

ganized polyphony. Also in this field of the monumental symphony lies the new trilogy by Nikolai Miaskowsky, a work which takes an entire evening and will have its premiere this winter.

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UNDER THE SWASTIKA

IT is difficult to present the world outside with an objective picture of Germany's new cultural status. For we ourselves have no such grasp of the situation. Pessimists believe the German government for years to come will be too absorbed in economic and administrative construction to give due consideration to esthetic questions, making their analogy with the new Russian state which, when similarly pressed, neglected cultural questions. But this view is contradicted by the important part art and culture play in the program of German fascism. From the fascist angle not to incorporate art and artists in the structure of the state would mean to neglect too important a means of public education.

The musical problems in this connection are complex. Of course it is taken for granted that what are termed destructive, "culturally bolshevistic" impulses must be forcibly suppressed, sacrificed to a new idea of unity. But how "constructive" elements are to be differentiated from these in any particular work, what the aspects of a national art should be, just which of many traditions it should follow—about such questions no definite conclusion has been developed. As to the race problem, it is now apparent that even in music the influence of Jewish artists has been reduced to a minimum. It is well known that Wilhelm Furtwängler has raised his voice against complete exclusion with the result that in the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra six Jewish musicians continue to occupy prominent posts; and the Staatsoper has extended its agreements with Alexander Kipnis, Emanuel List and Leo Blech.

The precarious state of all modern art in Germany today was described in the March-April issue of MODERN MUSIC. Two viewpoints are now in conflict. According to the first, all dissonant music is the manifesto of an enemy to the state and

consequently even German composers like Hindemith, Butting, Höffer and Krenek should be debarred. The second, more progressive, recognizes a constructive power in modern art and would enlist it in the national program. A large number of radical musicians continue to live in Germany and apparently intend to compose in the same style as before. It needs no especially keen vision to prophesy that these modern elements, which make their appeal to the sympathies of youth, will again win the upper hand. Hindemith has adherents high in the ranks of the National Socialist party and even in the extreme Kultur-Kampfund. The concerts of the conservative Prussian Academy of Arts last May and June included among their programs of music by party composers and older dignitaries, works by Heinz Tiessen, Max Butting, Paul Hindemith and Herbert Trantow. Hindemith's *Konzert für Orchester* had a pronounced success. Trantow's *Musik für Orchester*, a completely modern work, related in its machine-like precision to Stravinsky's middle period, reveals, in its turbulent introductory movement, a strong personal and expressive force.

The works of the Dortmund Tonkünstlerfest differed greatly in style and feeling. Hermann Reuter's oratorio, *Der Grosse Kalender*, was the most successful. It takes up a whole evening and, though in modern medium, is related somewhat to Haydn's *Jahreszeiten*. In its choral and solo passages it reveals a great talent for vocal writing and a contrapuntal mastery of high order. A more modern path was pursued by Werner Ekg of Munich in his *Vier Italienischen Gesänge* whose polytonal orchestral phrase ingeniously underscored and intensified folkloristic elements. The most extreme works were two string quartets, the short three movement composition of Schönberg's pupil, Peter Schacht, which met with an obviously expected and prepared-for failure, and the metaphysically burdened music of Frank Wohlfahrt, a work of huge dimensions, in whose oversubtilized polyphony a gifted talent carries forward the struggle with form. Hans Brehme, one of the most promising young Germans, was represented by a score for string quartet whose classical phrases did not conceal its relation to such modern works as Berg's *Lyrische Suite*. The piano piece of Karl

Höller of Munich, *Toccata, Improvisationen und Fuge* was interesting although not free of romantic entanglements. Among the older composers only Hans Pfitzner made any impression with his splendid C# minor *Symphonie*, remarkably Schönbergian in its closing passages.

The small music festival in Bad Pyrmont which was expressly dedicated to the nationalistic moderns must also be mentioned. I heard only two works, and these over the radio: the neo-romantic *Klopstock-Tryptichon* by Tiessen's pupil, Hermann Simon, interesting in the many voices of its choral passages, and a *Suite* for soprano and string quartet by Lothar von Knorr.

Two concerts held in the Italian Embassy were dedicated to young Fascist composers. An overwhelming reception was given Goffredo Petrassi of the Hindemith-Stravinsky school, for the aggressive style revealed in his *Introduzione e Allegro* for violin and piano. In Gian Luca Tocchi, a protege of Mussolini, we heard, on the contrary, the noble classical style. The effect of Italy's attitude on the development of German cultural activity is considered especially important by the modern composers. Italian Fascism has set the example in cultural policy; the acceptance of the futurists by the Italian Academy is an argument to which modern German leaders are not deaf. New Italian works, on the German radio programs for example, reveal the present features of composers like Casella and Malipiero as not unmarked by musical "cultural bolshevism." Which is food for thought and forces comparison with the German situation. The premiere of Casella's new opera, *La Donna Serpente*, which will shortly take place at Mannheim is awaited with great interest.

German opera, as was to be expected, is overwhelmingly restricted to a classical and romantic repertoire, and especially to the jubilee composer Wagner. The German premieres of works by Zemlinsky and Manfred Gurlitt have of course been postponed. Only Prague's German theatre kept its promise and performed the enchanting opera bouffe, *Verlobung im Traum*, composed by young Hans Krasa on a theme from Dostoevsky. This is held to a charming and personal parlando style, which yields in several places to strong melodic suggestions; a stretta at the

close of the first act and the quintet, à la Rosenkavalier, in which Bellini's *Casta Diva* is interwoven in a skillful manner, belong to the loveliest lyrical passages in modern German opera.

A divided reception was given the Berlin performance of Georg Vollerthun's *Freikorporal*, which is cherished in certain circles as the folk opera of national Germany. The score, which in every measure reveals Vollerthun's direct descent from Richard Strauss, is not without interest and much more modern in its harmonic diction than might have been expected. But this individuality is in contradiction to the manner in which Prussian military marches are used in the third act. The artistic passages clash with the purely operetta scenes where the librettist, Rudolf Lothar has speculated on the instincts of the general public.

The Bayreuth Festival gave us a curious surprise. Heinz Tietjen and Emil Pretorius, two representatives of modern ideas in the theatre, invested the *Ring* and the *Meistersinger* with an entirely novel scenic dress, and in a fashion which departed completely from Bayreuth tradition. Thus the paradoxical situation arose that the "Keepers of the Grail" protested against the cultural-bolshevistic conception of Wagner while the government declared itself completely satisfied.

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