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CURRENT CHRONICLE

UNITED STATES

New York

Percussion music, to many musicians and laymen alike, suggests something loud and noisy, with determined thumps in so-called "primitive" rhythms on those instruments of indefinite pitch that decorate our bands and orchestras: drums, tom-toms, cymbals, clap-sticks, etc. This is not an inviting kind of music to most people; they would prefer to have percussion instruments keep their customary places in the background, with occasional punctuation, in works whose primary interest lies in pitch relationships and in rhythms that rely only in part on percussion for their delineation.

The period since the twenties in contemporary music has not been a strongly experimental one, but nonetheless there have been several developments: the area in which there has been most exploration and expansion is that of percussion music.

In 1913 Luigi Rossolo decided that "futurist" music should eliminate musical tone and deal with regulated noises only. This seems to have been an abstract idea, and it cannot be said to have produced any classical gems of noise. Yet *Ionization*, by Edgard Varèse, perhaps the most famous percussion piece of the first half of this century, sprang from the composer's association with futurist esthetics. My own experiments with percussion music and organized noises, between 1923 and 1936, derived chiefly from my interest in the elaborate palette of sounds and their highly organized treatment in the Orient, and from dancers' request for percussion accompaniment. My pieces were sometimes tonal, sometimes not.

"Pure" percussion music abjures tones of definite pitch; it deals in shades of refinement of noise. John Cage and Lou Harrison both became known for their pure percussion music, and as leaders of percussion orchestras. They both started from the less abstract field

of music for the modern dance, and their music of the thirties typically employed several kinds of instruments that were used in sets of five or more sizes. Although these sets were not tuned to exact pitches, the general pitch level within a certain range became important, in contrast to Varèse, who was more interested in pure noise-makers: chains rattled in tubs, sirens, and so on. While Varèse's *Ionization* is for the most part loud, John Cage's excursion into "prepared piano" music established several degrees of *pianissimo*.

The Junior Council of the Museum of Modern Art recently presented a concert of music for percussion, composed between 1926 (Thomson) and 1952 (Surinach). Examples of music by purists Varèse, Cage, and Harrison were not included; similarly no attempt was made to show the extraordinary advances in handling percussion that have been heard in the improvisations of the great jazz drummers—advances that have made their way into certain concert music too. The schismatics who produced the Museum of Modern Art program were obviously interested in presenting a third approach, showing that the use of some percussion in a small melodic chamber group may have a place, and that not all percussion instruments need be treated as lacking in definite pitch. The program was intended to round out the picture presented by the recently more frequent concerts of the other "schools."

At the Museum concert the piano, which is not always allowed its due as a percussion instrument (since its "singing tone" is so carefully cultivated), was treated plainly as a Hammerklavier. Xylophones were prominent, and timpani were used more than less definitely pitched drums.

As might be anticipated, one of the earlier works, William Russell's *March Suite* (1937), was closer than most to the purist school. The five marches make carefully controlled use of many kinds of noises, each different, each extremely effective. There are also chords on the piano in which the pitches may be detected. Yet their value is primarily percussive, not harmonic or melodic, so this work managed to qualify on a program in which all percussion pieces must be sullied by definite pitch at some point.

The earliest work presented was Virgil Thomson's *Five Phrases from Song of Solomon* (1926). A single vocal line throbs expressively in Near Eastern fashion over a single percussion instrument that gives the simple fundamental beat. The voice supplies the pitch, while a tom-tom or sometimes a cymbal sounds the rhythm gently.

The most recent work was *Ritmo Hondo* (1952) by the Spaniard Carlos Surinach. It uses modern counterpoint, between clarinet and trumpet, xylophone and timpani. There is special emphasis on the ease with which percussion enters into canonic forms, without abandoning its conventional assignment to keep the rhythm incisive.

P. Glanville-Hicks's Sonata for Piano and Percussion (1951) did not differentiate between the piano and a percussion section, as the title might suggest, but rather turned out to be more or less a duet between piano and xylophone, with kettle drums and some non-tonal percussion in the background. Here one of the interesting things is the influence of the "purists" on the writing for the piano and xylophone, in a work conceived as chamber music. The pitches of these instruments are handled non-sequentially, so that their ability to produce a variety of isolated sounds becomes significant. They are not used to make melodies or chord successions. The third movement shows the influence of Oriental percussion practices, especially the Indonesian gamelan. This sonata was the most varied of the program's works.

Elliott Carter, in his Suite for Timpani (1950), undertook to find out whether interest could be sustained for 9 minutes 50 seconds in a work for one player on the regular orchestral kettle drums, and the consensus among the hearers was that it could not — this in spite of the fact that Carter, one of the leaders in modern American composition, wrote very well indeed for his instruments.

Paul Bowles's *Music for a Farce* was written in 1938; it is a take-off on the old vaudeville and music-hall orchestras that often consisted of a handful of players, chief among whom was the percussionist. This is satire, and it succeeds in being amusing. The percussion does not contribute an element of its own to the music; it rather confirms and exaggerates the rhythm of the trumpet, clarinet, and piano trio to underline the joke.

The program as a whole successfully made the point that the past 25 years have seen the use of an increased palette of percussion sounds, some of them really subtly controlled, and that not all of these developments belong among "pure" percussion works. There has been an improvement in the use of percussion in orchestral writing, and in combination with small groups, that tends to pass unnoticed. The pieces of Glanville-Hicks and Surinach, for example, show an advanced kind of integration of percussion into chamber groups, unheard of before the experiments of the purists. This is not to say that percussion

instruments manage to hold their own against melodic instruments in interest or variety as yet, but the current is obviously flowing strongly in that direction.

One aspect of the matter is at present crippling, and it urgently needs solving if the full range of percussion elements is to take a considered place in cultivated music. This is the question of notation. Only can write down fairly accurately the beats of the orchestral drums and the familiar rolls on the snare drums, the customary crack of the cymbals, and so on. But in direct proportion to the composer's desire for a wide variety of new sounds, the ability to notate them accurately diminishes. Many of the newer sounds are made on unconventional instruments: rice bowls of the composer's own selection, brake drums, metal utensils, sheets of brass and tin, etc. Because a precise notation has yet to be invented, the composer must describe the instrument and its technical performance in great detail, and even so, different performances of a given work will differ greatly. Some composers (Colin McPhee, Percy Grainger, Virgil Thomson come to mind) own the special gongs or drums for which they have written, and lend them for performance, with directions as to where and how hard and with what to strike.

In the many instances where a composer wants a familiar instrument to be sounded in new ways, he invents his own notation. This has the double disadvantage of being imprecise except to its inventor, and of requiring bulky explanations still because its symbols are not universally understood and accepted. There is now great need for agreement on concepts of tone quality so that a general notation may be possible.

What has been developed by the experiments is a scale of timbre values. Expansion of present percussion practices in Western art music can only come about by bringing in these many new timbres; the percussive use of the piano and the xylophone necessarily remains tonal because almost no variety of tone quality is possible. Only among the non-tonal or "pure" percussive sounds is there enough variety to challenge comparison with the world of pitch-tones, and much greater precision in classification and use of the former will have to be achieved before the challenge is a very serious one.

Notation of the conventional pitch instruments was made possible by general agreement on organization of pitch and rhythm and on the symbols for the resulting patterns, and by reasonable similarity in performers' training and experience. Some such path must ultimately

be followed in every field of experiment, it seems to me, if the experimentalists' compositions are not to remain a personal secret.

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People who work experimentally with new sounds seem to have trouble distinguishing between the materials of musical composition and the compositions themselves. They are apt to rush their new sounds prematurely into pieces that are hardly creative work in the generally accepted sense, and that are easily identified as vehicles for the new sounds rather than works in which these sounds form an integrated part. Men like Alois Hába, Julian Carrillo, and Harry Partch, for example, have all made interesting experiments in the microtonal field, without making microtones an indispensable part of their music. Proof of microtones' usefulness is still best supplied by certain Oriental music.

It is therefore refreshing when a composer offers his experiments frankly by that name, without confusion. Vladimir Ussachevsky did just this most disarmingly at a recent Composers' Forum, presenting a series of electronic sounds that depend on tape recording apparatus, with which he has recently been experimenting. These were not compositions, and no attempt was made to call them so. But the sounds are certainly a possible resource for composers. Ussachevsky describes his work as follows:

In magnetic tape we have, for the first time, I believe, the multiple means of modifying musical sounds after they have been recorded, or while they are being recorded. This is possible because of the flexibility with which tape can be cut up, spliced in any order, reversed for playing backward, speeded up, or slowed down or erased at any point, and so on.

Modification of sound during or after recording is now actively experimented with by several groups of composers in collaboration with electronic engineers. In another related but still distinct category may be placed the extensive experiments with entirely new types of sound, purely electronic in origin, as well as the introduction of non-musical sounds (often simply noises) into the fabric of a sound composition (i.e. the *Musique Concrète* group in France; John Cage's experiments as yet unheard here).

My own experiments up to this time have been restricted to the use of sounds well below and well above the conventional piano range; to modification of the tone quality of the sounds within conventional range; and to electronic repetition of any such sounds by means of a specially designed gadget. The sounds produced by the latter create a peculiarly dimensional impression, and permit many individual variations in dynamic level, in notes sounding simultaneously. A conversation among several people, mixed with music, has also been subjected to the

gadget, with effects sometimes simply amusing, sometimes evoking a more profound nostalgia or hypnotic feeling.

One might add that Ussachevsky's electronic repetitions are controlled, and vary from three or four to an indefinite number in the space of a quarter note at about *tempo allegro*. The repetitions overlap. One would not expect such a series of mechanical repetitions to be related to human experience, yet to nearly everyone the effect seems to suggest some half-forgotten, elusive experience. Several people have testified independently that the sounds correspond to what is heard at one level of consciousness during the process of going under an anesthetic; others recall having heard such automatic sounds in dreams.

Ussachevsky's process consisted, among other things, of recording tones above and below the piano range (but within pipe-organ range), recorded with the piano, and then re-recorded faster or slower. The percussive quality of the piano produced sharply defined, rapid groups of tones quite unlike those of the organ in the same register. An A two octaves below the lowest A on the piano was produced by playing a recording of the lowest A at one-fourth the speed. The fundamental pitch was inaudible, but its powerful low overtones produced an otherwise unheard-of timbre.

Ussachevsky is now in the process of incorporating some of these sounds into a composition. The pitfalls are many: we wish him well!

HENRY COWELL

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AUSTRIA

The 1951 I.S.C.M. Festival was held at Frankfort-on-the-Main, Germany, the 1952 Festival at Salzburg, Austria. Both events are worthy of being regarded as symbols of the return of the two countries to the international musical scene. The Salzburg Festival was at the same time the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the I.S.C.M., which was established after the first International Festival of modern music at Salzburg on August 11, 1922, as the project of Austrian musicians.

There were some changes in the procedures usually followed in festivals of the I.S.C.M. According to an experiment suggested by the

delegates at Frankfort last year, every active National Section was represented in the programs by at least one work, in order to give a comprehensive picture of what is being produced in the musical world. The result was a considerable increase in the works performed in the concerts. Within ten days we heard eleven concerts and a Mass, in all 55 works of 52 composers from 24 nations of five continents. (The choruses by seven contemporary composers performed after the opening ceremonies by the Wiener Akademie-Kammerchor are not included in this enumeration.)

If we consider the works as a picture of the world situation of modern music we may summarize our impressions in four points of view:

- 1) The so-called neo-Classical style is the predominant feature;
- 2) Dodecaphonism is winning more and more adherents in nearly all countries;
- 3) The influence of folklore on instrumental music has perhaps not yet diminished;
- 4) Form is the main problem of contemporary music.

1) Neo-Classicism, beginning in 1923/24 with the *retour à Bach* simultaneously in works of Stravinsky and Hindemith, has now involved all eras of music history. From Bach as the musical and historical center, contemporary composers are looking backward to the music of the Middle Ages and Renaissance as well as forward to the Romantic and post-Romantic eras and to Impressionism. A new and not even surprising point of view of some composers extends to the Expressionism of the years shortly before and after the first World War and results in what may be termed neo-Expressionism.

The Sixth Symphony by the Swiss Conrad Beck (b. 1901) has Hindemithian traits in the first movement, but is more lyrical; the second and third movements recall the melodic and dramatic line of Tchaikovsky. Beck's manner of building up the tune, of repeating it in connection with the change of instrumental colors, is Romantic throughout. The Danish composer Knudaage Riisager (b. 1897) is a pupil of Albert Roussel. His *Sinfonia serena* for strings and kettle-drums has no nationalistic features and is written in a partly linear Baroque and a partly neo-Classical style with more or less personal and conventional feeling. The fifty-four-year-old Hungarian composer Tibor Harsányi has been living in Paris since 1923. His Symphony in C is a conglomeration of French 19th- and 20th-century styles and popular, not folkloristic, Hungarian tunes. The effective Three Pieces for Or-

chestra of the Belgian Marcel Quinet (b. 1915), professor in the conservatory of Brussels, are well orchestrated, but written in a vein of post-Romantic and Impressionistic eclecticism. Sincere in its emotions, but in no way original in its neo-Romantic mannerisms is the *Canto de Amor e Paz* for strings by the Brazilian Claudio Santoro (b. 1919), a pupil of H. J. Koellreutter and Nadia Boulanger. Written in the specific form of the Italian neo-Baroque are the *Canzoni per Orchestra* by Giorgio Federico Ghedini (b. 1892). The work of the well-known Italian composer makes free use of the historical type of the *canzoni* as a setting of numerous contrasting parts, full of dramatic vitality. No less historical is the Suite for two flutes and strings by the Austrian Georg Gruber (b. 1904 in Vienna), composer of sacred music. The clear and concise seven movements are rich in counterpoint and written in different church modes. The youngest form of neo-Classicism, neo-Expressionism, is at least the least academic. Neo-Expressionism is subjective reaction and commentary on today's world. It is interesting that all neo-Expressionistic works performed at the Salzburg Festival must be discussed in connection with the twelve-tone system. Not one of these symphonies and symphonic compositions was really convincing, either by its ideas, or by its expression and form.

Not very different was the impression made by the solo concertos with orchestra using standardized forms. Paul Csonka, born in Vienna in 1905 and living in Cuba since 1938, writes a Concertino for oboe, bassoon, and orchestra, a vivid and fresh *duo concertante* in the 18th-century style. The Second Piano Concerto, with strings, composed in 1944 by the Norwegian Claus Egge (b. 1910), who was a pupil of Fartein Valen and Walther Gmeindl (Berlin), consists only of seven academic variations and a fugue on a Norwegian folk tune. The Japanese Yoritsune Matsudeira (b. 1907) is more interesting. As a pupil of Alexander Tcherepnin he acquired a command of the European principles of variation. The idiom of his Theme and Variations for piano and orchestra will be discussed further below as a particular example of folklorism. The Concerto for Violin and small orchestra by the Hollander Marius Flothius (b. 1914), who is a self-taught musician but influenced by Willem Pijper, betrays much technical skill and is charming by reason of its combination of virtuosity with melody and the brevity of its three movements.

The tendencies of the neo-Classical chamber music scarcely differ from those of the orchestral works. The Sonata for clarinet and 'cello by the Englishwoman Phyllis Tate (b. 1911) is written with consider-

able skill for the two instruments and has its charm in the unproblematic flow. The Variations for piano solo by Alfonso Letelier (Chile, b. 1912) display the variation style of Brahms and Reger; they are boring in their neo-Romantic conservatism. The Sonata for trumpet and piano by Karl Otto Runolfsson (b. 1900, Iceland) may be mentioned only as a rare and praiseworthy example in the literature for trumpet. The famous French conductor Jean Martinon (b. 1910) wrote his String Quartet expertly in the spirit of his master Roussel, with less personal artistic imagination, but with mastery of the four instruments. The witty and rhythmic Music for Clarinet, Trumpet, and Viola of the thirty-four-year-old Austrian Karl Schiske was an unsuccessful experiment because the combination of the three instruments offended the ear. Bach influences are combined with personal feeling to form an interesting work in the Sonata for Violin Solo by Marcel Mihalovici, born in 1898 in Bucharest and living in Paris since 1919. The neo-Impressionistic Duo for Flute and Harp of the Hollander Lex van Delden (b. 1919) is really charming in its sounds and its poetry.

Sterility is the danger of all classicism. The Theme and Variations for two violins by Ronald Tremain (b. 1923 in New Zealand, a pupil of the Royal College of Music, London) and the String Trio in two movements (*Passacaglia* and *Fantasia sobre el coral "Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten"*) by the Argentinian Paul Graetzer (b. 1914) are not personal enough to be interesting. The Sextet for Winds by Nils Erik Ringbom (b. 1907, Finland) is conversational and conventional. Three piano pieces by Stefans Grové (b. 1922, South Africa) are written in a neo-Classical manner of the Stravinsky-Hindemith style. None of these works was first-class.

As an impressive example of contemporary ecclesiastical *Gebrauchsmusik* the Mass in C (1936) by Joseph Messner (b. 1893) must be mentioned. It is a solemn, dignified, and effective composition for mixed voices, brass, and kettle-drums, recalling Bruckner, and written as a result of the special acoustical properties of the Salzburg cathedral, where it was performed.

It is not astonishing that contemporary music for organ is written for the most part in the neo-Baroque style. Modern music for organ, excellently performed by Robert Schollum, was represented in works of Olivier Messiaen (b. 1908, France), Robert Schollum (b. 1913, Austria), and Paul Amadeus Pisk (b. 1893 in Austria, living in the United States since 1937) and Siegfried Reda (b. 1916, Germany).

Schollum's Second Sonata is in its combination of linearity, Romantic expressiveness, and dodecaphony a mixture of styles. Pisk and Reda are unoriginal and purely academic. Messiaen is interesting and partly convincing for the abundance of bold sounds and colors, phantasy and mysticism.

2) It was the surprising result of the Salzburg Festival that the general advance of the twelve-tone system was apparent. Works of at least fifteen composers of the middle and young generation who occupy themselves with this technique were heard. The most exciting impulses of the festival arose from some of these compositions. The impressions may be summarized as follows: dodecaphonism is merely a technique admitting completely different possibilities of expression and mood; there are radicals, continuing the extreme style of Anton von Webern, moderates who are seeking to combine atonality with tonality, and finally composers incorporating it in a freely-conceived structure and idiom.

The three youngest were the most radical and the most orthodox. Henri Pousseur (b. 1929, Belgium), in his Three Sacred Songs for soprano and string trio follows Anton von Webern too strictly and writes abstract music of little personal distinction, but showing competence as well as promise. The Frenchman Pierre Boulez, born 1925, Messiaen's pupil, known as a wild but consistent young man through the Parisian and Donaueschingen scandals, was represented by *Le soleil des eaux*, two poems by René Chor for soprano, tenor, bass, and orchestra. The work may perhaps be characterized as expressing something beyond the abstract; the orchestral colors and sounds are bright, glittering, and buoyant in a new way that owes nothing to French Impressionism. Another radical is Roman Vlad, born 1919 in Rumania and living in Italy since 1938. His *Tre invocazioni* for voice and piano with Latin words are confessions of an extreme ecstatic Expressionism.

Neo-Expressionism in a typically German sense is represented by Bernd Aloys Zimmerman (b. 1918). His Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, written in 1950, is full of turmoil and dramatic tension, sincere in its feeling, a picture of the apocalyptic character of our time. The *Hymnes à la beauté* for soprano, alto, choir, and orchestra by the Swede Göte Carlid (b. 1920) are translations of the verses of Baudelaire into the abstract musical language of his own individuality. The Viennese Hanns Jelinek (b. 1901) belongs to the Schoenberg school in the orthodox sense. His artistic means and his musical expression are dependent on the post-Romantic style of Mahler, Schoenberg, and

Alban Berg. He develops in his Fantasy for piano, clarinet, and orchestra a strong dramatic feeling with vigorous accents and a subtle ear for sounds. The Englishman Humphrey Searle (b. 1915) attains in his Poem for twenty-two strings a fine and sensitive music recalling the atmosphere of Impressionistic models. Personal feeling recedes before a poetic idea. In the Sonata for piano of the talented Claus Adam (b. 1917, son of Austrian parents, living in America since 1931) personal feeling seems to be outdone by constructivism. The self-willed musical language of the Swiss Edward Staempfli's (b. 1908) Variations for wind instruments, formed by a free use of the twelve-tone technique, showed an original mind at work. Don Banks, born in Australia in 1924, living in England since 1950 as a pupil of Mátyás Seiber, shows some influences of Hindemith and Bartók in spite of dodecaphonism. A mature work in technique, form, and expression is the *Chorfantasie nach einem Fragment von Hölderlin* by the German Winifred Zillig (b. 1905, pupil of Schoenberg), written in strict observance of twelve-tone principles and steeped in strong emotion that at times rises to hymnic exaltation.

Finally there were some compromises between atonality and tonality, attempts to write alternately in both styles. Whether there really is a chance of a new way here will be seen only in the future. The three *Mythologischen Figurinen* for orchestra by the German Rudolph Wagner-Régeny (b. 1903) are only light music employing some modern techniques; the Piano Concerto of the Austrian Cesar Bresgen (b. 1918) mixes folklorism with atonal portions; the Italian Mario Peragallo (b. 1910) writes a piano concerto recalling Liszt in the conglomeration of lyricism, dramatic power, and virtuosity.

3) There are chiefly two possibilities of using folk tunes in modern music: either as quotation or as raw material. According to a footnote in the program-book Joseph Tal (b. 1910 in Germany, living in Israel since 1934, director of the Israel Conservatory of Music) writes in a style based freely on European 20th-century music and Jewish folk music. His Sonata for violin and piano, consisting of three movements each corresponding to one of the three parts of the sonata form, is predominantly lyrical.¹ Harsányi's use of popular Hungarian tunes (Symphony in C) results in music that is often vulgar. The Sonata for violin and organ by Josip Slavenski (Jugoslavia, b. 1896), written in 1919, is an odd combination of folklorism and sophistication. Some

¹ See p.614f.

parts consist of melodic folk tunes, others of effects based on chords of the overtones as long pedal-points. No less odd, but fresh in its rhythmic vividness is the piano concerto by Cesar Bresgen mentioned above. The *Simfonična antiteza* by Matija Bravničar (b. 1897, Jugoslavia) uses melodic folkloristic material from Jugoslavia in a potpourri with changing instrumental colors often recalling Tchaikovsky. The most talented attempt, convincing for its technical skill and exotic charm, was the Theme and Variations for piano and orchestra by the Japanese Yoritsune Matsudeira. The harmony and orchestration of the theme, written in imitation of Japanese folklore, suggest the original sound; the variations are different Western types, e.g. a song without words, a boogie-woogie, and a toccata.

4) Today all theoretical discussions on modern music culminate in the antithesis of tonality and atonality. That is truly strange, since the specific problems of present-day music lie in the search for new musical forms. We do not yet have new forms as definite types comparable to the concerto of the Baroque era or the sonata of the Classical and Romantic periods. The striving after new and valid forms seems to have been the central problem of contemporary music since the twenties. A cross-section of the works in the I.S.C.M. Festival confirmed this situation, typical of all periods of transition in music history.

KARL H. WÖRNER

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GERMANY

Whatever else the music of Wolfgang Fortner may or may not be, it is highly competent. It is more than that: it is extremely skilful. Fortner knows his craft in all its phases. He has a thorough mastery of counterpoint, rhythmical device, techniques of variation and development, and orchestration. In so far, he is a musician's musician. In the past he has on occasion been accused of being cold and cerebral, of having too little to say and too much to say it with, of having more skill than inspiration. Such criticism may have been justified. But as regards his new 'Cello Concerto, it most certainly would not be. The Concerto speaks not only with address but with emotion; it speaks not only to the intellect but to the heart; it is music not only for the

connoisseur but for the public. Testimony to this fact was amply provided at the recent world première in one of the "Musica Viva" concerts in Munich, where a capacity audience gave the new Concerto and its composer an ovation.

Fortner is a twelve-tone composer, but not an aggressive or experimental one. Compared with the music of some of his confederates, such as Pierre Boulez, or with that of Webern or even with some works of Schoenberg, his music sounds conservative. Indeed, if one did not know that Fortner writes in the twelve-tone technique, one might not suspect it from the sound of the music alone. The importance of the technique in the formal structure is of course another matter; here it is indispensable. In the 'Cello Concerto, in any case, the fact that the work is written in the twelve-tone technique is a matter of secondary importance. Of primary importance is the strong feeling of conviction and sincerity the Concerto conveys. It is honest as well as expert music, and it is "clever" only in the best sense of the word. Part of its cleverness lies in the orchestration, which is nothing short of masterly. Fortner not only writes well for the orchestra, with a complete knowledge of the possibilities of each instrument and of orchestral color, he also writes with great imagination, finding new sounds and creating an orchestral palette of wide range and variety.

Yet the total impression — and this impression is stronger in the 'Cello Concerto than in any other of Fortner's works known to this writer — is that Fortner is in the tradition of German symphonic music from Bach through Brahms and Mahler to Hindemith and beyond. (It is not suggested that Fortner and Hindemith are similar in their styles; they are distinctly dissimilar.) The word neo-Classical has sometimes been applied to contemporary music in which formal elements play an equal role with freer, more outspokenly expressive procedures. The word has also been used to designate works in which actual devices, techniques, forms, and even melodic and harmonic characteristics of Baroque and "Classical" music (music of the 18th century predominantly) are employed in a modern idiom. In the former sense one might be justified in speaking of the 'Cello Concerto as a neo-Classical work. The formal balance is neatly preserved and the balance of form and expression no less so. One aspect of the Concerto deserves special mention: the expressive nature of the melodic substance represents great progress over some of Fortner's earlier work. The melodic line maintains tension and gives direction to the music. Passages conceived primarily in terms of rhythm alternate with the melodic passages (often contrapuntal in nature

This soaring theme is then heard in the orchestra and later it is heard in its inversion, after which the "head" of the theme is subjected to independent development. The movement is episodic in character (a lively *poco scherzando* is interpolated) without detriment to the sense of flow and progression.

The second movement is in the nature of a slow scherzo, in which the orchestra carries the burden of the material. A sarcastic, tongue-in-cheek kind of melody, bordering at times on the banal and recalling similar passages in the works of Milhaud, is accompanied by decoration in the solo part. At measure 18 the solo 'cello has the following melody:

Ex. 3

Vc. solo
mf
etc.

The third movement is a series of free variations in which Fortner displays not only great technical ability but also a fine sense of proportion in his alternation of tempos and in his sensitive manipulation of textures. The movement begins *Andante* with a long-spun melody in the orchestra that is taken over by the solo 'cello. This is followed by a delicate passage of a "busy," scurrying nature. A fugato section, in which the inversion is heard together with the normal subject opens as follows:

Ex. 4

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Via.
Cb. 8va bassa
p

A well-constructed cadenza combines cantabile passages with a restrained virtuosity that does not appear as an end in itself but is structurally justified. An *ostinato* figure is then built up from *p* to *ff*, and a broad passage brings the work to a close in an atmosphere of apotheosis.

EVERETT HELM

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ISRAEL

Four outstanding orchestral works by Israeli composers — written in the past two years and first performed this spring and summer — show clearly to what a great extent the country's prominent musicians are preoccupied with the problem of expressing in music their own feeling for the new homeland, their spiritual absorption, and their impressions of its landscape and atmosphere. While in the past decade most composers chose popular dance rhythms or other folkloristic elements with which to imbue their music with some national color, all of the new works tend to the style recently described here as "Eastern-Mediterranean"; melodic invention, rhythmic organization, and instrumental coloring take their inspiration from the traditional Oriental style. Dance forms still have a prominent place in this music, but they appear in a more stylized guise, rather spiritualized. The attitude of these composers is not a narrow nationalistic one; they have come to live in and get assimilated to an atmosphere completely different from all they knew formerly, and the resultant impact of this "new world" had before long to find an artistic outlet in their musical work. It is interesting to note that this trend can now be found in the works of composers from different countries of origin and of varied musical education: the four works under review were composed by musicians from Eastern Europe and from Germany, two of them being in their forties and two in their fifties.

The titles of the works alone prove the tendencies outlined: Paul Ben-Haim calls his latest orchestral Suite *From Israel*; Karl Salomon's symphony is named *Nights of Canaan*; Menahem Avidom has written a *Mediterranean Sinfonietta*; and Aviassaf Barnea simply describes his work as *Israeli Suite*. Barnea and Avidom won the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's prize in a competition for a short orchestral work (when

pieces by Bernd Bergel and Haim Alexander were also recommended for performance); both were performed by the Orchestra in subscription concerts. Avidom's work was played in Paris, while Ben-Haim's Suite and Salomon's Symphony also had their world premières abroad, in Zürich and Stockholm respectively.

Ben-Haim's Suite *From Israel* (written in 1951) pursues — and attains — its aim in the most consistent way. While in some of the other works influences from the other end of the Mediterranean (Spain, France, Impressionist coloring) frequently gain an upper hand, there is stylistic unity and integrity of a high order in the music of Ben-Haim. His principal means of re-creating the Eastern-Mediterranean atmosphere are his melodic lines and instrumentation. Oriental melody, as is well known, is not based on a tempered scale, and the Oriental singer and instrumentalist have throughout the centuries preserved their virtuoso capacity for ever-changing, improvisatory, variation. Ben-Haim does not resort to micro-tones proper, wisely refraining from trying to give a Western composer's music an "authentic Oriental touch" (which would certainly lead to an impression of falsity); he rather creates the atmosphere of Oriental singing or playing by moving around certain important melodic notes and by embroidering his motifs melodically. A typical example of this can be found in his recently published Sonata in G for violin alone, which was played for the first time by Yehudi Menuhin (and edited by him for publication) this spring:¹

Ex. 1

(Molto Allegro)

arco
pizz. left hand
arco
pizz.
arco
pp
pp

In orchestration, the principal tendency is a frequent change of coloring, the avoidance of full and heavy tutti effects, and a rather unorthodox distribution of instruments. In addition to a "classical" orchestra Ben-Haim's Suite employs a great variety of percussion and, apart from a harp, a harpsichord. The harpsichord, especially in its juxtaposition to the harp and to the body of strings, adds — strangely enough — quite an exotic touch to the music, since it sounds in the orchestra rather like an Oriental *qanun*. The first composer to use the harpsichord

¹ The examples are printed by permission of Israeli Music Publications, Tel-Aviv, Israel; sole representatives for the Western Hemisphere, Leeds Music Corporation, New York.

in this way was Alexander Uria Boscovich in his orchestral *Semitic Suite*; in America, Alan Hovhaness has achieved a very similar effect in the combination of piano and strings in his striking Piano Concerto.

While Ben-Haim may be seen to have thrown overboard most of the European composer's post-Romantic and modernistic heritage — of which only the achievement of techniques and forms seems to remain — there is a much stronger echo of the European past in the music of Karl Salomon. His *Nights of Canaan*, scored for large orchestra, has a definite Romantic touch, though melodically and rhythmically the work falls into the "Eastern-Mediterranean" sphere as well. The most engaging, and most interesting, of the four movements is the second — a dance movement based on a striking folk tune. As in all of Salomon's compositions, a virtuoso art of melodic variation and a masterly command of orchestral writing are most impressive in this work, which is a noteworthy contribution to the still not too varied symphonic repertory of Israel. Of the four works reviewed here, this is the only full-length symphony, and it claims the listener's attention throughout the twenty-five minutes it takes to perform.

Aviassaf Barnea (whose original name was Bernstein) stems from the Eastern-European school and both the Russian tradition and the work of the Russian-Jewish national composers have left their mark on his music. It is only in his most recent works that Barnea has found new ways of expression and left behind the Eastern-European heritage, which in his music had particularly been echoed in heavy harmonization. Being a piano-pedagogue of repute himself, Barnea cultivates a field that has probably meant a turning-point in his musical development: he wrote piano pieces for his young pupils, looking for subjects and themes of interest for Israel's youngest generation. The result was a number of piano albums that contain many charming pieces, along with some still commonplace material, and laid the foundation for larger works in which a similar simplicity and straightforwardness of expression were attempted. Important in this direction are the various sets of Seven Preludes which Barnea has composed for different instruments: so far he has written such sets for violin and piano, for violoncello and piano, for piano alone, and for clarinet — the latter being the maturest, most attractive, and most original of the series; he is now at work on a series for brass instruments.

The *Israeli Suite* (the first performances of which were conducted by William Steinberg during his visit to Israel) is scored for large orchestra and consists of five movements: a Prelude in a quick pace and

gay moods; a pastoral movement styled *Landscape*, a Dance in 3/2 rhythm, Nocturne, and Finale. In the last, the material of the Prelude is contrapuntally worked out in combination with a new, broadly conceived melodic theme. Most characteristic is the central Dance, which from beginning to end is essentially homophonic-melodic: the strongly rhythmicized theme is accentuated by heavy harmonic blocks, which however can hardly be interpreted as having harmonic functions (Ex. 2); they have a predominantly percussive effect, while in a later development they assume a contrapuntal character — but as a subordinate and accompanying counterpoint, as is shown in Ex. 3.

Ex. 2
Allegro moderato



Ex. 3



The *Mediterranean Sinfonietta* by Menahem Avidom (Mahler-Kalkstein), first performed at Paris in May this year under George Singer and played in Israel for the first time under the guest conductor Milton Katims, is the freshest and least pretentious work of the four; it was composed in the autumn of 1951 and was first meant to be a one-movement work — the composer completed a Dance Overture first and then decided that it did not have the character of an opening; he then made it into a finale and added an opening movement and a slow middle movement. Stylistically speaking, Avidom must be put into the neighborhood of Ben-Haim; yet Avidom's work has a lighter touch than Ben-Haim's and is perhaps more closely linked to Western-Mediterraneanism than the older composer's music. There is a generous measure of wit in the opening movement, and some charming rhythmic twists color the fundamentally simple melodiousness of the slow intermezzo; in the manicolored Finale the amusing second dance theme

seems to have been born of a Latin-American father and an Oriental-Mediterranean mother.

Among other orchestral pieces performed during the season four seem worthy of at least a passing note: the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, with Josefa Schocken (soprano) as soloist, included in a subscription series the song cycle *My People* set to poems of Else Lasker-Schüler by Erich Walter Sternberg — this is post-Mahlerian, post-Straussian music of considerable impact. Frank Pelleg played with the same orchestra the world première of Marc Lavry's Second Piano Concerto, music on quite a different plane: light, quick-moving, entertaining music influenced by both Khachaturian and Gershwin yet strongly imbued with local color. The Kol Israel Broadcasting Orchestra in Jerusalem unveiled Hanan Schlesinger's new Sinfonietta, a full-fledged symphonic work of somewhat Romantic character, and Haim Alexander's Six Israeli Dances — an orchestral version of a recently published piano work: a very talented composer's competently orchestrated light orchestral piece which (in the composer's own words) sets out to do for Israeli dance types what Grieg did for the Norwegian counterparts.

The publication of some older Israeli works has drawn attention to some outstanding pieces that are revived here from time to time, foremost among them the witty Concertino for Trumpet and Orchestra by Joseph Kaminski (published by Israeli Music Publications in the composer's reduction for trumpet and piano); the first movement of this fine work is marked *Un poco Vivaldi*, its theme being a travesty of the main subject from the most hackneyed of Vivaldi's violin concertos, the constant playing of which by his pupils probably drove the violinist Kaminski quite crazy. Around the parodistic quotation of the theme Kaminski builds a movement full of spirited development and he follows this with an Improvisation, a slow and lyrical movement which is heralded, as well as closed, by the solo instrument with a cadenza that has a liturgical touch and is duly answered by the orchestral "choir" with an "amen"-like response. The Finale, a boisterous tarantella, follows without interruption and the colorful orchestration and captivating rhythms give a most vivid conclusion to this artful and original composition. Kaminski's latest work, his Violin Concerto (completed last year) has not yet been performed.

The most important Israeli chamber music work of the year is Josef Tal's Sonata for Violin and Piano, composed in the autumn of 1951 and performed at the Salzburg I.S.C.M. Festival this summer. Tal (whose former name was Gruenthal) does not belong to the

“Eastern-Mediterranean” school, yet through his constant preoccupation with Biblical themes and with the dance he too has arrived at a musical style with strong Oriental affinities. His recent choreographic composition, *The Ascent to Jerusalem* (commissioned and performed by Deborah Bertonoff), was a most original and captivating experiment: though using a variety of musical instruments, the composer wrote almost throughout the extensive work only solo melodies, to which the dance itself provided contrapuntal material. Movement and melodic verve are also the Violin Sonata’s most striking characteristics; strong rhythmic organization lends additional force to the expressiveness of the music. A passage like the one shown in Ex. 4 will prove that Tal achieves results not quite unlike Ben-Haim’s (see Ex. 1) though the tendency is certainly not the same:

Ex. 4
Andantino

The musical score for Ex. 4 is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a melody in the upper voice with dynamics 'P arioso, semplice' and 'mf', and a piano accompaniment in the lower voice with dynamics 'pp' and 'mf'. The second system has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with dynamics 'sub. p' and 'mf'. The piano accompaniment continues with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

In form, the Sonata presents the interesting and novel experiment of shaping a three-movement work in the scheme of a classical first movement: the opening *Moderato* represents the first-subject exposition; the *Andantino* corresponds to second-subject exposition and to the development; the final movement (*Moderato*) is given to recapitulation and coda.

PETER GRADENWITZ

ITALY

Acting as sponsor of a National Committee for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Verdi's death, La Scala set itself a rather large program (which at the last moment had to be shortened by dropping some works already announced on the playbill) composed largely of the works of Verdi, including the first (*Oberto conte di S. Bonifacio*) and the last (*Falstaff*). La Scala then proclaimed an international contest, open to composers of all countries and tendencies, without age limit, for an opera of three or more acts, a complete work, unpublished or never previously performed in its entirety, and never presented in any other contest. The prize: four million lire and performance on the stage of La Scala. The announcement, dated May 5, 1950, appeared over the signature of the superintendent of the Corporation of La Scala Theater, Dr. Antonio Ghiringhelli.

One hundred thirty-eight contestants took part in the competition. The committee was made up of Igor Stravinsky, honorary president, Guido Cantelli, Victor de Sabata, Giorgio Federico Ghedini, Arthur Honegger, Arrigo Pedrollo, and Luigi Ronga. The winner was Juan José Castro, with *Proserpina e lo straniero*; honorable mention went to *Don Chisciotte* by Vito Frazzi and *Masaniello* by Jacopo Napoli.

The winning opera was performed at La Scala last spring, as promised, the composer himself directing. But the outcome did not fulfill expectations, considering the importance of the contest. The plot used does not seem best suited to opera: Omar de Carlo, an Argentinian like Castro, was the unfortunate librettist of the work. He has confusedly related the story of a country girl of Argentina, torn between the modest amours of her countryside and the more decisive and less modest ones of the city brothel. These are the two areas into which her life divides. To break this unstable balance, there comes a foreign aviator who mingles with his new love for Proserpina remorse at having killed his own wife during the bombardment of a city. (The wife appears on stage as a phantom evoked by the self-torment of the husband.) Naturally the stranger ends by being killed by one of the many lovers of Proserpina, and in his death the heroine finds a certain obscure purification. The narration is turbid and confused, the analogy to the ancient myth of Proserpina poorly contrived, since one can scarcely compare this Proserpina-prostitute to the tender mythical Proserpina, goddess of spring and merciful queen of the dead. The final redemption never approaches the miraculous, the action is static. It is certainly a

poorly digested imitation of the subtle Parisian theatrical fantasies which in recent years have sprung from attempts, often successful (even in the movies), to revive ancient myths in modern dress. But where Anouilh or Cocteau can create an atmosphere of dreamy poetry, Castro sticks fast in a flat realism akin to vulgarity. The initial error lies, then, in the choice of the class of text; but the choice itself betrays the unrefined taste of the composer, a taste that has had ample space to display itself in the construction of the score. This is not ugly music, but it is certainly music without interest and almost certainly without future. Castro writes with a blunt-pointed pen that leaves large blots on the score.

Nevertheless, the public and critics of La Scala would not have taken arms against *Proserpina* (even though the accentuation of the name of the heroine grated on the Italian ear: we actually say *Prosérpina*, glidingly, while the entire score is written for Proserpina, accenting in the Spanish manner, and the able Italian translator of the text could not solve this difficult problem) had the committee of judges of the contest not been so imprudent, in announcing the winner, as to declare itself enthusiastically for the opera in a eulogy on the composer's merits that made him seem a secure champion of the art. Such undeserved judgment excited all the Italian and foreign critics gathered for the first performance of the chosen opera, so that they cried out against the score, creating a battle and arousing polemics that should never have occurred. The tumult having subsided, we can conclude that a masterwork certainly has not been discovered. Probably this was the best of the 138 operas presented in the contest, and the committee had reason to choose it. If such is the case then it means that the present-day world can no longer produce a worthwhile opera, at least outside the great composers who could not compete because they were part of the judging committee of the contest itself.

In reaction to this première, or perhaps solely in homage to its own citizen-composer, Florence chose to present as part of its Maggio Musicale the opera listed next after the winner of the contest: *Don Chisciotte*, by Vito Frazzi, who teaches composition at the Conservatorio di musica di Firenze. But even this attained only a *succès d'estime*, the public remaining rather indifferent to a score written nobly and with an expert hand, but still without vital musical content. Thus again, the performance of the second opera vindicated the action of the committee. As for the work singled out for third place, that will be performed during the Scala season next year. At that time the composer

selected by the Verdi contest will enjoy the judgment of the public as well as that of the committee. It remains only to wish it an outcome more fortunate than that of its predecessors. But all this will be revealed next year.

The opera of Vito Frazzi, then, came from Milan to interrupt the cycle of Rossini works which has been unfolding on the Florentine scene: *Armida*, *Conte Ory*, *Tancredi*, *Guglielmo Tell*, *La pietra del paragone*, *La scala di seta*, along with the *Didone* of Cavalli and the new work of Mario Castelnuovo Tedesco (*Aucassin et Nicolette*) and the performances of the New York City Ballet, which, as in Paris, has won a triumphal reception at Florence.

In the very midst of the Rossini festivities of Florence, Natale Gallini, noted collector of musical autographs, announced from Milan that he was in possession of an unpublished score of Gioacchino Rossini. This came too late for the work to be included in the presentations that had already begun at Florence, but was enough to regain for Milan the interest of the Rossinians gathered at Florence.

It was in No. 31 of the review, *La Scala*, of this year that Natale Gallini announced that he had owned an unpublished Rossini score since 1948 and that he was finally able to present it in its exact historic context. It was not an opera but theater music for the tragedy, *Edipo a Colono*, of Sophocles translated into Italian by Giovanbattista Giusti and published by the house of Bodoni at Parma in 1817.

The autograph score consists of one volume in oblong quarto, 32 x 24 cm. The orchestral forces are those customary for the Rossini operas. There are fourteen numbers, for orchestra, for chorus, and for the bass soloist (Edipo):

1. *Sinfonia*: Andante sostenuto in C major; Andantino in C major; Allegro in C minor; Andantino in C major
2. *Preludietto* for orchestra
3. *Recitativo* for bass: "A questa terra illustra"
4. *Coro*: "Dall'alma celeste"
5. *Recitativo* for bass: "Ed altra esimia lode"
6. *Concertato* for bass, chorus, and orchestra: "Per te novella gloria"
7. *Recitativo e aria* for bass: "Fussi pur io là dove"
8. *Coro*: "O Giove egiaco"
9. *Recitativo* for bass: "Nudo è colui di senno"
10. *Aria* for bass: "Meglio fora non mai"
11. *Recitativo* for bass: "Ecco il misero stato"
12. *Arioso* for bass: "Se a me non e vietato"
13. *Aria* for bass: "A te innocente e misero"
14. *Coro finale*: "O tu dell'Orco custode indomabile"

Handwritten musical score for the first page of the autograph manuscript of the *Sinfonia*, from Rossini's unpublished music for *Edipo a Colono*. The score is written on ten staves, each labeled with an instrument: Violini I & II, Fagotti, Clarinetto, Oboe, Clarinetto, Corni I & II, Trombe I & II, Fagotti, Trombe, and Fagotti. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'.

First page of the autograph manuscript of the *Sinfonia*, from Rossini's unpublished music for *Edipo a Colono*

Rossini probably wrote the score between 1815 and 1816. Indeed, in a note to the publication of the text of the tragedy Giusti declares:

A famous maestro di cappella set my choruses to music and was generously recompensed by me. Soon after, it struck me that in many pages the accompaniment was lacking. I complained to him and he took back the score; and I could not get it back, though I questioned him about it countless times during the following year. His friends say that he treats me thus for a joke; but jokes of this kind may resemble that of a certain famous clown who, during the solemnity of a holiday and in the presence of a king who was witnessing the ceremonies, stole the golden snuff boxes from the pockets of the astonished courtiers with wondrous dexterity.

But Giusti was probably exaggerating: not understanding music, he had misinterpreted the writing of the maestro and had believed incomplete a score in which Rossini had provided only a figured bass for the arias. Nevertheless, these published remarks were to suspend forever the relations between the poet and composer who had collaborated in 1815 on the *Inno dell'Indipendenza* text, by Giusti, music by Rossini. Rossini punished the poet by permanently withdrawing the score, which must, then, have been composed a little more than a year before 1817, probably soon after the *Inno dell'Indipendenza*. What did the composer do with his music? Nobody knows. In 1843, however, Maestro Gabussi of Bologna found, no one knows where, the score in question and assigned it to the Parisian publisher, Masset. The latter, before exercising the assignment, applied to Rossini for authorization, which the master bestowed in a declaration still to be found pasted on the *verso* of the frontispiece of the score: "I, the undersigned G. Rossini, composer, authorize M. Masset to print in whatever form he will my manuscript, *Edipo a Colono*, which he has acquired from Signor Gabussi, and I promise to recognize any assignments he may make abroad. Gioacchino Rossini, Paris, June 28, 1843."

Did Rossini retouch the brief score on this occasion? Probably so, and he probably realized those parts that he had not written out at the time of the collaboration with Giusti. Masset, however, did not publish the entire score, which — separated from the tragedy — had no reason for being, but used only two pieces for two choruses to French text, which he entitled *La Foix* and *L'Espérance*. The rest remained unpublished. Thus stands corrected the information about these choruses given by all biographers of Rossini, including Radiciotti.¹

After this the history of the manuscript is surrounded by a bit of

¹ *Gioacchino Rossini*, Vol. 3, Tivoli, 1929.

mystery. In 1948, a Milanese dealer in rare books notified Natale Gallini that he was offering a Rossini autograph for sale. Gallini examined it and found, first of all, that — pasted in back of the frontispiece — the autograph bore a photo of one of his older brothers, Pietro Gallini, who had died as a youth in America in 1892. This fact immediately induced him to acquire the manuscript without further ado.

It was only afterwards that he realized the importance of the find. But how had it come into the hands of Pietro Gallini? Perhaps through Bottesini, the celebrated double-bass player, who had been a great protector of the young Pietro Gallini at the beginning of the latter's career as pianist and who had often sent him musical gifts from abroad, and especially from Paris. Probably he also gave him the autographed score of Rossini. Pietro Gallini, in turn, must have given it to some friend who lived in France, inserting his photograph as visual souvenir. The manuscript then passed to public auction, as shown by an old semi-cancelled label pasted into the manuscript: it was actually sold at auction in Paris in 1923 for 18,000 francs. It must then have passed through other hands and finally into those of the Milan book-dealer, Pozzi, who sold it to the present owner, Natale Gallini.

A final point of curiosity: Gallini showed the autograph to Toscanini, who wanted to perform the *Sinfonia* at one of his concerts. But Gallini gave up the idea, preferring to wait for the occasion of an integral performance of the unknown relic in the frame intended by the composer: as incidental music for a performance of *Edipo a Colono*. Perhaps Florence this year would have been the ideal spot for such a première; but the organizers of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino were probably unaware of the existence of this score, which still awaits, as it has since the time of its writing, its first public performance.

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