

present time. He has all the freedom of the self-taught artist and speaks a distinct, original and convincing language. Chevreulle's sensitivity is marked by a childlike freshness and the capricious versatility of the young. He passes with the greatest ease and inimitable naturalness from airy grace to the lyric or the dramatic. These rapid shifts from one mood to another are accomplished without breaking the unity of the thought, always by that logic of the child, according to which everything is simple. Chevreulle, by his quick and penetrating mentality, reminds one of Debussy or Webern. His temperament is expressionist rather than impressionist and this brings him closer to Webern, though he is not uniquely contemplative like the composer of *Das Augenlicht*.

His works were notable from the beginning for the sureness of their realization and the richness of their content. Among the most remarkable are the fourth, fifth and sixth string quartets, a symphony for large orchestra, three excellent concertos for piano, violin and cello, respectively, and a very developed work for orchestra, vocal quartet and soloist, *Souvenirs*. This symphony in seven movements, free, diverse and yet beautifully unified, unfolds some reminiscences of childhood whose scenes are bound together by nothing more than the logic of dreams. Its subconscious essence shapes the musical material which underlines quite diverse and contradictory evocations. *Souvenirs* is large in conception and admirably orchestrated. There are also two delightful compositions for voice and chamber orchestra. *Evasions*, with soprano soloist, is set to very brief children's poems; *Saisons* is for baritone. In both works the voice is used most discreetly. It is scarcely an efflorescence of the music and seems to murmur the text through the orchestral web; in fact the orchestra expresses what the voice only suggests.

The youngest of these composers are Victor Lengley, author of an interesting *Sextet* and a *Concerto* for thirteen instruments, and David van de Woestyne, whose first work, a *Concertino* for violin and chamber orchestra, shows a most inventive and free talent. But this is still in the process of formation.

Paul Collaer

YOUNG FRANCE TODAY

IT is certainly too soon for an exhaustive picture of the music of young France that is just beginning to stir out of the winter's sleep into which it was plunged by four somber years. Political instability and the material difficulties that still weigh heavily on the country's activities could not curb the impulse of the summer of 1944. But after this short period of euphoria during which all hopes flourished, the reign of moderation,

mediocrity and reaction has returned. Big organizations continue to make up their programs of Beethoven, Berlioz and Wagner. The contemporary music societies have not yet resumed their activities. The radio, during the year after the liberation, gave over a good part of its time to modern works, but directives from higher-ups and economic restrictions reduced the number of such performances.

Some of the music composed since 1939 by important contemporaries living abroad has finally come to be known here. Curiously, the works have to a certain extent disappointed the young composers. The older men have certainly lost their ascendancy. It's as if their years of security in far-off America had estranged them from their juniors, who had to undergo a period of so many restraints.

Let us consider first some members of a large group of composers who follow a middle path. Despite their differences they all use a kind of basic language, an eclectic one incorporating the diverse emanations from the great, cosmopolitan musical elite who lived in Paris between the two world wars. The output of a second group I shall discuss later. This fully deviates from the norm and promises more for the future, or at least seems to have some importance as indicating an inquiring spirit.

III

Tony Aubin occupies a choice spot among the more conservative of the first group. His *Second Symphony* has been performed several times and we now await his suite of four scherzi and an oratorio on Jeanne d'Arc. Elsa Barraine, a pupil of Dukas and Prix de Rome winner like Aubin, is working on her third symphony. A developed sense of structure, a personal melodic turn in which almost popular motives intermingle with long, free *mélopées*, and a great thematic concision are outstanding characteristics of her *Second Symphony*, *Quatre chants juifs* and sparkling wind quintet, *Ouvrage de Dames*.

Henry Barraud's successful *Piano Concerto*, composed before the war, has a strong rhythmic framework and an expressive slow movement. His *Offrande à une ombre*, dedicated to the memory of his comrade Jaubert who fell before the enemy, is one of his finest scores, restrained in feeling and intimate in orchestration. In his *Testament Villon* for soloist, harpsichord and a cappella chorus, the voice part moves curiously through all its registers; the choral ballads recall certain motets of the Middle Ages. An oratorio on the Mystery of the Innocents is promised soon.

The works of Pierre Capdevielle, marked somewhat by Hellenism, also by French classicism, are executed with large strokes, *al fresco*. His jovial overture to *Le Pédant joué*, which has a short middle section that is more deeply expressive, and his oratorio, *Pérégrinos*, in which spectacular dramatic situations alternate with more lyrical passages, tell us that the

composer has a strong sense of the theatre, and a capacity to characterize a scene with a minimum of notes. Also worthy of mention are his *Incantation pour la mort d'un jeune Spartiate* and his *Ronsard Sonnets* for voice and five instruments.

Transparency and clear colors distinguish the works of Henri Dutilleux: his charming *Sonatina* for flute and piano, his orchestral suites and incidental music, like his score for Molière's *Princesse d'Elide*. These are pieces which pose no problems of expression or technique; agreeable and elegant, like those of the prolific Jean Francaix, they help to raise the often deplorable level of our light music. Manuel Rosenthal, who seems to have inherited the secrets of amazing orchestration from his teacher Ravel, has brought back from his self-imposed exile during the occupation several works of religious inspiration: a big oratorio, *St. Francis of Assisi*, a *Nativity*, rather violently popular, and *Pietà d'Avignon* for vocal quartet, string orchestra and trumpet, a more intimate and satisfying work.

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Several of our composers differ from this former group in their esthetic preoccupations; they favor new modes of expression or new techniques. The four members of Jeune France seek a revived musical humanism, fearing that neo-classical formalism is too overpowering an influence on contemporary thought. Yves Boudrier has found his voice in a very spontaneous language that we can recognize as his own in several piano pieces, songs and recently completed *Symphony*. Daniel Lesur's vocal music, on texts of Cécil Sauvage, Claude Roy and Heine, often evokes a dreamy landscape. In comparison, his instrumental works, a *Passacaglia* and a set of variations for piano and orchestra, seem a bit dry and less original.

The best-known of this group is, of course, Olivier Messiaen, the organist and fervent Catholic who gives religious titles to nearly all his pieces. An eclectic, he freely uses procedures from the Hindu ragas, Debussyan stylisms or blues-like harmonies. But his taste seems quite uneven. The obviousness of his work certainly guarantees him immediate success. For the public cannot discern the basic spiritual poverty under his complicated methods and is pleased by an agreeable enough music which modernizes the religious trappings of Saint Sulpice; his listeners do not mind if this act is accomplished by means of a cinema organ.

André Jolivet's manner shows an accomplished unity of style, the result of operating in a more or less empiric fashion, rejecting facile procedures. He is gifted with an analytic spirit and a very exact inner ear. Vehement, violent, orgiastic, his music seems to come from the atavistic depths of the subconscious. Messiaen declares that his own music is theologic rather than mystic, voluptuous rather than sensual; Jolivet's is Priapean and incantatory. From *Maria*, a set of piano pieces, to the *Danses Rituelles*

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for orchestra and his latest work, *Psyché*, there is constant evolution. These perfect works have a brilliant clarity; even more, they indicate a rich and benevolent nature. André Marcel, among the youngest composers, also writes in an incantatory style. His music, at first rather thick and arbitrary, is growing purer and freer. He has a new work in progress, the *Cantate du Feu*.

Other young men seek salvation in the twelve-tone system. They are ebullient and combative, almost all of them former students of Messiaen. Besides Pierre Boulez and André Casanova there is Serge Nigg, an observant, restless and untiring person. His strong personality and great musical knowledge allow him to compose with any technique. Despite his age he has written a mass of music. Certain works like the symphonic poems *Timour* and *Yassaq*, the *Concerto* for piano, celesta, percussion and strings and his twelve-tone variations for piano have already been well received.

There is also in France today a group of foreigners who have been here many years. Known as the Ecole de Paris they have been largely shaped by our influences; among them are Marcel Mihalovici, Tibor Harsanyi, Alexandre Tcherepnine, René Leibowitz and Ivan Wishnegradsky. We must not underestimate them nor (though I have had to omit many names) the composers of the middle path, who play a very real role. Their incidental music for the stage and for films, for instance, helps enlarge the new music public. But for me they are surpassed by some of our more inquiring minds, especially the master, André Jolivet, and by the great young hope, Serge Nigg.

Louis Saguer