

much more easily than an understanding of the painful development from modal music via contrapuntal invention to modern harmony. In other words the purpose of the book is to stimulate an inherent instinct for music. The reader is encouraged to analyse his own reactions, and a plentiful selection of musical examples and references to works available in gramophone recordings should make the appreciation both thorough and progressive. Professor Welch's book is not for the professed musician, but for all those who say they 'like music but cannot say why', it should be invaluable.

Mr Mellers writes, obviously, for a different sort of reader. His essays reveal an unusual degree of responsibility. For him the critic's ideal 'is to keep as close to the simple description in technical terms as is consistent with saying anything about the sort of experience the music precisely is, and the sort of value that may be attributed to it'. Between the two extremes of technical abracadabra and literary gush he steers a steady passage. A first group of essays considers the French tradition as exemplified in such composers as Gabriel Fauré, Satie and Roussel. The sociological aspects of music can lead to a special kind of tediousness, but Mr Mellers is sure in the proportions he employs, and perhaps his most original achievement as a musical critic (at least in England) is his double interpretation of the musical theme itself and of the culture which, like every art, it must reflect (if sometimes with the bizarre effects of an image in a distorting mirror). A second section of studies deals with the Central European group—Mahler, Wellesz and Kodaly, and here one especially welcomes the serious and extended appreciation of Dr Wellesz's original work as a composer. Finally, among essays on English composers there is a valuable appraisal of Edmund Rubbra, whose true stature as a symphonic writer still needs to be realised. Mr Mellers's discerning pages should encourage the understanding of a composer who, alike in melodic resource and integrity of purpose, is perhaps unique in England today. In him exact scholarship supports and enriches the originality of his mind, and since Mr Mellers's essay was written (1943) such works as the Cello Sonata reveal even further his proper dimensions as a composer.

A word of acknowledgment is due to the publisher for providing in both of these books a wealth of musical quotation that greatly extends their usefulness. Especially is this true of Mr Mellers's essays, where the material is often unfamiliar and a text almost unobtainable.

J. S. B.

THE WEST AT BAY. By Barbara Ward. (Allen & Unwin; 12s. 6d.)

In this timely primer to the great contemporary debate, modestly offered as an account of the background economics and, to a lesser extent, the politics of Western Union and the Marshall Plan, the outlines are clear, the parts well grouped, the temper calm and not

without confidence that the West's awake. It is largely a question of recovering our confidence. On Mercator's projection of Europe we are back again to Charlemagne's limits, no mean empire; but on other projections of the world our position is formidable and our resources impressive even by comparison with those of North America. Madness apart, the great threat is the world shortage of food, not treated in the present survey. However the short-term, rather than the immediate, problem is one of payment, not production. There is a great opportunity not only for this country, the destruction of whose privileged position has been hastened by two wars in which it was the only stayer from the beginning to the bitter end and whose traditional policy of maintaining an equilibrium of continental forces must now be re-adjusted, but also for all the countries of the west. They are challenged from the east by the ideal of a classless system free from exploitation, not necessarily to a war but to their own fulfilment. But the book is an examination, not an exhortation; its effect bracing rather than soothing.

T. G.

SAMUEL JOHNSON. By Joseph Wood Krutch. (Cassell; 21s.)

We opened this large, well produced and illustrated volume of some five hundred closely printed pages with some misgiving. It seemed a bold and unnecessary thing to attempt at this time of day a new full-dress Life of Dr Johnson, and thus to enter into quite hopeless competition with James Boswell. Mr Krutch, however, in his able Foreword gives good reason for such a book as his, and carefully avoids all rivalry with the Laird of Auchinleck. He writes from a new angle, and on a plan of his own. For the strictly biographical part of his work he seems to have read and studied the whole of the vast field of Johnsonian literature, even to the tremendous literary finds of recent years. He has mastered the nineteen volumes of the Malahide Castle papers, and the treasures of 'Thraliana' and of the D'Arblay Diaries. And if he does not give us the gist of the manuscripts till lately at Fettercairn House, it is solely because the Scottish Court of Session had (owing to disputed ownership) impounded them and locked them up!

But Mr Krutch's main pre-occupation is Johnson treated psychologically, and this is carried out with rare insight, and careful American scholarship. He is also concerned with Johnson as the Editor of Shakespeare, and as the Biographer of the English poets, and to this subject he devotes no less than ninety pages of acute criticism and sturdy common sense.

The one objection we have to make (one which the author anticipates and apologises for in a prefatory note) is that his appraisal of James Boswell is insufficiently appreciative. His book was probably in print before the issue of Mr Wyndham Lewis's 'Hooded Hawk'. Had he read that he would have seen in Boswell not only