

AS our regular readers already know, this double issue of *TEMPO* has come about as a result of circumstances in the printing industry earlier this year. It appears with our renewed regrets for any inconvenience the change of schedule may have caused. Fortunately in this case, the amalgamation of two issues acquires from their content a rationale of its own: reevaluation of a famous work representative of the 1920's is followed by introductions to a recently rediscovered figure – perhaps a key figure – from the next decade. This combined exercise does in fact inaugurate an inter-war series planned for the next few issues. Reasons for the recent increase, and shift, of interest in musical developments between the two World Wars will perhaps emerge from a complementary series designed as a composers' forum and due to begin in our December issue – which will also continue the inter-war series with a major article on Carl Ruggles.

With the exception of Varèse, all the major pioneers of modern music had reached maturity before the end of the First World War; and without exception it was their work, rather than that of the next generation or so, that dominated the whole era of rediscovery and reevaluation which began after the Second World War and has continued until now. The decisive role played by Pierre Boulez in that process, as in others, is clear, and more widely recognized than the connexions between the Paris-centred avant-garde of the 1930's and that of the post-1945 era. In his retrospective programming, Boulez himself has tended to stop short at the 1920's, and where possible at an early stage in that decade. The fascinating concerts mounted by his Ensemble Inter-Contemporain for the Paris-Moscow exhibition last year did indeed suggest an epochal significance in the silencing of the post-Revolutionary avant-garde in Russia. But a sense that the 1920's in general were a period of decadence and the 1930's of exhaustion – except for one's favoured pioneers or stalwarts – has been in the air for a very long time. A premonition of it, and one with a special bearing on the present issue of *TEMPO*, may be found in Constant Lambert's preface to the 1936 issue of his 'Study of Music in Decline', *Music Ho!* Compared to the vertiginous 'twenties, Lambert writes,

the thirties are curiously static and even Stravinsky seems to have stopped reacting. London has woken up to surrealism just as Paris was forgetting it, Vaughan Williams and William Walton have written symphonies, the latter marking yet a further stage in the composer's return to consonance, Igor Markevitch, a curious, unsympathetic but decided talent, has emerged as the leading figure of the Franco-Russian school, but otherwise things, particularly in the world of popular music, are very much as they were.

The notion that anything at all (except perhaps the more oblivious sorts of popular music) could have remained 'very much as it was' after the world events of 1929-33 may well surprise us. It would certainly have surprised the Diaghileff who, shortly before his death in 1929, wrote that historic letter to the *THE TIMES* in which he repudiated the ethos of the 1920's and looked forward to the sterner responsibilities of the decade to come.

Nostalgia for the 1920's in either of its mythic forms – as the last age of innocence or the first of true emancipation – has been a feature of our cultural life for the past quarter of a century. Eminently exploitable by commercial interests and readily allied to reactionary ones, it discovers period charm in the pristine Satie and the chimerical 'Brecht-Weill', prefers (of course) the Bad Boy Antheil to the Good, upsets poor Hindemith (about whom most of us will have a guilty conscience until the London Sinfonietta rescues us later this season) and generally muddies over everything that pertains most closely to the real quality of music. By comparison, the cries of 'Back to Bax!', or indeed to any reputable figure outside or tangential to the orbits of Modernism, seem distinctly salutary; they too convey their characteristic nostalgias, but within the true range and dynamics of conservatism.

It is no bad thing for music that the accidents of recent history and especially of economics have removed some of the psychological supports for the cult of the 1920's, and directed attention towards the decade that followed. The Second World War and the events that led up to it caused a much deeper rift in the history of modern music than is generally recognized. Whereas the events of the 'vertiginous' twenties were widely publicized and soon found their way into official chronicles, many lines of communication were already broken in 1933 and most of the remainder went dead five years later. The priorities of postwar reconstruction, as directed from Darmstadt and elsewhere, were such that many areas of musical activity in the 1930's were simply overlooked; and they have remained so.

Today we can no longer afford to ignore (even if we choose to dismiss) any information that may be relevant to the future of composition. In that sense every rediscovery, whether of a Markevitch or a Nancarrow, already has symbolic significance and soon may prove to have much more than that. Meanwhile our lengthening perspectives combine with deliberate or chance reflections from recent music to alter the meanings and demeanour of what is most familiar. So Walton's *FACADE* – or Sibelius's *Fifth* – are seen to be facing forwards again. Backwards, we ourselves must not go.