

accurate as they are, could learn a good deal in theatre effectiveness and in invention from Massine.

From the standpoint of new music the season has not been very rich. *Concurrence* by Auric is nice but not new. Tansman's new version of his *Sonatine Transatlantique* for Joos is excellent music and good for dancing. I didn't like Cohen's *Prodigal*. The best new ballet music I heard was Paul Bowles' score for *Horse Eats Hat*. This whole production is much the most interesting thing in the season's spoken theatre from the standpoint of movement.

Edwin Denby

OVER THE AIR

By CECIL MICHENER SMITH

THIS abbreviated column, appearing for the first time in this issue, is presented principally as a hope for things to come. It is the assumption of MODERN MUSIC that the air channels will, from time to time, carry programs of contemporary music worth writing about. When such happy diversions mar the smooth routine of our broadcasting studios, I shall make note of their boldness by printing a record of it in these pages.

As a reporter of contemporary music broadcasts, I am somewhat hampered by the accident of residence outside the broadcasting range of New York City stations. Many programs are not carried by the local stations to which I can conveniently listen. In many instances, therefore, I shall be forced to imitate the precedent set by some other music reviewers, of covering musical performances which I have not attended.

This irritating state of affairs may have at least the virtue of calling the attention of our readers to the special privileges enjoyed by residents of the New York area. It is quite appropriate to New York's metropolitan position among American cities that the bulk of the nation's concert and operatic performances should be presented there.

The radio, however, has been highly advertised as a democratic means of providing large city advantages for those who dwell in smaller cities and rural localities. And many radio

features, from the Philharmonic broadcasts to the Hollywood studio parties, are made readily available to this scattered, unstratified audience. But most stations in the hinterland are unwilling to risk the limited audience appeal of programs of music which they think esoteric. The situation makes for a vicious circle, as the very music these stations choose to keep off the air will continue to seem esoteric just so long as radio listeners have no ample opportunity to hear it.

Furthermore, the hesitancy of local stations to present chain programs of serious contemporary music does not always result from the intrusion of profitable commercial claims upon their time. The Federal Communications Commission requires each station, in proportion to the wattage it carries, to offer a specified number of programs of an "educational, religious, or agricultural" nature. Unless the station fulfills this prescription, it is likely to lose its operating franchise. So at the present time, in addition to sure-fire farm talks and evangelistic exhortations, many stations carry futile musical potpourris as sustaining "educational" features. Called "Echoes from the Classics," or something kindred, these programs often offer hit-or-miss record concerts, the unrelated selections interlarded with painfully learned critical estimates pontifically uttered by the station announcer.

The moral is clear. Time is available for the kind of broadcast we should like to hear in greater abundance. An educational challenge offers itself—a challenge to educate studio program directors to their opportunity in the field of contemporary music.

Cecil Michener Smith