

This subject seems to be an endless source of inspiration to Soviet composers. Now, after the long running into the ground of Shostakovich's *Polka*, we are due for a landslide of the same sort of thing by Prokofiev. Both Shostakovich and Prokofiev have produced the clever and entertaining type of distortion-mirror stuff that seems to shine with malicious reflection on the age of poor Queen Victoria.

Leonard Bernstein was twice represented this month by his *Seven Anniversaries*. I heard Gordon Manley at Town Hall play five of them which were competent, smooth and Coplandesque. The one to the memory of Nathalie Koussevitsky was quite moving and spacious and has a little downward melodic sigh in thirds that seem to stick in one's head.

Harold Kohon played at Town Hall a new *Sonata For Violin Alone* by Johan Franco which rather undid me. Though not lacking in interesting devices to improve the color of so ascetic a medium, I fail to see that the transposition downwards or upwards of principal chords by minor seconds does anything but produce in the lay mind some pleasant misapprehension that he is listening to modern music, or, in the trained mind, a slight annoyance at the wilfulness of the deception. It is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Neapolitan Sixth. The same recital also offered a playing of Eda Rapoport's new *Midrash*, a well-done rehash of Bloch's ultra-Hebraic style.

Lou Harrison

SUMMER MUSIC: THE STADIUM

AT the Stadium the promised hearing of a new *Symphony* by Jerome Moross did not come off. There was rain one night, an unexplained omission the next. Thus the Stravinsky *Four Norwegian Moods*, in their first performance here, took the place of honor. The outdoor concert is certainly the proper setting for these sketches. Their wan scent carries best away from the stern concert hall. So little is here that Stravinsky has not attempted before — the vague overtones of Grieg barely justify the title — that the result is more like a faithful follower's tame reproduction than any new variation by the composer. This is definitely minor, and I don't mean minor masterpiece.

Marc Blitzstein's *Freedom Morning*, a kind of composite of Negro hopes and war aims, also had its premiere in this city. I hope that the day which has inspired Blitzstein is greeted with more faith, intensity, and convincing joy than he can muster up. A familiar slow-fast-slow arrangement offers good popular Copland to start with, more animated antics

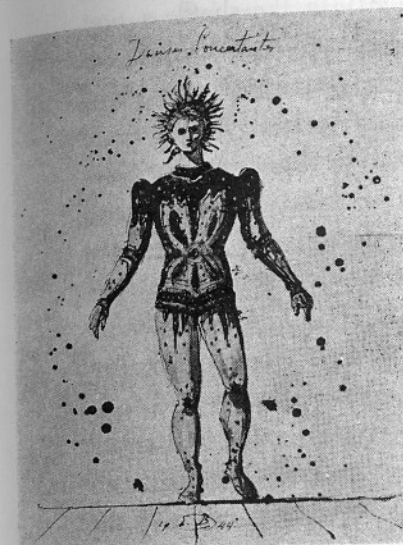


DESIGNS BY EUGENE BERMAN FOR
NEW BALLETS BY GEORGE BALANCHINE

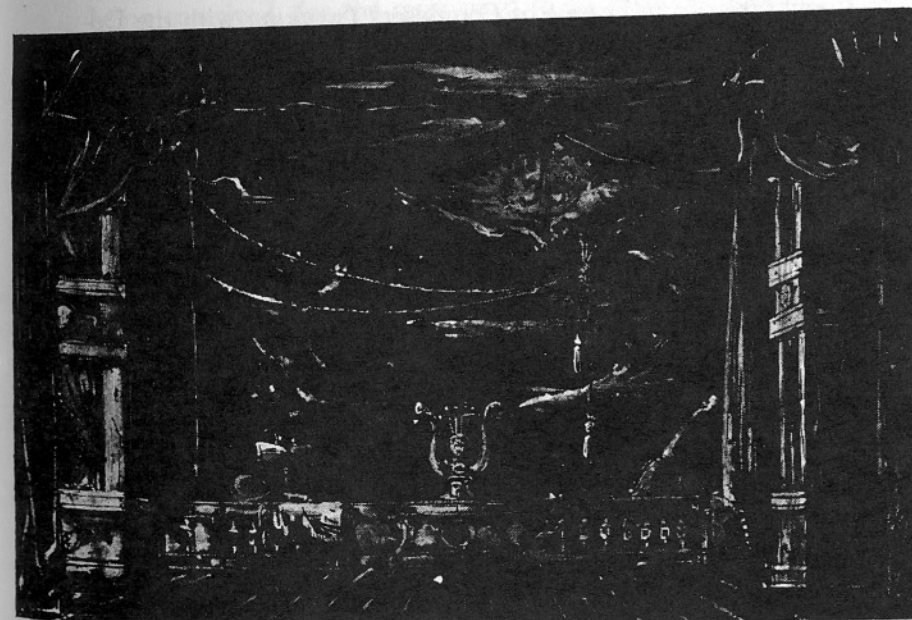
Presented by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo
At the New York City Center in September



Figures in LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME
Orchestral Suite by RICHARD STRAUSS



Backdrop and Costumes for the
DANSES CONCERTANTES
of IGOR STRAVINSKY



later of the sort one admires in Henry F. Gilbert. But surely Blitzstein's many years' intimacy with good source material could have produced something more striking in the way of rapid Negro fantasy.

Burrill Phillips' *Courthouse Square* managed to convey much of the fresh, homely feeling it aimed for, though it was weighted down with pretty banal progressions in its nostalgic sections. In the shuffle a tiny, naive *Jack in the Box* by Satie, in a Milhaud orchestration (no credit given on the program), was almost lost. More familiar items continue to stand up well. Virgil Thomson's *Filling Station*, Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid* and *Our Town*, Leonard Bernstein's "Jeremiah" *Symphony*, and the William Schuman overtures are included here. The Ravel *Piano Concerto* had a hard time exerting its usual magic, what with a sloppy performance by the orchestra and Bernstein's too brash conception of the piano part.

Donald Fuller

SUMMER MUSIC: THE PARKS

LARGE audiences enjoyed the music offered on the Mall in Central Park this summer. It is pleasant to report that the programs arranged for the twenty-seventh season of the Goldman Band and the second annual Festival of Folk and Contemporary Music presented by Associate Committee of the League of Composers (working with the Department of Parks and this time also the Common Council for American Unity) included some music written by composers of today, and that this music was well-received. However, judging both from the amiability of the audience and the interest in up-to-the-minuteness which characterizes both Edwin Franko Goldman and the League of Composers, there might have been more contemporary music played than there was. This failing was due perhaps chiefly to the exigencies of rehearsals, in some instances of musicians newly together and for only the summer.

The League Festival began with two programs strictly limited to songs and dances of various European countries. The third night gave us American music: *Devotion* and *Cindy* by Harry Wilson, *The Mother's Vow* by Arthur Farwell, a *Psalm* by Normand Lockwood, *Prayer of the Slavic Children* by W. Golde, *Alleluia* by Randall Thompson, and *The Soul of America* by T. C. Whitmer (all sung by the Teachers College Chorus under the direction of Harry Wilson). There were also Negro spirituals, performed by the Hall Johnson Choir, and squares and rounds danced by the Don Chambers Group. The fourth and last program, played