

# New Masses Hits a New High

Orson Welles will open the following program

## Radio Music

MARC BLITZSTEIN'S *I've Got the Tune*. Entire Company. Mr. Blitzstein at the piano.

## Revue Music

HAROLD J. ROME'S *Geneva*, a Satirical Ballet, and *Death in the Afternoon*. Mr. Rome at the piano.

## Chorus Music

LEHMAN ENGEL'S music from *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Within the Gates*.

VIRGIL THOMSON'S *Christmas Eve Music*

Lehman Engel Singers. Mr. Engel and Mr. Thomson conducting.

## Opera for Children

Solos from AARON COPLAND'S *Second Hurricane*  
Vivian Bloch, Arthur Anderson, and others. Mr. Copland at the piano.

## Choral Dance Music

CARLOS CHAVEZ'S *Tierra Mojada*

Anna Sokolow and the Lehman Engel Singers. Mr. Engel conducting.

## Theater Music

By KURT WEILL, HANNS EISLER.

Mordecai Bauman, baritone. Mr. Blitzstein at the piano.

## Swing Music

COUNT BASIE AND HIS BAND.

## Opera Music

Excerpts from PAUL BOWLES'S *Denmark Vesey*. Libretto by Charles Henri Ford. Mr. Bowles at the piano.

## Music for the Dance

WALLINGFORD RIEGGER'S *Finale* from the *New Dance* arranged for two pianos. Paul Creston and Edwin Gershefski at the pianos.

ALEX NORTH'S *Ballade*—Dancer: Anna Sokolow.

## Militant Music

EARL ROBINSON AND CHORUS.

## Music for the Home

VIRGIL THOMSON'S piano compositions. Mr. Thomson at the piano.

Charles Friedman directing entire production

Program confined to two hours

## Sunday Evening, February 6

at 8:45 P. M.

46th STREET THEATRE

226 West Forty-sixth Street, New York City

Tickets on Sale: New Masses, 31 East 27th Street, Workers Bookshop,  
50 East 13th Street, Commodore Music Shop, 144 East 42nd Street.  
For reservations call Tiba Garlin, CAledonia 5-3076.  
All Seats Reserved. 55c, 83c, \$1.10, \$1.65, \$2.20.

Kan-ching, Yeh Chen-yu, Yeh Fu, Chien Tao, Rachel Levis, Li Hua, Chen Yen-chiao, Lui Lun, Li Chun, Wu Chigio, Hsin Po, Kao Kang, Lo Shao-fei, Chang Kwang-yu, Chang Lo, Lo Ping, Li Wu-chung, Yieh Po, Wang Tse-mei, "W. Z.," Lou Chin-chun, Siao chi, Jack Chen, Wu Ko, Paddy O'Shea (whose father was Irish, but whose mother was Chinese), and others. ELIZABETH NOBLE.

## Toscanini and Others at the Microphone

THE Toscanini broadcasts have been the big noise of the last few weeks, but the loudest drums have been those beaten by the press. As a somewhat Missourian admirer of the maestro I have been pleasantly surprised to find some of his most devout worshipers examining the broadcasts with a critical dispassion they used to check with their hats at his concert hall performances. And well they may. The absence of his visual presence and the freedom from the grip of crowd hysteria combine to whittle the *Uebermensch* down to human size. For many the series has been a discovery that even an idol may be clay-footed; for others they have reaffirmed the belief that Toscanini is one of the great conductors, but in a strictly limited sphere; a musician unsurpassed for his rhythmical clarity but one often lacking in breadth, humor, and insight. In short, no miracle man.

On his first program (Christmas night) the Vivaldi concerto was superb, but the Mozart G-minor Symphony, for all the thoroughness of detail, lacked the sparkle of spontaneity and the soaring lyricism we so closely associate with the term "Mozartian." The Brahms First was definitely dull, with even the customary muscularity missing. I missed most of the second concert, but even two of the most famous Toscanini war-horses on the third (January 8) failed to excite me. Debussy's *La Mer* was lacking in homogeneity and poetic manipulation of sonorities (although here the studio engineers were largely to blame), and while Toscanini undeniably plays the Beethoven *Pastorale* with uncommon finesse, first-rate musicianship is still not rare enough to be acclaimed as genius.

The next afternoon the radio proffered another fine musician, surely no peer of Toscanini as a conductor, but one who rose astonishingly close to the stratosphere of genius. The first part of Georges Enesco's program with the New York Philharmonic demonstrated his familiar talents as a violinist in the A-minor Bach concerto and Chausson's *Poème*. Hardly a virtuoso fiddler, his straightforward, sensitive playing was a welcome relief from such sorry virtuosity as that exhibited the week before by Elman in the Tchaikovsky concerto. But Enesco surprised even his admirers with a revealing reading of the Beethoven *Eroica*, the most lyrical and singing performance I have ever heard of this symphony. Uncorrupted by any attempt at epic grandeur, it was funda-

mentally melodic, phrased to perfection, and ravishingly lovely in tone.

The lack of pure beauty of tone in the Toscanini broadcasts has been blamed on the N.B.C. Symphony, but to my mind the fault lies wholly with the type of studio and the transmitting equipment and engineers. No real sonority can possibly be obtained, the sheen of the strings is coarsened, and every fortissimo ensemble passage is powdery dry and harshly strident. I have heard Monteux play the Handel D-minor *Concerto Grosso* in concert; and hearing him play it again on an earlier N.B.C. broadcast, I refused to believe that he had any idea of how it was sounding over the air. And I am sure that Toscanini has as little idea of how his performances—that of *La Mer* in particular—sound to radio listeners. Unless he is equipped with earphones so that he can judge his playing as it is actually picked up by the microphones, instead of as it sounds in the studio itself, the series is doomed to failure. (What should be done is to move the whole affair into a decent auditorium.) As it is now, we must judge the series by its one success: the perfect performance of Saint-Saëns's *Dance Macabre*, in which the conductor's rhythmic clarity and the hollow tonal quality of dead studio broadcasting were ideally suited to the music at hand. But if the *Dance Macabre* is the best the touted N.B.C. Toscanini concerts can do, they will go down in music history as the most colossal mountain ever to give birth to a mouse.

Hugh Ross and the Schola Cantorum had courage to venture on the first American performance of Delius's Nietzschean *Mass of Life* (Carnegie Hall, N. Y., January 12) and as an old—if somewhat backslidden—Delian I couldn't stay away. There were moments of the former magic: the fugal dance section, the moment before midnight ("Dahin! O Jugend!"), and some of the broad passages for full chorus were both thrilling and deeply moving. But how alien the whole idiom and inspiration sound today. Even its nostalgic appeal was weakened by the incompetence of the soloists and the none too competent orchestral playing. I got more pleasure from the innocent antique shop of the London Intimate Opera Company—Miss Radford, Messrs. Dunn and Woodhouse, and a quintet (Little Theatre, week beginning January 4). The singing and acting is probably run-of-the-mill, but the little *Singspiele* were given with a humor that seldom degenerated into burlesque and at their best were surprisingly attractive entertainment. There was at least one moment of great music, in Dr. Arne's *Thomas and Sally*: one would have to comb the whole operatic repertory for a lovelier duo. But the real lesson one learned was that the old boys like Arne, Dibdin, Carey, and Purcell were supreme craftsmen in setting the English language to music. Except for Sullivan that art was ignored or lost for years until its contemporary revival, as demonstrated in so different an idiom, but with no less skill, by a man like Blitzstein.

I thought for once I could write a column



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without reference to that man with the tune, but try to keep out of any discussion of music—of any age—in contemporary life. This time he provides a good opportunity for a reminder that his masterpiece—along with a wealth of other timely achievements in diverse forms—is included in the NEW MASSES own concert at the 46th Street Theatre, February 6, a date emphatically not to be forgotten.

R. D. DARRELL.

## Young Choreographers

IN its second concert of the season at the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A. in New York, the American Dance Association again presented younger dancers in a program of compositions predominantly and healthfully devoted to the contemporary scene. Themes ranged from Marie Marchowsky's satiric *A Moral for Workers*—Horatio Alger to Ida Soyer's emotionally stirring *War Face*, and with little exception indicated a mature approach.

In order of their appearance, Suzanne Remos presented a rather well developed composition which was technically pleasing. But *The Young Are Starving But Not for Food*, considering relief rolls are on the up, hit a bit of a sour note. Granted that food is not the only thing for which adolescents are hungry, there's no need for what amounts to a reactionary program note.

Eva Desca took too big a bite in her picture of the South, *Death of a Negro—Southern Style*. The first two sections of the dance, "In the Klavern" and "Under a Lynch Tree" follow well enough and dramatically. But from there, the young dancer leaps into an attack in "Senator from Alabama" which does not flow organically out of the composition, and is anti-climactic coming after an effective lynch scene.

Marie Marchowsky, who is a regular member of the Martha Graham group and has been seen in solo concert before, indicated marked development in her well integrated *A Moral for Workers*, *Folk Song*, and the satiric *Red-Baiter*. She exhibits marked facility and moves rapidly toward a personal idiom which should find itself in more positive subject matter.

Marjorie Hyder's *Spring Underground* is concerned with the coming of April. The dancer is technically equipped to do work of more contemporary importance.

Evelyn Jackson's *Hunger* is a fairly literal impressionist composition, but the young Negro dancer has quality in movement and a sensitivity. She is definitely an A.D.A. find.

Fanya Chochem is a bit heavy in her treatment of excellent choreographic materials: lynching in *Trial by Fury*, silicosis in *Miner's Legacy*. Her Group work as well as her own dancing has improved, but right now her dances are concerned more with ideas than with people.

Ida Soyer has been seen for some time as