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tail which, but for Mr. Asbury's work, you would have to work as hard as Mr. Asbury did to get; which wouldn't be by any means worth the trouble. And since such detail furnishes some light against which to candle the social egg, and since there is some usefulness in realizing in what essential ways the past was like, and unlike, the present, it is a book on which the head can be used. You will get neither help nor hindrance from the author in any serious quantities; the whole job is researched, thought out, and written in the tradition of the mid-twenties liberal literary journalist. The latter is not an entirely damnable character; but he is certainly not a particularly interesting one. Nor are his works. Nor are the people who enjoy them—beyond the fact that all three persist in our time. Indeed if the book has any "significance" at all, it is because its writing and publication presuppose the existence of a subsection of the sub-intellectuals of the middle class which is conditioned to enjoy what it offers and which is still numerous enough to support it. JAMES AGEE.

★

Also Published This Week

(A listing of important new books not necessarily recommended.)

365 Days, edited by Kay Boyle, Laurence Vail, Nina Conarain. Harcourt, Brace. $3. Brief stories, each pertaining to a news item during the year, by notable writers.

The Best of Art Young, with an introduction by Heywood Broun. Vanguard. $3. More than 200 drawings, with "review" by Art Young.

Brookings, by Hermann Hagedorn. Macmillan. $3.50. Biography of the founder of the institution.

The Sacrilege of Alan Kent, by Erskine Caldwell, with wood engravings by Ralph Frizzell. Falmouth House. $3. Prose saga of the South.

Reasons For Anger, by Robert Briffault. Simon & Schuster. $2.50. Essays.

Recently Recommended

Caleb Catlum's America, by Vincent McHugh. Illustrated by George T. Hartmann. Stackpole. $2.50. Tall tales with sociological overtones.

David and Joanna, by George Blake. Holt. $2. Scottish working-class novel.

The Yellow Spot: The Extermination of the Jews in Germany. Knight, Inc. $2. A documentary study with an introduction by the Bishop of Durham.

The Negro as Capitalist, by Abram L. Harris. The American Academy of Political and Social Science. $3.

More Poems, by A. E. Housman. Knopf. $2.

Lincoln Steffens Speaking. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50. A collection of Steffens's essays, sketches, etc.

Three Worlds, by Carl Van Doren. Harper. $3. Autobiography.

All Brides Are Beautiful, by Thomas Bell. Little, Brown. $2.50. Novel.

An American Testament, by Joseph Freeman. Farrar & Rinehart. $3. Autobiography. Book Union choice for October.

Calling Western Union, by Genevieve Taggard. Harper & Bros. New York. $2.

Brandeis, The Personal History of an American Ideal, by Alfred Lief. Stackpole. $3.

Spain in Revolt, by Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard. Knopf. $2.

World Politics, 1918-1936, by R. Palme Dutt. Regular Edition, Random House. $2.50. Popular Edition, International. $2.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The Philharmonic: personalities versus programs—The state of the ballet—Some new films

NEW YORK'S symphonic colossus strode across the musical scene this week with something less than its usual supreme assurance: no exceptional keenness of ear was required to detect a timid whimper of appeal above the customary fanfare with which the Philharmonic-Symphony Society opened its ninety-fifth season. Carried so long and so triumphantly on the narrow shoulders of Toscanini, the Society betrayed its lack of self-confidence last spring in its hasty roundup of no less than five new box-office supports. The compliment to Toscanini was a pretty one, but a flourishing one-man show cannot be converted into a flourishing five-ring circus over one summer. And, discounting the brief visits of Stravinsky, Chavez, and Enesco as those of the inevitable composer-conductor "guests," the Society's overlords are banking essentially on the powers of two minor luminaries. No attempt has yet been made (and it will be difficult to make it) to dress up the purely routine qualifications of Rodzinski, but while Barbirolli has only a very similar status in England, the almost complete unfamiliarity of his name to American concert-goers gave the publicity men their opportunity to build up a dark horse. And the best they have been able to do is to go back a few years for anecdotes of his talented youth and rise from 'cellist to conductor. There is little in his more recent career as an operatic and recording director to invest him in the desired glamour of stardom.

Learning little from experience, the New York Philharmonic-Symphony plays its old game: paying scant attention to its incredibly vast Sunday afternoon broadcast audience, utterly ignoring the increasingly serious problem of maintaining musical discipline in what is unquestionably the most talented and the most intractable body of orchestral musicians in the world, staking everything on a desperate attempt to hold its subscribers with a pretended all-star conductorial cast—each member of which is sold to the public as a "personality," with no more than passing reference to his talents as a musician or his ability to redeem the Philharmonic programs from their pitifully circumscribed and sterile repertory of recent years.

Yet despite the lack of logic or good musical sense to its plans, the season may succeed. Not of course, as hoped, on the basis of glamorous personalities (for even the dark horse, Barbirolli, is likely to make at best a pleasant rather than an exciting impression), but in the ignored field of program interest and freshness. Stravinsky, Chavez, and Enesco, with only a few concerts apiece and free from the necessity of packing them with standard works, are sure to choose stimulating music. And while Barbirolli's hands will be somewhat tied by his own awe at this sudden elevation to fame as well as by the overlords' restrictions, his excellent and catholic taste will inevitably be reflected to a considerable extent in the music he plays. His recent British recording repertory of popular war-horses and concerto accompaniments has been dictated by economic necessity. The programs of the chamber orchestra he organized some years ago give a better index to his musicianship. One can safely look to him for able performances of both old and new British works and of neglected Mozart and Haydn symphonies. He will, unless altogether intimidated, venture into the less conventional precincts of the standard symphonic repertory, and while he undoubtedly derives little personal pleasure from contemporary American music, he can be counted upon to give it not only fair representation, but what is more important, diligently prepared performances. The vital question of the orchestra's coöperation, made so problematical by the overlords' unwillingness to delegate complete authority to the conductor, will be settled, as always, behind the scenes. Barbirolli may be knifed like many another Philharmonic leader, but his freedom from conceit, the fact that he rose from the ranks himself, his sincerity and unquestioned musicianship are more likely to win him the respect and support of the players than they are to fulfill his employers' hope of a box-office sensation.

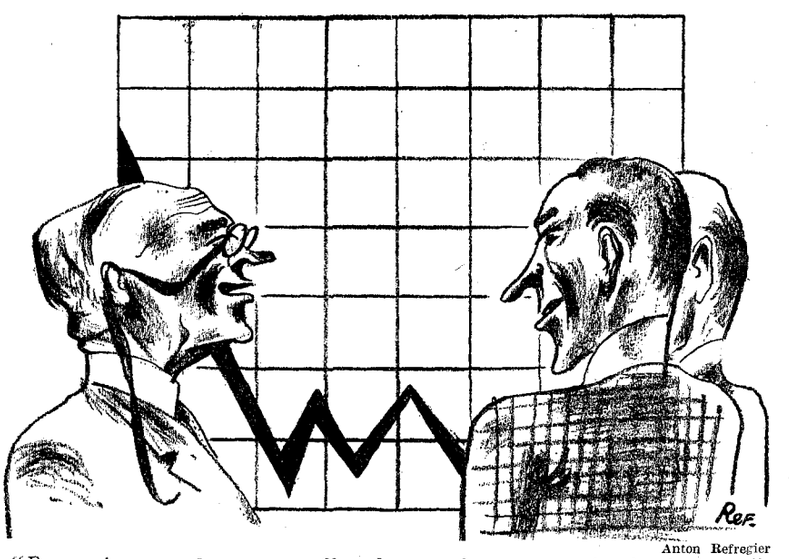
For the most part, however, the man in the street will still go elsewhere for good and interesting musical fare. The visiting Boston and Philadelphia orchestra's programs are still likely to be more inviting than the Philharmonic's, although Stokowski continues rapidly toward the obvious goal of playing nothing but his own transcriptions. His first concert gave us a *Boris Godunov* miscellany, but while Stokowski was one of the earliest to assist in throwing Rimsky-Korsakov's edition overboard, he has since succumbed to the same urge as Rimsky to correct poor Moussorgsky's "deficiencies." Instead of the straight *Ur-Boris,* we got a trade-marked Stokowski transcription forming what he describes as "something like a free modern symphony." We still want something more like Moussorgsky.

Happily the W.P.A. orchestras and the Cantata and other societies are going down to bedrock for Bach and other old works so seldom found in authentic form in the "name" orchestras' concerts. And the New Friends of Music bring a breath of fresh air into the chamber scene. Their Beethoven and Brahms series for this year not only enlist the services of some really first-rate ensembles and individual artists, but schedule many unfamiliar works and promise truthfully to live up to their almost too-good-to-be-true prospectus: "Artists have been chosen for their high standard of musicianship and not necessarily on the basis of their reputation. . . . By-products of concert-giving, such as exploitation of the artists' personality, display pieces, and encores, will have no place in the schedule. . . . [The New Friends of Music] will, we hope, encourage the development of audiences which will attend concerts for the sake of the works presented." It is fortunate for our nerves that we are never likely to be shocked by such a manifesto emanating from Carnegie Hall.

ROBERT D. DARRELL.

THE DANCE

THE ballet, both as a technique and a spectacle, has come in for some severe panning these last years, and not without reason. For one thing, here in America especially the ballet has been rather sterile, limited to



Anton Refregier

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