

veals his great fertility of musical ideas especially in harmonic progression.

Another young composer, Dante Fiorillo, had two movements of a *Concerto for Piano, Oboe and Horn* played at the concert of the Society for Professional Musicians. Though very dissonant in style, the work was not original in conception. The confused contrapuntal texture and the static harmonic basis gave it a diffuse and uncertain quality which canceled out the tension caused by the dissonances. If its form had been tighter and clearer the message might have come across better. The composer seems to have a personality but has not learned to express it convincingly.

The Henry Hadley Memorial Society gave an entire evening of their composer's orchestral works which turned out to be quite interesting. Although Hadley's style is very much in the European late nineteenth century romantic tradition, two pieces, *The Culprit Fay* and *In Bohemia* both achieve a real character and a deeply felt quality that in spite of their lack of strong individuality make them worth hearing more often in our orchestral concerts.

Elliott Carter

POLITICAL ART—NOTES ON KRENEK'S KARL V

WE read in *Faust* that "a political song is a vile song," and so think all those who believe that the artist creates in an ivory tower, remote from current movements, withdrawn from the confusion of the day. Even Krenek, if I am not mistaken, often defended this thesis (or wasn't that his intention in the song, *Politik*, from the *Reisetagebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen*?) But in his latest stage work, *Karl V*, he has not only turned to political art but to the art of politics. For anyone who ventures to use the twelve-tone technic as a material in his musical works today has yielded to political art. Why not call a spade a spade? Anyone professing progress becomes actively involved in art-politics. It is a fact which characterizes this age, regrettable perhaps, but nonetheless true. Furthermore, anyone who propounds the question of reformation and counter-reformation, that is, the problem of political Catholicism, affirms *a priori* the necessity of introducing political questions into art. Of course,

if we take politics to mean simply, as the Philistine Babbitts do, "the corrupt affairs of a current minister of finance," we can exclude political questions from art. But if art really is what it should be, the expression of our essential ideas, how can we ban politics, which has an ever-increasing influence on every individual's private life? Fascism, and its frankest demonstration, national socialism, forbids "tendencious" art which reflects the era. Marxism affirms that art must mirror the age. Even so-called "abstract art" is the expression, conscious or subconscious, of the reaction of a class to present trends.

In *Karl V* then do we find Krenek consistent in his opposition to dialectic materialism, a position he so vigorously maintained in recent years?

Krenek has really been—although he probably never would admit it—always a political artist. Even when he shunned politics, or most especially then, he practised it so strongly that the younger generation which openly carried the banner of political art, has always greatly admired his dialectics. From his earliest works, on through *Jonny*, to *Karl V*, he has followed a political road. But what a road! Granted that in 1933 we can survey the counter-reformation more objectively than we did jazz and "race" in 1925, it is still a question whether Krenek has actually attained objectivity in *Karl V*. I mean the objectivity which history demands. To take a problem in which even land reform has never been an issue and develop it in the form of a *Lehrstück*, is in itself no great achievement. Brecht was the first to do this, as in *Massnahme*. The form and the point of view were different, but the problem he dealt with was not so dissimilar.

But if the listener is to be left in doubt as to who has got the better of whom, the problem never comes to a head. Within this form one could treat the whole question of domination and slavery, but one must have the boldness to actually perceive the problem. With a *Karl V* whom we expect at any minute, God forgive me, (and I don't mean the God who seems constantly to be hovering in the background) to burst into a stanza of the *Dreigroschensong*, nothing has been accomplished except to assist the old Christian mystery play to a kind of assignation with the modern *Lehrstück*.

Staging the work presents a real difficulty. A satisfactory solution is almost impossible because the essential problem is treated in picture book fashion, and the realistic basis resolved to a game of Questions and Answers. Moreover, from the standpoint of dramatic technic, the work seems to escape the confines of its form because of its content. With this wavering between convention and freedom of the theatre, one element rides roughshod over the other. We were already amazed in Schönberg's *Von heute auf morgen*, in Berg's *Wozzeck* and especially in his *Lulu* to find the celestial symbol of ourselves suddenly taking body on the stage in the form of ordinary people. But imagine how much greater will be the astonishment of the audience at discovering that something buried long, long ago, is now being carried to the grave in a "De Luxe Funeral." Because of these disparate elements the director faces the task of keeping the work from breaking into fragments, of preserving unity while building it up from minute details.

The younger generation has a claim on Krenek, a stronger one than on those classical figures of modernity, Schönberg and Stravinsky. He is closer personally, he stands nearer to it spiritually. He owes that generation the duty to follow the road of art to which his ability, his knowledge and his courage have predestined him, that road on which the artist expresses "what is." Krenek must eventually follow this road. For it presents the supreme questions of life—hunger, and the final satisfaction of hunger. And this is a question which will soon—whether we await the solution with rejoicing or with foreboding—be raised by our era, and by our era be solved.

Kurt List

HOW NEWS COMES TO PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA'S furtherance of contemporary music gains little support from the so-called "higher circles." Whereas the city boasts of some of the country's leading musical organizations, its programs have been sadly lacking in contemporary music representation. Repression seems to be the slogan. Transcriptions abound, intertwined with fair doses of the standard moderns. The Philadelphia Orchestra gives programs which,