

treats, muttering perplexedly "Il santo? Il santo?" This scene, in fact the whole work, reestablishes our faith that historic opera in spite of its present senile conventionality, is not yet dead. Perhaps, after all, historic portraiture is destined to be the same vital force in opera as it is today in belles lettres.

One might have expected from Kaminski magnificent and intricate polyphonic writing, but the contrapuntal and rhythmic difficulties surpass the so-called "worst" scores known, such as *Les Noces* or Bartok's *Dorfscenen*. Nothing could be a greater tribute to Fritz Busch's superb musicianship and mastery and the perfection of his Dresden ensemble, than his triumph over the difficulties of *Jürg Jenatch*, his performance with its clarity and verve, its driving unity and its finely articulated detail.

*Lazare Saminsky*

## FLY-WHEEL OPERA

THE play, the novel, the symphony have made a god of the machine—why not opera?

*Maschinist Hopkins*, the lyric-drama by Max Brand which first was revealed last July at Duisburg, in the Rhineland, where it was one of the two chief successes of the fifty-ninth Tonkünstlerfest des Allgemeinen Deutschen Musikvereins, and which more recently has been mounted in Dresden and is scheduled for Berlin this winter, strives to apotheosize the flywheel.

It courts savagery and relentless brutality. To some small extent it humanizes the machine, but to a larger extent it mechanizes man. However, it is not a score for mechanical instruments. A mechanical piano, purposely out of tune, contributes to the atmosphere of a low-life dive, otherwise Bony's Bar, which, at Duisburg, was painted in stripes suggestive of the American flag, this opera being one more example of the Germanic obsession just now for things American. Otherwise the musical mechanics of *Maschinist Hopkins* are those of orchestral imitation, and they are limited to two scenes in a great machine hall, where human kind are put in their places as pigmy serfs of the levers, cogs, belts, pistons and wheels they operate.

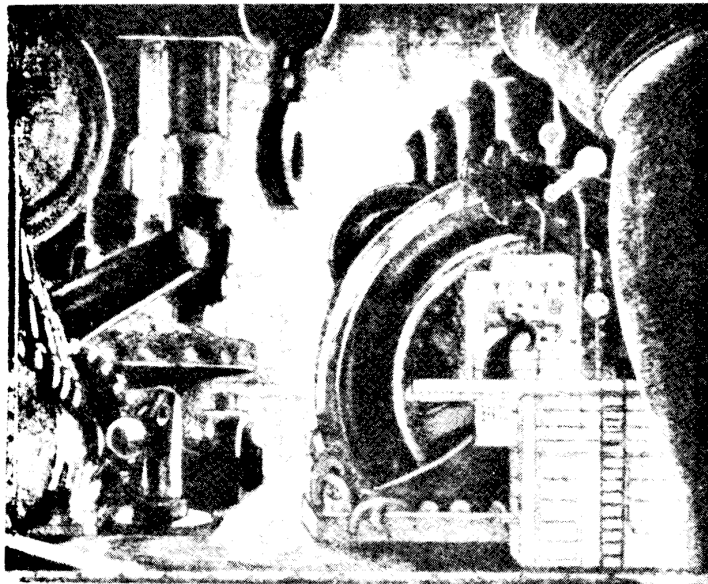
The story is primarily sentimental and melodramatic. Once it leaves the machine hall the composer is forced to resort to a variety of styles, from jazz that is appreciably nearer the American commodity than the ersatz blues of Krenek's keyhole *Jonny*, to nocturnal love music that is Tristanesque and anything but machine-like in its suggestion. Certainly there is plenty of change in shifting from slum to machine hall, from machine hall to the office of an industrial magnate, from that office to a garden rendezvous, a night club on the top of a skyscraper, a backstage view of a theater, a dressing room, and finally again the slum and the machine hall.

An opera of the world, of the here and now, like *Jonny Spielt Auf*, but altogether serious rather than farcical, *Maschinist Hopkins* does not completely escape the atmosphere of the revue, and for this succession of everyday scenes, the jazz music and the jazz dancing, the modern dress and undress, all, indeed, that wears the label of the twentieth century is responsible.

But it has required the Teutonic imagination to cover the tops of New York's skyscrapers with open-air night-clubs, looking out over the electric signs of Times Square! The idea seems not yet to have occurred to Texas Guinan, but it came not only to Brand but to the elderly Eugen d'Albert, whose *Schwarze Orchidée* is an American opera in the same sense as *Maschinist Hopkins*. D'Albert dallies with a social Raffles while industry is Brand's milieu and industry means the machine.

We find at the outset a young machinist (not Hopkins) making an assignation with the wife of his foreman. They meet in the great machine hall at night, where all is dark and silent, or would be if Brand had not found tongues for the machines that whisper in the dark, like the chorus in Schönberg's *Glückliche Hand*. Their eyes witness the killing of the foreman when he surprises the pair together and is pushed into the machinery set in motion by his wife. Not a comfortable death.

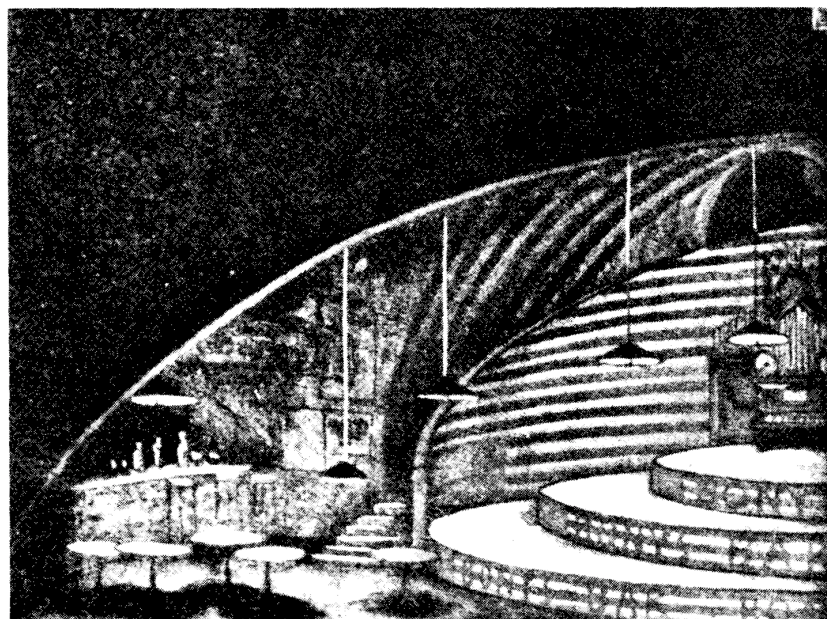
The guilty pair rise in the world, the man becomes a magnate while she takes her talents to the stage. Bill Hopkins comes upon the scene, a mechanic, a machine of a man. Through him the machines avenge the foreman's death. By an almost hypnotic hardness, he forces from the wife enough to ruin the man. She is



# THE MACHINES IN BRAND'S OPERA

*Design by Johannes Schröder*

These were the principal actors in MASCHINIST HOPKINS, whose premiere took place in Duisberg last mid-summer.



## BONY'S BAR

*Johannes Schröder*

A Scene from MASCHINIST HOPKINS:  
the night-club on the sky-scraper roof.

dragged back to the gutter, and is eventually strangled by her paramour who is drawn irresistibly to the spot where the foreman was mangled. With Hopkins at the switches, the machines whirl on.

The softer spots of this lurid melodrama, those in which the love element is developed, disclose no very superior inspiration in Brand. Nor are his night-life pictures indicative of any marked individual ability to say what other men already have said. But his musical dialogue has a firm, emphatic line, and his drama progresses easily and naturally, so far as the conversational necessities are involved.

His real achievements in this work are the two industrial scenes whose vitality have a machine-like throb, and the creation, in Hopkins, of a character who is himself an avenging machine. The great clanking upbuildings of sound at the finale, when the huge industrial plant is in full operation, with Hopkins in control, and a multitude of puny workers going through their machine-like routine, have their power in the theater, and transcend in their weight and clangor the mechanistic music that has had its place in ballet and orchestral programs. Whether it will have any interest for audiences, once the machine fetish has run its course, one who has harkened to the opera at Duisburg is inclined seriously to doubt.

*Oscar Thompson*

## DE FALLA IN REVIEW

THE eternal problem of discussing an art in other terms than its own has been met by Mr. J. B. Trend with unusual clearness, precision and lack of sentimentality in his book on Manuel de Falla, just published by Alfred A. Knopf. The subject is one which might easily have slipped into the florid phraseology of another school.

Instead of luring us with purple wiles among the intricacies of the gypsy cave and the Moslem mosque where so much Spanish music found its origin, Mr. Trend leads us with dispassionate clarity through the Iberian centuries, accenting here, depreciating there, but never imperiling his or our sense of direction or proportion.