

Music to My Ears

SIMON BARERE—MORE DE LOS ANGELES—BING'S PLANS

THE DESTINY that shapes our ends decreed that Simon Barere, who had spent virtually all of his fifty-five years attaining a unique mastery of the piano, should leave as the last sound for mortal ears a discordant jangle of chords as he toppled from the bench on which he was playing during a recent concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Carnegie Hall. His sudden and shocking death was a misfortune of magnitude, not least for the infant American-Scandinavian Foundation, whose first public venture was thus blighted.

Musicians are rarely in agreement on any matter not demonstrable in black and white, but there would be minimum dissent with the statement that Barere was the most prodigious technician since Josef Lhevinne. Did I say black and white? The keys of both sorts were rarely so docile as when brooded over by the massive but dexterous hands of Barere. Some say there were auguries of disaster before Barere's collapse; if so I missed them in attentive respect for the delicacy and musical order he projected in the thrice-familiar work.

The confusion induced by such a happening is inevitable, but it should not obscure the credit due to Eugene Ormandy and the superlative orchestra for its playing of the Sibelius Seventh Symphony with which the concert began. I have heard this work at intervals since its introduction here twenty-five years ago but rarely with so much respect for its orchestral design. If it required so dazzling a demonstration to open these eyes, they

are at last open. I can't say too much for the "Songs of King Erik," by Ture Rangström, sung by Set Svanholm in the unhappy interlude after Barere's collapse, other than noting a sure sense of orchestral writing by this Swedish composer, plus a family likeness to his peninsular contemporaries.

The fifth symphony of Carl Nielsen (scheduled to be played in the canceled second half of the concert) will be heard during the final visit of the Philadelphia Orchestra next Tuesday. Eugene Ormandy has made a gesture of uncommon courtesy in inviting Erik Tuxen, the Danish conductor who was to have made his debut on this occasion, to share the program with him.

* * *

The third appearance of Victoria de los Angeles at the Metropolitan, as Mimi, left the arc of her personal pendulum somewhere between the extremes of an indifferent Marguerite in "Faust" and a superior Butterfly. In the kind of raffish "Bohème" produced by the self-centered Giuseppe di Stefano as Rodolfo, the virtuoso Salvatore Baccaloni as Benoit and Alcindoro, the voluble but unsubtle Giuseppe Valdengo as Marcello, and the profoundly superficial conducting of Fausto Cleva, Miss de los Angeles's fragile charm wilted rather than flowered. "Fragile" refers here, of course, only to the Spanish singer's concept of style, for she is certainly no wispy figure of a consumptive.

There have been buxom Mimis before Miss de los Angeles, and there will be others after her. Most of them,



—Bender.

Simon Barere—"prodigious technician."

however, have contrived to establish a sympathy based on some kind of organized appeal beyond the merely vocal. This one often sang well and with an uncommon restraint; but she left unanswered that perpetual question—what did Rodolfo see in her, anyway? Better, if not necessarily more expensive, costuming, surer action, and, most of all, a Rodolfo who was looking for more than his own reflection in Mimi's eyes would help.

The forecast for Rudolf Bing's second Metropolitan season should be regarded with an ear for the eye as well as an eye for the ear. It would be relatively easy for him to make a splash with a pair of or three novelties that would satisfy those who consider agitation of the surface more interesting than calming of the troubled operatic waters. By choosing, rather, the more prosaic way of a new "Aida," "Rigoletto," "Carmen," and "Cosi fan tutte," he has, I think, added valuably to the concept of putting first things first—to putting the Metropolitan's scenic house in order before inviting in lodgers for the night (or the season).

These four added to "Don Carlo," "Fledermaus," and the Italian-Siamese twins give us eight fairly staple works in presentable décor. Projecting the general thought through his third season, we would have more than half the present quota of repertory works in representative form. Adding such solid musical properties as "Alceste" (with or without Flagstad), "Elektra," "Salome," "Figaro," "Otello," and "Meistersinger" to the agenda gives renewed confidence in Bing's appraisal of the place the Metropolitan should have—musically and theatrically—in the life of America and the world.

Who will sing what remains, for the while, obscure; but there is no reason to doubt that *why* what is being sung is in safe hands. —IRVING KOLODIN.

We Are Set Free

By Joseph Joel Keith

WE ARE set free: we go from dark to day.
Untangled now, we pass the cooling fountain,
our will no longer earth-bound; eyes, deep-set
and closed, have seen the shining mountain.

Out and beyond small journeys of our need,
past budding fields and flowering hills and winding
ascents of growth, we walk as if we found
the thing of height that we are bent on finding.

We reach, not as the small rise toward the ripest fruit,
nor as the fingers fondling love, demanding
the promised vow, but for a rooted growth,
wed to the sun, seeded on holy peaks—
all thought loosed god-like where a man is standing.



"The most readable
Luther biography
in English."
— TIME

Here I Stand

A LIFE OF
MARTIN LUTHER
By Roland Bainton

"A new insight into the religious and political controversies that led up to the Reformation."

--San Francisco Call Bulletin

100 RARE WOODCUTS
AND ENGRAVINGS

\$4.75 at your bookstore



THE ABINGDON
COKEBURY
AWARD WINNER

ABINGDON
COKEBURY

FAMOUS BOOKS IN PAPER COVERS
Complete stocks of Penguins, Pelicans, Mentor, Signet, Bantam, Pocket, College Editions, etc. Every paper-covered book mentioned in this issue of the "Saturday Review" now available by mail.

Ask for our free lists of hundreds of worthwhile titles
We pay postage. Minimum order \$1.00
BOOK MAIL SERVICE
Dept. 3, West Hempstead, N. Y.

**BUY U. S.
SAVINGS
BONDS**

In Paper Covers

The Saturday Review's Guide to the Best New Reprints

Title and Author	Subject	Critics' Consensus
THE DIALOGUES OF PLATO Edited by J. D. Kaplan from the Jowett translation (Pocket: 25¢)	Four complete dialogues—"Apology," "Crito," "Phaedo," and "Symposium" — and some of the most famous passages from the "Republic."	Handy introduction to Plato's thought.
THE FIRES OF SPRING James A. Michener (Bantam: 35¢)	The author of "Tales of the South Pacific" recounts the progress of David Harper from a Pennsylvania poorhouse through college to New York, where he finds his true love and true vocation.	Warmhearted, incident-packed, highly readable, but flawed by sentimentality and naïveté.
THE GREAT GATSBY F. Scott Fitzgerald (Bantam: 25¢)	The abiding love of Jay Gatsby for Daisy Buchanan, the society girl who had spurned him before his rise to affluence through bootlegging and racketeering.	Memorable for its picture of one facet of the Twenties. Probably Fitzgerald's best novel.
ILL WIND James Hilton (Avon: 25¢)	To prove that things often "jump out of nothing" Mr. Hilton writes of nine totally unrelated Britishers whose lives become intertwined through a series of chance encounters.	A tricky, ambitious novel carried off successfully by the author's expert craftsmanship.
MEAN AS HELL Dee Harkey (Signet: 25¢)	The reminiscences of a peace officer in the Southwest at the turn of the century.	Absorbing reading for Western fans who prefer facts to fiction.
MEMORY AND DESIRE Leonora Hornblow (Signet: 25¢)	An errant husband at large among the temptations of Hollywood.	Characters vividly alive; style witty and perceptive, a bit reminiscent of Evelyn Waugh.
NIGHT IN BOMBAY Louis Bromfield (Bantam: 35¢)	An attractive American girl getting ahead amid the glamour and filth of prewar India. A skilful compound of romance, lust, and sacrifice.	Fiction for fun. Characters and plot slick; craftsmanship superb.
100 MODERN POEMS Selden Rodman, Ed. (Mentor: 35¢)	A representative anthology of American, English, and European verse written during the past half century.	An excellent selection.
PYLON William Faulkner (Signet: 25¢)	Four days in the lives of a strange set of people, all of them connected with an airplane competition held during a Southern Mardi Gras.	Realistic dialogue, brilliant descriptive passages. Faulkner at his best.
THE STRANGE LAND Ned Calmer (Signet: 35¢)	An account of the U. S. Army's "Operation Uppercut," an attempt to breach the Siegfried fortifications during 1944, as seen through the eyes of twelve individuals.	One of the finest novels to come out of World War II.
THEY SOUGHT FOR PARADISE Stuart Engstrand (Signet: 25¢)	Life in a communistic community set up in the Midwest by a group of Swedish immigrants under the leadership of a religious fanatic.	Engrossing historical background, a mature love story.
TOP OF THE WORLD Hans Ruesch (Pocket: 25¢)	The adventures of an Eskimo family and especially of young Ivaloo, who finds the ways of the southern Eskimos and their contacts with Christian missionaries difficult to comprehend.	Fascinating for its picture of strange peoples and customs. Poetic style marked by humor and affection.
THE WAY WEST A. B. Guthrie, Jr. (Pocket: 25¢)	Chronicle of an emigrant trek from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon in the 1840's. Dick Summers, one of the principal characters of "The Big Sky," reappears.	Superb character development, occasionally overripe prose. On the whole better than "The Big Sky."

—RAYMOND WALTERS, JR.