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THE New World Symphony came to town for the first time last month, conducted by its artistic adviser, Michael Tilson Thomas, and began its concert, in Carnegie Hall, with the New York premiere of Wuorinen's "Bamboula Beach." The orchestra, eighty strong, is described as America's only full-time, full-size advanced-training orchestra. Based in Miami, it gave its first concert there two years ago and has already visited Paris and South America. The players, drawn from all over the country and from Canada, are aged between twenty and thirty. Their Carnegie concert was exhilarating.

"Bamboula Beach" was composed for the Miami inauguration. Wuorinen made no concessions to inexperience; on the contrary, the chance to write for eager, adept young players evidently inspired him to compose with a freedom and brilliance that orchestras of a more traditional cast might find daunting. On some pages, the metre changes with each measure; lively tunes that are heard as single, glittering gestures are shown by the score (which is published by Peters) to be hocketed forth exuberantly by the different members of a section. The bamboula is a Creole dance. (The New Orleans composer Gottschalk wrote one.) Wuorinen has used the word in the titles of a series of pieces that are (he says in a program note) "musically unrelated" but that "all share a certain lightness of spirit." Others in the series are "Bamboula Squared," for orchestra and tape, which the American Composers Orchestra introduced in 1984; "Grand Bamboula," for string orchestra, which is recorded on Nonesuch; and "The Blue Bamboula," for piano, which is recorded on Bridge. "Bamboula Beach," the composer tells us, is absolute music that "nevertheless contains some concealed programmatic information," including references to the city of its first performance. Steel drums are prominent in one episode; toward the end, the trumpet plays a popular tune. But what matters most is the energy of the inventions that dance through the score, the liveliness of the textures, and captivating shifts of "perspective." At times, the music seems suddenly to have moved farther away;

then a new idea strikes up in the foreground.

"Bamboula Beach," although short—it lasts about seven minutes—is an important piece. Dozens of bright jolly overtures and such have been written as concert "starters"—works that enable orchestras to give a brief, painless representation of contemporary music before settling down to the popular concerto and the standard symphony. Many of the pieces have been slight in substance. "Bamboula Beach" is substantial, although it does have "lightness of spirit." And it demonstrates a feature discernible also in the longer Wuorinen pieces of recent years—the Third Piano Concerto, "The Golden Dance," the Third String Quartet, the Third Piano Sonata, the Concerto for Amplified Cello. Let me call two expert witnesses in support of what, through several individual reviews, I have been noting. Michael Steinberg's essay accompanying the Bridge record begins:

Charles Wuorinen is not about to join the ranks of the born-again tonalists or of those who, forgetting that the Romantic movement was about adventure, not retreat, presume to call themselves neo-Romantics. He is a "maximalist" through and through, writing music dense with notes, with event, with cross-reference and allusion. He has never thought there must be something wrong with a piece that reaches its listeners at the first encounter... but he does believe in writing music that challenges performers and listeners to do better than they knew they could, that reveals its riches gradually rather than all at once, that rewards attention and effort.

And in a 1987 *Perspectives* essay the composer Jeffrey Kresky examined the new "accessibility" to be found in Wuorinen's recent music:

This accessibility is offered in all dimensions, reducing seeming surface disorder to order: isolated pitches are rare, compared to "gestures" of a clearly memorable, motivic sort (whether or not treated motivically); linear extravagance is replaced with "tunes" of registral, intervallic and rhythmic compactness; a regular pulse often informs the surface for very long stretches. And there is dynamic and timbral revision along these same lines: periods of steady dynamic utterance as opposed to—at the most extreme—a change in loudness for each attack; and many pitches in a row in the same instrumental voice.

He puts it carefully, being as reluctant as Mr. Steinberg and I are to suggest in any way that the composer has joined the compromisers in a bid for easy public acclaim. Wuorinen, Mr. Kresky says, "flatly states that his underlying structural and procedural

concerns remain precisely the same as they have been over a considerably long stretch of his output: namely the establishment of a piece-long general structure involving both in pitch and in time a single twelve-tone set that influences, again in pitch and in time, and in ways that vary from piece to piece and certainly vary from classical twelve-tone practice, the course and detail of the piece at all levels." Nevertheless, standard concert audiences do now confront "more comfortably inviting shapes among the noises" and a "kinder surface, with its promise of accessibility, warmth and connectedness." The composer "admits to the possibility of readier acceptance in this trend in his recent music, and although he does not consider it a chief aim, he is perfectly glad of it."

The Carnegie program continued with what was billed as the New York premiere of the "complete symphonic score" of Copland's "Appalachian Spring." Copland composed the ballet, in 1944, for thirteen instruments, and soon thereafter produced a concert suite for full orchestra. About twenty-five years later, at Ormandy's request, he full-scored the passages of the ballet omitted from the suite. "Appalachian Spring," everyone knows, is Copland at his most captivating. Although he was right, I think, to shorten the work (by about ten minutes) for regular concert use—even music so winning can outstay its welcome—once in a while it is good to hear it all. The New World Symphony's playing was spirited, lyrical, athletic; the tunes breathed and sang. Mr. Tilson Thomas, now forty-five, has long seemed to me—in his choice of repertory and his alert execution thereof—one of the very best American conductors. He is now the principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra (a successor in that post to Richter, Nikisch, Monteux, Abbado), and we hear too little of him in New York. The second half of the concert was an excellent big-orchestra Beethoven Seventh: clear, taut, and arresting.

—ANDREW PORTER