

The latter are worthwhile primarily as appraisals. Rosenfeld's distribution of values few can reject, at least summarily, who have ever considered modern music seriously at all. They may find some too highly praised, some too slightly. But the hierarchy in general they must admit is admirably conceived. Stravinsky appropriately looms highest; Hindemith as the "most fruitful of contemporary German composers;" Ravel is appreciated for his better efforts, even if *Valses Nobles* is curiously numbered among these; Bartok is perhaps placed too high; Harris, for his superior "movement," stalks in America's "first ranks;" Copland, in a former book musically "a young man," advances to his merited place as "one of the solid achievements of recent music;" Sibelius is neatly excluded as an "over-stuffed bard" whose elephantine bulk eclipses more worthy contestants like Milhaud; and though Scriabin, the pitiful visionary, is admitted, the apt swan-song for the disintegrating Bloch is an extenuation.

The list could be prolonged but for want of space. Suffice it to mention that one-third of the book treats some pre-Wagnerians from Monteverdi, and with such good taste as will possibly induce the reader to accept the subsequent oracles of modern music which he might otherwise sceptically reject. I must confess I do not follow the divagations on the "she" in Mozart, which divert a fine thesis, nor on the "free libido" in Beethoven, which seems to be an unnecessary complication of a plausible contention. The political and biographical excursions on the Wagnerian terrain are, however, absorbing additions to the bulging shelf. Item: was it the Freudian unconscious, or malicious forethought, that inspired the attribution of *Vorwärts* to "Kurt" Eisler?

Arthur V. Berger

## FESTIVAL AT HARTFORD

FROM the lively imagination of the *Friends and Enemies of Modern Music* in Hartford, Connecticut, has come forth the idea of an annual festival in which new and rarely played music may be performed with the concurrence of the other arts in appropriate settings. By combining the many forms of contemporary music with the arts of the dancer, the painter and the

stage-designer, it is the hope to build up a tradition which will give the Hartford event such renown as is enjoyed by the festivals in some of the smaller European cities. It is a praiseworthy ambition. The different sessions of the Festival, which were held in the Avery Memorial on February 9, 15, 16 and 17, afforded hearings of new works by American and European composers, repetitions of well-known and neglected works of both the distant and the recent past, and a program of films dating from 1902 to 1924. In the management of the Festival there was the same cooperation of the advance guard forces in the fields of the arts of decoration and the ballet which marked the 1934 Hartford production of the *Four Saints in Three Acts*.

The program of the concert on Sunday afternoon, February 9, was entitled "Music of Today from the Connecticut Valley." Of the two songs by Sessions, *On the Beach at Fontana* and *Rinaldo's Song*, the second, written for the performance of Andreyev's *Black Maskers* at Smith College in 1923, is more important. The Festival prize, offered by Mrs. Morris Joseloff, was awarded by the judges, Harold Berkeley, Aaron Copland and Colin McPhee, to three songs by Ross Lee Finney. Though slightly lacking in vocal continuity, they reflected sensitively the moods of the poems by Archibald McLeish to which they were set. The orchestral works on the program were played inadequately by the Hartford Festival Orchestra. Frederick Jacobi conducted his own *Cello Concerto*, a work of much lyrical feeling. In this composition as in Werner Josten's *Concerto No. 2* for strings and piano, there is a sense of genuine beauty that is conspicuously lacking in much music to today that feeds solely on its own ultra-modernistic pretensions. The incidental music from *Hamlet* by Ruth White Smallens for a group of cellos and wind instruments, conducted by Alexander Smallens, though rhythmically monotonous, showed imaginative sense in the handling of the instrumentation.

The films at the Sunday evening session of the Festival, (supplied by the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art) included George Meliès' *A Trip to the Moon*, *A Fool There Was*, with none less than Theda Bara, Sarah Bernhardt in *Queen Elizabeth* and René Clair's *Entr'acte* with music by Erik Satie. In spite of the fact that some of the photography and acting in these

silent movies seems laughably amateurish, it is a sad commentary on the gargantuan movie production of today that more has not been done with the artistic possibilities suggested by such films as *A Trip to the Moon* and *Entr'acte*. In the latter the change from slow to swift motion showed the field of pictorial acceleration, and the simultaneous presentation of pictures moving from different directions suggested an analogy with polyharmony.

The climax of the Festival was reached the following week-end in the performance of Stravinsky's *Les Noces* without ballet under the direction of Alexander Smallens. In comparison with the sophisticated style of *Perséphone* and the hybrid neo-classicism of the other later works of Stravinsky, a performance of *Les Noces* gives one the impression of a revival of a music that already may be dated in style but actually is more vigorously alive than most music of today. In many of the later works, such as the *Octet*, the *Capriccio* or the *Duo concertant*, we may find music in which the material is as completely integrated but hardly anywhere, except possibly in *Oedipus Rex*, music which has as much vitality. It at least hints at the possibility that Stravinsky's genius found its most natural expression in a style suggested by literary and dramatic rather than abstract ideas. In *Les Noces* the short melodic motives of the "lamentation" give him just the kind of musical material with which he seems to work most successfully. Using the same kind of short phrases for the singing parts as in *Renard*, he combines them with extraordinary sureness and sets them against the more dissonant background of the four pianos and the percussion instruments.

On the same program were performances of a Mozart *Serenata* danced by Felia Doubrowska with a *corps de ballet* from the School of American Ballet and Satie's *Socrate*. The ballet lacked finish and the Satie work, in spite of its real originality and the presence of Eva Gauthier as one of the performers, suffered from a poor orchestral accompaniment. The mobile setting for *Socrate* was an interesting experiment which left one wondering whether the presentation of geometrical designs as a background for music added to or detracted from one's enjoyment.

The final program of chamber music, carried out against an elaborate and well designed baroque setting, combined both

ancient and modern music. The performances of the modern works by Virgil Thomson, Jere Abbott, Henri Sauguet, Paul Bowles and Henri Cliquet-Pleyel can best be justified on the principle that the more the performances of new music the better, but they offered nothing of distinction. The quality of performance in this program was very erratic. Virgil Thomson, as master of ceremonies, in his informal remarks to the audience gave the occasion an intimate atmosphere that added to the enjoyment of the evening. One came away with the feeling that the idea behind this First Hartford Festival has the possibility of growth towards much greater achievement.

*Arthur W. Locke*

### NEW WINTER DANCES

MARTHA GRAHAM, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, Harald Kreutzberg, Tina Flade, and the Jooss Ballet have filled the dance calendar since the New Year.

Tina Flade has advanced remarkably in a short time. Her style is considerably simpler than when she was first seen in America, and she relies far less on decoration for its own sake than formerly. Her choreography is greatly clarified and it is safe to predict that she will mature into one of our most interesting dancers.

So much cannot, unfortunately, be said of Kreutzberg who deteriorates from year to year. He dances as well as he ever did, but the substance of his composition is childish. As a matter of fact the average weekly show on the stage of Radio City Music Hall is far more progressive and interesting than any single composition of Kreutzberg's.

Of the Jooss Ballet it can be said that the style is neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. The new works are too trivial and uninteresting. If the productions were not clothed in so much pretense we might be less offended. Jooss' *Green Table* was a real high point. The new *Mirror* and *Johann Strauss, Tonight!* are petty, the symbolism of the former thick and tawdry.

Charles Weidman's *Atavisms* is among his best works. *Lynch Town* is strong and to the point, *Bargain Counter* is genuinely amusing and *Stock Exchange* will, if pruned, complete a very