

and Copland influences well differentiated in separate movements. It was very listenable, especially in its bright, brash moments.

The Guarnieri evening was surprisingly successful in view of the fact that all sizable works were written ten or more years ago. A near-complete picture was yet given, though it remains something of a mystery why the League could not have procured more recent indications of how the man has developed. The songs are among the best of their species. Few South Americans seem to fail here, and the established manner for this genre makes the later date of the songs themselves not very indicative. The *Third Sonatina for Piano* has been heard here before. It is a delightfully fresh piece, an expert synthesis of popular and formal elements. A wider emotional span is apparent in the more imposing chamber works. Guarnieri has passion, eloquence, energy, and tender sadness in addition to his vivacious light-heartedness. He is the first full-fledged South American composer we have known, a varied personality, articulate, with a fluid technic. It is not necessary to appreciate him for his implied abilities. He lacks the sudden, new-sounding flashes of a Villa-Lobos, but then it is not primarily for his coloristic, nationalist traits that we appreciate him. He moves in a more universal sphere, though he is completely of his country.

Donald Fuller

## FIRST IN BOSTON

GIVEN a public that will listen, the conductor of an orchestra may bring out all the new music he likes. Confronted with one that balks at strange sounds, he must restrain himself. This is not telling the world anything; but to observe how the matter affects Serge Koussevitzky in his planning of programs for the Boston Symphony concerts. Speaking of the regular Friday afternoon and Saturday evening pairs in Symphony Hall, his audiences will take more unknown and lately-written works than he himself can prepare for them. Unless Dr. Koussevitzky had at call an assistant conductor in his concert-master, Richard Burgin, a man competent to rehearse and present, unaided, almost anything a modern composer can fetch along, the Boston Symphony would make no such record as it does. Dr. Koussevitzky takes in hand, naturally enough, the most important of his novelties, or those at any rate that he thinks will most interest the subscribers on the route of his monthly tours; but even so, he finds himself compelled to pass along some pretty good things to his second in command. Occasionally he lets a composer do his own con-

ducting, although he is discreet about this; for he wants no bungling on his platform, nor does he hand over his executants lightly for some visitor, whether distinguished or undistinguished, to practice on.

To look back at the "first time" pieces of the season just gone, a half dozen figured on the showbills of home that found no place on those of the New York visits. Four of these the assistant conductor and one the principal conductor handled. The remaining one the composer had charge of. Now leave judgment, if you will, to me, the most markworthy of the six was *Ode for Orchestra*, by Frederick Jacobi, done on April 22nd under the baton of Dr. Koussevitzky, too late to be repeated in New York. Next to this I would place the *Violin Concerto in G minor* of Vladimir Dukelsky, put on by Mr. Burgin, March 19th, Ruth Posselt as soloist. When I rate these two ahead of the others, I am thinking of their quality of originality and of their newness in a larger meaning than is conveyed by what we call "news." Jacobi's work, no mistake, has stuff, fibre, and structure. It is no mere sketch, no experiment in form, no excursion into strange realms of sonority. It has consistent style. It masters the situation in which it finds itself. By this I do not mean that as descriptive music the *Ode* is extraordinarily picturesque, nor as abstract music anything super-classic. Yet it is music possessing heart and voice. It says what I have not heard before and what I want to hear again. Regarding the Dukelsky concerto, an unusual trait is that it allows the soloist a fair chance. That may be a doubtful merit, I grant; nevertheless, I for my part do not get what I expect from the violin and orchestra combination when the soloist much of the time is effective only as an object for the eye. And so I am willing to commend Dukelsky, even if he has turned out a moderately impressive score, for re-establishing a lost balance.

As for another item in the list, Robert Russell Bennett's *Sights and Sounds, an Orchestral Entertainment*, done under Mr. Burgin, January 22nd, to me there seemed an awful lot of "orchestration" and "instrumentation" on display. Another Burgin responsibility was *Sinfonietta*, Opus 27, by Nicolas Lopatnikoff, introduced on November 22nd. Was not this first heard last summer under the auspices of the I.S.C.M.? At the time of the Boston performance I made extensive remarks on the piece, no doubt influenced by the California send-off. To my present confusion, however, I cannot recall how it went, nor can I make the words I wrote about it re-live. A fourth Burgin undertaking was Hindemith's *Nobilissima Visione*, on the same date as Bennett's piece. The composer, writing into

his concert suite a passacaglia, takes advantage of me because I have a weakness for things contrived in ancient forms. Possibly I keep a certain repute for studiousness that way. Right or wrong, too, I'll aver that the passacaglia is an episode to keep the *Visione* in the glow a while.

Last to mention is the Brazilian music of Camargo Guarnieri, *Abertura Concertante*, heard March 26th with the composer conducting. A charm of tune and rhythm that must be truly Brazilian, because so clean out of the ordinary run, inheres in it. Dignified enough for what we call a symphony orchestra, and ingratiating enough for a popular summertime assemblage of players.

Winthrop P. Tryon

## WAR BOOM IN THE NORTHWEST

RAPID growth of musical activity in the Northwest has paralleled the recent expansion of population and industry in that region. The town of Vancouver, Washington, for instance, has mushroomed from 15,000 to 85,000 almost overnight. While the war is very much with us, it has had its musical compensations. The tremendous influx of population brings new promising elements and new organizations. Record shops are full of people buying symphonic discs and eager young players come up increasingly from the many school choruses and bands.

The advent of Sir Thomas Beecham as conductor of the Seattle Symphony has crowned this new sense of our musical growth with that special enthusiasm and joy which are his great gift. The concerts have been extraordinary events with a far-reaching and stimulating effect. His ideas and plans seem legion and he apparently likes the country. The "Standing room only" sign has been hung out at all his concerts, the audiences have been preponderantly young, soldiers, sailors, students. Under Sir Thomas, several works by Americans were played, including two by local composers — *Prelude to a Holiday* by the Australian composer Arthur Benjamin (living close by, in Vancouver, B. C.) and my own *Symphonic Miniature*. History was made when the conductor gave these pieces a painstaking and thorough preparation, robbing standard works of precious rehearsal time to do the new ones well.

The Portland Symphony is momentarily quiescent. But Oregon has a new organizational set-up which bears watching. Theodore Kratt, just elected dean of music at the University of Oregon, has now also been made state director, with control over not only the University music depart-