

forty-five musicians and fifty-six singers, and can draw on 700 semi-active members. It is even necessary to be a subscriber to get seats for the orchestral and choral concerts.

Quite recent has been the founding of another organization destined to play a part in artistic life: The Groupe Culturel formed by the Chambre Syndicale des Artistes-Musiciens with the idea of promoting contacts and an exchange of ideas among members of the profession. Lectures are held each week at the Maison Internationale des Etudiants. Ansermet, honorary president, inaugurated the series with a brilliant talk on *The Musician in the World*.

Arno Huth

CHAVEZ AND THE CHICAGO DROUTH

CHAVEZ was here. He conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra through three of his major works. The impression made was direct and vital. The rest of the music we have heard recently is weak and doesn't reach far enough to even touch.

I didn't hear Nicolai Berezhowsky's *Concerto* for viola and orchestra. A criticism by Edward Barry mentions an "attractive sustained movement," the andante, and finds the "low musical comedy" of the second movement not "surpassingly deft." I did however hear Cadman's *Pennsylvania Symphony*. This has a variety of themes — of the forest or lurking Indian; of the pioneer, the river, the factory, the happy worker; and, finally The American Theme. The only things missing were moving pictures. It is sad to think how seriously the work must have been written, and how little of this seriousness comes off.

The Illinois WPA Symphony Orchestra, which is to be commended for its many first performances of contemporary works, gave on this occasion two very dull premieres: Radie Britain's *Drouth* and Leos Jánacek's *Lachian Dances*. The latter were written in the 1880's, and might have been exciting then. Miss Britain's *Drouth*, like Cadman's *Symphony*, also needed an illustrative film, particularly for the plaintive cowboy song which is heard toward the end of the composition, "expressing his loneliness and desolation as he sees the land blown away." The strings did most of the blowing and sighing. At one point a ratchet electrified the wind section and for a moment there were interesting jagged sounds. But these were written for a decorative-dramatic effect and not as an organic

part of the composition. They were followed by moaning muted violins. Miss Britain is said, through this work, to exhibit her kinship with the great Middle West.

It is a relief to remember the Chavez performances: his arrangement of the Buxtehude *Chaconne*, his popular *Sinfonia India* and his *Concerto for Four Horns*. During the *Concerto*, a large part of the audience took fiendish delight in the trouble the horn players were having. The second movement, an *adagio cantabile*, was made mysterious by long sustained dissonances between the horns. The work was originally for horns alone. In 1937, seven years after its composition, it was turned into a concerto. Chavez says that not a note is changed, though some have been given to other instruments. The effect, however, in the second movement, is that the string parts are pasted on. Most of the time the orchestra sat and listened to the horns. Their quiet attention was very theatrical and made the whole situation seem intimate, magic and private between Chavez and the horns. This second movement was the best of the three; the tempo was right for the horns. In the fast first and third movements, the expectations of the fiends were gratified. The last movement ends abruptly in a brilliant and affirmative character, but, unfortunately, the ending is not convincing. It belongs to Chavez but not to this particular work. It has the effect of a signature, not of a solution.

It is needless to say much about the well known Buxtehude *Chaconne* and the *Sinfonia India*. The *Indian Symphony* could very easily become our Pan-American *Bolero*.

The composers mentioned here all find their material in the land and the people around them. The sources from which the music has been conceived account for some of the differences in the results. Miss Britain and Mr. Cadman have accepted certain literary and intellectual concepts of the American scene which they have illustrated musically. The music is recognizably regional according to one's knowledge of the conditions which prompted it; it is not an expression in musical terms of a close contact with the country. When Chavez, on the other hand, quotes Indian melodies directly, as he does in the *Sinfonia India*, he has gone to a source that is essentially musical to begin with. It relies completely on musical elements which never call for literary explanations but speak in terms of rhythm and sound, to which everyone responds. Hearing this *Symphony* for the first time, one has the feeling of remembering it. It is the land we all walk on, made audible.

John Cage