Leonard Bernstein conducted an artistic and exhilarating performance of Handel's "Messiah" at the Philharmonic concert in Carnegie Hall last night. Assisted by the Westminster Choir and a staff of soloists headed by Adele Addison, David Lloyd and William Warfield, the Philharmonic acquitted itself nobly in the welcome departure from symphonic routine.

"Mr. Bernstein rearranged some numbers with an eye to closer Biblical sequence and heightened dramatic contrast, the result being a reading of marked emotional power and strong expressive line.

"There was sustained musical fervor to the performance, besides a freshness and zest often lacking in standard holiday performances of Handel's oratorio masterpiece. Last night's observance was as much of Handel's genius as of the sacred theme.

"The soloists all rate high praise for warm, ringing tones and discerning style. The choir sounded remarkably firm and clear, and Mr. Bernstein maintained a fine balance among the various groups."

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)
"When the Philharmonic announced that it would place Handel's "Messiah" in its program, many admirers of this great and enduring masterpiece were elated. Without intending any slight to the good oratorio and church musicians, it may be said that this elaborately and highly refined score calls for the most accomplished professional interpreters. Unfortunately, the high hopes did not materialize; diletantism was present in shocking abundance and quite the professionals at work.

"Mr. Bernstein arbitrarily rearranged the score. I simply cannot understand how a literal Harvard-educated musician can apparently be so ignorant of the nature and history of such a famous score. Surely, a person of his intellectual and musical capabilities should realize that this two-hundred-year-old masterpiece is created with barnacles which should be scraped off. There is a five-foot shelf of literature to offer him guidance.

"The "libretto" of "Messiah" represents a very carefully chosen selection of Biblical passages whose organic sequence was in large measure dictated by Handel, himself a profound student of the Scriptures. What he wanted were exact descriptions of the original. For instance, the harpsichord In a service has undergone changes. The Philharmonic version is a superb technician and a model of clarity and whose tones probed straight to the heart of the matter. David Lloyd, tenor, and William Warfield, baritone, also did fine work.

"Of the vocal soloists the best impression was made by Adele Addison, whose lovely sopranos voice floated clear and pure over the orchestra; and by Mr. Oberlin, whose enunciation was a model of clarity and whose expressive phrasing and bell-like tones probed straight to the heart of the matter. David Lloyd, tenor, and William Warfield, baritone, also did fine work.

"Mr. Bernstein was in complete command throughout. His ideas were individual and could (and perhaps will be) argued from here to Doomsday. At any rate, this Messiahs is a superb technician and a model of clarity and whose tones probed straight to the heart of the matter. David Lloyd, tenor, and William Warfield, baritone, also did fine work.

"In short a present-day Messiah depends upon the taste of the conductors and singers. And taste is often a subjective matter. To one listener Bernstein's ideas were a little theatrical. Tempo seemed a little too fast or a little too slow.

"The organ at the end of "All we like sheep" tinted the chorus with ecclesiastical chrome. The broadening of the middle section of the "Hallelujah" Chorus was something one would expect from a TV Christmas spectacular. The speed of "Every Valley" made the orchestra lose dignity just as the speed of "For unto us a Child is born" made the orchestra lose dignity just as the speed of "For unto us a Child is born" made the orchestra lose dignity.

"But one thing this Messiah had that few previous New York performances had, and that was real preparation. Chorus, orchestra, soloists— all worked together. Mr. Bernstein is a superb technician and has a strong enough personality to dominate the proceedings. Perhaps this personality is too strong.
NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE

Mrs. Ruth Deasy Palmer (’39) is music coordinator for the Nordhoff School District in Ojai, California, and also for Simi Elementary District in Simi, California. She has five schools and about 80 teachers and 2,800 children or more to help. She also plays organ at the Methodist Church in Oxnard, and teaches a beginning piano class for adults. She was happy to have heard Westminster Choir in Los Angeles on October 20th, and reports, “that kind of choral singing we do not hear around here, and what a blessing it was to hear them. They are in the middle of making history on this tour....”

William F. Forrest (’54) is director of the Naval Training Center Recruit Choir in San Diego. A concert was presented by them on 16 December, the numbers sung included five which were especially arranged by Forrest. The Choir has achieved considerable prominence, performing on television and radio and at a number of civic functions in the San Diego area.

“Amahl and the Night Visitors” seems to have been a popular production during the Christmas season. James N. Mellor (’51) conducted a most creditable performance of this work, under auspices of the El Dorado Musical Coterie (El Dorado, Arkansas). Mrs. Mellor (Joyce Watts ’51) sang the role of Amahl’s mother, and Henry Clay Hornsby (’53) was King Kaspar. Quite a large orchestra was employed.

David V. Williams (’47), and Marvin E. Reecher (’38) combined their choirs in a performance of Ravel’s “Daphnis and Chloe” with the Tulsa Philharmonic orchestra on November 26. Mrs. Williams (Mary Louise Newell, ’47) participated in the chorus.

Robert and Mildred Newman Downer (both ’54), are in Frankfurt, Germany, where Bob is Chief Clerk in the Division Chaplain’s Office. They see “Rocky” Graziano (’55) often; he is with the Army Band there. While visiting Milano, Italy, they attended a concert at LaScala, conducted by Guido Cantelli. Sitting three seats away from them was Virginia Konadjian (’55), who is now studying at the Conservatory in Milano.

TALBOTT FESTIVALS

(Contributed by David V. Williams)

Next month in this column we will give a complete summary of the Talbot Festivals—when, where and who. The answer to “how many” at present is seventeen, probably eighteen. There is still a hope for the projected twenty for this year.

If someone were to ask Cecil Lapo, head of the Festival Committee, what his greatest problem was in this project, I know what his answer would be. I am sure Carl Dahlgren could give the same answer when asked to document his woes with the Alumni Fund. I well remember the days in Religious Education classes when Miss Potts would notice someone neglecting to take proper notes. Sweetly would come the question “Mr. Davis,* have you an amanuensis?” The student soon discovered that this was a high brow way to ask who was doing his writing for him. And so the question still goes out to Alumni: “have you got an amanuensis, a secretary?” If not, won’t you please take care of your correspondence yourself in an efficient and prompt manner. The mailman goes through storm, hail, etc., to deliver a letter which is often unanswered, sometimes unread. The information requested is never forwarded, no opinion is registered, no vote cast, and one more strand of rope is put on the wrists of those who try to advance the Alumni work of Westminster Choir College. Please answer your mail! We don’t need an orchestration—just a simply melody is usually sufficient.

(*Sorry, Jack, but this was the first name that entered my mind.)

MRS. LEE RECOMMENDS

Since my two previous recommendations have been somewhat on the expensive side, I should like to call to your attention a reasonably priced book which I am sure would prove of value to any director of church music. Music for the Protestant Church Choir, by Dwight Steere, was published in 1955 by The John Knox Press, of Richmond, Virginia—price $4.50.

The author examined over 4,300 titles of sacred octavo music from over 30 publishers in order to select the 644 anthems and response collections which he classifies and describes. Two questions were used as criteria for the choices made: (1) Are the words appropriate to the worship situation? (2) Does the music call attention to God rather than to itself? He also makes three assumptions as his justification for undertaking this work: most choirmasters are not fully familiar with the literature with which they must deal; most choirmasters, particularly in non-liturgical churches, pay too little attention to the Church Year; there should be a closer correlation between music and sermon in Protestant worship than now usually exists.

The book is in no way meant to be exhaustive or authoritative—it simply reflects the personal choices of a man who needed a practical approach to his job and felt his findings might help others. It is limited to music for adult mixed choirs, and is Minister of Music for the Protestant Church in Covington, Kentucky.

Mr. Steere, also an organist, is a product of the University of Michigan, and the Christiansen Choral Schools. He presently heads the Department of Music at Centre College in Kentucky, and is Minister of Music for the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in Covington, Kentucky.
ALUMNI WEEK
April 22 - 25, 1957

MONDAY, April 22
1:00 P. M. on - Registration (Main Lounge) - Registration Fee $2.00

TUESDAY, April 23
10:00 A. M. - Opening Chapel Service - The Chapel
2:00 P. M. - Lecture - Mr. Julius Herford - Playhouse
4:00 P. M. - Tea (to meet the faculty) Main Lounge
8:30 P. M. - Concert - Symphonic Choir and Orchestra
   Mr. Warren Martin, Mr. Ralph Burrier, Mr. Nicholas Harsanyi - Conductors

WEDNESDAY, April 24 (ALUMNI DAY)
9:00 A. M. - Coffee Hour (Gab Fest)
10:00 A. M. - Chapel
10:30 A. M. - Coffee hour and Gab Fest with the Williamsons
1:00 P. M. - ALUMNI LUNCHEON AND ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
8:30 P. M. - Westminster Choir Concert - Playhouse
   (This concert will be given by the choir which has recently completed a tour around the world.)

THURSDAY, April 25
10:00 A. M. - Chapel Service - Dr. Erdman and the Graduate Department Choir
11:00 A. M. - Chapel Choir - Harold Hedgpeth, Conducting
3:30 P. M. - Westminster Junior Choir - Miss Virginia Cheesman, Conducting

Weddings and New Arrivals

Jeanne Porter ('54) and George Fowler, Lowville, N. Y.

Stephen Miles, 9 January 1956, and John Richard, 17 December 1956, to Mr. ('55) and Mrs. (Eva Allen, '55) Richard Raub.

Susan Elizabeth, 16 December 1956, to Mr. and Mrs. (Ruth-Gloria Hayman, '53) Owen Dexter.

Contributions to the Alumnal Fund now total $2,248.33, received from 108 individuals — a mere 10% of the total alumni. Approximately 900 alumni have not yet been heard from in this respect. We hope that these 90% will review and reconsider their responsibility to their Alma Mater and make an appropriate contribution before the end of the fiscal year.

Reviews of the performance of "The Messiah" are reprinted in their entirety from 3 of the New York newspapers because they seemed especially worthwhile, and because we thought they would be particularly interesting to Westminsterites. Only one bad feature—they took up so much space, other articles in the Newsletter consequently had to be shortened.

Reviews of the "Persephone" performance were not interesting. Westminster was mentioned but once, and then purely perfunctorily.

We apologize for our first serious error. In the November 26 issue, we reported that John Kemp had been elected to the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association. It should have listed James Camp, of Oklahoma City, as the victorious candidate. Our alert Executive Secretary caught the error immediately.

Throughout January, the Westminster Choir sang in the following cities (the itinerary was changed and re-shuffled several times, because of the Middle-east situation): Kuala Lumpur, Malaya; Colombo, Ceylon; and Madras, Bombay, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Lucknow, Banaras, Allahabad, and Calcutta, India.

The Alumnal Fund Committee and Newsletter staff sincerely thank the many friends and acquaintances who sent Holiday Greetings.