

ered the evicted tenants about him, and, in song, persuaded them that there is nothing better than living in the street, with the stars for your parlor ceiling and the buttercups and daisies for a carpet.

But, unlike the bourgeois escapists who find perfection in the past, Cantor finds grafters and politicians even in Ancient Rome. In the end he is forced to rely on the good individual, the "friend of the people." The petty bourgeois temper recognizes at all times a "social" problem—"bad" government in need of reform, "unfortunate" circumstances (evictions, unemployment)—and the tendered solution is always with the "good" individual.

Though the recognition of the current social predicament is present, Cantor, and the petty bourgeoisie, are too much rooted in the sentiments and values of the golden age, they still retain the smug optimism, the drooling, mawkish sentimentality and the glittering tinsel.

This is all apparent in *Roman Scandals*, and it has resulted in a dull and uninteresting strip of celluloid pieced together according to the time worn Hollywood formula: so many indexed gags, so much female nudity and "dance" numbers, a chase, and presto!—a film has been created! Even with Cantor's limitations the story contained the possibility of an excellent farce but it is easier for Hollywood not to think and to forget what a camera can be made to do; it is easier to grind out the usual hokum.

NATHAN ADLER.

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# Music

**T**HE advent of Arnold Schoenberg to our shores would have been an important musical event at any time. Coming, as it does, as a result of Hitler's anti-Semitism, at a time when there is a great need for leadership among the expanding creative musical forces of America, there are aspects of special significance attached to his arrival.

That we should eagerly welcome a man of Schoenberg's fame in music, is the continuance of a greatly honored American tradition. The American bourgeoisie, which has always dominated our musical life, has only turned to cultural considerations after having attained financial preëminence. The development of a genuine musical culture indigenous to our soil, even if otherwise possible, would have certainly been frustrated by the stifling patronage or indifference of our bourgeoisie. Not having within its own ranks sufficient talent to place in the position of leadership, which it controls, and not having the perspicacity or patience to search for such talent elsewhere in America and develop it until it reaches that point where it can stand comparison with the best from other parts of the world, our bourgeoisie has always imported our musical artists from other lands. That we have had many distinguished foreign artists of great attainment goes without saying. Yet the criteria governing the choice of those elevated to positions of preëminence in our musical life are not entirely musical. Our musical lights must shine with a fame so bright that our social-musical leaders may bask in the warmth of their glamor and fame, and shine in their reflected glory.

The glamor of Schoenberg's name has long been known to us. While American audiences have occasionally had opportunity to hear his works, yet it is undeniable that part of the glamor has been the result of enchantment lent by distance. With Schoenberg's first American appearance, and certain utterances of his to the press, much of the aforesaid glamor, together with any hopes we may have had that he would bring a new, significant leadership to the creative forces of America, have been dispelled.

The need for musical leadership has long been felt by those who are in touch with the

various phases of musical creation existing in this country. With many young composers, imbued for the most part with no definite ideology, writing in the manner of any influence which happens to catch their fancy for the moment, from jazz to Stravinsky, there is a great opportunity for an inspiring musical genius to crystallize this musical chaos, to purge it of an eclecticism which diffuses and makes sterile its efforts, to imbue it with a definite ideology which will point the way to great heights of achievement.

In this connection it is not amiss to quote from Tchomodanoff's *"History of Music in Connection with the History of Social Development"* (the first attempt at a Marxian interpretation of the whole range of musical history): "Often an artist adopts his ideologies without synthesizing them internally, only connecting them mechanically. Such are the artist-eclectics. A great artist, who has his own creative style, is never an eclectic; he does not feed himself upon bits of ideologies, but upon whole ideological systems of definite class groups. The process of this feeding is often hidden from the consciousness of the artist. However, it exists. It is realistic."

Since such wealth of talent, largely without spiritual direction or definite ideology, exists today in America, there are many attempts, so far futile, to seize the leadership for which there is such urgent, pressing need. Even the redoubtable Paul Whiteman has tried to make secure his slipping crown by offering a substantial sum of money for a new, significant composition in "modern" idiom (in Broadway parlance, "modern" being synonymous with "jazz"). Aaron Copland at Yaddo and elsewhere, Howard Hanson at Rochester, etc., etc., are other manifestations of these attempts toward musical leadership.

Since no composer of world significance had heretofore chosen this country for residence, it is quite natural that many should have looked to Schoenberg for inspiration and guidance. Here was not only a great master, but a man, perhaps a great man, directly connected with one of the most engrossing, significant upheavals in modern times, an exile from his adopted land. Surely such a one would exert an influence on our musical life as would mould our musical tendencies for a long time to come.

The League of Composers, probably unwittingly, performed a service to the musical life of this country of the greatest significance in introducing the distinguished guest in a program composed entirely of his own works. It is well known that few composers, living or dead, can successfully withstand such a terrific test. Without going into long or technical analyses of the various works, the general impression, upon as distinguished an audience of musicians and musical intelligentsia as has

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