

BLACKFRIARS

than does the highly-complicated thought of the Third Symphony, although the method of that thought is considerably clarified in its successor.

At the Queen's Hall, on January 27th, the Royal Philharmonic Society are presenting the first performance of a Symanovsky Piano Concerto, with Nicolai Malko as conductor and Jan Smeterlin as the soloist. On the Sunday afternoon of January 29th Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra are presenting the new Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra by Francis Poulenc, the 'enfant terrible' of the musical world a decade or so ago. He will find it a difficult task to shock the present generation of concert-goers by the eccentricity of his harmony and rhythm. The composer himself will be at one of the pianos. Quite a number of other composers have now 'queered his pitch' by going one better (or worse) in the matter of dissonance.

At the B.B.C. Concert on February 1st, Vaughan Williams' new Piano Concerto is to be given for the first time. This work has aroused the keenest interest since it is the first essay in this form of composition by any contemporary English composer of established repute. Miss Harriet Cohen will be the soloist. PATRICK GEOGHEGAN.

The Play.

MIRACLE AT VERDUN. By Hans Chlumberg. At the Comedy Theatre, London.

In this play we have presented to us, by the medium of a German ex-soldier's vision, the world-crisis created by the sudden return to life of the whole of the thirteen million War dead. Firstly we are shown a small section of the 'miracle of resurrection' taking place in a military cemetery in the Argonne.

Then come three short but very amusing scenes depicting the casual manner in which the news of the 'miracle' is received by the French and German Presidents, and the English Prime Minister.

Next we see the reception afforded to two of these 'resurrected' individuals, one French and one German, in their respective homes. Different in nationality, they yet receive the same treatment. Both return to find them-

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selves unwelcome relics of a long forgotten past; the French cobbler to a wife remarried, the German hotel-keeper to a mother who is the unpaid slave of his newly-rich ex-waiter.

Up to this point the author has written an intensely interesting play with a logical progression of events. The next scene, however, representing a conference of all the Powers to discuss the situation, attended by a small band of the 'resurrected,' betrays the bitterness and lack of balance in the mind of its creator. Herr Chlumberg uses this scene in order to indulge himself in a perfect orgy of scratching at all within reach of his pointed wit.

Although this procedure is accomplished in a quite unbiased, completely wholesale, and highly entertaining manner (the military, political, scientific and ecclesiastical leaders are all weighed in his capricious balance and found wanting), nevertheless it is impossible not to resent the petty method adopted by the author to discredit the aforementioned people. This method is simplicity itself; each individual representative is made to deliver whatever Herr Chlumberg arbitrarily decides would be that person's opinion, and all this solely in order to display the sure aim and flashing flight of the Chlumbergian shafts. Nothing could be more misleading than the pompously illogical and coldly inhuman pronouncements with which the representatives of the Catholic, Jewish, and Evangelical Churches are made to condemn the 'miracle' as an act of the Devil, and to advise the 'resurrected' to return whence they came.

Although this play has had but a short run in the West End a revival in the near future is a distinct possibility, and should be greatly welcomed by reason of the intrinsic interest of the problem it contains. The English translation, by Edward Crankshaw, might well serve as a model in this most difficult branch of the art of collaboration.

P.K.G.

SCRUTINY OF CINEMA. By William Hunter. (Adelphi Quartos, 2; Wishart; 5/-.)

This is a book to be added to the growing list of intelligent works on the cinema. It consists of an essay 'towards