

be formulated, what new customs will be made.

This will be a furiously debated book. Women will dispute it. The church will react violently to it. The impresario will fume at it. Men may laugh at it. But no one will ignore it. It is one of the most iconoclastic books of our time. After twenty years of meditation and research, this dignified housewife, mother, and grandmother, arrives, all by herself, at revolutionary conclusions. She tears to

shreds some of our most widely accepted traditions. Neither philosopher nor impresario comes out unscathed. There is not a rehashed idea in the book. Every idea is her very own. If you ever thought of music as a sentimental art, a purposeless diversion, or as mere radio drooling, you will be shocked out of your absurd notions into realization that music is the most functional activity of man or woman. If this book doesn't start a hurricane of debate, I miss my bet.

to discuss the esthetic problem of beauty. In his preface he boldly asserts that an historical and "technologized" analysis must take beauty for granted, and continues:

The ideas that underlie musical styles can only be shown in a factual stylistic analysis that takes music apart as a mechanic does a motor, and shows how musical elements are combined, how they achieve their special effect, and what constitutes the difference between externally similar factors.

Here is a philosophy of style criticism with integrity!

The musical examples are numerous and well-chosen; many are fairly extensive, and nearly all clarify what they are intended to illustrate. Bukofzer's style analysis leads to numerous observations on performance practices and warns continually against the danger of applying the characteristics of late baroque style to the whole baroque period.

"French Music Under the Absolutism" (Chapter V) and "English Music During the Commonwealth and Restoration" (Chapter VI) receive the attention too often denied them, but, perhaps for reasons of limited space, the author does not lay a sufficient foundation for the "fusion" and "coordination" of national styles in Bach and Handel which occupy chapters eight and nine. Nowhere is Dr. Bukofzer's insight more evident than in his chapter on form in baroque music:

The essentials of musical structure were carried by style and texture so that the form could be transferred from one medium to another . . . procedures like variation, fugue, and canon . . . could be realized both in the vocal and instrumental medium.

The value of this first book in English on the music of the baroque era is evident in the appendices. They include a "Checklist of Baroque Books on Music" and a working bibliography. A "List of Editions" has a practical list of smaller collections and performing editions, which should encourage some readers to explore the music through performance.

This reviewer wishes that the author had included a list of recordings of baroque music, with critical notes on performance style. Perhaps he has hesitated for fear his honesty, however disarming, might cause the withdrawal of the few baroque works now on single records and in collections such as "L'Anthologie Sonore."

"Music in the Baroque Era" is a significant milestone in the long process by which American musical scholarship is coming of age.

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From Monteverdi to Bach

MUSIC IN THE BAROQUE ERA. By Manfred F. Bukofzer. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1947. 489 pp. \$6.

Reviewed by RAYMOND KENDALL

THIS is a carefully written and significant musical publication, the first definitive work in English devoted to this period. Despite the author's modest disclaimer that he is not a specialist on the baroque in music, one suspects that he will be considered so from now on.

Dr. Bukofzer, who is professor of music at the University of California at Berkeley, addresses himself at once to his task, which is to define and to examine baroque style in music. The definition appears in four different chapters: the first, "Renaissance vs. Baroque Music," and in the last three, "Form in Baroque Music," "Musical Thought of the Baroque Era," and "Sociology of Baroque Music." In these chapters the author integrates his study with the general history of ideas. His conclusions are objective and, in the last chapter, tell the tale familiar to the general historian of the price in blood and gold by which "progress" in the arts is sometimes bought. The intervening eight chapters are devoted to an examination of works by composers from Monteverdi to Bach, selected to illustrate differences in baroque style. Of the composers discussed, only Bach and Handel are presented in clear profile as musical personalities, but absence of biographical data on earlier composers does not detract from—rather it has the effect of enhancing—the relation of their output to early, middle, and late baroque style.

One must allow an author any number of analogies, generalizations, and comparisons provided they do not go more than a little beyond the evidence he presents. For, in creating such a "frame of reference," the author provides us with a skeleton which he subsequently clothes with flesh and blood.

Such a useful and legitimate structure is the table on page sixteen:

Renaissance
One practice, one style . . .
All voices equally balanced . . .
Modal counterpoint, etc.

Baroque
Two practices, three styles . . .
Polarity of the outermost voices . . .
Tonal counterpoint, etc.

Professor Bukofzer recognizes the peril of stylistic symbolism, as for example when he refers to the idea of *a-capella* singing, "It is not surprising that the *a-capella* ideal, once discovered, should have been attached in retrospect to Renaissance music." This interpretation has persisted, but whenever we refer to the Renaissance as the "*a-capella* period" we unwittingly apply a baroque term with questionable implications.

Dr. Bukofzer refuses categorically



Seeing Things

THE OLD LOOK

HE KNEW it was not one of the best of his plays. He tired of it almost as soon as he had written it. "Could anyone read it now?" wrote he in disgust. "It maddens me. I'll have my revenge in the preface by offering it as a frightful example of trying to write for the *théâtre de nos jours*." Thus Shaw, as the mere word *preface* must have betrayed; Shaw on the subject of "You Never Can Tell"; and Shaw on the subject of that comedy as far back as 1897, in other words within a year of its completion.

That he overstated the case, with the genius for overstatement which is his, few people would suspect from the Theatre Guild's revival. This revival is a strangely unsatisfactory and pedestrian affair. It lacks confidence, style, and distinction. Although it tries hard to be bright, it succeeds mainly in being dull. That it could shine; that the stuffs are in the text which should sparkle is clear enough. But somehow the light neither reaches them nor they the light. The revival has no sheen. It is as dull as unpolished mahogany; dull as a dusty mirror. It is dull in most of its acting; above all, in its director's desperate attempts to be gay.

How can one explain dullness in a play, a book, a person, a landscape, or a dish, without having recourse to negatives? Dullness is not often intentional. Usually it is the result of an interest which was meant to be there but is not. It is as simple as that. The Theatre Guild's production is paved with good intentions. The pity is that, for the most part, these come through as no more than intentions. The revival is arch where it should be buoyant, strained where it could be relaxed, and heavy where it needs to be light. Indeed, if one excepts, as except one must, the delightful performances of Leo G. Carroll as the old waiter, of Tom Helmore as the dentist, and of William Devlin as the waiter's fearsome son, the production at the Martin Beck is of so wooden a kind that it would have turned the living Tecumseh into a cigar store Indian.

**YOU NEVER CAN TELL, by George Bernard Shaw. Directed by Peter Ashmore. Settings and Costumes by Stewart Chaney. Presented by the Theatre Guild in association with Alfred Fischer. With a cast including Leo G. Carroll, Tom Helmore, Ralph Forbes, Frieda Inescort, Faith Brook, Patricia Kirkland, Walter Hudd, William Devlin, Nigel Stock, etc. At the Martin Beck.*

This is regrettable because, inferior Shaw as "You Never Can Tell" may be, it can still claim its virtues. A third-rate play by G.B.S. has more to offer than the best plays by most dramatists. No matter how far-fetched his foolishness, no matter how dated his technique or outmoded his iconoclasm, the dynamo of Shaw's mind can usually be heard. Its whirling is one of the most stimulating sounds this noisy world knows. His unpredictability, his uncommon common sense, his sharp awareness of human frailty, his unromantic idealism, his incredible command of the language; and his audacities of heart and spirit—all these make themselves felt, too. His garrulity, his perversity, the absurdity of some of his plots, his surrender to sheer nonsense at moments of high seriousness, the thinker who gets lost in the farceur—none of these can obscure the giant size of his endowments. And these endowments are apparent even in such a lesser Shavian work as "You Never Can Tell," and in spite of its present revival.

When Shaw pretended to be exasperated with the "tricks and laughs and popularities" of "You Never Can Tell," perhaps it was his conscience which was hurting him. As a resolute Puritan, he was well aware that in its writing he had made deliberate compromises with the enemy. He, the



—Vandamm.

The production "would have turned the living Tecumseh into a cigar store Indian."

champion of the New Theatre, the defender of Ibsen, the foe of Irving, had taken pains to write a play acceptable to West End managers. He had also stooped to gratify the tastes of audiences for "fashionable dresses, for a pretty scene or two, a little music, and even for a great ordering of drinks by people with an expensive air from an if-possible-comic waiter."

He was willing, he contended, to "show that the drama can humanize these things as easily as they, in undramatic hands, can dehumanize the drama." But the test of rehearsal proved to Shaw that, in making his play "acceptable," he had made it, for the moment at least, "impracticable." Apparently the first players Shaw endeavored to direct in "You Never Can Tell" were as much at sea with the text, compromises and all, as are most of the actors in the Guild's revival.

AN older person who had seen the Guild's production insisted that only people over sixty should be allowed to go to "You Never Can Tell." She knew that as a script it could not claim the dimension of "Man and Superman," and that as a performance it lacked the bounce and certainty of Maurice Evans's production. She was shrewd enough to realize that its Gloria and Valentine are no more than first sketches of Ann Whitefield and John Tanner. She was well aware, too, that younger people, who had not grown up when the New Woman was new and who had come to know Shaw only when his victories had been won, would in these post-Kinsey days find it hard to believe that the play had once had bold, unconventional things to say on the subject of sex, parents, marriage, and love. But she had enjoyed "You Never Can Tell"; enjoyed it very much; in fact, enjoyed it because it brought back her youth.

Much as the farce pleased her, it filled her with fears. She was confident, for example, that younger playgoers would find in Dolly and Philip only two of the most obnoxious brats ever dreamed of instead of a healthy symbol of revolt from Victorianism and a forerunner of that long outdated horror, the flapper. She was afraid that, in this age of Atlee and Britain's Labor Government, junior spectators would miss the pathos of the old waiter's obsequious devotion to his class and deem him only absurd. Shaw, her delight, was also her worry. Her aim in limiting the audience to those sixty or over was to protect him. She could not bear the thought of having a mind so innovational dismissed as old-fash-