

the whole significance of the music. It is not the music that is ambiguous; it says the same thing to everybody. Ambiguity makes its appearance only when each person attempts to formulate in his manner, the emotional impression which he has received . . ."

If a rational understanding of music is not to be supplied by emotion, association, or representation, how, then, may this be reached? Each of the fine arts may be understood only by observing the technical manipulation of subject matter within the boundaries of the media. It is this manipulation that imparts form to any art work and, "the form of a work is its most essential quality . . ." A number of recent aestheticians adhere to the belief that all of the arts should aspire to the condition of music, i. e., in which matter is more completely absorbed into form. The principles of form, namely, dominance of subject matter, unity and variety, balance and evolution, present in all art works, are found to a greater degree in music.

Every musical composition emanates from one or more musical ideas or subjects. Since music is a temporal art, its content cannot be grasped within a single impression, hence the need for repetition. It is this reiteration of subject matter which gives unity and cohesion to the whole. Variety is achieved by the introduction of new ideas, or new treatment of the old, depending upon the composer's skill and ingenuity. A musical idea alone is worthless — it is only by its evolution or development that it achieves meaning, or form. "A musical idea originates in the composer's imagination; he develops it — more and more crystals coalesce with it, until by imperceptible degrees, the whole structure, in its main features appears before him."

It is only by the manipulation of the subject matter itself, that a formal musical structure is obtained; and it is only by a clear understanding of musical form that the rationality of music is perceived.

(\*) 'Die Natur d. Harmonik u. Metrik', Moritz Hauptmann

(§) 'Vision and Design', Roger Fry

(‡) 'The Beautiful in Music', Eduard Hanslick

# COMPOSERS OF MODERN PALESTINE

by PETER GRADENWITZ

MODERN PALESTINE HAS BEEN FIGURING in the musical news ever since the inception, in December 1936, of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, which brought to the country the inimitable maestro of the orchestra, Arturo Toscanini. Since then, many conductors, instrumentalists, and singers have called on Palestine, and new visitors are expected after the temporary cessation of visits owing to the war. Musical life is now dominated by the Palestine Orchestra, the broadcasts of the Palestine Broadcasting service (Jerusalem) with an orchestra of its own, the Palestine Folk Opera Company, and the chamber music offerings of the Palestine String Quartet (Lorand Fenyves, leader), the Kaminsky and Bernstein quartets, and the harpsichordist and pianist Frank Pollack, all of these given in the three main towns, i.e. Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, and Haifa. In addition, a great number of rural choirs and instrumental organizations, a Youth Orchestra (organized by the General Federation of Jewish Labour), a rural orchestra of settlement labourers, a Students' Orchestra of the Palestine Conservatoire, and the Haifa amateur orchestra are active in bringing good music to the people, and there are certainly more people visiting concerts or listening in to serious music than in any other area of the size (a population

of about 1,500,000, of whom well over two-thirds live in oriental communities).

The present state of affairs is largely due to the considerable influx of Jews from Central Europe in the last fifteen years, though the beginnings of music organization in modern Palestine date back as far as 1910 and opera made a first start in the early 20's.\* The Jews, coming back to Palestine from the four corners of the globe and trying to build a new nation and new culture on the very same spot that saw their most splendid achievements in national life, art and science some thousands of years ago, have brought occidental civilization to their oriental brethren; they have applied modern agricultural technique to a soil that had been ploughed in the same way for thousands of years, they have irrigated the desert and made it bloom again by means of modern scientific knowledge, and they have imported the rich heritage of European art into a country that had preserved a most ancient tradition.

Under the impact of European music, oriental musicians are rapidly adapting their tunes to Western harmonization and abandoning their own instruments in favor of the piano and our orchestral instrumentarium. Comparative musicology and oriental music research have to make great strides to record the last remnants of ancient oriental—Near Eastern—musical culture. The song of the Bedouin, the shepherd, the Muezzin, and the teller of epic tales, the synagogue chant of the Yeminite, Samaritan and Persian Jews—all of them preserved since Biblical times with probably very little variation, if any at all—will soon be irretrievably lost; for communities that have lived in seclusion and isolation since the beginning of the Christian Era are now exposed to the influence of Western civilization through their direct contact with the Western world as well as through their listening to broadcasts from all over the world.

\* The historical facts presented in this survey are based on the studies incorporated in the final chapter of the author's book "The Music of Israel", a history of Jewish music from the earliest times up to the present day and a discussion of the mutual influences between the Jews and their cultural environments. This book has so far been published in Hebrew only. (Jerusalem, 1945). The notes on Palestinian composers and their works are based on the communications received by the author at the time of the compilation of his historic-analytical books "The World of the Symphony" and "Chamber Music" (Tel-Aviv, 1945 and 1946).

Arab music in modern Palestine is in a state of flux, and no truly great musician seems to have arisen yet to give expression to the impact of East and West. The Arab Orchestra of the Palestine Broadcasting Service is experimenting widely in this direction, and in a number of Arab schools choirs of remarkable standing cultivate occidental as well as oriental music. The considerable Armenian community, with a venerable tradition of religious music of its own, has produced a number of interesting musicians, and so have other oriental communities. Most fruitful, however, has been the meeting of East and West for the Jewish composer. Burdened with the heritage of a centuries-old tradition of great music in Europe, shattered by the far-reaching evolutions in the social status and artistic creed of the 20th century composer, haunted by nostalgic memories and placing all his faith in a new and hopeful future—that is how the composer in Jewish Palestine is getting down to work. Commanding a musical technique based on the principles of harmony and counterpoint, he is confronted in the new country with melodic patterns that do not naturally lend themselves to harmonization or polyphony. To him, oriental melodies seem monotonous, lacking variety, primitive, and he is inclined to forget that the oriental can as little tell the difference between a Bach chorale, a Mozart symphony, and a Schönberg quartet—thinking all of these monotonous, lacking variety, primitive—as the occidental can distinguish among an oriental Call to Prayer, a shepherd tune, and an ecstatic dance. Yet the unique atmosphere of the country, the continuous contact with rural life of all those who do not confine themselves to the walls of the cities, and the feeling that only with difficulty could the musician continue to create as he has done in a radically different world make themselves felt in the works of almost all serious composers; and though all composers creating in Palestine now may later appear to have been but a generation of pioneers, it seems worth while to study their contributions to the treasure of contemporary music, if only to learn the results arising from the certainly far-reaching clash between the ancient oriental and the second-millennium occidental musical values.



Palestine's early musical history mirrors truly the development of the Jewish national home, with immigrants hailing from anywhere and everywhere. With their language and literature, with their customs and ways of life, the pioneers and settlers brought along their songs, their music. The early pioneer songs, sung in the hours of sweat and toil, some surviving to this very day, were songs in a Russian, Polish, Ukranian, Roumanian, Caucasian idiom; Central and Western European, Turkish, Egyptian and Yeminite influences mingled with them freely at a later stage. The first working songs, dance tunes and nursery rhymes that were actually created in Palestine were modelled on those melodies the immigrants had brought with them, but they soon showed the first signs of an independent character with a first amalgamation of European and Oriental traits. It is interesting to note that this amalgamation was much more quickly arrived at in the case of Eastern European immigrants than in that of Western European Jewry, the explanation being that Eastern European music is generally much nearer to the Orient than the creations of Central and Western European masters of music, and that the old Jewish tradition — hailing itself from the Orient — was much more alive in Eastern countries than in the more assimilated circles of Western Jewry.

The first development of concert — and later of opera — coincides with the institution of music schools in the fast-rising towns and the visits of a number of curious instrumentalists from the great musical centres of the world, some shining musical stars among them. Orchestral bodies and an oratorio society sprang up in the early '30's, and soon there were added some permanent chamber organizations. But the decisive year was 1936, when first the Palestine Broadcasting Service and then the Palestine Orchestra were launched on their way, both inspiring composers of serious music with great hopes. The first of these organizations, the Broadcasting Station, has indeed become the greatest consumer of Palestinian music and gives a hearing to almost every composer of songs, chamber or symphonic music, who has something to say; while the Palestine Orchestra, though disappointing by their conventional programs and lack of enterprise has given the local composer the benefit of a great

number of outstanding individual performers able and prepared to give his chamber works the chance of a hearing. Opera has come to stay since 1941, and despite all difficulties there has already been staged an opera based on Palestinian life in subject and music, written by Palestinian authors and a Palestinian composer. Recitalists are now including local works in most of their evenings, and another chance for the composer in Palestine are the concerts of the Tel-Aviv Chamber Choir, which has already included two original Hebrew works in its repertoire. Lastly, there must be added the rural organizations, especially the larger choirs in the communal settlements. They have a large consumption of music for their festivals, and many a good choral work (some of them with instrumental accompaniment) has been heard in the settlements and villages. Such works are often written by members of the settlements themselves, others being commissioned from recognized composers. The outstanding compositions have been broadcast (and recorded) by the Palestine Broadcasting Service.



Many different tendencies might be observed in the output of the country's composers. A great number are utterly unconscious of the influence exerted by the new medium, yet their music mirrors the Palestinian atmosphere in some way or other; one group pretends that no truly Palestinian music can ever be created without the elaboration or imitation of the melodies typical of the old orient or the new country; and yet another opinion is expressed by those saying that not the melodic material but the spirit of the country should characterize the new compositions—i.e. the spirit of the glorious biblical past or of the modern pioneer work. It need not be stressed that great music can never develop in the way of "tendencies" and that the composer's success depends not so much on his material, his sympathies and ideas, and on his artistic desire, as on the greatness and originality of his invention and the craftsmanship underlying the presentation of his musical inspiration. But young

nationalistic communities do not always heed such deliberations, and very often a poor work is applauded on account of its national trends or the appearance of a favorite tune. Many Palestinian musicians have been seduced to believe that a "set of variations on a Palestinian folksong" must needs represent Palestinian music, or that musical craftsmanship is less important than national enthusiasm clad in sounds. Yet the country has also to its credit a great number of composers in whose creations a faithful and natural musical expression is found—in the frame of a purely musically conceived composition—of the work and feast, the sorrow and mirth, the song and dance, the tradition and youth in the country.

As in all national renaissance movements, the most important composer in modern Palestine is "Anon.". His songs and dance tunes appear in the kindergarten and schools, in the fields, on the village greens and at the rural festivities, and he inspires the song writers throughout the country. Nursery song literature in Hebrew has its origin in the works of Yoel Engel (died 1927), who based the bulk of his songs on texts of the Hebrew Poet Laureate, H. N. Bialik; modern writers of popular tunes include M. Zeira, D. Sambursky, Postolsky, Pugatchov, Ravina, Nardi, E. Ben-Haim, Wilensky, Kaplan, Esrahi, Walbe, Sarah Levy, I. Edel, Sahavi, Melamed, and Y. Gorohov. The genuine folksongs and those attempting to become such are being collected and published at intervals, and most valuable work in this direction has been done by Yehuda Shertok, himself an interesting composer, living at Yagur settlement near Haifa.

Some of the composers mentioned above have also created works on a larger scale. They have written "art songs," folk tune arrangements and variations, and instrumental works of merit. Based on music by Engel and on tunes of the country are instrumental compositions by Israel Brandmann (born 1901); his "Variations on a Theme by Engel" for piano and string orchestra (1934) and his "Variations on a Hebrew dance tune" for strings (1928) have been widely played, and his Violin Sonata of 1927 is the first valuable work in an "abstract form" with distinctly Palestinian traits in its thematic invention.

EXAMPLE I.  
Main theme of first movement from Sonata for Violin and Piano  
by Israel Brandmann:



EXAMPLE II.  
Dance theme from last movement of same sonata:



Izhaq Edel, (born 1896) has pondered much on the possibilities and necessities of modern Hebrew music and has come to the conclusion that European scales and harmonies should have no place in the work of the Palestinian composer but that the structural forms of sonata, rondo, and aria are the highest achievements that can possibly be reached and can well be filled with entirely new contents. He thus uses them as frames for his oboe sonatina (1943) as well as for his two string quartets, while his themes are based on synagogal or ancient modal scales.

The atmosphere of the country is the most important aspect in the two Suites for string orchestra and the Variations for string quartet by Jaariw Esrahi (born 1904) and in Palestine's most popular orchestral work, the light-hearted symphonic poem *Emek* by Marc Lavry (born 1903). Lavry is also the composer of the Palestinian opera mentioned earlier, *Dan the Guard* (produced 1945), of an oratorio *Song of Songs*, of a symphonic poem *Stalingrad*, and of a *Tragic Symphony* (commemorating the martyrs and heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto); in addition he has written songs, choirs, music for the theatre, and works for different other mediums.

Though the composers mentioned so far have enriched Palestinian music with a number of fine works, their contributions cannot in any way be regarded as "contemporary music" strictly speaking, derived as they are from traditional and con-

ventional forms and means of expression. The same holds true with regard to a number of composers hailing from the sphere of influence of the Russian Jewish Folksong Society, such as S. Rosowsky, G. Grad, M. Rapaport, Sh. Aharoni, and—to a much lesser extent—of A. Bernstein and J. Stutschewsky. The former has composed concerti for piano (1944) and violin (1945), variations for violoncello and orchestra (1944), and a Suite (1945) of musical pictures inspired by the scenery and moods of the Lake of Tiberias. The latter has done much for the study and arrangement of Eastern European folklore music, but absorbed much of the Palestinian atmosphere in his latest works, which include a charming Suite for flute and piano.

The picture becomes different when we approach the composers who have come to Palestine from Western European countries or those who have sought contact with modernism. Even when they occasionally take a folksong or dance motive as basis of a musical creation, these composers attack their material from a purely formal, abstract point of view. Karl Salomon (born 1897), for instance, has written a set of orchestral variations on a well-known folk tune (1937), but given the work the scope and form of a symphony, each theme of which presents a new variation of the folk theme, and the theme proper is only heard at a last stage of the work in its original form. But most of the composers of "absolute music" treated below have let invention work freely for them, and little of their work is of problematising nature. It will be seen, though, that biblical subjects or Palestinian landscape have often given food to their inspiration.

The leading figures among Palestinian composers are Erich-Walter Sternberg and P. Frankenburger who has assumed the Hebrew name of Ben-Haim. Sternberg (born 1898) was a well-known figure in German contemporary music before he settled in Palestine, and his independent style has changed little if at all in his Palestine years. Sternberg has no sympathy with borrowings from folk music but a prominent feature of his creations is the preponderance of Jewish subjects. Sternberg has written a large number of songs, two string quartets, choral music, and a Children's Opera based on Hugh Lofting's *Dr. Dolittle* stories;

but his most important works so far are the choral *Praise Ye* on words of the medieval Hebrew poet Yehuda Halevy, the String Orchestra Suite *Joseph and His Brethren* (1939), and the large-scale symphonic work *The Twelve Tribes of Israel* (1942). In the last-named composition, each of the biblical tribes is characterised by one variation of the basic theme, which—in the composer's own interpretation—represents the common root and the common belief of the Israelite tribes. There is firm strength in the theme of the work (Ex. 3), and the variations draw their character and mood from the descriptions of the tribes in the Holy Scriptures. The final variation, dedicated to Benjamin, the chosen tribe, the "ravenous wolf" according to Genesis 49:27, takes the form of a mighty quadruple fugue (Ex. 4) to crown an impressive and finely conceived work.

## EXAMPLE III.

Basic theme of E. W. Sternberg's "Twelve Tribes of Israel":



## EXAMPLE IV.

Theme of 12th variation from the same work, beginning of final quadruple fugue:



Another of Sternberg's biblical works is the string orchestra Suite *Joseph and His Brethren* (1939). Each of the short movements of the suite depicts a scene from the legend which at all times has attracted painters, writers and musicians, and the thoughts, feelings, and experience of the principal characters are transformed into musical ideas. Yet in spite of the programmatic character of the composition, form and thematic development are musically conceived for each of the eleven movements.

(The score is published by Novello's of London.)

An original work is Sternberg's *Quolibet* for string quartet (1936); the composer combines and elaborates here three Palestinian folksongs and a German-Jewish festival hymn in old quolibet form. Of his later chamber music — both the string quartets were composed in the 'twenties — a Piano Trio (1941) and a Wind Quintet (1942) are the outstanding works.

The music of P. Ben-Haim-Frankenburger (born 1897) — like Sternberg's — stems from Central European modernism; but while Sternberg speaks an ardent, sometimes even acid musical language, the themes and moods of Ben-Haim tend to the soft and pastoral. No wonder then that Ben-Haim's Palestinian compositions show a strong influence of the rural, pastoral atmosphere of the country. The composer's pre-Palestinian works include an oratorio *Joram*, a Concerto Grosso, and *Pan*, a symphonic poem for soprano and orchestra. In Palestine, Ben-Haim has completed two symphonies and a number of fine songs, in addition to chamber music which seems to be the composer's very best medium of expression. His four-movement string quartet (1937) is the first of his chamber works written in Palestine but is already permeated with the singular atmosphere of the land. A characteristic pastoral theme of the viola opens the quartet and may be said to dominate all of its movements — a sonata-form movement, a puckish scherzo, a short air-like Andante, and a delicate Rondo.

EXAMPLE V.

Opening theme of Ben-Haim's String Quartet:



Ben-Haim's second Palestinian chamber work is a set of variations on a Hebrew folk-song for piano, violin, and cello (1939) the theme of which is of Beduin origin; and this was followed by the composer's finest chamber music composition so far, a Quintet for clarinet and strings (1941), the three move-

ments of which are a pastoral sonata-form *Molto Moderato*, a Capriccio-like Scherzo, and a set of variations on a quiet and songful theme.

The two symphonies of Ben-Haim offer complete contrasts. the first (1939-40) contains two dramatic movements of tragic note: "It is inevitable (says the composer) that a work which was commenced in the last days of 1939 and concluded on the 20th June, 1940, the day on which France collapsed, should be influenced by the tragic events of those days; the terrible forces of destruction which tore the ground from under our feet could not fail to leave their stamp on my work." But the second of the three movements is a contemplative, lyrical piece of rare beauty, possessed by an inner calm that can leave no listener unimpressed.

EXAMPLE VI.

Theme of second movement, Ben-Haim's First Symphony:



The second symphony (1943-45), in four movements, is pastoral throughout and bears the stamp of folkloristic influence; contemplation of landscape and the beauties of nature have occupied the composer's mind, and the opening theme of the flute sets the pastoral mood of the first movement as well as of the entire symphony. The work is delicately scored, especially in the Nocturno of the third movement.

EXAMPLE VII.

Opening theme of Ben-Haim's Second Symphony:



A fine orchestral work on a smaller scale is Ben-Haim's Poem for Violin and Orchestra (1942) *In Memoriam*, a requiem without words that takes the shape of a one-movement

piece in three interlinked parts: an Introduction, an "Invocation", and a dramatic Allegro (Remembrance), after which an Epilogue calls back the theme of the Introduction and brings the work to a solemn conclusion.

Of great originality are the compositions of Joseph Kaminsky (born 1903), violinist and conductor of Russian-Polish origin. They include a Concertino for trumpet and orchestra (1940-41), in which the first movement is a travesty of a hackneyed Vivaldi theme (it is styled "Un poco Vivaldi"), after which there follow a slow and lyrical movement with a liturgical touch and a boisterous Tarentella; Ha-Alijab (The Ascent), a set of variations on a popular Jewish melody (sung at the Feast of Lights), symbolising the characters of the nations with whom the Jews lived before their ascent to Palestine and closing with a Zion's Hymn of the medieval poet Yehuda Halevy; and a Comedy Overture, in which the middle section was inspired by oriental singing and dancing. Kaminsky's latest orchestral work is a Ballad for harp and small orchestra (1945). In the realm of chamber music, Kaminsky has produced a single string quartet (1945), hailed as among the most successful chamber works written in Palestine. It begins with a manicoloored Allegro which leads without break into a Variation-movement. The theme of the variations is a songful theme of delightful simplicity, it is elaborated in five "character" variations ending in a quiet Epilogue. The last movement of the quartet is dominated by gay dance-rhythms but a quotation of the main theme from the beginning of the work heralds in a contemplative, almost mystic mood, and the fine work closes in delicate pianissimo sounds.

## EXAMPLE VIII.

First theme of Kaminsky's String Quartet:



## EXAMPLE IX.

Theme of variations, second movement of the same work:



Though musically reared in different surroundings, Verdina Shlonsky (born 1905), Palestine's No. 1 woman composer, shows in her works a spiritual affinity with Kaminsky's music. Her works include a three-movement Symphonic Poem (1937): "Jeremiah - David - Heroic March"; a Suite for string orchestra (1937), compiled from her music for the Hebrew theatre; and a symphony in four movements awaiting completion; they culminate in the Piano Concerto (1942-44), a two-movement composition in which polyphonic, playful, dramatic, and virtuosic elements are molten together. Most characteristic in this interesting and effectful concerto is the two-part invention of the main themes and their subsequent individual development.

## EXAMPLE X.

Scherzando-Theme in the piano, second movement of Verdina Shlonsky's Piano Concerto:



The compositions of Joseph Gruenthal (born 1910) and Heinrich Jacoby (born 1909) are works of absolute music that show little influence of Palestinian or general-oriental character; this may be due to the fact that the composers are residents of Jerusalem and have less contact with the rural life and atmosphere than their colleagues in the coastal towns or country-villages. Jacoby's works include concerti for the viola (1939) and the violin (1942), a four-movement symphony (1944), a series of Miniatures for orchestra (1945), two string quartets, and a piano trio — the latter containing the material out of which the composer derived the third and fourth movements of his sym-

phony. Jacoby is a descendant of the Hindemith school, and the German composer's playful polyphony as well as his later romantic trends are mirrored in the Jerusalem musician's works. Gruenthal's orchestral compositions culminate in a Piano Concerto (1944), the four movements of which are full of dramatic developments and interesting pianistic problems; his chamber music includes Suites and Sonatas for unaccompanied 'cello and viola.

A spiritual force of decisive interest were the work and teachings of Stefan Wolpe, a composer who himself has greatly been impressed by the Palestinian surroundings in the five years he stayed in Jerusalem, and whose influence is still being felt in the work of some of his former students, such as H. Kaplan, H. Bruenn, W. Rosenberg and others; Wolpe, now a resident of the United States, seems to continue his occupation with Palestinian and Biblical themes in his new country. The manicoredness and vivacity of his rhythms lend his music, especially his choral works which are sung here by many choirs, a flavor and character quite of his own.

A most interesting choral composition is a Sabbath Cantata by M. Starominsky (born 1916), to Psalm texts and passages from the Song of Songs. The composer here develops his counterpoint on a modal basis, but the impression is not archaic at all, as plain-chant and synagogue music are derived from a single source.

Among the composers of European modernist tendencies, there must still be named A. Daus (born 1902), who has written a "Legend and Scherzo" for string orchestra, an "Overture to a Cantata" (1942), and a number of chamber works — songs with flute and viola accompaniment and a set of variations on a Yeminite theme for flute and piano among them; Berthold Kobias (born 1895), a prolific composer of chamber music for various combinations; Oedoen Partos (born 1907), whose "Concertino for String Quartet" was chosen to represent Palestine at the New York I. S. C. M. festival just before war temporarily interrupted the Society's activities; and Peter Gradenwitz (born 1910), who has written a "Symphony of Variations" for solo instruments and orchestra (1941), combining symphonic and

variation forms into one continuous movement, a "Serenade" for violin and small orchestra (1941) in one movement, a chamber trio for flute, viola, and 'cello (1939), and "Four Palestinian Landscapes" for oboe and piano (1946) — four movements, the headings of which indicate moods and impressions rather than programs and in which the unity of atmosphere is symbolised in the composer's use throughout the work of a single basic theme (based on a twelve-note row) sounded by the oboe in the very beginning of the Prelude.

## EXAMPLE XI.

Main theme of Gradenwitz's "Four Palestinian Landscapes":

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is for the Oboe, marked 'Lento (Oboe)' and 'mf'. It begins with a melodic line in 7/8 time, featuring a sequence of notes that form a twelve-note row. The lower staff is for the Piano, marked '(Piano) mp'. It provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines that support the oboe's melody. The overall mood is contemplative and atmospheric.

Oriental atmosphere plays an important part in the latest works of another young composer, M. Mahler-Kalkstein (born 1908), especially in his string quartet (1945) in which the composer tried to give expression to Palestinian-oriental elements in the frame of a classically shaped chamber work, in his two tiny piano sonatinas, in his concertino for strings and flute, and in his five-movement Sinfonietta.

Much publicity has been given lately to the works of Uriah Alexander Boskovich (born 1908), who stepped to the front rank of Palestine composers with his oboe concerto (1943). This work was the first effort of a composer to introduce genuine oriental elements not only into the melodic and rhythmic foundations of a musical work but also into instrumental expression and scoring. The three-movement oboe concerto won immediate and well-deserved success, its genuine coloring impressed even those listeners generally rejecting any and every music of unfamiliar aspect. Of a singular appeal is its second movement with its monotonous melody conjuring up the world of an endless desert colored by slowly moving caravans.

## EXAMPLE XII.

Theme of second movement from Oboe Concerto by Boskovich:

Unfortunately, the oboe concerto has so far remained sort of a single stroke of genius. The composer's violin concerto (1942, revised 1944) was a disappointment, and his piano pieces are still on the experimenting side. Some of these have been scored and shaped into a "Semitic Suite" (1946); but the composer's attempt at "orientalising" the orchestra has here led him into the world of ("Persian Market") Ketelby and the realm of cinematic descriptive music. Boskovich is now at work on an opera on a Palestinian subject, and it is hoped that he will avoid the pitfalls of cheap orientalism in his further development.

Our short survey can make no claim at a complete and exhaustive picture of the Palestinian scene, and a number of composers — talented musicians among them — have not been included; the names of J. H. Wohl, H. Ladendorf, B. Bergel, Max Brod (the well-known writer who has also contributed to Palestinian music), H. Hurtig should, however, be recorded. The youngest Palestinian composer talents are Moshe Lustig (born 1922), among whose compositions there stand out a sonata for harp and French Horn (1943-44), a Quintet for flute and strings (1945), and a peculiar piano piece (1946); and Robert Starer (born 1924), who has composed a promising three-movement violin sonata (1945) of individual traits, a Suite for strings with violin, viola and 'cello solo (1945), and a Rhapsody Orientale for orchestra (1946).



It is interesting to compare Jewry's position in Palestine today with that of thousands of years ago. Today as then, immi-

grants are coming from most different countries, bringing along with them the habits and customs, the civilizations and tastes of their former surroundings. Today as then, Palestine represents a large melting-pot and its inhabitants have great hopes of a culture and art of their own. In ancient times, Jerusalem was the spiritual centre and a centre of philosophy, art and science that fed not only Judaism alone but all cultural centres of the antique world. The Temple, symbol of ancient Judaism, has not been rebuilt, but the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus overlooking old venerable Jerusalem as well as the width of the Jordan Valley is rapidly developing into a new spiritual centre of the Middle East. Authors, poets, and novelists, scientists and research workers are active all over the country, and Palestine's musicians are travelling all over the Middle Eastern countries as "musical ambassadors" of a rising culture.

East and West meet in the works of Palestine composers. They are quite conscious of the fact that they are doing experimental work and that their efforts are those of pioneers paving the ways for future generations. Some of their compositions can certainly hold their own in international composition and may well be placed alongside with the works of composers who have won esteem in the musical centres of the world, others are just interesting as stepping-stones in the young musical history of Palestine herself. But they have not only a task to fulfill in the upbuilding of their own country. The need for fresh musical impetus has long been felt in contemporary music in general and composers have, from the times of Debussy, looked to the East or to the song and dance of the "primitives" for new inspiration. From the exotic elements in Debussy and in Mahler to the Eastern-European sources of Béla Bartok's great works, from the earliest invasion of Spanish, African, and American rhythms into art music to the influence of jazz and swing elements on the masters of today there is an unbroken chain of musicians who are dissatisfied with the highly-developed musical art of the West. Who knows whether the example of Palestine — whose European-built town of Tel Aviv has aptly been described as a "show-window to Europe" — will not be of benefit to Western music one day, as an example of ways and means to infuse new

elements into the art of contemporary music.

Historians may find it premature to do so now, but the time may not be too far when the textbooks of musical history will devote a special chapter to "Contemporary Music in the Land of Israel" just as they invariably carry on their very first pages, a survey of the "Music of the Ancient Hebrews".

## In Defense of Modern Music

by KATHARINE MULKY

MR. CHARLES HAUBIEL'S "Revolt Against Tradition" \* opens for discussion many questions which are debatable. There are several points in the article where the matter might become confusing, because terms are undefined and philosophical hypotheses unexplained. I should like to mention a few of these and present my opinions regarding some of them.

To begin with, we shall consider terms in groups: first, general philosophical terms; second, philosophical terms referring specifically to æsthetics; and third, terms referring to ideologies. There are in the article three words used quite often, which Mr. Haubiel does not define. These are *normalcy*, *tradition* and *truth*.

What is normalcy? Music has been different in every age of civilization, so that what has once seemed new has become something which has been used many times by later composers, and is accepted as a "norm" because it is used by the majority of those creating music. How can we determine now, in our age, while we are living in it, what will, for the future, be "normal"? *Normalcy* is not an absolute, but changes as the techniques used by the majority of composers writing music change. For example, before the seventeenth century, composers for the most

\* Charles Haubiel — *Revolt Against Tradition in Musical Composition*, *MusicoLOGY*, Vol. I, Nos. 1 & 2.