

ally proficient, prolific—in every sense of the word *habile*. Perhaps in spirit it is less sophisticated than Ibert—simpler in sentiment, more nearly approaching a child's humors. The *Trio* is the most successful of these three works, wistful and gay by turns and sometimes playfully inconsequential.

Malipiero contributes two works composed in 1934 and 1932, and both dedicated to Mrs. Coolidge,—the *Fourth String Quartet* (Wilhelm Hansen) and *Concerto* for violin and orchestra (A. & G. Garisch). The *Concerto* is published as a holograph score which makes it pretty to look at, but difficult to read. Malipiero's music is always straightforward and sincere—for that we are grateful. But one cannot say that it is always well sustained or brilliantly executed. Nor is it possible to find any signs of spiritual growth in these recent works. Nevertheless, one would hear either the *Quartet* or the *Concerto* with pleasure, for they are honest works from a truly musical nature.

Paul Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* excerpts (Schott Sons) and Bela Bartok's *Fifth String Quartet* (Universal Edition) have both come out in small score and are indispensable additions to any music collection. These are the works which bring credit to the entire modern music "movement" and should be studied and restudied by those who wish to keep aware of what is going on in the field of contemporary music.

Aaron Copland

IN THE THEATRE

WPA SHOWS WITH MUSIC

A RIOTOUS night in a mad house is provided by the WPA performance of *Horse Eats Hat*. This modernistic version of Eugene Labiche's comedy, *Un Chapeau de Paille d'Italie* (Paris, 1851), by Edwin Denby and Orson Welles, is highly amusing and it is only a pity that the producers have repeated a number of their theatrical formulæ (already somewhat threadbare) too often so that the second act falls far short of the first in comical effect. Acting, costumes and scenery are excellent.

The music of Paul Bowles, orchestrated by Virgil Thomson, is amusing too and fits well the spirit of the production. It comes in at precisely the right moments and our composer has given us just the kind of music we want at the time we want it. Unfortunately, it appears to be hastily made and, in spite of the large apparatus used, sounds more or less flimsy. It is in the "style-catchy" but it is not really catchy. Mr. Bowles does not seem to realize that it requires at least as much care and skill to write a *Falstaff* or a *Don Pasquale* as it does to write a *Symphonie Pathétique* or a *Tristan and Isolde*. It is a pity, for there are diverting things and a good sense of the stage in this sur-realistic melange of Satie and Offenbach.

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When art and propoganda come to grips it is usually art which suffers most. From Aristophanes to Vinton Freedley creators and re-creators have known what the exigencies of a production, as such, must suffer if they are forced to bend to the scoring of a point. One may argue that even in the greatest of the Greek plays there is some propoganda for the Greek idea of human life and the gods. But in these the play usually takes precedence over the point and where it does not, where both point and play are developed with equal fullness and logic, it appears that a miracle has happened. And miracles occur but seldom.

So it is not surprising that the WPA show, *Injunction Granted*, which is an historical pageant of the growth of the Labor Movement in America, should fall rather flat as a show: that in spite of its remarkable qualities, some of which, particularly in the realms of lighting and of plastic groupings, are both beautiful and telling, the final effect should be something like that of a high school entertainment done with immense conviction and talent.

For this, Virgil Thomson has written the orchestral accompaniment; to call this "music" is unfair both to it and to music. The shrieking sirens and Klaxons give an effective opening. But when, later, the dialog is punctuated, point for point (somewhat in the nature of Walter Winchell's "Flash!"), by beats on the bass-drum, occasionally varied by rolls on the snare-drum,

and when this process is continued regularly for the better part of a long first act, the effect becomes both monotonous and nerve-racking. Further along there is music of slightly greater pretense in which roll-calls on trumpets and fife play a considerable part. But on the whole it cannot be said that this "score" will add greatly to the reputation of the author of *Four Saints*. It lacks his light hand and his usual ingenuity. No doubt he will claim that it is just the right thing as a commentary on the *Living Newspaper* and perhaps this is so.

Frederick Jacobi

WEILL SCORES FOR JOHNNY JOHNSON

I HAVE written some harsh things in the past about Kurt Weill and his music. I wish now to write a few good things. He hasn't changed, I have. The touchoff is the production the Group Theatre have given of his and Paul Green's *Johnny Johnson*. Whatever its fate at the hands of New York audiences (I have seen a preview of the work) I wish to go on record as being grateful to it for having shown me values I didn't know about before.

Johnny Johnson is a piece about an essentially pure, young, glib American of 1917, who goes off to the "war to end war" believing implicitly in Woodrow Wilson, and in all the trumped-up slogans of the time. It is the story of his disillusionment, and it also intends to show that Johnny is the only sane man in a mad world—this last through satire, with Johnny incarcerated in an asylum because of his sanity. The play misses because of deep confusion in the poet's mind as to just where real sanity such as Johnny displays would lead him; also because in his effort to make Johnny lovable, he has him do things which are not only sane but cute, and thus robs him of a necessary dignity. The end is pitifully bad, the last song hoping to retrieve some dignity out of defeat plus cuteness, and becoming impossibly sentimental, the embarrassing kind of sentimental.

It is sort of American *Schwejk*, a folk play. For it, Weill has written some of his best music. The song of the Goddess of Liberty, the one called *Soldiers, Masters, Men*, the comic one on psychiatry are in their way quite as fine as the *Barbarasong* or *Surabaya Johnny*. They are also less in the music-hall pattern