

cluded Quincy Porter's *Fantasy on a Pastoral Theme* – a romantic and almost frenetic work with some appeal; Howard Hanson's *Concerto* for organ, strings and harp (which seemed even more inflated and awkward than is usual with him); Francis Poulenc's *Concerto* for organ, strings and kettledrum – a disappointingly mixed-up affair; Walter Piston's *Prelude and Allegro* and Leo Sowerby's "Classic" *Concerto*. The excellence of Piston's work, its clarity and nobility of expression distinguished it from all the others. It was undoubtedly the only genuinely successful piece on a program of untidy and (excepting the Poulenc) humorless compositions.

At Jordan Hall in Boston, a premiere of Daniel Pinkham's ballet, *Narragansett Bay*, revealed very little in the way of invention, an overall amateurishness, and an unfortunate tendency to quote directly from *Billy the Kid* and *The Incredible Flutist*. The absurdity of the choreography by Jan Veen and the ineptness of the dancing only made matters worse.

Irving Fine

VIGOR AND FRESHNESS AT ROCHESTER

DIVERSITY is the aim of the annual Rochester Festivals of American Music. Forty compositions by thirty composers were presented in the festival at the Eastman School this spring. The seven sessions ranged from a string-quartet evening to a concert given by the Eastman School Senior Symphony and an ensemble of women's voices. Also included were programs by the Symphony Band, the Ballet Company and the Chamber Orchestra, as well as a new experiment billed as "Concert Music in the Jazz Idiom." Somehow, in spite of limited rehearsal time and related impediments, the performances had a freshness and vigor, if not always a high polish, that made for a feeling of youth and sincerity. This was true whether the work performed was the *Pagan Poem* of Loeffler or something written in 1946.

The experimental jazz concert, conducted by Jack End and featuring Paul Nero's *Prelude and Allegro* and his hot fiddle, failed to sustain much interest because of the conservative commercialism of most of the ideas. The Symphony Band, under Frederick Fennell, played a program of similar music. Both concerts seemed to prove that it has all been said before and should be said better, but this time it wasn't.

The Thelma Biracree Ballet danced to seven musical scores. Most of these were not written specifically for choreography; some were almost classics in their own field, like Barber's *Overture to "The School for Scandal,"* the Andante from Hanson's *Romantic Symphony* and Gershwin's *American in Paris*.

Works by William Schuman, Normand Lockwood and Walter Piston

were played by the Gordon String Quartet. Schuman showed a sure grasp of the string idiom, and Lockwood imaginative and unconventional musical ideas. But Piston's *Second Quartet* displayed these qualities and a remarkable beauty of form as well.

First public performances of scores by Robert Palmer, Howard Hanson, Bernard Rogers and Wayne Barlow were given by the Eastman School Little Symphony, Fennell again conducting. Originally commissioned for radio performance, these works, together with Roy Harris's new and rhythmically vital *Music for Radio*, made up about as completely varied a program as could be wished. Rogers' *The Plains* is pictorial and economical; two movements from Palmer's *Concerto* for small orchestra show his special ability in writing slow movements and tightly-woven organic polyphony. Barlow's *Nocturne* is a subtle set of variations; Hanson's *Serenade* for flute, harp and strings is a tribute to his versatility and control in a medium likely to present difficulties of expression from the outset.

Two compositions on the final program of the festival (the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra under Howard Hanson) deserve special comment. Weldon Hart's *First Symphony* maintains an exquisite balance of form and content. A true personality emerges. There is a little too much complexity of idea in the finale but even so this is a real symphony. Bernard Rogers, in his *To the Memory of President Roosevelt*, has written a brief and seemingly effortless piece, both economical and expressive.

Burrill Phillips