

outbursts — terrifying with the attraction of the weird, lurid, incredible. Perhaps it is this factor which elects and re-elects Hitler as “the most outstanding personality in the world today” among American college students — the attraction of the evil! We should be grateful to Dr. Rauschnig for these reports as he jotted them down “under the immediate influence” of each conversation, but why so many years late? And to this reviewer, *the* great question still remains unanswered: How is it possible that men of Dr. Rauschnig’s obvious intellect remained for so long — and many still remain — such easy victims to the blood-curdling nightmare of suffering and death which Hitler dishes up whenever he speaks or acts?

Read it all, the revelation of the most frightening mind yet, swimming as it does between dreamland and reality, a terrible warning to us all!

BORIS ERICH NELSON

MEN OF MUSIC, by Wallace Brockway and Herbert Weinstock (Simon & Schuster; \$3.75).

Frequently one shudders at the advent of a fresh volume on music, for to the layman, alas, too many are ponderous and severe. But here we have the radio listener’s bible, the symphony addict’s dream — a work which is at once a practical reference book and excellent reading.

Through seventeen chapters of important critical biography, *Men of Music* moves along on its own private breeze. In a minimum of space and with a maximum of brilliance, we are first treated to a powerful opening chapter on the great masters before Bach, thence led a somewhat uneven course through Handel, Gluck, Hayden, and Mozart to Beethoven (where the authors appear to falter slightly in their stride), on through Chopin and Wagner, a slightly controversial chapter on Brahms, a highly personal chapter on Tchaikovsky. Thence they move through the great “S’s” of modern music, with an oddly frivolous but charming chapter on the last, Stravinsky.

The book is personal and refreshing, and the combination of nimble and gossipy asides with hard-headed comment is most piquant. Throughout, the writing is polished and spry, the flair for words striking, and the approach experienced and thorough. Much popular folklore is swiftly deflated. Some readers may be scandalized at omissions; others, hurt by arbitrary estimates of the great and the near great in music, for the authors have some fairly definite ideas about this. However, the musical men whom this well-qualified and agile pair reconstruct are as alive and vibrant when we read these pages as is their music in the concert hall; and the occasional unevenness or rambling is more than offset by the extraordinary success in contrasting and analyzing the contributions of these masters. (One could perhaps wish that Messrs. Brockway

and Weinstock had traced more clearly the great changes in music at the turn of the century.)

The recommended recordings are particularly welcome. This book should be indispensable to all the vast company of musical amateurs who combine a thirst for accurate knowledge with love of an entertaining book on the subject.

HOPE HANES

BOLERO: The Life of Maurice Ravel, by Madeleine B. Goss (Holt; \$3.00).

It was perhaps inevitable that a biography of Ravel should be titled for his most popular composition. But, obvious though the choice may have been, it is singularly apt. There was little in the texture of Ravel’s life to suggest the quality of that *danse lascive* which brought him world-wide notoriety; yet the composition, in a sense, reveals the man. “To make much out of nothing — to create a masterpiece from the least possible material — this was typical of his life,” Mrs. Goss asserts. It was the peculiar triumph of his “Bolero.”

Born in 1871, of Basque and Swiss descent, Ravel died tragically in 1937, the victim of a lingering disease of the brain which mercilessly failed to impair his reason. “There’s so much music still in my mind,” he complained sadly toward the end. “I’ve said nothing yet — I have everything left to say.” The world of music thinks otherwise, and certain of his major works are today established as contemporary classics. In his youth, Ravel was a disciple of Chabrier, Faure, and Satie. He became a radical innovator whose compositions bewildered the musical public and exasperated many of his colleagues. He lived to see his work acclaimed for its technical virtuosity, its polished perfection, its intellectual lucidity — and became incorporated in the main body of French musical tradition.

The enigmatic detachment of Ravel’s private life from those experiences which journalism sums up as “human interest” is not minimized by his biographer. His profound devotion to his mother and brother, his painful military service in the World War, his many friendships and few intimacies, his singular pride in the suburban villa which he built outside Paris, and his cult of cats merely accent an inner solitude. For the rest, he was, as Mrs. Goss remarks, a “channel through which music flowed, controlled and guided by his superlative craftsmanship, but unrestricted by the self-limited vision of those who live too intensely personal lives.” In this accurate and illuminating biography, Mrs. Goss has dealt justly with both the man and his art.

LLOYD MORRIS

THE WAY OUT OF WAR, by CÉSAR SAERCHINGER (Macmillan; \$0.60).

The purpose of this book is to analyze the present war and to indicate what attitude the United States

should take toward it. In a short volume of short chapters, short paragraphs, short sentences, and even short words, Mr. Saerchinger ticks off half a dozen of the principal causes of war, both general and specific. These include nationalism, industrialism, imperialism — the general ones — and the Versailles Treaty, Germany's late emergence as a great power, Britain's stubborn defense of the *status quo*, the French obsession with security — the specific ones. Some of the chapters read like self-sufficient little essays; others follow a vaguely chronological pattern. Gradually but a bit jerkily, the story comes down to the outbreak of the present war and finally gets around to the subject indicated in the title. Mr. Saerchinger, who is no isolationist or absolute pacifist, believes that the United States should maintain her neutrality, not merely in order to save herself from war but in order to contribute to building a firmer peace in a better world.

QUINCY HOWE

GHOSTS OF LONDON. by H. V. MORTON (Dodd, Mead; \$3.00).

Mr. Morton has to date written eleven popular books about the British Isles, five of them about London. His opening chapter here explains how he laid aside this book early in September, 1939. But obdurate publishers insisted he return proof for publication. So he added an account which is more graphic than any newspaper story of London, sand-bagged and almost child-deserted, her skies dotted above with hundreds of glistening balloons. He writes, as usual, with deftness and charm and with an inbred knowledge of London town before its sounds and sights were so ominously altered by daylight and in blackout. He is confident that "wars come to an end, but London goes on." The illustrations are pleasing photographs and drawings by James Macdonald.

E. V. A.

WINDLESS CABINS. by MARK VAN DOREN (Holt; \$2.50).

Out of death, out of fear and decay, springs this novel of love. Although at times it seems to cross the line where characters cease to be characters and places cease to be places and both become symbols, the story of Ray and Lucy, how they met fear and conquered and how they took on a great burden to learn what it means to be alive, will ring true to all readers.

As light filters through the woods, dappling the ground with yellow, gray, and green shadows, so this novel gently persuades itself into the mind. Those who love the unexplored shadows as much as the light, who distrust right angles, flat surfaces, and sterile white will welcome this addition to the fiction of the spirit.

JOHN SLOCUM

The Reviewers

ERIC M. MATSNER, M.D., is a New York gynecologist and obstetrician, a lecturer and writer on medical subjects.

JOSEPH S. KORNFELD is a scholar, lecturer, and radio commentator.

WILLIAM JAY GOLD is Managing Editor of the Virginia Quarterly Review.

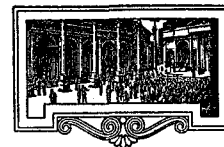
NABOTH HEDIN is Manager of the Swedish American News Exchange, in New York City.

BORIS ERICH NELSON is a student of international affairs and a writer and lecturer specializing in central European problems.

HOPE HANES, an amateur devotee of music, is the wife of John W. Hanes, former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

LLOYD MORRIS, lecturer, critic, and writer, is the author, among other books, of *The Rebellious Puritan*.

QUINCY HOWE is an author, radio commentator on foreign affairs, and editor associated with Simon & Schuster.



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