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of these conditions already exist and that others are developing. The first condition is already met. The number of composers writing today in the United States is formidable. Since the beginning of the American Composers' Concerts in Rochester in 1925 we have at the Eastman School alone performed over a thousand works by more than four hundred American composers. It is common to have eighty to a hundred scores submitted for each program, most of these scores coming from young, unknown composers. At the American Music Students Symposium in Rochester last year sixty-seven selected works by composers from the Eastman School of Music, the Juilliard School, the New England Conservatory, the Curtis Institute, the Royal Conservatory of Toronto, Yale, and Northwestern universities were performed. When one considers the fact that in the music schools of thirty years ago a student of composition was a curiosity, the contrast is startling. It would seem that the young composers writing in the United States today number literally in the thousands.

Second, the facilities for the training of the young composer, which were so meager thirty years ago, are now present in abundance. The last three decades have marked the establishment of three great endowed schools of music, the Juilliard School of Music, the Eastman School of Music, and the Curtis Institute, in chronological order, at least two of which consider the education of the composer as one of their most important tasks. This emphasis upon creation, in an educational atmosphere which up to that time had stressed primarily performance, rapidly influenced other institutions to stress equally the arts of creation and interpretation.

Today, there is not a first-rate school of music which does not consider its composition department as one of its most important. Even the smaller schools of music today frequently have flourishing departments of composition. Most of them supply not only adequate instruction in the theory and art of composition, but also see to it that the young student has, whenever possible, opportunities for the performance of his works. This is a far cry

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF LITERARY FAVORITES

By way of celebrating SRL's silver anniversary, we present what is by all odds the easiest quiz to appear in this department. Listed in chronological order are the best-known books from 1925 to 1949. Match the titles with their authors. Allowing four points for each correct answer, a score of eighty-eight is par, ninety-six is good, and 100 just about what one has a right to expect of SRL readers. Answers on page 166.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----------------------|
| 1. "Soundings" | () | Hervey Allen |
| 2. "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" | () | Pearl Buck |
| 3. "Elmer Gantry" | () | Dale Carnegie |
| 4. "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" | () | John Roy Carlson |
| 5. "All Quiet on the Western Front" | () | A. J. Cronin |
| 6. "Cimarron" | () | Lloyd C. Douglas |
| 7. "The Good Earth" | () | Dwight D. Eisenhower |
| 8. "The Fountain" | () | John Erskine |
| 9. "Anthony Adverse" | () | Edna Ferber |
| 10. "While Rome Burns" | () | A. Hamilton Gibbs |
| 11. "Green Light" | () | Marion Hargrove |
| 12. "Gone with the Wind" | () | Russell Janney |
| 13. "How to Win Friends and Influence People" | () | Sinclair Lewis |
| 14. "The Yearling" | () | Richard Llewellyn |
| 15. "The Grapes of Wrath" | () | Betty MacDonald |
| 16. "How Green Was My Valley" | () | John P. Marquand |
| 17. "The Keys of the Kingdom" | () | Margaret Mitchell |
| 18. "See Here, Private Hargrove" | () | Charles Morgan |
| 19. "Under Cover" | () | Marjorie K. Rawlings |
| 20. "Strange Fruit" | () | Erich Remarque |
| 21. "Forever Amber" | () | Lillian Smith |
| 22. "The Egg and I" | () | John Steinbeck |
| 23. "The Miracle of the Bells" | () | Thornton Wilder |
| 24. "Crusade in Europe" | () | Kathleen Winsor |
| 25. "Point of No Return" | () | Alexander Woolcott |

from the student days of my generation.

The third condition, the *rapprochement* between the composer and the performer, has not yet been fully realized. In certain fields, such as the orchestra, there has been of late a tendency to consider American compositions a natural and proper part of the orchestral repertory. In the field of the virtuoso instrumentalist this is not yet true. The programs of the concert pianist are still made up in large part of the repertory of the past with a few excursions into the contemporary.

Among students, however, this same ultra-conservatism does not appear. The present generation of student performers is interested in the compositions of fellow-student composers and plays them with that understanding which comes from similarity of viewpoint. At the Eastman School a young performer will frequently "commission" a young composer to write a work. I doubt if the financial value of the commission is significant. What is significant is that the composer is writing in the stream of musical life, for performance by his own colleagues. This warm personal interest is a heartening sign for it signals the end of the ivory-tower days and a return to the time when all music was music for performance. One of my most thrilling experiences was to conduct the Eastman Senior Symphony last year in a concert of orchestral works of student composers. The students played these works with an enthusiasm, an abandon, a brilliance, and a devotion which could not have been greater had each work represented the greatest conception of a Beethoven, a Brahms, or a Wagner.

There are signs that the listener is not far behind. In conducting concerts of American music with various orchestras in the country, I am always impressed with the number of young men and women who come back to the green room after the performance and discuss the music of Harris, Hanson, or Piston, and who discuss this music with an understanding born of acquaintance. Much of this acquaintance has come through recordings, again emphasizing the fact that the record and the phonograph are fundamental tools in the development of musical understanding.

All of these conditions, which are being fulfilled today and which, as I have pointed out, are similar to conditions which existed in the golden ages of composition in the past, indicate the possibility that we may be entering in this country upon our own golden age. Whether it will come in our lifetime I do not know, but the signs of spring are everywhere. The buds seem about to burst into bloom.

There are several composers writing



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Aaron Copland is "the musical son" of both Gershwin and Stravinsky.

in the United States today who in their own creation, their teaching, and their general influence upon our musical life sum up the forces which will influence the direction of composition in the United States for a number of years to come. These men, curiously enough, all began their active work in the third decade of this century, the decade which Dr. Koussevitzky has referred to as the beginning of musical composition in the United States. Most of these men have, naturally, European antecedents, for most of us are of European descent and it is difficult for any man to be born without ancestors. I shall not attempt to place them in order of importance but shall discuss each of them at random.

The first is George Gershwin. The importance of Gershwin's contribution lies in the fact that he struck a death-blow at the stuffiness which was beginning to pervade the concert hall, a blow which also felled the tradition of what was "proper" in symphonic music. I recall walking out of Carnegie Hall with Willem Mengelberg after he had conducted an abstruse work by a contemporary composer. Mr. Mengelberg asked me how I liked it. I replied that it seemed slightly "wormy" to me with chromatic counterpoints working their way up from the contra-bassoon to the piccolo. "It is a sairioos vork," said Mr. Mengelberg, "a verry sairioos vork." And then with a twinkle in his eye—"perhaps, too sairioos!"

GERSHWIN'S music was the antithesis of all that was over-intellectual, over-philosophical, over-"serious." He brought play back to music. His music was gay, witty, emotional, but always fun to listen to, and under-girding it were the rhythms of

the popular dance, the rhythms which brought lightness to the feet.

His effect on American music has been enormous. Hardly any of us but has been influenced at least by some of his rhythmical devices and by the timbre of his orchestral scores. Many of his colleagues also contributed importantly to this influence, including, undoubtedly, unknown popular orchestrators who assisted men like Gershwin and Jerome Kern in the preparation of their scores. It is proper, however, that Gershwin should receive first credit because it was he who successfully bridged the gap which separated popular from serious music. His influence has been strongest on such men as Aaron Copland, Morton Gould, and Robert Russell Bennett—whose symphonic metamorphosis on the material of "Porgy and Bess" is a masterpiece of orchestration.

ANOTHER influence is that of Aaron Copland himself. The influence of Gershwin and of American popular dance music—and recently of Latin-American dance music—upon Copland is readily apparent. His "Music for the Theatre"—which I know well, having conducted it both in concert and for records—might have been written by a more technically sophisticated Gershwin. What complicates the line of descent is the fact that Copland is also the musical son of Stravinsky. The two influences are not antipathetic since both Gershwin and Stravinsky are primarily masters of the dance. Copland, too, is a master of rhythm but his melodic invention has never equaled that of Gershwin or the earlier Stravinsky.

Of late, his music seems to have grown increasingly simple and direct, especially in such a work as the "Ap-



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palachian Spring" with its undertones of folklike music. What constitutes his real self is still not apparent, for he seems to glorify a Mexican hot-spot, "Billy the Kid," and Abraham Lincoln with equal enthusiasm. This somewhat opportunistic impartiality may lead some critics to question his basic convictions, but it requires no critic to sense the rhythmic urgency of his music. Twenty-three years ago I conducted the first performance of Copland's early score, "Cortège Macabre." On that occasion he played for me on the piano a new score on which he was working. I have no confidence that the notes which he played were all in the score. In fact, it seemed to me at times almost as though the exact notes did not matter. The rhythmic energy was, however, terrific, and it was apparent at which altar of the Muses Copland would offer his oblations.

Copland's influence, both as a composer and as a teacher at Tanglewood, has been great. It has been felt particularly by younger composers such as David Diamond and Marc Blitzstein. In others, it is more difficult to tell whether the influence is that of Copland, or of Stravinsky translated into Coplandese.

The third basic influence is that of Walter Piston. He has been reputedly labeled a "neo-classicist," but, in my opinion, this does him less than justice. The term neo-classicism seems too frequently to be applied to music possessing form but without grace, wit, or melody. I have conducted too many works of Mr. Piston which have had all of these qualities in abundance to want to accept this inadequate label. It has perhaps become attached to him because of his highly superior craftsmanship. If I were asked to name the two American composers who best know how to write music, I should unhesitatingly name Walter Piston and Leo Sowerby. Their music has nothing in common except this quality of superb craftsmanship. Piston's influence is much greater because his music is more fully emancipated from tonal chromaticism and, therefore, seems to have no impression of moving into the future looking backward. Piston's influence upon the younger composers is less obviously apparent because it must be observed in details of workmanship rather than in the reflection of his personal style—which is difficult to imitate.

The fourth influence is that of Roy Harris. This is a strange influence, difficult to analyze or describe, primarily because Mr. Harris is difficult to analyze or describe. Of all the composers I have mentioned he is the only one who has a "method" of composition. I do not use this word in any opprobrious sense, but it is impossible to discuss either Harris's music or his

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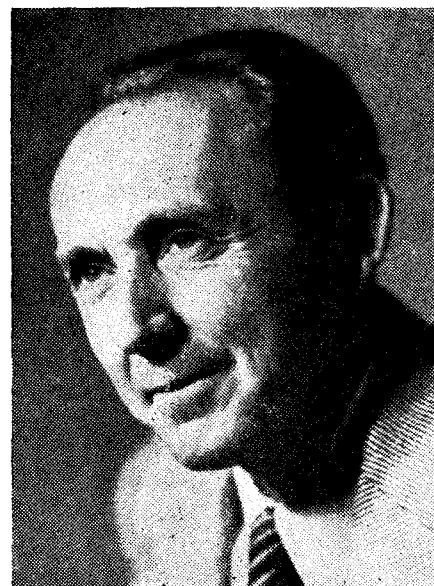
influence on young composers without speaking of it.

Harris, in spite of his long study of counterpoint—or perhaps it could as easily be said, on account of it—is primarily concerned with consonant harmony. His works frequently depend for long sections upon a continuous harmonic shifting from triad to triad with the melodic lines singing through them. This frequently produces an impression of lack of any harmonic purpose or direction, which is baffling to the listener. And yet, when he frees himself from this chain of entwining triads he may soar to heights seldom attained by other composers. His musical ancestors seem to go back to the sixteenth and, perhaps even more definitely, to the fifteenth century.

I have always had an almost paternal regard for Roy Harris, for I had the privilege of conducting the first performance of the first work which he wrote for orchestra. Already in this young work, imperfectly realized though it was, could be discovered that intensity, the rough and sometimes awkward span of melody groping toward emotional realization. In such a work as his "Third Symphony," his aims seem to find complete expression and I still regard this work as one of the few great American symphonies.

His influence on his students has reflected his own deep conviction. Most important among them is the highly gifted and brilliant William Schuman and his younger colleague, Robert Palmer.

The fifth influence is perhaps that of the Eastman School of Music and of the author. My own musical ancestor has been widely proclaimed to be Sibelius. This is undeniably true to



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Roy Harris sometimes "may soar to heights seldom attained by other composers."

the extent that the Scandinavian folk melodies and dances which have moved Sibelius were a part of my musical memory as a child—and my own "Nordic Symphony" was written before I had heard a symphony or tone-poem by the Finnish master. My three greatest loves have been the music of Grieg, Handel, and above all, Palestrina, who seems to me to have possessed the most complete understanding of the relationship of tone of any composer who has ever lived. I am trying to develop in my own students an understanding of music as an art of sound, teaching them that it is not the appearance of music on the printed page that counts, nor the particular theory embodied in its construction, but only how it sounds, and its affecting power upon the mind through the ear.

I have tried to make the large number of gifted young men who have come under my influence sensitive to tonal values so that each composer may select from the vast encyclopedia of musical relationships those which best enable him to express his own creative personality. This Eastman tradition is being ably carried on by such gifted young composers as Peter Mennin, Louis Mennini, William Bergsma, Burrill Phillips, Kent Kennan, Wayne Barlow, Robert Palmer, Gardner Read, Ulysses Kay, Herbert Inch, Robert Ward, Frederick Woltmann, to name but a few. A detailed listing of these young men would of itself constitute a fairly complete cross-section of the last quarter century of American music.

There are three foreign composers now living in America whose writing has powerfully influenced the young composer—Stravinsky, Schönberg, and Hindemith. I have already referred



—Boosey & Hawkes.

Walter Piston—one of "two American composers who best know how to write music."

briefly to Stravinsky. It is something of a tragedy that the influence both of Stravinsky and Schönberg should, through the coincidence of history, be exerted upon the young American composer at a time when their own creative powers are waning. The influence of the Stravinsky of "Fire Bird," "Petrouchka," the "Sacre," "Les Noces," and "Symphony of Psalms" is the impact of a strong, dynamic, creative mind. The influence of the latest Stravinsky symphony is in my mind another matter. In spite of the countless physical, economic, and spiritual problems which beset the present-day composer, the era ahead does not need to be sterile. It might become so, if we follow the wrong guides.

The problem of Schönberg is simpler in one sense, and more complicated in another. Since his determined effort to throw off the Wagnerian yoke, apparent in such an early but moving work as "Verklärte Nacht," he has set up a self-imposed tonal discipline which seems to be more at home in the laboratory than in the composer's study. I shall not ape the critics by attempting to pass judgment on this gifted man. His influence, so powerful in Europe in the earlier decades, has seemed to be considerably less potent in the United States. There are many composers who have come under his influence, but only those who became disciples have remained faithful. Even they have had only a minor influence as their music has not been widely

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