



## Munch Begins His Last Go-Round—Fou Ts'ong

THE past, present, and future of the Boston Symphony Orchestra coalesced more than casually at the first concert of its final season in Carnegie Hall. For it began with Charles Munch, who is retiring at the end of this season, conducting an "Elegy in Memory of Serge Koussevitzky" (his predecessor), by Howard Hanson. In a box was Erich Leinsdorf, who will succeed Munch, paying heed also to the orchestra's playing of a new symphony (No. 3) by Alexei Haieff and an old symphony (No. 1) by Johannes Brahms.

Of the two new works, Hanson's "Elegy" was, clearly, the easier to like. It is direct, straightforward, schooled in the manners of the eulogist, and above all, well-sounding. It seemed, somewhat, to follow the formula ascribed by the late Ernest Newman to the "Marche funèbre" of Chopin's B flat minor Sonata. "The poor fellow is dead" (sombre). "But he had a good life and he is probably enjoying the hereafter" (brightening up). "But, after all, he is dead" (sombre again). In Hanson's case, the "moving ahead" section suggestive of the conductor's long, active career tended also to recall some composers for whom he had a special partiality—Sibelius, Wagner, Copland. Whether this was wholly intentional, I have no way of knowing—but it was, in a special way, appropriate. Munch organized these as well as the other values with considerable persuasiveness, and with a hint of pastel shadings (in an autumnal hue) which typify the sound of the orchestra at its current best.

The Haieff symphony was, of course, quite another matter. It is spare, sophisticated, chary of any note not preordained to occupy a meaningful place in a chord, a thematic interjection or a counterphrase. This, to be sure, is a valuable discipline against the venial sin of overwriting. But it can, and does at certain moments of this work, produce the impression that the composer has pondered so long over his next move that, in the manner of a chess match, interest in the outcome is forfeit. One could go on to make a variety of other analogies in the same metaphoric frame, but the sum of them all would be that Haieff here is rather more occupied with method than communication. He has, for example, alluded to the slow movement as "Narcissus," because the latter portion is a total reflection of the beginning, note for note, backward and upside down. Doubtless I would hear more of this a second, third, or fourth time;

but would it mean more? I doubt it. The finale also has its share of the schematic, but not, to my taste, enough of impulse, decisiveness, or resolution to establish a real involvement with the listener. There was every indication that the composer, who was present to acknowledge the applause for his work, was pleased with the performance.

A pianist direct from China who qualified for an engagement with the New York Philharmonic would be indeed exceptional; but Fou Ts'ong, who is, indeed, Chinese, does not quite fit the description. For he has spent the years since 1955, when he was a prize winner in Warsaw, absorbing European influences, especially the traditional approaches to the F minor (No. 2) Concerto of Chopin with which he was introduced as a soloist with Paul Paray conducting. In several respects it was finely fluent, musical Chopin, touched with many evidences of artistic sensitivity and awareness of the composer's poetic purpose.

However, these were qualities that had to be perceived in spite of, rather than by means of, the sound Fou Ts'ong produces. It had a certain amount of resonance in cantilena passages, especially in the slow movement, but it inclined to be metallic in runs and arpeggios, and incisive rather than ringing in chords. It all tended to become overburdened by Paray's preference for a very large body of players (for Chopin) in the orchestra, beginning with eight basses. In any case, more subtlety, contrast, and variety of sound is imperative if Fou Ts'ong is to make the most of his otherwise admirable qualities.

For the orchestral elements of the evening, Paray had the players under firm control in the "Hebrides" ("Fingal's Cave") Overture of Mendelssohn, the Schumann C major Symphony, and, post-pianist, Ravel's "Bolero." His fine sense of phrasing, orchestral coloration and balance were especially evident in the Schumann, whose slow movement gave the Philharmonic's first clarinet (Stanley Drucker) and oboe (Harold Gombert) opportunity for a perfectly matched interchange.

Along with its promised "Ring" cycle, this season of Metropolitan Opera may be remembered as much for a cycle of Puccini, whose works promise to exceed any previous sum for a single season. In the latest "Butterfly" Dorothy Kirsten demonstrated the vocal command (short of meeting the written requirements of the entrance), carefully elabo-

rated characterization, and identity with the inner life of the one she is impersonating which place it first in her range of competence. It is, also, a far closer approach to credibility than her recent Minnie in "La Fanciulla," which, however well it was sung (and much of it was well sung) was so marcelled, glamorized, and carefully tailored as to suggest that her mountain shack was hard by a Forty-niner's version of Helena Rubinstein's.

But who is to make a case for credibility in the present state of matters Metropolitan when the Pinkerton to Kirsten's Cio-Cio-San is the eager, musicianly, but light-voiced George Shirley? Musicianship, a modest demeanor, and intelligent feeling for the vocal line of Puccini are factors in his favor, but he is, in tonal production, a size or two small for this auditorium. Such a moment as Pinkerton's angry order for the local priest to desist from disturbing the peace of "Casa mia" ("My home") lost force, hence meaning, for lack of it in the singer's voice, cleverly as Fausto Clevea endeavored to cover the lack with his conducting. Clifford Harvuot was an uncommonly convincing Sharpless, the new Andrea Velis a good Goro, and Margaret Roggero a cherishable Suzuki.

The Metropolitan added a tall, broad-shouldered man with a voice to match when Randolph Symonette attracted more than usual attention to the music of Telramund at a recent "Lohengrin". From a background of musical theatre ("Street Scene," "The Consul," etc.) Symonette has made his way through the German opera theatres to an authoritative command of Wagnerian requirements. He tends a little to the explosive enunciation of text, but this may alter in another part. Of particular note were his top tones: free and on pitch in the difficult E-F range. Also new was Ernst Wiemann, who was rather hard put for the depth or height of the vocal range for King Henry. Character roles would seem to be more in his line.

Latest of imported dance attractions is the "Mazowsze" Polish song and dance company currently at the City Center. Its sizable complement of females is not only talented but pretty, and its matching male personnel earn high marks for physical discipline and spirit. But, in terms of some past visitors, the choreographic arrangements are highly informal, lacking the creative discipline that makes artistry of the informal. Within its scope, the company performs well (including the compliment of a touchingly sung "Red River Valley") but that scope is decidedly restricted. As a detail: an amount of choreographic care equal to the needlework on the enchanting costumes would have added as much to the visual movement as to the decor.—IRVING KOLODIN.



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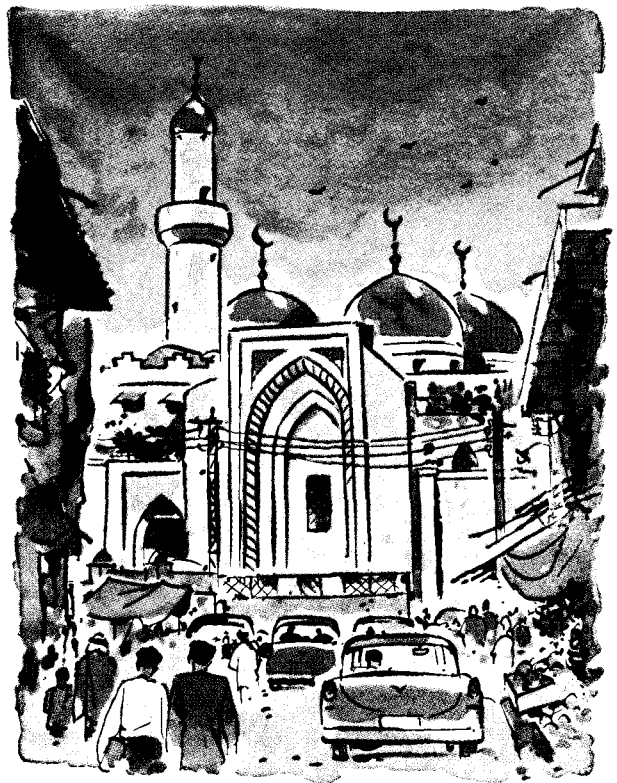
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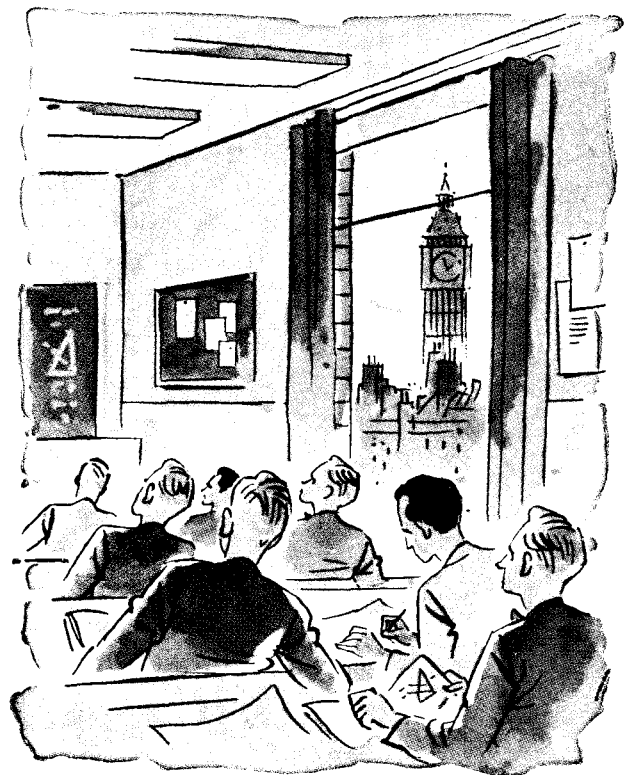
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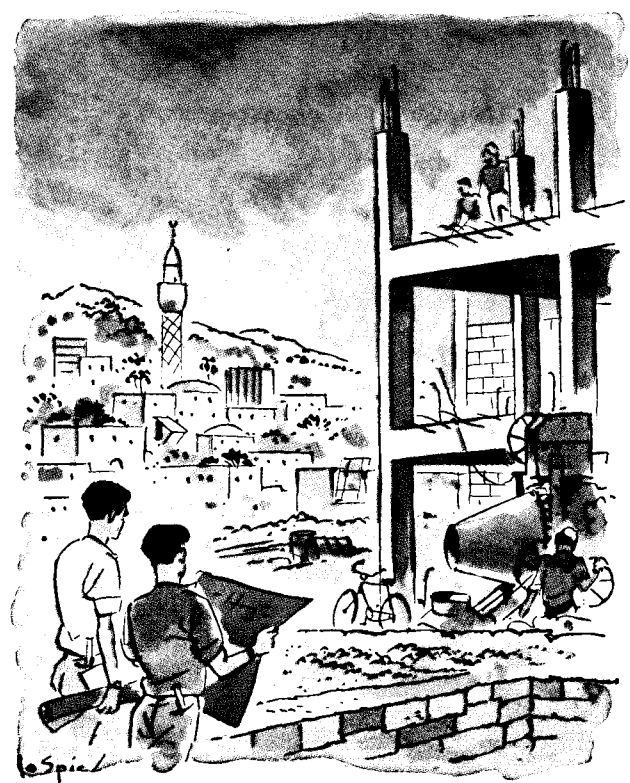
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Ordinarily, only one of SR's film critics reviews a given movie. But after seeing advance screenings of Stanley Kramer's "Judgment at Nuremberg," Hollis Alpert and Arthur Knight were so impressed with its significance that each asked for the opportunity to write about it. Their evaluations, written without consulting each other, appear on this and the following pages.

**A**SIDE from one or two niggardly quibbles regarding "Judgment at Nuremberg," it seems to me that Stanley Kramer has once again used film importantly and that he continues to emerge as the one truly responsible moviemaker in Hollywood. He has addressed himself to that most haunting of questions, the degree of involvement of all levels of German society in the awesome criminality of the Nazi regime. The success of his more than three-hour-long motion picture is twofold: he has put on the screen an entirely absorbing story, and he has provided thoughtful insights into the nature of Nazism and its hold on the German people.

He has also managed to marshal a Hollywood cast of eminence and capability; they include Spencer Tracy as an American judge of rugged honesty, sent from Maine to preside over one of the second series of War Crime trials at Nuremberg; Burt Lancaster as a once prominent German jurist, known before the Hitler days for his probity and learning; Richard Widmark as the American military prosecutor; Maximilian Schell as a flamboyant defender of the four judges in the dock; and Marlene Dietrich as a gracious, charming German widow, whose husband, a general, had been hanged after the first series of trials. In smaller, but highly effective roles are Montgomery Clift and Judy Garland, both seen as victims of the kind of justice purveyed by the men on trial.

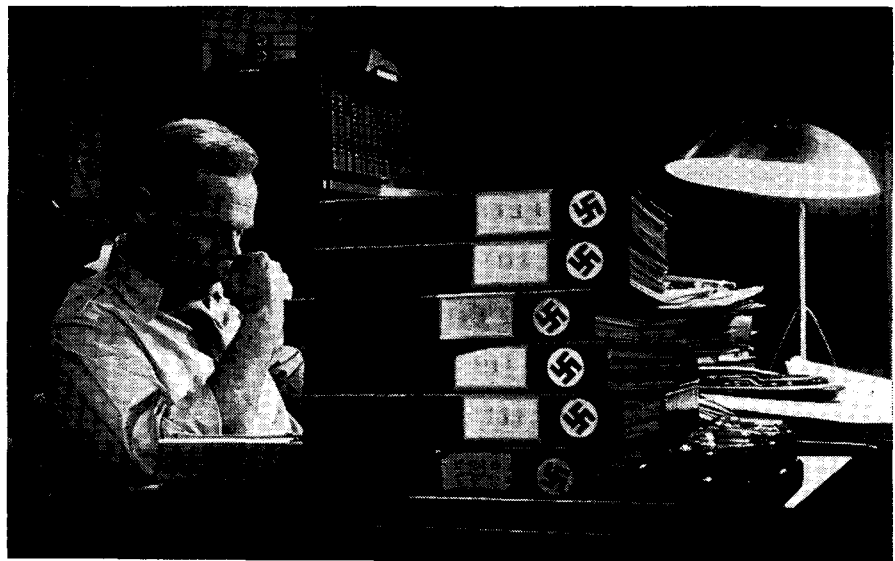
Kramer has a reason, of course, for assembling casts of a potent box-office nature; they more or less insure that large audiences are attracted to his pictures and, in the present-day structure of the film industry, help promote the needed financing. On the other hand, major stars show a surprising willingness to participate in his ventures, a recognition of his forcefulness that has not yet been shared in by the feebler mentalities of Hollywood. (After "High Noon," "The Defiant Ones," and "On the Beach," there is still no

Academy Award for him.) It would seem, by now, that there is no accident involved when unusual performances turn up in his pictures; it has happened this time, too. Tracy is splendid in conveying the very same kind of puzzlement that a good many of us have felt when attempting to equate the German individual with the monstrous German acts. And Marlene Dietrich, normally not one of my fancies, gets my admiration for her cool, controlled

performance as a woman of culture and grace attempting to stress the "other" side of the Germans of that period.

But the others are fine, too. As a result, the courtroom comes alive. Burt Lancaster, made up to look old and grizzled, stolidly listens, no emotion on his face, while the prosecution and the defense battle, until finally, in one of the movie's best moments, he takes the stand, both to explain and confess, and to provide the most crushing indictment of all. While these events are going on, Spencer Tracy, as Judge Haywood, reflectively wanders through Nuremberg, listens in his mind to the roar of Nazi "heils" in the infamous stadium, chats with the lovely German widow, in-

### Haunting Question



Richard Widmark as prosecutor—Unusual performances are no accident.



Burt Lancaster as a German jurist—the most crushing indictment of all.