

SR's Checklist of the Week's New Books

Crime, Suspense

CRIMES ACROSS THE SEA. By The Mystery Writers of America. Edited by John Creasey. Harper & Row. \$3.95.

THE EYES AROUND ME. By Gavin Black. Harper & Row. \$3.95.

KILLER IN THE RAIN. By Raymond Chandler. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.50

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER. By Stephen Sheppard. McKay. \$4.95.

THE WOMAN WITH THE PORTUGUESE BASKET. By Eva-Lis Wuorio. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. \$3.50.

Current Affairs

THE FREE ENTERPRISERS: Kennedy, Johnson and the Business Establishment. By Hobart Rowen. Putnam. \$5.95.

WHERE I STAND. By Barry Goldwater. McGraw-Hill. Hardbound, \$2.95. Paperback, 95¢.

Fiction

AGRIPPA'S DAUGHTER. By Howard Fast. Doubleday. \$4.95.

THE FORTRESS. By Catherine Gavin. Doubleday. \$4.95.

GOD BLESS THE CHILD. By Kristin Hunter. Scribners. \$4.95.

HOT FOR CERTAINTIES. By Robin Douglas-Home. Dutton. \$3.95.

I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING. By Hans Koningsberger. Simon & Schuster. \$3.95.

AN INFINITY OF MIRRORS. By Richard Condon. Random House. \$5.95.

THE ITALIAN GIRL. By Iris Murdoch. Viking. \$4.50.

MORE COMBAT STORIES. By William Chamberlain. John Day. \$4.50.

THE NEW GIRL. By Elise Sanguinetti. McGraw-Hill. \$5.50.

THE PEOPLE ONE KNOWS. By Robert Boles. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.95.

THE RIGHT BURGEER. By Henry Lee. Trident. \$4.95.

SKIN DEEP. By Ralph Martin. McKay. \$3.95.

TARGET. By William Wister Haines. Atlantic-Little, Brown. \$5.75.

History

HOW THEY LIVED. Vol. II: 1485-1700 (British Isles). By Molly Harrison and O. M. Royston. Barnes & Noble. \$6.

Miscellany

A BIG BOWL OF PUNCH. Edited by William Cole. Simon & Schuster. \$8.95.

BUTTING IN: An Adman Speaks Out. By Milton H. Biow. Doubleday. \$4.95.

CASSEROLE TREASURY. By Lousene Rousseau Brunner. Harper & Row. \$4.95.

THE FLAMMARION BOOK OF ASTRONOMY. Translated and edited by Bernard Pagel. Simon & Schuster. \$19.95 until Dec. 25; \$22.95 thereafter.

THE STUPIDITY PROBLEM AND OTHER HARASSMENTS. By John Fischer. Harper & Row. \$4.95.

INSIGHT: Ideas of Modern Science. By J. Bronowski. Harper & Row. \$5.95.

MARVELS AND MYSTERIES OF OUR ANIMAL WORLD. By the editors of *Reader's Digest*. Little, Brown. \$12.95.

THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL: The First Eighty Years. By Will C. Conrad, Kathleen Wilson, and Dale Wilson. Univ. of Wisconsin Press. \$5.

MOREHEAD ON BIDDING. By Albert H. Morehead. Macmillan. \$5.95.

SEX AND THE OFFICE. By Helen Gurley Brown. Bernard Geis. \$4.95.

THE STONE AGE ISLAND: New Guinea Today. By Maslyn Williams. Doubleday. \$5.95.

Music, Theater

FIVE OPERAS AND RICHARD STRAUSS. By Lotte Lehmann. Macmillan. \$5.

PANTOMIME: The Silent Theater. By Douglas and Kari Hunt. Atheneum. \$3.50.

Personal History

AN AMERICAN IN ROME. By Mike Stern. Bernard Geis. \$4.95.

AT LARGE. By Herbert Kubly. Doubleday. \$4.95.

EIGHTH MOON. By Sansan, as told to Bette Lord. Harper & Row. \$4.95.

THE JOURNAL OF THOMAS MOORE. Edited by Peter Quennell. Macmillan. Hardbound, \$4. Paperback, \$1.95.

MEMOIRS OF THE DUC DE SAINT-SIMON. Edited by W. H. Lewis. Macmillan. Hardbound, \$4. Paperback, \$1.95.

POET IN THE FORTRESS. By Thomas C. Aitken, Jr. New American Library. \$6.50.

A START IN FREEDOM. By Sir Hugh Foot. Harper & Row. \$4.95.

THE STUARTS IN LOVE. By Maurice Ashley. Macmillan. \$5.95.

TALES OUT OF CONGRESS. By Stephen M. Young. Lippincott. \$3.95.

Religion

BEST JEWISH SERMONS OF 5723-5724 (1964). Edited by Saul I. Teplitz. Jonathan David. \$5.95.

THE CHAIR OF PETER: A History of the Papacy. By Friedrich Contard. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. \$10.95 until Dec. 25; \$12.50 thereafter.

FINDING OURSELVES. By Sidney Greenberg. Jonathan David. \$5.95.

JOY. By Bertrand Weaver, C. P. Sheed & Ward. \$3.95.

OUR CHRISTIAN HOPE. By Georgia Harkness. Abingdon. \$3.

PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH—Warts and All. By R. Benjamin Garrison. Abingdon. \$3.

PROTESTANTISM IN SUBURBAN LIFE. By Frederick A. Shippey. Abingdon. \$4.50.

REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE. By Frank S. Mead. Abingdon. \$2.75.

THE SEARCH FOR GOD. By Robert W. Gleason, S.J. Sheed & Ward. \$5.

THE WORD: Readings in Theology. Foreword by R.A.F. MacKenzie, S.J. Kenedy. \$4.95. —Compiled by RUTH BROWN.

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ALBAN BERG: AN UPBEAT

By MARTIN BERNHEIMER

THE tragic ending of Alban Berg's life reads like a bad joke. Death was caused by blood poisoning, brought on by nothing more devastating than a bee sting. On December 19, 1935, five days before the end, Berg underwent a blood transfusion and, typically, demanded to thank the donor personally. When he learned that the blood came from Leo K. Marker, a composer of lighter music, he turned to his friend, pupil, and biographer-to-be Willi Reich. "I only hope this won't make an operetta composer of me," he cried in mock desperation.

Berg had a relapse two days later. On December 23 he made a strange prophecy: "This will be the decisive day." Later, amid feverish hallucinations and still very much concerned with the unfinished *Lulu*, he made some motions as if conducting. "An upbeat, an upbeat!" he muttered repeatedly. He died early the next morning.

Considering the accomplishments of Berg's relatively short lifetime, not to mention his importance as a revolutionary musical figure, it is surprising that printed biographical data on the composer has been so sketchy. Until recently, there were only three books that dealt with his life story at all, and none of these—not even Reich's—could be described as substantial biographies.

There are reasons for this apparent neglect. Berg was only slightly more controversial when he died twenty-nine years ago than he is today, and his atonal scores have never been clearly understood by the public at large. Early writers saw it as their duty, therefore, to explain (or at least analyze) the man's creations before attempting to explain (or analyze) the man himself. Willi Reich, probably the foremost Berg authority alive, devoted less than a dozen pages to biographical data in his initial study published in 1937 (Reichner Verlag, Vienna). The remaining 196 pages were given over to essays on the Berg output, written by the composer himself as well as by other and contemporary musicologists.

Reich's effort was complemented in the 1950s by H.F. Redlich's equally scholarly *Alban Berg: The Man and his Music* (English edition, Abelard-Schuman Ltd., New York, 1957). But, contrary to the implication of the title, Redlich concentrated primarily on The

Music (276 pages), and not on The Man (a mere twenty-eight pages). Until last year, the best source of Berg data remained a remarkably unprepossessing little volume by Konrad Vogelsang called *Alban Berg: Leben und Werk* (Max Hesse Berlin, 1959). Although Vogelsang made no attempt to exhaust his subject, Berg's life got at least as much attention as did his works.

Ironically, when Willi Reich finally got around to revising his long out-of-print first effort (the original had been banned when it became clear that Berg's esthetic principles clashed with those of the Nazis), he chose the same title as had Vogelsang. The new *Alban Berg: Leben und Werk* (Atlantis Verlag, Zurich, 1963), however, bears little resemblance to any of its predecessors. The "Leben" portion alone numbers almost eighty pages. It represents the most exhaustive documentation of Berg's life currently available.

Eventually this, too, may prove inadequate for complete understanding of the man who created *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, and the Violin Concerto dedicated to Manon Gropius. Certainly an even greater time lapse is needed to make our perspective a wholly objective one. And publication of hitherto unrevealed letters and memoirs will no doubt add to our comprehension of Berg's goals as well as his achievements. In the meantime, however, we may be content with Reich's fascinating blueprint, to which Redlich and Vogelsang still add valuable illumination.

Berg himself would probably be the first to object to our insistence that we know as much as possible about a composer's life. "I believe the creative effort is more important than the man," Berg wrote to Erwin Stein in 1921. "Perhaps the only reason for 'nurturing' the man at all is so one may coax from him the highest possible creative effort."

Be that as it may, the act of *reading* about these creative efforts is often both frustrating and unrevealing. Pedantic studies of how Berg put his works together are no more satisfying for the hungry listener than cookbooks are for a hungry man.

Perhaps there is a correlation between Berg's distaste for matters biographical and the physical unpleasantness of his own existence. A man strangely prone to infections and illness, he grew accustomed to pain while still quite young. At the age of fifteen he suffered the

physical shock of severe bronchial asthma and the emotional shock of his father's unexpected death, both within two months. It is probably significant that Berg turned to music for the first time during that same year, producing songs with texts by Franz Ewers, Siegfried Fleischer, and Walther von der Vogelweide. It is also worth noting that Berg's psychological makeup was such that he attempted suicide three years later, following a series of amorous and scholastic failures.

Long before a family inheritance enabled him to concentrate on composing full-time, Berg found himself strangely fascinated by the musical avant-garde. Strauss and Mahler were the strongest influences of his early years; each represented the culmination of romanticism on one hand, the bridge into a new musical realm on the other. In Berg's search for an original, valid mode of expression, however, he desperately needed an authoritative, more advanced guide. He knew that the harmonic language of his Brahmsian lied compositions was dead, but saw no clear alternative.

Then Arnold Schönberg entered his life, practically as a *deus ex machina*. Introduced by Berg's musical but less creative brother, Schönberg became the younger composer's idol, friend, adviser, and teacher. Lieder continued to be Berg's most frequent vehicles, for the time being at least, but they soon began to take on avant-garde characteristics missing in the earliest efforts. The last piece written under Schönberg's tutelage was not a vocal composition but the String Quartet, Op. 3, of 1910. With it, a final barrier between past and present had been broken.

When Berg himself turned to teaching in his later years, he followed Schönberg's relatively conservative pedagogical techniques. "Standard" rules of counterpoint and fugue composition were invariably enforced, though matters of form were handled a bit more flexibly. Berg disliked correcting mistakes, preferring to scrawl on exercise papers such instructions as "Find a better way!" For most composition lessons he cited examples from the classics. But if a student showed honest modernistic learnings, the example came from Schönberg and Berg.

Although Berg had met Gustav Mahler only once, the latter's death came as a bitter shock. It was afterwards that Berg became closely connected with the family of his former idol. The Mahler's name recurs like a leitmotif throughout the Berg biography. Mahler's widow helped finance *Wozzeck*; it is to her that the opera is dedicated, just as it was the memory of her late daughter (of a second marriage) that inspired Berg to write the Violin Concerto. Anna Mahler, daughter of Gustav and Alma, was the artist sum-