

manually impossible feats with a freshness and originality of inspiration that reminded one of Prokofieff. A *Suite* for mechanical organ by Paul Hindemith was composed in his best manner. Ernst Toch also had a *Study* for mechanical organ. A garbled version of the first part of Antheil's *Ballet Mécanique* was given with a badly functioning mechanical piano.

One word should be added about the music that Hindemith wrote for mechanical organ to accompany an animated cartoon called *Krazy Kat at the Circus*. The wit and *diablerie*, the abundant flow of melodic ideas, the vitality and force of this little commentary on a very amusing film, confirmed one's opinion that in Hindemith Germany has its first great composer since 1900.

Aaron Copland

A FESTIVAL THAT FAILED

IT is impossible for any one vitally interested in the International Society for Contemporary Music to discuss the fifth festival at Frankfort last summer without commenting freely on its results, which were frankly disappointing to the hopes of those who attended. Indeed the discouragement felt after this festival of an opera performance and six concerts was so great that one is justified in doubting the future benefits of such arrangements. The ideal plan of Edward I. Dent, the chairman, is splendid, and in himself he, more than anyone else, embodies the society's traditions. But with the entrance of a jury into the scheme, there are injected all kinds of extra-musical considerations, and diplomacy begins to play a role.

In keeping with the purpose of the society, progressive art should be given first place. This need not mean the purely experimental, but rather the fruitful experiment. What we want is to hear new music in the making and on its way to a goal. Thus we can acknowledge and salute the master works of our own time. On the other hand we cannot separate these too finely, for it is also vital to compare the less mature product with the master work. And if the festival is to be for the younger com-

posers it should also include the works of older men, for there are as we know many young composers who already sadly bear the characteristics of age, and vice versa.

A truly international festival, moreover, should show as explicitly as possible how various races are developing the contemporary idea. Neither the methods of the newer music, nor the technical means are as important as the expression of inner and spiritual characteristics. Atonality, polytonality or whatsoever are not the essential thing, for naturally no composer will overlook any of the technical cornerstones of modern music.

Finally there is the question of whether a music festival each year encourages new creation. This is the day of over-emphasis on individual works and their proper alignment in the general development is apt to be neglected. International festivals must show a well defined output and therefore should, perhaps, take place less often. Above all, the professional music making world should not be allowed to obscure the picture.

Unfortunately in all these respects the fifth festival was a failure. But from the general negative effects I will attempt to select a few positive ones for discussion.

It was a happy thought to open the festival with a masterpiece of lofty conception, the *Doktor Faustus* of Ferruccio Busoni. But it was a less happy idea to entrust its performance to a conductor who, talented as he may be in directing opera of the conventional repertoire, is temperamentally averse to works that reduce his chance of personal success. The intriguing problem of this *Faustus* is that it reveals a man completely devoted to his art, bringing to it a mastery both technical and of the spirit, yet keeping a certain detachment from it which prevents a dionysiac self-expression. The subject, a living thing to most people, was, in his hands, extraordinarily interesting. There is a definite withdrawal from effective device, an imposed self-restraint, and at the same time an apparent desire to accomplish a sure result. This uncompromising attitude is doomed to the displeasure of the larger public. That Busoni, writing his own libretto, should banish all eroticism was to be expected. His music has the many-sidedness which we have come to recognize as a synthesis of his personality. Following Berlioz, he develops his ideal without

making it unnatural. Everything is absorbed into a truly remarkable expression of his own individuality.

Reviewing the works on the six concert programs we observe with astonishment the meager output of the French musicians. No one can persuade us that French creative force in music is as weak as it seemed here. Undoubtedly the responsibility falls on Walter Straram, the conductor, who, as a member of the jury, also co-operated in the selection of works.

With pardonable curiosity the European always looks eagerly for new developments of creative energy in American music. What a pity then to present Henry F. Gilbert's *Dance in the Place Congo*, which released a spirit of hilarity not always intended by the composer. We are accustomed to regard a symphonic poem as something more important, less naive. Quite different in effect was Aaron Copland's *Music for the Theatre*. The dependence on Stravinsky is obvious, but Copland nevertheless makes remarkable use of his jazz. It was so effectively treated, so varied, with such comprehension of its true objective, that the work ranks as a success in an unsuccessful festival.

We also expected new musical inspiration from Russia but what we heard was neither more nor less than a repetition of the national romantic tradition. Alexander Mossolow is the first who has not yielded to Paris, who retains something of his own to say. One can hardly call his string quartet a strong work, but it achieved a quality of folklore, and, what is more, a characteristic and individual form.

Interest in England was also keen at the festival, but the latter only seemed to show that the greater the capacity of English musical intelligence, the greater is its distance from creative power. The principal English accomplishment really seems to lie in vocal music. It was undoubtedly fitting that W. G. Whittaker with his Newcastle chorus should present his own setting of the 139th Psalm. It is easy to understand how a composer with such an instrument of his own making should find therein an inspiration to his imagination. One would go far to seek another chorus capable of the same infinite gradations of tone color. Astonishing difficulties in the part writing inherent in the rhythms and harmonies, not imposed on a chorus since

Schoenberg's choral works, seemed to disappear entirely. The expressiveness of the music was never in any way threatened.

That Italy seemed weakly represented is apparently to be laid at the door of Alfredo Casella, who, also a member of the jury, worked energetically in favor of his special group. A piano concerto, *Le Danze del Ré David*, by Castelnuovo-Tedesco, in spite of its Hebrew themes, contained so little of genuinely new music that the sixty year old *Islamey* of Balakirev seemed more modern in comparison.

It is not my intention to discuss all the festival's questionable, unimportant, forced and already passé works. However, it is to be regretted that a *Trio* of Joachim Turnia should so superficially have represented the Spanish output.

Turning to the German contribution, we see the completely opposed works of Alban Berg, Heinrich Kaminsky and Ernst Toch and also, a surprising oddity, the *Seventh Suite* of Josef Matthias Hauer. Berg's *Chamber Concerto* for piano and violin with thirteen wind instruments is the ultimate development from *Tristan*. Complicated as is its structure, it lacks contemporaneity. The composer whom chance gave so unusually effective a libretto in *Wozzeck* became thereby more famous than he can ever be through his chamber music. The *Magnificat* of Kaminsky is in the Handelian style, well written but just as little suited, though in a different way from Berg's work, to our changing times. The *Piano Concerto* of Toch proved a simple, even an open acknowledgment to Brahms.

The Austrian, Hauer, not accepted seriously by his own people till now, has composed only during the last ten years. His theories approach those of Schoenberg with whom, however, he is not to be compared in intellectual stature. He is completely a primitive. His music is atonal and one finds the twelve tone scale in his works, but it remains inarticulate speech whose message awaits liberation by the conductor. The second of the six movements of the *Suite* is wonderfully delicate music of the spheres; otherwise the machinery is sadly conspicuous.

What Bela Bartok is need not be proclaimed again here. His profile is definite, his mastery beyond all question. We know that folk-lore is the basis of his work and gives it shape. Sensuous

joy is foreign to him, he is by nature hard, raw and angular. With his *Piano Concerto*, intended to be self-interpreted in the concert halls of Europe and America, he seems to me to have made a compromise with the world. The work is undeniably interesting, with the exotic influence, not unaffected by Stravinsky, again important. But it is not nearly so grateful to hear as one imagines it was meant to be.

These positive effects gathered from the Frankfort festival, do not, it seems to me, vitiate my original conclusions. Well organized though they were, the performances failed to express the musically creative spirit of our time.

Adolph Weissmann

MORE ABOUT "FAUSTUS"

TO this writer the real surprise, even the shock of the Festival was Busoni's *Faustus*. After the opening bars of the opera another stupid legend vanished—that of Busoni's cerebral instrumentalism. There is a mellow warmth here which is granted only to creators with a feeling for the human voice.

It is vain to seek in *Faustus* the influence of Wagner; what one finds rather are the tints of Berlioz and Meyerbeer. How peremptory a creative urge must have possessed the composer to arm him against Wagner! For Busoni was in truth a gigantic sponge forever absorbing. His eclecticism is reminiscent of Mahler's. Their genius as performers and assimilators distorted and crushed their creative gifts. In spite of strong racial differences and an even wider divergence in taste, there is a great similarity in their musical natures. As composers they both were constructors rather than creators. They had the power to assimilate the melodic and harmonic wealth of the past, and at the same time they joined eagerly in the frantic pursuit of new tonal acquisitions. Both had the ability to melt down and mold all the gathered musical ore; both were able to construct now light and graceful, now vast and powerful frames. But neither could make his utterance in a voice distinctly his own.

One marvels therefore all the more at the great musical vision of Busoni, at his extraordinary intelligence and taste when one