

## Writers and Writing

Continued from page 22

larity as a novelist and literary figure in order to tell the truth to his genteel readers.

The second half of Howells's life is indeed a heroic and unique episode in our national letters in which this cautious, uncertain, and very often anguished artist—this urbane man of affairs—became almost a solitary rebel, a bold dissenter, a radical critic of American society. Mr. Cady does not quite get at the emotional springs of Howells's long drive for literary success and his dramatic renunciation of it. But this biography is intelligent and solid; and the next volume should be even more interesting.

**THE UNIQUE MISS ROBERTS:** Harry Molden Campbell and Ruel E. Foster, who five years ago collaborated in an effective literary appraisal of William Faulkner, now turn their attention to another modern in "Elizabeth Madox Roberts: American Novelist" (University of Oklahoma Press, \$3.75). Their more detailed admiration of Miss Roberts's achievement is seconded by J. Donald Adams, who in a foreword to the volume finds Miss Roberts's "The Time of Man" one of those books, he says, like "Moby Dick" and "The Scarlet Letter" which stand alone, resembling nothing else in American literature. Messrs. Campbell and Foster present a more reasoned, perceptive examination of the novelist's life and writings, discovering in her best work a symbolic expression of the primacy of the human spirit unequalled in her generation. Theirs is high praise, but their demonstration is seasoned with quotations and explications which will tempt most readers to turn to Miss Roberts herself. This is certainly a good thing. Her sensitivity to people and to place, her style which so often seems the perfect blending of word to mood or perception, and her proud certainty that spirit could prevail beyond cant or creed, make her a person not to be forgotten. For people who need reasons, Messrs. Campbell and Foster have provided compelling ones.

—LEWIS LEARY.

**HENRY JAMES'S CONCERN WITH ART** and architecture is observed by almost every reader and has been pointed to by a number of critics, but Edwin T. Bowden in his small book on "The Themes of Henry James" (Yale University Press, \$3), which he explains in subtitle as "A System of Orientation through the Visual Arts," now

demonstrates how intimately this concern is related to the intricate, essential meaning of James's fiction, how "a basic esthetic taste . . . draws the man, the critic, and the novelist into one unified being." "Not only does he constantly echo his intimate knowledge of the visual arts in the novels," writes Mr. Bowden, "but he also makes extensive use of the arts to define and illustrate the themes of his novels." As James himself put it, "The forms are different . . . but the field is the same—the immense field of contemporary life observed for an artistic purpose." Mr. Bowden finds James's references to the arts "seldom restricted in function to the simple establishment of scene and local color, or even to the strict definition of a theme," but, as imagery or symbolism, "an integral part of the greater structure and meaning of the novel." By examining a few of James's works, he demonstrates the intricately subtle uses to which the novelist put his own discriminating understanding of art. His comments on "The Portrait of a Lady" and "The Golden Bowl" are especially good.

Among the most charming attributes of Mr. Bowden's book is a simple concreteness of its own, in basing what it has to say on direct examination of what James said or suggested, in saying itself what it set out to say, and then in stopping. People who admire Henry James more than they admire other people's ideas about him will like Mr. Bowden for this. —L. L.

### FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 713

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 713 will be found in the next issue.*

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## ASCAP vs. BMI

Continued from page 15

own the radio stations and the television stations and since the two big networks also own the two biggest recording companies, their interlocking strength is obvious. Add to this the fact that they are now in the music business, that they now publish their own songs, own their own copyrights, and it is clear how much at their mercy the average songwriter is. If he is an employee of BMI his songs will be "plugged"—the trade term for exploitation. If he is a member of ASCAP or some other association he has every reason to feel out in the cold.

The evidence of how much the broadcasters abuse these interlocking powers may be disputable, but it must be remembered that if there were no evidence whatever of abuse, there is overwhelming evidence of a concentration of power that could be abused. Songwriters have no objection to the existence of BMI or any other copyright pool. The danger lies in the ownership of BMI, in the fact that these copyrights are in the hands of the people who control all the outlets for exploiting music.

The broadcasters' chief defense has been publication of figures which purport to prove that between 70 and 80 per cent of the music played on the air is not BMI. I will not undertake at this time to dispute these figures. The standard and popular musical literature of this country lies in the public domain and in many of the works of ASCAP. Naturally, these must be played. If they weren't the viewers and listeners would curtail a good deal of their viewing and listening.

But other figures have been published by BMI claiming in a boastful spirit that they have had in one week seven or eight BMI numbers out of "the first ten," and in another month six out of the first ten, and even nine out of the first ten. This is the significant thing. The new songs that have to be exploited, introduced by records, and played by disc jockeys—this is the department in which BMI predominates because it makes the records and controls the channels through which they are played!

A group of songwriters has started a suit against the broadcasters, demanding \$150,000,000 damages and the divestiture of ownership of BMI from the broadcasters. The prosecution of this suit we must leave to the lawyers and the decision to the judges. There was, nevertheless, some interesting evidence brought forth by the

Congressional investigation a few weeks ago. One witness testified that BMI sends "music memos" to every station in the country describing current phonograph records sent by BMI for plugging. He quoted a sentence from Volume 1 which goes as follows:

This is a BMI number—meaning it is your own music. (Be careful of the other side of this disc, it is NOT a BMI tune!)

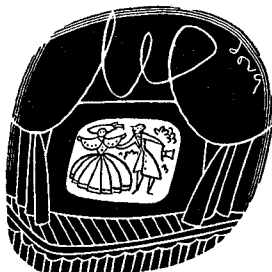
There was another instance of a contract between BMI and a publisher. This publisher also owned some firms that were in ASCAP. A clause in this contract provided that the publisher's ASCAP firms would not exploit any ASCAP music!

The songwriter who is not an employee of BMI has very legitimate fears. He feels at the mercy of a chain of interests which not only creates competition for him, but has the means of favoring that competition for its own profit and increase of power.

I would like to suggest that the songwriters are not the only ones who should be afraid. The public has a right to hear the best music, not what the communications directors decide. The situation is an unhealthy one. I am surprised that the broadcasters themselves do not show more initiative toward seeking a remedy for this situation. Obviously the remedy is to voluntarily rid themselves of BMI, get out of the music publishing business and, with clean hands, confine themselves to their function of broadcasting and telecasting. If they do not do this, the combination of their present assets may well turn into a fearful liability.

I must add that I regard the men who have been guiding our networks as men of exceptional talent and energy. By and large they have done a remarkable job in developing first radio and then television entertainment. Impairing the freedom of musical creation and erecting a structure for unfair competition is a black mark. I would like to see them erase it voluntarily.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Next week SR will publish a reply to Mr. Hammerstein by Carl Haverlin, president of Broadcast Music, Inc.



## Age 4 . . . He Works Every Day Till Midnight

This is Antonis Pavolopoulos, age 4. At an hour when other children are sleeping, he sells almonds at an outdoor cafe every day till midnight. Thus he struggles to support himself. His ill parents cannot even provide him with his most basic need—his daily food. Two older children cannot find work, for this area in Greece is economically depressed. Like Antonis the younger children sell almonds to keep from starving. "Home" is one room with no ceiling. "Bed" is a bundle of old rags on the cement floor. Antonis begged his parents for permission to work. He cried till his father made a wooden basket for him. He tries to wrap the almonds himself in the little paper cones, but his tiny hands are too small. Only the parents' anguish of misery and poverty forced them to permit Antonis to work. Heartsick and weary, they look with despair on Antonis and their other children who go to bed at night only with hunger and distress. Won't you help a distressed child like Antonis and his family—for your help today means hope for tomorrow.

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## Why Angels

Continued from page 14

over the producer in any of his creative efforts to put on the play.

What if the play never recovers its original investment? During the life of the play, the producer gets his percentage, the actors get paid, the writer gets his royalty. In some cases, this system, as it pertains to a play that might not be a hit, could prove financially beneficial to all these parties, since the original investment can often be more than enough to keep the production alive longer than if it were presented in the routine commercial way. If the producer desires he can use funds earmarked for him in the foundation to keep the play going. These are funds which would have been returned to some previous investors in a commercial production and on which the investors would have already paid a large share in taxes.

Where does this leave us angels, especially the great majority in America that invests between \$500 to \$1,000 in plays?

We would derive no profits—financially, that is—from our investment. (Actually, as any income-tax expert can tell you, there can be some real disadvantages to making money on plays and some real advantages in losing money or simply donating it to a not-for-profit corporation, especially if you are in the higher income-tax brackets.) Certainly the hard-boiled investors, notably those who got rich in the earlier days when it was still possible to get rich on theatrical investments, will scoff.

But for many of us, I believe, the system I advocate will mean great satisfaction and genuine gratification.

We will be more vital to the theatre in whose activity we find such vicarious joy.

We will have the identification we seek and rarely get now.

We will help to stimulate real fervor and fresh enthusiasm in the theatre.

This new kind of angelhood will find us investing our money not merely into this play or that play. We will be making an investment in theatre, the American Theatre. The "kick" of the gamble will yield to the kick of a strong, and greatly-needed, contribution to the vitality of an artistic medium which we have fervent affection for and which obviously fills certain emotional needs in all of us.

And, who knows, we angels might even get to meet a few actors and directors, be invited to opening nights, get our names on the program, and buy extra seats without paying scalpers' prices!

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# SR/ RECORDINGS SECTION

FEBRUARY 23, 1957

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Hugo Distler.

By IRVING KOLODIN

**E**VEN though their country is presently divided into two parts, the Germans are traditionally celebrated as people who don't do things by halves. The latest indication is the appearance of a boxed collection of six long playing records, complete with scores and relevant documentation, which, under the general title of "Musica Nova," will eventually embrace nineteen works by fifteen composers. The contents have been selected by the "Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft and the German section of the International Music Council," says Hans Mersmann in his introduction, "under the auspices of UNESCO."

Eventually, we are informed, the records will be available in shops through the Deutsche Grammophon's American affiliate, which is Decca. Libraries and other institutions can order the sets directly from Germany. A source point for audition,

## THE NEW GERMAN MUSIC

### *An Old Tradition Reviving*

we are informed, would be the German consulates in various American cities. One set has been made available in the record archives of each consulate office, for loan to colleges, conservatories, or other responsible agents. This participation by the German government is the limit of its subsidy of the venture, which was organized and carried out by Deutsche Grammophon with the assistance of the German section of the International Music Council, as noted above.

The factors involved are, of course, much more complex than appears on the surface. The recording and distribution of elaborate contemporary works is almost invariably non-commercial, meaning that it is excluded from the normal program of companies organized for profit and responsible to stockholders at the year's end. Nevertheless, a considerable body of such music has come into existence, rather haphazardly. The Arts Council, in Britain, has underwritten a few projects; London Records, through its activities on the Continent and in Scandinavia, has processed a surprising number of recordings (local in origin) for international distribution; Columbia in this country has a program, and RCA—which, in an isolated instance, has ventured so costly an enterprise as a complete recording of Menotti's "The

Saint of Bleecker Street"—is at work on a plan of its own.

None of these represents such a systematic procedure as Deutsche Grammophon has undertaken, for no country's problem is quite the same as the German one. We have begun to hear in this country of such men as Orff, Egk, and Blacher, who are already in the fifty-to-sixty age group. They have, however, been separated from us by more than a war and its aftermath. Virtually no new German music was heard abroad after 1933, for the then-celebrated Hindemith, Krenek, Toch, Schoenberg, et al. either left or were ejected when the Nazis took power. The regime itself was anti-experimental where the arts were concerned, tending to suppress still further the emergence of consequential new talent.

**I**N A real sense then, there is a gap of nearly a quarter of a century in the panorama of German music stretching back for so many centuries. How many musicians in this country know even the name of Johann Nepomuk David, a musician of sixty-one who became director of the Leipzig Conservatory in 1939, has written twelve books of organ music, quantities of chamber music and other orchestral music besides the concerto for violin and orchestra (Op. 45) dating from 1952 which is included