

tional progression of Stravinsky's own version. This masterpiece, frequently accused of being "bone-weary," seems to keep its vigor amazingly intact, perhaps because it has real bones instead of the rubber facsimile of so much other contemporary music.

Donald Fuller

HARRIS' FOLKSONG SYMPHONY

OF numerous American compositions heard during the convention of the Music Teachers' National Association in Cleveland, the *Folk-Song Symphony* of Roy Harris was the plat du jour, warmed over from two previous hearings within the week by the Cleveland Orchestra and Philharmonic Chorus under Rudolph Ringwall.

It is doubtful whether this work will prove any less provocative than a good many others from Harris' pen, but it certainly deserves the kind of reflection which only the highest forms of creative activity arouse. If we can agree on some minor issues such as calling this not a symphony but a series of five folksong settings plus two instrumental dance interludes, if it is admitted that the second movement based on two cowboy tunes is a little long and repetitious, if one concedes that the voices in one or two spots do not find their most expressive register and are overpowered by the brass, if we can condone the Harris tendency to put a good many eggs in one basket, then the ground may be cleared for viewing the essence of the music. This is totally and overpoweringly magnificent in its rich outpouring of lyricism.

There are a half-dozen first rate American folksongs in the work, from *Johnny Comes Marching Home* to *The Gal I Left Behind Me*. To assimilate this material, words and all, and to give it out as something so fresh and momentous as does this music, is to meet a supreme artistic challenge comparable to the decorative problem of the chorale prelude. It requires a subjective approach, an identification of self with the material, such as few composers have ever mastered. It almost involves nourishing the exalted conviction, *le peuple, c'est moi*. Yet I find nothing presumptuous about such an attitude in Harris, because his expression of it shows too deep a reverence for emotional realities to bear any symptoms of megalomania.

The fluidity of his harmony, the variety of his cadences, the ever-broadening current of melodic and rhythmic invention which gives such an extraordinary sense of growth to his form — all these suggest a mind attuned to an inmost spiritual center where all things are one. It is in the

matter of differentiation, of portraying that final dissipation of energy where things become separate and static, that Harris sometimes refuses us a complete picture. His eternal flux, like Wagner's, is intoxicating, and it may lead to emotional exhaustion if it is not sufficiently energized by the drama of basic contrasts. Yet, still conscious of the abundant vitality, the homespun beauty, the spacious reach of tenderness and pathos in this folk-song fantasia, I feel no uneasiness in yielding to the dynamic persuasion of Harris' "uninterrupted eloquence."

Two movements from Arthur Shepherd's *Horizons*, Piston's *Incredible Flutist* and Barber's *Overture to A School for Scandal* were on the same program. This was preceded at the convention by an "orchestral laboratory session," organized by Shepherd, consisting mainly of new works which might prove practical for high school orchestras, and produced for us by the Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestra under F. Karl Grossman. Among the ten composers represented, the general level of competence was high. Topping the list was a sturdy if conventional *Passacaglia and Fugue* by David Van Vactor, Melville Smith's *Tarheel Fantasy* was an effective exploitation of North Carolina folk-tunes, smooth, adroit writing marked Alvin Ettler's *Scherzo* and Edmund Haines' *Three Dances*; there was more folk melody in William Bergsma's amusing *Set of Dances*, Ulysses Kay showed imagination in his *Five Mosaics*, and Philip Greeley Clapp supplied some elaborate percussive buffoonery in his effective *Overture to a Comedy*. Other works heard were by Richard Morse, Robert W. Palmer and James Aliferis.

More American music presented at the convention included string quartets by Normand Lockwood and Charles Sanford Skilton, the *Garden Hymn Fantasia* of Arthur Shepherd, the *Two-Piano Suite* of Beryl Rubinstein, and three songs by this reviewer.

Herbert Elwell

THE NEW STRAVINSKY

THE work that Stravinsky has written for the Golden Jubilee season of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra bears a like relation to *Symphonie des Psaumes* that *Le Sacre du Printemps* bears to the earlier ballets. It is a symphony in four movements, a return of the symphonic gods of Haydn and Mozart, veiled now, but still revealing those eternal forms and essential proportions.

Loyal to the classic beliefs, Stravinsky too has now given us a contemporary monument of ingenuity and imagination which must endure -