

## Music

*Continued from page 21*

charge, for the interested reader to proceed to the point of purchase. Along with such examples of observant humor, he will find relentlessly sound and, I am sure, helpful opinions on many great songs by writers ranging from Bax to Hugo Wolf and Charles Wood. Not everyone can go to London and seek the personal counsel of Gerald Moore, but he has succeeded in making an almost perfect medium for the reverse with this singular volume.

## Notes

### JEWISH MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES:

Wisely subtitled an appreciation, Aron Marko Rothmüller's *"The Music of the Jews"* (Beechurst Press, \$5) is a genial recounting of the long march of Jewish music from the glories of Biblical times, through the sorrows of the Dispersion and the ghetto's gloom, until its bright and busy resurgence in today's Israel. A personal account by a Yugoslavian singer and composer, it is happiest when detailing the music he knows at first hand. Lacking the scope, authority, and objectivity of a historical survey, it is by no means "an important contribution to musicology," to quote the misleading blurb; it neither presents new data nor makes novel interpretations.

When the author dons philosopher's robes to discuss knottier questions, such as what constitutes Jewish music, he is more readable than cogent. As a historian he is weaker still. He seems to have bypassed the newer findings and approach of ethno-musicology. The gravest result of this is his treatment of tropes (*neginot*) without introducing the concept of melody-types; this would have clari-

fied Oriental Jewish melos in terms of identical principles of melodic construction throughout the Near East and Byzantium. Antiphonal and responsorial chanting are surprisingly not discussed, instruments on the plates are too loosely identified, doubts on the Jewishness of Susskind the Minnesinger go unmentioned, and the folksong question is presented in the customary naive and over-generalized fashion. While these weaknesses detract from its usefulness, the book's final chapters should prove valuable sources of information on Israeli composers and their music.

—JOEL NEWMAN.

**AMERICAN CHURCH MUSIC:** Perhaps it is significant that the first book published in colonial America was "The Bay Psalm Book," an attempt to improve on the metrical psalms the Pilgrims had brought with them for congregational singing. All through

our history the music of our churches has played its part, though the story will be new to most readers of Leonard Ellinwood's *"The History of American Church Music"* (Morehouse-Gorham, \$6). Dr. Ellinwood divides his survey into three periods—The Colonial Era (up to 1820), The Next Century (to 1920), and The Contemporary Scene. The various elements that have gone into our sacred music, fuguing tunes, spirituals, white and Negro, Gospel hymns, quartet anthems, and the new style contributed by the moderns—all these are fitted into place, with the personalities that fostered them. The author, both music librarian and clergyman, is peculiarly fitted to tell the story. His absorbingly readable narrative is supplemented in the appendices with repertory lists and biographical notes on outstanding church musicians. There are numerous illustrations.

—PHILIP L. MILLER.

## A Stream

By Witter Bynner

**C**OOL, moving, fruitful and alive I go,  
In my small run reflecting  
all the sky,  
I see through trees,  
I see through melting snow.  
I see through ripples  
which the wind and I  
Can make, and through  
the shadow of a man  
Nor know where I arrive,  
where I began.

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—Lon Tinkle, *The Saturday Review*



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## Business and the Cultural Climate

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less likely to be a paying proposition. As the size of businesses and possibility of large profits have increased, skilled managers and promoters have more and more assumed control; earning statements and the welfare of stockholders have become matters of primary concern. In the entertainment and communication fields editorial and artistic points of view can be allowed to prevail only if they produce profitable results. Those whose job it is to satisfy a large clientele are necessarily conditioned by the responses of the audience they are serving, and their own esthetic judgments will in time be affected by the atmosphere in which they work.

**T**HIS does not mean that the heads of large newspaper, magazine, book, film, radio, and television companies are evil men conforming to the radical caricaturists' pictures of them. In most cases they would like to have pride in their product and they would like to have the recognition and the regard of critical opinion that comes from making superior quality available. They usually find themselves, however, caught in a competitive situation in which not only success, but survival, demands constantly maintained or even increasing volume and allows little room either for indulging in personal tastes or in straying far from the line of proven appeal.

Once a structure has been created which is dependent on a given turnover it is almost impossible to pull back. The audience exists; if one company lets some part of it get away a rival will be there to snap it up. Film makers must provide goods that will fill huge theatres; magazines and newspapers will lose their advertising if circulation drops; sponsors demand television shows with high popularity ratings; publishers find that issuing a given twenty-five-cent book is unprofitable unless it will attract close to 200,000 buyers. It does not at all follow that the article of wide circulation is necessarily inferior. The popular can, of course, be excellent and the experiment worthless. The question raised by the condition is not whether bigness in itself is good or bad, but rather whether the small can also flourish—not merely occasionally exist—alongside it. For in the field of ideas and art the new, the original, the different have always played an invaluable role. Much of what we most cherish in our intellectual heritage has in the first instance received trifling acceptance and has gradually

grown and sifted down through wider and wider circles, to be appreciated eventually by large numbers. We are familiar with the stories of our most highly regarded novelists whose first several books went entirely unnoticed by the public, of great painters and musicians whose work took years to be recognized.

Hospitality to the original has often depended on young ambitious enterprisers trying to establish a place for themselves. We are not living in a world in which the doors are shut to such new activities, but in most fields control has become vested in fewer and fewer hands, so that competition, even though intense, is usually a struggle between giants. The cards are importantly stacked against the newcomer or the producer who is addressing himself to a small portion of the people. The newspapers with huge circulation can afford to buy innumerable features with which a less wealthy rival can scarcely compete. Book clubs and paperback editions that are based on big circulation can afford to offer bargains which make the ordinary volume of narrower appeal seem exorbitant in price. The quality magazines aimed at pleasing relatively restricted circles have to charge a much higher retail price than their mass-directed competitors, can pay far less for contributions, and can hope to have their wares on sale in only a small percentage of the localities that are available to the more popular periodicals. No one can undertake to bring a play to the commercial stage with the hope of profit unless it promises to be of hit proportions.

These conditions lead to enormous difficulties not only for the small producers, but possibly even more so for the creative artists who are as yet unrecognized or who are trying to address themselves to something less than the mass. These are apt to be the very people who explore new paths and who bring stimulation and variety to the fields in which they work. Without them conformity and repetition of proven formulas are likely to be the pattern, but at present there is evidence that the original talent which does not fit in with currently accepted popularity has tremendous difficulty in getting heard.

Even in music, where the phonograph and the radio have created an undreamed-of audience for the very best and where consequently the mass distributor can make his strongest case for having contributed to cul-