

statement. "Music can only be really alive when there are listeners who are alive. To listen intently, to listen consciously, to listen with one's whole intelligence is the least we can do in the furtherance of an art that is one of the glories of mankind."

The important thing about Copland's high school opera, *The Second Hurricane* is not that he carried out his intention of writing for school children, but that in so doing he did not compromise on the modernity of his materials. So often composers with the desire to write educational material or symphonies of "social significance" will issue these works with the most worthy and progressive of titles but will use musical materials that spring from the decadent world they so energetically abhor.

The music for *The Second Hurricane* had naturally to be wrought within the emotional and physical capacities of high school children. With this considerable limitation it succeeds in covering a wide gamut of feeling. The harmonic writing is very free and very explicit. The rhythms are only natural complexities for American boys and girls brought up on jazz. And the manner in which the words are set to music is sheer delight. "Composers must be able to set English to a melodic line that does not falsify the natural rhythm of the language," Copland writes in his book. The composer well understands his statement. Certainly the boys and girls who perform the opera will sing the music after school hours as something they really enjoy.

Let us hope that as a publication this work will have a commercial success commensurate with other high school pieces. If it can be demonstrated that teacher and pupil alike really want an indigenous expression to replace the insipid lush concoctions the hacks have been growing fat on these long lean years, an important step will have been made. Copland's piece may set the door ajar, to a point where it can be pushed wide open.

William Schuman

A LESSON FROM MOZART

W. J. TURNER's "*Mozart: the Man and his Works*" (Alfred Knopf, 1938) has irritated some persons and delighted others. This writer belongs definitely to the latter group; he is more than willing to overlook both the "arrogance"

and the occasional—*horribile dictu!*—lapses of scholarly accuracy with which its author has been taxed, in view of certain other qualities which make it truly valuable, and even an important book. Its value lies precisely in the fact that it is an interpretation rather than in the strict sense a biography of Mozart, and in the genuine and original insight with which this interpretation is carried out. Let it be quickly added that the word "original" is used here in its only true sense, denoting that which is the product of pure instinct and experience rather than of knowledge. Mr. Turner's knowledge, to be sure, is considerable; but knowledge, though not as common as it should be, is accessible to everyone. Understanding, on the other hand, is rare, even in the case of composers like Mozart and Beethoven, whose works have been familiar, and whose lives and utterances have been for more than a century the object of painstaking scrutiny.

It is not entirely surprising then, that Mr. Turner's view of Mozart's music—his insight into its psychological complexity and the strange "ambiguity" of its moods—should be hailed, both on the wrapper and in some of the reviews, as something like a novel view of Mozart, even though hearers sincerely familiar with the string quintets, with *Così fan Tutte*, with certain piano concerti, to name but a few works at random, can scarcely have been totally unaware that this music is something infinitely more profound and more disturbing—something at all events completely other—than the charming rococo image which still represents the orthodox view of the most mysterious of all musical personalities. Mr. Turner's observations on this subject are admirable—the fresher and more vivid, perhaps, for being written by one who, besides possessing an authentic literary gift, is not primarily a musician, and who therefore can allow his impressions to take shape directly in words, without turning, as the musician instinctively does, to specifically musical images.

It is not only as a biography of Mozart, however, that this writer finds the book important; it is rather as a remarkably penetrating and subtle study of the personality and the destiny of a composer of genius, and of the intimate relation of personality to art. That such an intimate relation exists is, to be true, often denied by those who understand little; it is, on the other hand, the most commonplace truism to anyone who has ever composed

a simple phrase of what is generally called "sincere" music. It is true that there is also prevalent a spurious conception of "personality" as mere idiosyncrasy, often carefully affected and nourished in mannerism, or in an adopted technical or esthetic platform. Musical personality, however, has nothing in common with such matters, and is an intangible as well as an inevitable element in all music which springs from genuine experience—all music, in other words, which is music at all.

This fact and its many implications are made quite clear by Mr. Turner, and it is, above all, these implications which make his book relevant, not only to the lover of Mozart's music—as what genuine lover of music, after all, is not?—but to those interested in the fate of music in our time. Perhaps the ultimate conflict in the contemporary world is between those who are aware of personality and believe in its decisive power, and those who, either through brutishness or envy, would destroy it. In any world whatever, the destiny of a Mozart is far from reassuring. Mr. Turner, with the assistance of plenty of documentary evidence, disposes thoroughly of the Pharisaical and manifestly absurd view which has recently become prevalent, that the misfortunes of men of genius are of their own making, and that great works of art are invariably understood (even "best understood") by their contemporaries. Historically and psychologically this is, of course, quite false. Mr. Turner is wholly correct in pointing out that in any period whatever, in any *conceivable* period, great music is kept alive only by the effort and even the struggle of the small minority which really understands and loves it. No doubt some composers are more fortunate in this respect than others. Mozart was one of the least fortunate, not because of his "arrogance" or "indiscretion," but because of the totality of his nature, of which his music was certainly not the least part. The fact that a very few of his contemporaries were aware of his real stature did not prevent his wordly fortune from being utterly horrible to contemplate. It is salutary in a time of increasing totalitarian peril to pause for a few moments and reflect on this destiny, and, keeping *Don Giovanni*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and the rest in mind, to recall the values, human and "cultural," which made their creation possible, and which gave, for Mozart in far greater measure even than to us, purpose and infinite meaning to the unspeakable tragedy of his life.

Roger Sessions