

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

hears *Faustus*. In this work his inherent eclecticism is much less manifest than in any other—the *Piano Concerto* or *Clarinet Concertino*, for example. He has contrived to give his opera a unity, a style and a flexibility of musical action that might serve as a challenge to any creator. His aristocratic speech and pure, exalted musicianship put Busoni into the sacred circle of Liszt, Scriabin, Debussy and Schoenberg. Of this spirit Busoni was one of the few embodiments surviving into our own busy time.

As an operatic conception *Doktor Faustus* is a relief from the stodgy and artificial continuity of the Wagnerian music drama. The return to the fantastic and picturesque, to whim and episode, to the elegant adventures in art of Berlioz and Delacroix is more relevant to our time and to the new opera than the tedious consequentialism of Wagner.

To me the performance of Busoni's *Faustus* appears a great event in contemporary musical life. Without doubt it was the triumph of an otherwise uninspired Festival which, at its liveliest, proved to be chiefly an exhibition for the new pastiche of clichés. The feeling that remains with me after hearing this work is one of profound admiration for a race which still gives us, after having given so much, masters who, more than Titus, are the "consolation of humanity." In their aloof and noble artistry, in their disregard for the fads worshipped by the mob, Busoni, Toscanini and Malipiero are true masters of the new Italian Renaissance, the heirs to Monteverdi and Mantegna, Sebastiano del Piombo and Vivaldi.

Lazare Saminsky

"OEDIPUS" AND OTHER MUSIC HEARD IN PARIS

OEDIPUS REX, opera oratorio by Cocteau, set to music by Stravinsky, was the most important as well as the most baffling event of the season in Paris last spring. What especially disturbed the elegant audiences of the Russian Ballet was to hear the traditional story of Oedipus, without any dramatic performance, sung in, of all languages, Latin. Many cried out against it as a stunt, a hoax, a mockery. But on reflection they may perhaps realize that there has never been a musician who could have united the elements used by Stravinsky with such spontaneous