

struggling to shake off the powerful influence of that Russian giant. Antheil was not simply content to write four-hand piano duets in the manner of the *Cinq Pièces Faciles*, but he must note them down on manuscript paper of the same shape and size used by the Swiss publishers. Because Stravinsky utilized dynamic effects with consummate mastery Antheil became convinced that "all music is rhythm" and that anyone who composed solely in a 3-4, 2-4, 6-8 or 4-4 bar for an entire piece, was writing nothing but "doggerel." It must be admitted that the lot of the young composer who comes after Stravinsky is truly a hard one. He cannot even react from Stravinsky as Debussy reacted from Wagner, for the simple reason that Stravinsky has already reacted from himself.

Fortunately, Antheil now realizes the part Stravinsky has played in his musical development. That means that he is one step nearer to finding his own personal idiom. Exactly what kind of music he will write in the future would be impossible to prophesy. But certain passages in the *Piano Concerto*, in the two *Sonatas for Violin and Piano*, and especially in the *Symphony for Five Wind Instruments* make us confident that an enviable future is before him.

By Aaron Copland

A BRAZILIAN RABELAIS

AT first hearing, the music of Villa-Lobos strikes the ear with an effect of shock, painful or baffling. Eventually it divides its audience—to some it brings an authentic musical message, to others it represents a mere dissipation of energy.

Crossing the seas that separate Europe from his own continent, the music of this young Brazilian within the last ten years has found a way more or less triumphant into the concert halls of most important musical centers. The occasions on which his works were heard in Paris last season were demonstrations of a unique power to get under the skin of the audience and win either supreme admiration or supreme contempt.

Of all South American composers none possesses a bolder, more audacious talent, a more inventive genius than Hector Villa-Lobos. He is a creator of ambiances, of spiritual vistas. Intellectually and emotionally he is alive to the world. In his nature the qualities of savage races and of exquisitely civilized peoples meet, and this union is the determining cause of a rare sensibility. With unusual, powerful imagery he combines the ridiculous and the pathetic. He is a Rabelais of the new music with a laughter that is generous, rude and gusty. And yet, beneath his colorful phrases, his lawless rhythms, as in the *Historietas* and *La Famille du Bébé*, there is profound and glowing feeling.

Above all he is a master of style. His work discloses a luxuriant at-homeness in every manner, from the classical to the most intrepid present-day practice. No matter how he expresses himself, he always gives the true essence of the formula—but never at the sacrifice of his own individual quality.

For a man still in his thirty-fourth year his musical output is prolific to an outstanding degree. It includes quintets, quartets, trios, piano and violin, and piano sonatas, constructed according to established rules. There are chamber works in which the accepted laws are ignored, such as his *Octet* for piano, flute, clarinet, two violins, alto, violoncello and contrabass; his *Quartet* for great flute, saxophone, celesta and harp, with a chorus of female voices; and the *Mystic Sextet* for harp, celesta, flute, zither, guitar and saxophone, with a chorus of male voices and drums. There are at least one hundred and thirty other pieces, not including an imposing group of symphonies and symphonic poems such as *Légende Indigène*, *Suite Paulista*, *Carnaval de Brazil*, *African Dances*, *Le Centaure d'Or*, and his operas *Femina*, *Jesus* and *Isaht*.

The most superficial acquaintance with these works reveals an extraordinary responsiveness to life. His microscopic penetration seeks to translate the meanest every-day incidents into tone. Tone, nevertheless, is important to him first for its dynamic and then for its emotional effect, the *Ironic and Sentimental Epigrammes*, set to six poems of Ronald Carvallo, especially illustrating his love of sonorities.

Despite the influence of Debussy and certain Russians, Villa-Lobos developed an early abhorrence of pattern, and liberated

himself from slavery to accepted models. His rhythms are extremely personal, and in creating a language of his own he has impressed upon it the characteristic attributes of a rare spirit. His melodic line is acute and fine, never at rest, never over-taken; and passage notes are treated as principal notes of departure to new fields.

The tendency of Villa-Lobos, in which, of course, he reflects his epoch, is towards elegance by means of a simplification of line. He never confuses affluence with redundancy, neither does he mistake zeal for the forceful expression of thought.

Without doubt he is the finest epitome of his country's culture, for, more than any other musical representative of Brazil, he seems to be actuated by the "interior flame" of his race. It is not the synthesis in his music of the ethnic elements of the Portuguese Africans and Indians that makes it remarkable, but rather its disclosure of a "new entity or the specific character of a people that is commencing to define itself intellectually, artistically and morally."

By Irving Schwerké

