

others might study with profit. Why, amid this deluge of authenticity, we could not have an American Pinkerton (rather than the able but clearly Czechish Rudolf Petrak), I cannot say. Probably for the same reason of convenience that presented Joseph Rosenstock as conductor. I may add, to get back to the theme of nationality pro and con with which this commentary began, that his was a sound, fluent treatment of the score, and a directorial exploit (relative to the personnel involved) that clearly profited from the years he spent in Japan before, during, and after World War II.

**H**EARING the authentic Puccini in a performance of so much theatrical illusion on one night put in a new perspective the size of talent involved in his purported disciple Gian-Carlo Menotti, whose "Consul" was added to the City Center repertory the night before. Let it be recognized at once that this version of "The Consul" had no part of the plus theatrical values imparted to "Butterfly" by the imported performers; that it was, on the whole, substantially inferior to the previous showings on Broadway, though Patricia Neway had her original part of Magda, as did Gloria Lane (the Secretary), Jon Geyans (Mr. Kofner), Maria Marlo (the Foreign Woman), and various others in smaller parts. Neither Norman Kelly as Magadoff nor Mary Krete as the Mother gave to their roles what Andrew McKinley and Maria Powers did when the work was new.

So much for the interpretative factor. Experienced anew, it seemed more clear than ever that "The Consul" is essentially a theatrical experience that counts its effects in terms of devices which impress the first time they are encountered—the dream sequences, the shattering of a pane of glass, an unexpected knock on the door, a ghostly apparition in a doorway—rather than in terms of musical inventions which penetrate and delve and strike new chords of response the oftener they are experienced.

*Per se*, some of the musical inventions retain their force and individuality. But they are so ringed about by the mechanics of plot and theatrical impact and quick, sure effect (at first encounter) that they constitute an apology for a talent, rather than an affirmation of it. For Broadway "The Consul" was a work of superior intelligence and artistic purpose; for the operatic repertory it is wanting in substance and lasting interest. Eating the cake of a Broadway success has, in this instance, left only crumbs to interest a more demanding taste.

—IRVING KOLODIN.

**Music.** Aaron Copland is a notable contemporary example of the "critical composer," the man who can write about music with the same persuasiveness that he writes music itself. He demonstrated his talent over a decade ago in "Our New Music" and "What to Listen for in Music." It is evident again in his latest book reviewed below, "Music and Imagination," a section of which was published in *SR* Sept. 27. Though composers have often been adept at musical scholarship, critical judgment, and literary style, the same can rarely be said of performers. But there are a few who have managed to write meaningfully as well as to play meaningfully. One of these is the veteran French pianist Alfred Cortot, who now supplements his studies of French piano music with a volume entitled "In Search of Chopin" (page 35) . . . Phonograph records have focused the attention of a large audience on pipe organs other than the movie-house variety; for those who wish to pursue the subject further William Leslie Sumner's "The Organ" (page 34) is a useful guide covering the period from the seventeenth century to now.

## *The Finest Product of the Spirit*

**MUSIC AND IMAGINATION.** By Aaron Copland. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 116 pp. \$2.75.

By WILDER HOBSON

**T**HESE are the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures which Mr. Copland delivered at Harvard during the season of 1951-52. If their title suggests the rarefied and lofty, rest assured that Mr. Copland writes about his art with great warmth, intimacy, and liveliness. The composer of "Appalachian Spring" and "Billy the Kid" is talking here primarily to laymen—the lectures are not conspicuously technical—and, indeed, this reviewer has the temerity to approach the work only because Mr. Copland himself

shows so much interest in "the listener who intends to retain his amateur status."

One inevitably fascinating thing about Aaron Copland is the fact of his Americanism and what his life and his musical intelligence have to reveal about music in this country. He is, of course, profoundly American, born and raised in deepest Brooklyn, an alumnus of that large and remarkable institution called the Brooklyn Boys' High School, which has given so many fine minds to the republic (in Mr. Copland's generation, to name just three out of many, there were Louis Hacker, Sidney Hook, and Meyer Shapiro). He went from Brooklyn to Paris. Under such foreign teachers as Nadia Boulanger he became an utterly sophisticated composer. And then he came home and began to make splendid use of the usable American past.

It is the delight of this little book that it tells so much about his growth and the directions of his spirit. "The poetry of music," he says with characteristic simplicity, "is always with me. It signifies that largest part of our emotive life—the part that *sings*." And he goes on to emphasize the rich human involvement of true musical responsiveness. "I like this idea," he says, "that we respond to music from a primal and almost brutish level—dumbly, as it were, for on that level we are firmly grounded. On that level, whatever the music may be, we experience basic reactions such as tension and release, density and trans-



—Angus McBean.

Aaron Copland—"warmth and liveliness."

Wilder Hobson, author of "American Jazz Music," contributes regularly to *SR*'s RECORDINGS section.

parency, a smooth or angry surface, the music's swellings and subsidings, its pushing forward or hanging back, its length, its speed, its thunders and whisperings—and a thousand other psychologically based reflections of our physical life of movement and gesture, and our inner, subconscious mental life. That is fundamentally the way we all hear music—gifted and ungifted alike—and all the analytical, historical, textual material on or about the music heard, interesting though it may be, cannot—and I venture to say should not—alter that fundamental relationship."

Mr. Copland attacks the petrification of musical taste in the fetishism concerning "classics"—even "light classics" or "jazz classics." He wants his ideal listener to pay attention to everything from "the quick wit of a Chabrier" to the "latest importation of Italian dodecaphonism." There is a fine chapter on sheer sonority, during which he, typically, draws attention to the whole vast catalogue of Oriental sounds as against "our own poverty-stricken percussive imaginings." He strikes out against the lush "nouveau-riche temptations of the modern orchestra" (Hollywood papers please copy) and notes that if Ravel had written a treatise on orchestration "the first precept would have been: no doubling allowed, except in the full orchestral *tutti*. In other words, discover again the purity of the individual hue."

There are absorbing pages on the interpretative function, with praise for the "frankly unglamorous" European approach. Gradually, as the lectures proceed, Mr. Copland glances over the whole contemporary musical scene, and pauses at many points of special interest, from Schoenberg to jazz. He pays his disrespects to Soviet esthetic theory and remarks: "For the artist who has once heard Milhaud or Hindemith, the apple of evil has been

tasted and the 'harm' from [the Soviet] standpoint has been done." Paying his usual tribute to the Latin-American beauties of Villa-Lobos, Chavez, and Revueltas, and to the high distinctions of Connecticut's Charles Ives, Mr. Copland comes at last to the question of the American contribution to the international musical stream. What, if any, great general values have the New World continents supplied?

His answer is that which would immediately occur to any hot jazz devotee. The special American genius is the rhythmic, proceeding out of the African-Spanish-Indian cultural admixture. Mr. Copland's discussion of the American rhythmic gift is the most lucid and thoroughgoing that I can remember. I will cite just one passage: "... an *ambiance* of playing fast and loose with the rhythm is encouraged which has tended to separate more and more the American and European conception of musical pulse. . . . The European is taught to think of rhythm as applying always to a phrase of music—as the articulation of that phrase. We, on the contrary, are not averse to thinking of rhythm as disembodied, so to speak, as if it were a frame to which certain tones might be added as an afterthought. . . . Our European colleagues may protest and claim: 'But we too write our music nowadays with the freedom of unequal divisions of the bar lines.' Of course they do; but nonetheless it is only necessary to hear a well-trained European musician performing American rhythms to perceive the difference in rhythmic conceptions."

In 1900, when Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn, Louis Armstrong appeared in New Orleans. There is really considerable common culture between Satchelmouth and the Charles Eliot Norton lecturer. They share the vigorous, youthful, and subtle American pulse.

## Space & Thunder

THE ORGAN. By William Leslie Sumner. New York: Philosophical Library. 436 pp. \$10.

By DAVID HEBB

WHEN the author, who is an organist and an honorary fellow of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology in London, speaks of "the organ," he means an instrument of pipes blown by wind, and not one of the products of the electronic age that amplifies synthetically generated fundamentals and harmonics. Mr. Sumner is a purist who knows what he is writing about and writes it well. Further titled "Its Evolution, Principles of Construction, and Use," his book, in its three sections, traces the history of the pipe-organ back as far as the time of the early Greeks, outlines the principles of organ mechanism and tone production, and discusses at some length the approach of the performer to the instrument.

It is written not only for the organ builder and the music student, but for the devoted amateur of the organ as well—he who finds fascination in this marriage of art and the machine. For all three, and for the music-lover of any persuasion and for the member of the church music committee, this will be a valuable work of reference. Books on the organ are legion—the New York Public Library has three drawers full of listings—but most of them are out of print. Audsley's "Art of Organ Building," published in 1905, is currently being offered at \$100 for its two volumes. Barnes's "Contemporary American Organ," in four editions and going into a fifth, does not begin to cover the ground that Sumner encompasses, though his illustrations are more numerous and mechanical features more detailed.

Historically, the development of the organ has been far from continuously progressive. From a standpoint of tonal architecture, some of the greatest instruments were built prior to 1800 in Germany, Northern Europe, and France. The interested record collector probably has recordings of organs by Schnitger, Compenius, and Cliquot, the last of whom built an organ of sixty-four stops in 1781 for the church of St. Sulpice in Paris. The nineteenth century brought with it a "romantic" era that changed the entire aspect of organ building until the third decade of the present century. In spite of the influence of Mendelssohn and of Cavallé-Coll, the French builder, the organ began turning into an imitative "one-man-orchestra" that was neither fish nor fowl. It took

## My Barefoot Girl

By Eric Barker

SEARCHING alone through the voices of the sea,  
Through rustle and hush like the brittle tongues of leaves  
Brimming in autumn drifts as high as her knees,  
My barefoot girl goes dancing along the shore,  
Kicking up rainbows, stamping up fans of rose,  
Shells in her fists, a seaweed wreathed in her hair,  
My window-raking lightfoot, fallen heir  
To the voyaging trove the prodigal waves cast down  
For a gull-disturbing infant tanned as brown  
As the sand she prints for a time as long as it takes  
A wave on web-foot, diamond-spattering heel,  
To scatter them sky and shoreward, squawk and squeal.