

not without its comic aspects. It is characteristic that there are missing, on the one hand, Walter Braunfels, one of the few real German opera composers, who has written at least two grand operas since 1933, one to a text by Claudel, the second to a text by Grillparzer; and, on the other hand, Franz Schreker. Nothing better typifies the change in the concepts "new music" and "modern music." A dictionary is sometimes forgetful, sometimes too pedantic, it is necessarily unjust. Sometimes, it is entirely too objective. Mr. Colles devotes special attention to an opera, *Friedemann Bach*, by Paul Gräner and says: "The score shows it to be a work which might at some time find a welcome in such a Bach-lov-

ing country as this." That is too enthusiastic. I hope the time will never come, not because Paul Gräner is a Nazi, but because, as I can assure Mr. Colles, *Friedemann Bach* is nothing more than, to use studio language, terrible "*kitsch*."

Though it is a dictionary, this is a lively book. It is full of information, which extends, for instance, both to broadcasting and twelve-note music. But it also reflects the living spirit of the years it deals with. Because of this information, and because of this spirit, later generations will reach for this manual as we reach today for old J. J. Walther, for Rousseau, or for the two dictionaries of Gerber.

*Alfred Einstein*

## MUSIC FOR DANCING

**V**ERNA ARVEY has done a prodigious job of compiling facts and opinions to make up her book *Choreographic Music* (E. P. Dutton, 1941). The result is a definite contribution to literature on the dance and especially on the influence of the dance upon music. Her thesis is that the two have been interrelated through the ages; composers, whether for financial or esthetic purposes, have always written music specifically for the dance. The story begins with the primitive and goes on to today. There are chapters on folk-dance; on early-Russian, French and Italian ballet, on ballet-in-opera. The steady evolution of musical forms (symphony, sonata) is traced in relation to the dances of Lully, Rameau, Mozart and other composers. Included also are pieces on jazz influence and on modern French and American

composers who have written for the dance.

The most elaborate example of a composer working to order, is the assignment Petipa gave Tchaikowsky for the *Nutcracker* Ballet. Here it is, item by item.

1. Soft music . . . sixty-four bars.
2. The tree is lit up . . . Sparkling music; eight bars
3. Enter the children . . . Animated and joyous music; twenty-four bars.
4. A moment of surprise and admiration; a few bars of tremolo.
5. A march; sixty-four bars.
6. Entrée des Incroyables: sixteen bars, rococo (tempo minuet).
7. Galop.
8. Enter Drosselmeyer. Awe-inspiring but comic music. A broad movement; sixteen to twenty-four

bars. The music gradually changes character; twenty-four bars. It becomes less serious, lighter, and finally gay in tone. Grave music for eight bars, then pause. Repeat the eight bars – pause. Four bars which express astonishment.

9. Eight bars in Mazurka rhythm. Eight more. Sixteen still in Mazurka rhythm.
10. A piquant, spicy valse, strongly rhythmic; forty-eight bars.

The contemporary views of composers and dancers make up one of the most provocative sections of this book. But one important problem isn't sufficiently clarified, namely the historical development of the modern dance and the originally subservient role of music written for it, when it was considered no more important than a piece of décor. The modern dance was such a complete departure from its predecessors that its music naturally followed suit. As to the question of whether this music can stand on its own, why not ask first what difference that makes? The important fact about any collaboration is the finished product, the spectacle, the performance. A self-critical composer will know at once whether his music should be heard independently. If he wants, he can re-work and expand his material beyond the limitations which the dance has im-

posed upon it. This is true also of film music, as Copland demonstrated with the suite he shaped from the score of *Our Town*, or as Eisler did with the bicycle scene from *Kuhle Wampe*.

Of course it is trying to write two bars of 4/4 and then six of 11/16, and so on. Yet problems like these are interesting to solve and often yield good results. The experience of working with the dance has given many a composer facility and a rhythmic fluency – Riegger, Creston, Lloyd. And, too, certain dancers with a fine musical sense and feeling for form often help him simplify the task.

Miss Arvey has not covered the most recent years, which have brought dramatic and theatrical emphasis to the modern dance. This newer trend will undoubtedly lead dance music away from the abstract, the diffuse, the non-descriptive.

The book is not exactly easy reading. Too much is crammed into each paragraph; the material as a whole is not well integrated, and adequate authentication of statements is lacking. There are some factual errors too; for instance the *Ballet Comique de la Reine Louise*, and *Circe* are listed as having both been produced in a certain year; actually the two ballets are one and the same. Despite these minor faults, the book should prove of great value to students who are devotees of the dance and music.

*Alex North*