

Reviews of Books

BERNSTEIN, LEONARD. *The Joy of Music*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. 1959. 303 pp. \$5.95

The first sixty pages of Leonard Bernstein's book are given over to an introduction and four short essays. The next ten pages contain seventeen portraits of the author. The last 230 pages provide the scripts of seven television shows which Bernstein presented on *Omnibus* between 1954 and 1958, and these, it is clear, are the heart and soul of the volume.

Bernstein is brilliantly articulate in words, in music, and in his general sense of showmanship. Furthermore, in preparing the *Omnibus* scripts, he was able to implement his showmanship with the full resources of a symphony orchestra and a television network. His television shows for *Omnibus* were probably the richest, most informative, and most dramatic introductions to the art of music which have ever been presented by any popularizer. But their scripts are far less effective as printed matter between hard covers.

There are pages and pages of material in musical notation, all of it analyzed in words of one syllable for the totally uninformed. It seems never to have occurred to Bernstein that auditors needing analysis on so rudimentary a level could not possibly read his examples in notation; perhaps he thought that the reader would play the notated examples on the piano, but many of them are difficult, and many, entirely orchestral or vocal in nature, are meaningless except in terms of the media employed in the broadcasts.

These scripts, in other words, should not have been published in book form at all, but as phonograph records. One of them, "The World of Jazz," has been so published, and it is the finest introduction to its subject that one can find in any medium. Bernstein's broadcast on Beethoven's Fifth Symphony ought to be available in the same way. It employs Beethoven's own sketches, fully scored and performed by the orchestra, in contrast to parallel passages in the final version. The idea is a stroke of genius, for it brings us directly into Beethoven's workshop and uses his own evidence to show us how a great symphony is put together.

The jazz and Beethoven scripts are the best, but the others are vividly informative, too; they deal with conducting, American musical comedy, modern music, Bach, and opera.

The "imaginary conversations" are somewhat arch dialogues on Beethoven (of whom, it seems, Bernstein thinks in rather the same way as Bernard Shaw of Shakespeare), on Gershwin, and on the plight of the contemporary composer of symphonic music vis-à-vis a symphonic audience which could not care less about what he has to say. An "interlude" on film music makes very clear just what the Hollywood composer does and does not do, and why very few composers of stature will have any truck with Hollywood.

San Francisco, Calif.

ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN

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BLAU, JOSEPH L.; ARTHUR HERTZBERG; PHILIP FRIEDMAN;* and ISAAC MENDELSON, Edited by. *Essays on Jewish Life and Thought: Presented in Honor of Salo Wittmayer Baron*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1959. xxx, 458 pp. \$7.50

Essays on Jewish Life and Thought was published as a *Festschrift* on the occasion of the sixtieth birthday of the noted scholar and teacher, Dr. Salo W. Baron, Professor of Jewish History, Literature, and Institutions at Columbia University. All of the twenty-six essays and research monographs were written by former students as a tribute to Professor Baron. The inclusion of a bibliography of Baron's extensive writings provides a most useful addendum.

The essays reflect the influence that Baron has had on his students. In the first place, the range of subject matter is as broad and diversified as Jewish life; it encompasses the ancient Near East and the biblical world; the period of talmudic creativeness; social and communal life in the medieval period; religious thought, ideologies, cultural movements, and literary forms of expression in modern times. Primary and secondary sources, moreover, are carefully checked; manuscript material is employed, and the opinions of previous scholars are re-examined and modified on the basis of new data and interpretation. New knowledge is constantly sought. There is the readiness to explore, yet this is done with reservation; individual authors refer to their conclusions as being "tentative" and "hypo-

* We note with sorrow the recent passing of Dr. Philip Friedman. He contributed the article on the Nazi regime in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia.

thetical." For the contributors to this volume, the information that can be gleaned from the records of the past does have bearing on contemporary life; such data can aid in understanding and evaluating the present.

Questions bearing on the methodology employed in examining Jewish history are suggested by the articles in the *Festschrift*. The conventional space-time correlates do not seem to the contributing scholars to provide an adequate frame-of-reference for dealing with beliefs, practices, and institutions that are not confined to a specific period of time or geographical area. For example, in the description of the role of Oscar Straus at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, it is pointed out that he cannot be understood solely as an American Jewish communal leader who emerged at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Straus continued to follow the policies of the medieval *shtadlan*. Such "individual leaders took it upon themselves to represent the Jewish people and to act for Jewish interests as they interpreted them; and this approach indicated the persistence of medieval practices in modern Jewish life" (p. 160).

The revival and development of a Jewish community are not only contingent on internal factors like the will to live or survive. In the reconstruction of the efforts of Franconian Jewry to achieve territorial unification in the mid-fifteenth century, both external factors (the political attitude of the rulers toward the Jews) and internal factors (the unity and cohesion expressed by the Jewish community, especially in time of emergency) were taken into account. As the essay on "Tradition and Innovation" puts it, "the Jewish life of any time and place is the resultant of the forces of Jewish tradition and the specific temporal and spatial environment" (p. 104).

Furthermore, such essays as the ones dealing with the Babylonian academies, the Karaites in Byzantium, the Messianism of Abraham Abulafia, or the Berlin Haskalah, can be cited to illustrate that history is more than a collection of facts. Facts acquire meaning and become "alive" when they can be placed within the social and cultural environment of which they were originally a part.

The conclusions concerning the "Lafayette Committee for Jewish Emancipation" — the committee was possibly "the first interdenominational and even international body for the protection of Jewish rights in the world" — allude to the factors that have had an influence on the status of the Jew in modern times. The account of the emancipation of the Jews of Holland raises the query whether emancipation was beneficial for Jewish survival. One is reminded of a remark by Professor Baron:

Emancipation has presented the challenge of developing a creative and meaningful Jewish life under the conditions of freedom.

The *Festschrift* represents painstaking research, a critical evaluation of sources, and an eagerness to find relevance in the data at hand. This volume in honor of Salo W. Baron is a substantial contribution to American Jewish historiography; no doubt it deserves to join that large body of Jubilee Volumes and *sifre ha-yobel* that are referred to in research and study.

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DANISH, MAX D. *The World of David Dubinsky*. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co. 1957. 347 pp. \$4.75

Biography should strive for a high degree of objectivity. *The World of David Dubinsky* supposedly is a biography, but it reads more like an obituary — an obituary to a man who is an angel and has never in his lifetime deviated from the mythical “straight and narrow path.”

Perhaps Dubinsky *is* an angel. But even if he is, he must have, like any mortal, at one time or another strayed before donning the halo. There is no indication in the book that this has ever happened to Dubinsky. As one reads the book, one hopes fervently that Danish would admit — just once — that Dubinsky was not perfect.

Unfortunately, Max Danish has been too close to the scene and lacks the objectivity to write a definitive biography. He is too involved with his subject and, like a lover, sees his love as only untouchable, incomparable, and God-like.

Danish readily admits this in his introduction: “The biography of a man still not far removed from life’s midday is admittedly not an easy writing task, and I have been warned of this. Such a task, perhaps, is all the harder for one who had been associated with this person a good part of his own mature life. A still greater distraction from the narrow and required pattern of objectivity might be a frank admission by this writer that he has over the years entertained a robust admiration for this unique ‘American by choice’ personality — David Dubinsky.”

One would think that with such advance warning and confession, the

writer might have attempted to be more objective. But once Mr. Danish makes the confession, he throws all caution aside.

I am sorry that I must decry Mr. Danish's approach to David Dubinsky's life. I wish that I could praise it, for I feel that Dubinsky has a unique place in the labor movement and has been one of its shining lights.

Danish admits that Dubinsky himself "is not at all convinced that all the world's wisdom is lodged in his own head." But apparently Danish is convinced that this is so.

The book reads as if Dubinsky were the "Big Brother" of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; as if he were omnipotent and all-seeing:

"The ILG president professionally keeps a watchful eye on every outgoing union dollar."

"The staff of the union's political department, under the close supervision of David Dubinsky, gave round-the-clock services to the central campaign headquarters in research and publicity."

Grudgingly, Danish admits that others in the union may have been partially responsible for its development. At one point, he goes so far as to concede that a first vice-president signed a letter on behalf of the ILG, as "President Dubinsky was absent on union business in Europe."

The book at times does give some indication of Dubinsky's thinking, but this is only when Dubinsky himself speaks; the author's interpretations are practically always laudatory. Dubinsky does speak for himself on such diverse subjects and personalities as the Communist issue, Sidney Hillman, John L. Lewis, the New Deal, the CIO, the AFL, the Jews, and the rackets.

For example, Dubinsky on Jews: "I am not a professional Jew, I am a Jewish worker, and I am proud of it. The labor movement has given me an inspiration and a key to world problems, and I am grateful for this as well. Many people ask why Jews are so responsive to all appeals for aid, not only [those] coming from Jews. The answer to this is quite simple; the Jews have suffered for centuries from all kinds of persecution and injustice and they know what it means to suffer

"But we, Jewish workers, feel that as labor people we should help other workers irrespective of nationality — whether they be Italians, French, Chinese, yes, even Germans, once we conclude that they are being persecuted. To us Jewish workers, help for workers everywhere means a great deal because we realize that if there is a prospect of solving the Jewish problem, that prospect lies with the working masses of the world."

The definitive biography of David Dubinsky — the man, the labor

leader, the Jew, the politician — is yet to be written. When it is, it will present a picture of the American labor movement, its early struggle, its growth and development, its internal strife with Communists and racketeers, and Dubinsky's contribution to the national and world labor scene. And let us hope that its motivation will be an objective presentation rather than one of adulation.

Chicago, Illinois

ARTHUR WEINBERG

Mr. Arthur Weinberg edited the best-seller, *Attorney for the Damned*. His most recent work, *The Muckrakers*, is scheduled for publication by Simon & Schuster in 1961.

HOLDE, ARTUR. *Jews in Music*. New York: Philosophical Library. 1959.
xi, 364 pp. \$5.00

Since the publication of Adolph Kohut's once popular *Beruehmte israelitische Maenner und Frauen* (Leipzig, 1900), the book market has had its regular quota of Jews in . . . , Jews of . . . , Contributions of Jews to . . . , etc., etc. Despite his best intentions, this reviewer fails to see what aim such compilations and reference books pursue; a mixture of encyclopedic, historical, apologetic-aesthetic ends and methods is employed in these productions, but in most cases the results have been rather vague and inconclusive. So also in this volume. The Jews, no doubt, *are* a musical people; we know this fact from the Bible, from King Sennacherib's stele, from the geographer Strabo, from the Church Fathers, even from ancient Arabic sources, and so on down to our days. What, then, is the purpose of a dictionary of musicians who were born Jewish?

If we could define in unequivocal terms the concept "Jewish Music" (which we cannot), a reference work on that subject, with all its historical and aesthetic ramifications, might be an important musicological achievement. Yet this is not the aim of Holde's book. He starts with a historical essay on Jewish sacred music, an essay which amounts to a rather poor condensation of Abraham Z. Idelsohn's books. Errors abound therein: Salamone Rossi died in 1630, not 1628; a goodly number of musical compositions from the Italian synagogue have come down to us, although the author denies it; and, foremost of all, "modes" are not "scales" or vice versa. This ancient blunder was rectified more than forty years ago by Idelsohn himself. Joseph Singer, the Viennese cantor who introduced that error, is not even mentioned in the book. The author continues with a

truly valuable list of current anthologies and recordings of synagogue music; even here, however, he has bypassed the National Jewish Music Council's systematic catalogue of recordings of Jewish music.

The second part, which deals with secular musicians and music, lists composers, conductors, soloists, musicologists, etc., of Jewish extraction. Here this reviewer should like to submit, for all further compilations of this sort, the suggestion that in each case it should be made clear whether or not the person in question still adheres to the Jewish faith. The time is long past when we used to cover bashfully such trifles as baptism. The reviewer discovered in this part a number of omissions: for example, the Thomaskantor Moritz Hauptmann, the families Bassevi and Hershel, and the composer Otto Goldschmidt (husband of Jenny Lind). The term "musicologist" is used throughout the book so indiscriminately that clever journalists like Oscar Bie, Paul Stefan, and David Ewen are juxtaposed to internationally famous scholars, such as Curt Sachs, Alfred Einstein, and Guido Adler, to name only a few. How vague the author's information is in this field may be seen in the following instance (p. 277). Referring to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Holde lists the following "musical" fellows: R. Kirkpatrick, A. Mendel, O. Strunk, and O. Gombosi. Of these four men, two are of Jewish extraction. Yet he overlooks Professor E. Lowinsky, of the University of California, and this writer, who, after all, are both fellows of the Guggenheim Foundation and consider themselves Jews.

The worst errors occur, unfortunately, in the case of Felix Mendelssohn: (1) The incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was composed seventeen years after the overture, not six, as Holde believes; (2) Mendelssohn never wrote music for *Oedipus Rex*, nor did he hide himself under the pseudonym "Voss" (the *nom de plume* of his close friend, the famous historian Gustav Droysen); (3) Mendelssohn never considered the composition of an oratorio "Moses" (the libretto "Moses," which this reviewer discovered was written by Mendelssohn's friend, A. B. Marx). This is only one of the many areas in which Holde did not check his sources carefully enough.

Other instances which concern us even more are his remarks about the *Union Hymnal* and cognate questions. He states that "only in 1946 did a comprehensive volume of the *Union Hymnal* appear under the editorship of Abraham W. Binder." That edition appeared in 1932. Totally reprehensible for a German Jew is Holde's observation (uncritically taken from an article by A. W. Binder) that in German Jewry "no effort was made to teach the cantillation from a scientific and musical point of view" (p. 207). Is it necessary to remind Holde that about three quarters of all

“scientific and musical” interpretations of biblical cantillation stem from German Jewish authors? To name only a few: A. Japhet, A. Ackermann, Salschuetz, Heidenheim, A. Baer, A. Nadel, Eduard Birnbaum, H. Ehrlich — a glimpse into Jean Szendrei’s bibliography will demonstrate the surpassing German Jewish work in this area.

Finally, the bibliography. Here the description “insufficient” might mislead the reader, for the bibliography is not only scanty and unsystematic, but also highly arbitrary. Reference works such as the *New Oxford History of Music*, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, the monumental *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, E. Gerson-Kiwi’s and H. Avenary’s encyclopedic articles, the well-known anthology *The Jews*, and many other publications of importance are omitted, while the *Jewish Music Forum Bulletins* (1939–1955) and popular compilations like the books of W. Niemann and C. Reis are carefully noted.

No, this reviewer fears that Holde did not render a genuinely useful service; except in the thoughtful last chapter and some chapters of reference, he was rather beneath his usual, considerably higher, standard. In this writer’s opinion, Jewish music or even music by Jews deserves a better treatment than this. As a whole, the book may serve as a reference volume for some areas, but only if checked and doublechecked!

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Brief Notices

ADLER, JOSHUA. *Philosophy of Judaism*. New York: Philosophical Library. 1960. 160 pp. \$3.00

The author attempts in this volume a survey of the sociological and cultural aspects of Judaism in contemporary society, and seeks to relate Judaism to the modern world. Included are chapters concerning the world of nature, human creativity, reflections on the Bible, Jewish history, theology, and institutions.

BRAV, STANLEY R. *Since Eve*. New York: Pageant Press, Inc. 1959. 204 pp. \$3.00

Subtitled "A Bible-Inspired Sex Ethic for Today," this work by the rabbi of Cincinnati's Temple Shalom investigates the Hebrew Bible "in terms of social hygiene and family relations, on the road to a positive new affirmation of religion's sex ethic." It is Dr. Brav's intention to uncover "the meaning of the Bible for sex behavior and family living in our day." Written by a recognized authority in the field of religion-and-the-family, *Since Eve* includes a helpful index.

FINGER, BEN, JR. *Concise World History*. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc. 1959. x, 851 pp. \$10.00

Mr. Finger — poet, painter, philosopher — has created in this work of encyclopedic scope a testimonial to cultural pluralism. In twenty-eight chapters he has set out to document "the march of world-culture" — with emphasis not only on socio-economic and political history, but also on the arts, the sciences, philosophy, and religion. The book contains a foreword by Dr. Thomas E. Ennis of West Virginia University, as well as an extensive bibliography and index.

FOX, G. GEORGE. *Abraham Lincoln's Religion: Sources of the Great Emancipator's Religious Inspiration*. New York: Exposition Press. 1959. 120 pp. \$3.00

Dr. Fox, Rabbi Emeritus of South Shore Temple, Chicago, aims in this notable contribution to Lincolniana to assess the sixteenth President's religious awareness and inspiration. Lincoln's religion, the author concludes, "was a this-worldly ethical discipline based upon a

wholesome relationship between God and man, and man and man No biblical teacher . . . has given us a clearer statement of his own nearness to, and dependence upon God, than Lincoln." The book, which is well-documented, contains an index.

GOLDENTHAL, LEON. *Toil and Triumph*. New York: Pageant Press. 1960. 289 pp. \$3.50

Though not a biography "in the strict sense of the word," as the author points out, this book is a biographical novel, based on the life of the controversial Yiddish poet, Morris Rosenfeld, who died in 1923. Dr. Goldenthal, a graduate of New York University's College of Dentistry, knew the poet personally, and has included in the novel a number of Rosenfeld's poems.

GORDIS, ROBERT. *Judaism and International Relations*. New York: Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. 1960. xii, 60 pp. 35¢

Dr. Gordis' study, the fourth pamphlet in the Commission of Social Action's "Issues of Conscience" series, deals cogently with the relevancy of the Jewish heritage to international affairs. The work contains a preface by I. Cyrus Gordon, Chairman of the Commission, as well as a valuable appendix, including bibliographical and resource material. The author is Associate Professor of Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, in New York.

Nine Who Chose America. Compiled by the Editors of *Life International*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc. 1959. 190 pp. \$3.95

Nine distinguished Americans of immigrant origin are biographized in this handsomely published volume. Among the nine are five Jews — Selman A. Waksman, Felix Frankfurter, David Dubinsky, Irving Berlin, and Helena Rubinstein. The biographers — Lester Bernstein, Archibald MacLeish, Richard Carter, Robert W. Glasgow, Tom Prideaux, Serrell Hillman, and Robert Coughlan — portray their subjects as people who "have contributed . . . to every aspect of American life." The book is embellished with numerous photographs and a brief introductory essay.

ZARETSKY, HINDE. *Der Ferter Nigun: The Fourth Melody*. New York: Verlag "Mordecai Leib." 1960. 256 pp.

Readers of contemporary Yiddish verse will find this volume of great interest. Several of the poems deal with the American scene.