

it is not the music which is stretched out taut but rather the subject of the drama which is reduced to its fundamental tragic elements. *Numance* was originally performed at the Paris Opéra and in view of its success has already been revived there.

## LETTER

THE EDITOR, *TEMPO* 18th June, 1957.

DEAR SIR,

An event of great importance in the world of modern music took place in the early months of this year with a series of concerts entitled "Music of a Century" given in the Royal Festival Hall by the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

I attended all nine of these concerts, which, to quote from the handbook issued to cover the series, were "cast in the form of an anthology, with each programme pursuing some particular line of musical thought."

The first concert, entitled "Retreat from Wagner," was one of the most rewarding of the series, the highlight being a wonderful rendering of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*. The second concert, entitled "Adventures in Tonality," contained a curious compound of music that was tonal, Hindemith-tonal, polytonal and atonal: incidentally, although the programme set out a useful quotation from Hindemith's *Philharmonic Concerto* (which could really have done without one) it failed to set out the note-row for Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, so that we were left completely in the dark as to the composer's intentions.

For the third concert, entitled "Strange Orchestras," the hall was packed to capacity, and obviously many of the audience had come more in the mood to hear the Hoffnung Orchestra than the L.P.O. The fourth concert, entitled "Nostalgia," was composed wholly of pops, and the same is true of the fifth, aptly called "Once Upon a Time." With the sixth concert we were offered Mahler's *Song of the Earth* and Britten's *Spring Symphony*: this was an enterprising programme, even if not wholly successful in execution.

With the seventh concert, entitled "Primitive Strength," we were offered a thrilling performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and some little-played works of Janáček and Bartók. The eighth concert, entitled "Diversion," contained a charming *Concertino for Pianoforte and Orchestra* by Françaix and Arnold's *Second Symphony*, but some may have felt that the distinguished conductor, Massimo Freccia, was not in sympathy with this kind of music. The ninth

and final concert was a *pot-pourri* of twentieth-century English traditionalists, together with the Suite from *Lulu* by Berg.

Everyone thinks that he can compile an anthology better than the next man, and it would be churlish to criticise the L.P.O. for having omitted works that happen to be particular favourites of particular people. It was clearly never the intention of this series to be more *avant* than the *avant-garde*. Nevertheless, the total omission (barring the puerile *Ballet Mécanique* by Antheil) of works by native American composers was startling.

I would suggest that if concerts of contemporary music are to be given to a wide public in the Festival Hall, and that if the idea of an anthology is to be persisted with, a wider range of works should be considered for performance.

Nevertheless, this series of concerts was a fine advertisement for contemporary music, and the merits far outweighed any shortcomings. It is greatly to be hoped that the L.C.C. and the Arts Council will continue to sponsor such worthwhile ventures; it is also greatly to be hoped that the printed programmes will be thoroughly checked for printing errors, which were legion.

Yours faithfully,

R. A. BULLOCK.

## BOOK GUIDE

### THE ART OF TYMPANIST AND DRUMMER

by Andrew A. Shivas, M.D., D.P.H.

(Dennis Dobson, 8/6 net)

I find Mr. Shivas' book delightfully refreshing and informative. Sufficient encouragement and enlightenment is given to the amateur—particularly with regard to the possible mastery of the side drum—that, speaking as a professional I experienced a twinge of alarm. I foresee a marked diminution in the "well-earned copper, (not forgetting the ham tea") derived from the heretofore pleasant engagement as an "extra" with the amateur organisation.

The lack of printed examples, giving space for detailed technical observations is in itself highly commendable, and the beginner will profit well from the combination of the old and new styles of practise for the attainment of the long roll.