

# HAROLD J. LASKI

Professor of Political Science at London School of Economics, Member of British Labor Party, Author of "The State in Theory and Practice" and other works.

## THE FUTURE of WESTERN DEMOCRACY

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in Spain or permit him to attend an anti-Nazi meeting without fearing that he is betraying the artistic demands of his contract. . . ."

PETER ELLIS.

### CONCERT MUSIC

*PARSIFAL* (Act III on the New York Philharmonic-Symphony's March 28 program in toto at the Metropolitan Opera House) held no temptation to break a welcome Easter vacation from concert-going; neither did the New York Women's Symphony March 30 presentation of Horatio Parker's frequently praised and rarely performed *Hora Novissima*. I weakened momentarily to the extent of tuning in on the ever-admirable WQXR (New York) for the latter work, but the best broadcasting in the world can't make a rankly incompetent performance any more palatable, and in any case a Puritan sneaking in his operatic exhibitionism under the cover of a churchly text was offensive enough in itself. So, while waiting to hear the sonorously fanfared Symphony by Samuel Barber, and Ernest Bloch's new *Voice in the Wilderness* (scheduled by the Philharmonic-Symphony for April 3 and 4, a couple of days too late for reporting in this issue), I found a not too impertinent subject for these notes in an uncommonly substantial book on music.

B. H. Haggin's *A Book of the Symphony* (Oxford University Press, \$5) is not to be confused with Charles O'Connell's *The Victor Book of the Symphony*, published by Simon & Schuster a couple of years ago. The latter work is essentially a collection of program notes on the standard symphonic repertory, seeking, in the author's words, to "stimulate the reader's own emotional and imaginative responses to music." Haggin sets out on sounder ground with a text that bears quoting:

A statement about music will mean nothing to a person who reads it unless he has heard the music or can hear it when he reads the statement. . . . To understand what a phrase of music conveys he needs only to hear it; and there is, in fact, no other way: the meaning of the phrase consists in subtleties of feeling for which there are no words, and which are conveyed through music precisely because they cannot be conveyed in any other way. . . . What Mozart has to say, then, only he can say for himself (and one must doubt that he intended or would accept the interpretations of some who undertake to speak for him).

It is not the single phrase which causes any difficulty to the person who has not studied music (he has only to hear it), but the "aggregate, the succession of phrases that gives him trouble." Unlike pictures, for example, which can be studied in their entirety merely by standing and looking at them, a symphony exists in the dimension of time: "For the untrained listener there are too many details that succeed each other too rapidly; so that his ear misses some of them, and in the end he is left with an impression of a number of unconnected, unorganized fragments." Haggin's ideal solution to this old problem is the tonally illustrated lecture; his substitute in the present book is to key his discussion of the details of a work to illustrations in music notation plus

# LOUIS FISCHER and BENJAMIN STOLBERG take opposing points of view on their discussion of the new book by LEON TROTSKY

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(for the benefit of the many who are wholly or partly musically illiterate) exact cues to sounded illustrations in recorded performances. It is properly to be used as a handbook to phonograph records of the works with which it deals, and for that purpose it is accompanied by an ingenious measuring device (similar to those lately popular among British "disco-philos") which enables one to locate and play the particular passages quoted and written about.

The dual approach—by eye and ear—has long been recognized as the best; Haggin's application of it is both novel and practicable. Except for some excellent introductory material on musical form in general, brief chapters on the make-up of an orchestra, the phonograph and phonograph needles, and succinct notes on the individual symphonies and their composers (Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Franck), the book consists principally of page after page of illustrated analysis invariably cued to one or more recorded performances.

The general lay musical public seems to have an insatiable appetite for education, and devours Gargantuan doses of so-called appreciation material. Those of it who want their education predigested and well saccharined, who mistake a wind-swollen belly for a solid meal, will gag at Haggin's honest roast beef, but those who sincerely want nourishment and who aren't afraid of some tough chewing will find *A Book of the Symphony* their meat.

Yet with all the concise and remarkably accurate information it contains, its pithy true talk, and painstaking fulfillment of its objectives, the book leaves me admiringly respectful, but unsatisfied. Its intricately detailed tonal blueprints do not lead as directly as the author may imagine to a concept of the whole tonal architecture of a work. The linear elements are given first-rate exposition, but they provide little clue to the spatial and coloristic characteristics that are scarcely less significant. Complete knowledge of a musical work calls for reading the full score while hearing the tonal web itself. Haggin's work is most important as a convenient stepping-stone to score reading, and through its use untrained listeners may easily acquire that faculty; but there is no reference I can find to this function, nor to the fact that score reading is much less difficult than the layman supposes. I can warmly commend Haggin's work to anyone seeking to enlarge his musical knowledge, but in doing so I should not neglect to supply the missing emphasis that it is fundamentally a primer and that the next step is the study of pocket scores, many of which have similar analytic annotations and which in addition give a full working model of the tonal structure as opposed to Mr. Haggin's blueprints.

Nevertheless, this is a good elementary work,



Darryl Frederick

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### LECTURE

**HAROLD J. LASKI** will lecture on "The Future of Western Democracy" at the Roerich Museum, 310 Riverside Drive, New York City on Monday evening, April 19, at 8:30 P. M. The meeting is sponsored by the New Masses. Tickets at 40c, 65c, and \$1 are now available at the New Masses, 31 East 27th Street, New York City.

### DISCUSSION

**CHARLES RECHT** speaks on: "THE SOVIET UNION AND THE NEW CONSTITUTION" on Sunday eve, April 11th, 8:30 p.m., at 119 W. 57th St., Studio 615.

and it would be perhaps unfair to demand further that it illuminate as well as elucidate. It is a rare technical study that can match the artistic integrity of this one and go on to fire one's imagination and stretch one's sensibilities to an undreamed of pitch of acuteness. I know of one, and, while praising Haggin's valuable *Book of the Symphony*, cannot forbear to pay new tribute to the incomparable *Contrapuntal Technique in the Sixteenth Century* by R. O. Morris. But Morris doesn't deal with the symphonies of Beethoven, Brahms, *et al*, and if not many will be willing to chew over Haggin's analyses, there are still fewer who ever have come to grips with the most truly exciting book on music I know about.

R. D. DARRELL.



### Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

**Music.** Polish chamber music featuring N.B.C. String Quartet with Clarence Adler, pianist. Tues., Apr. 13, 1:45 p.m. N.B.C. blue. Also Vienna broadcast in commemoration of fortieth anniversary of Brahms's death, Wed. Apr. 14, 2 p.m., N.B.C. red.

**Thomas Mann.** Tues. Apr. 13, 7:45 p.m. N.B.C. blue. **Archibald MacLeish.** Dramatic poem *The Fall of the City*, written especially for radio, will be dramatized by Columbia Workshop. Sun., Apr. 11, 7:00 p.m. Columbia.

**Problems Before Congress.** A Representative will review them Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. and a Senator Thursdays at 5 p.m., Columbia.

### Recent Recommendations

#### MOVIES

**Beethoven Concerto** (Cameo, N.Y.). Amkino giving us pleasant entertainment featuring two musical child prodigies.

**The Golem.** Intelligent treatment of Hebrew legend with present-day political overtones. Directed by Julian Duvivier in French.

**Razumov.** A French version of Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* against a backdrop of the Nihilist movement in 1910.

**The Woman Alone.** Director Alfred Hitchcock's version of Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, with Sylvia Sydney.

#### PLAYS

**Chalked Out** (Morosco, N.Y.). Crime melodrama concocted by Warden Lawes and Jonathan Finn; hovers on the fringe of social understanding.

**Candida** (Empire, N.Y.). Revival of Shaw's domestic-relations comedy, with Katharine Cornell.

**Storm Over Patsy** (Guild, N.Y.). James Bridie's adaptation of Bruno Frank's pleasant comedy about a dog who precipitated a domestic-relations and political crisis.

**Helen Howe.** Monodramas in social satire, on tour: Apr. 12, San Mateo Jr. College, San Mateo, Cal.; Apr. 21, College Club, Portland, Me.; Apr. 23, Watertown, Mass.; May 1, E. Northfield, Mass.

**The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse** (Playhouse, N.Y.). Cedric Hardwicke in Barré Lyndon's smooth, clever, crook comedy-drama.

**Power** (Ritz, N. Y.). The Living Newspaper's powerful and amusing attack on the utilities racket.

**Having Wonderful Time** (Lyceum, N.Y.). Marc Connelly direction and Arthur Kober authorship of a play about young love at camp.

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