

*Brief
Comment*



*And
Review*

AND AFTER STRAVINSKY—?

JUST as Claude Debussy epitomized the impressionistic tendencies of his period, so Igor Stravinsky focuses in himself all the satirical, ironic and sardonic elements of the last decade. Not only is his incisive thematic material unique, but also his manipulation of this material.

In a period when a masterly technic is the common property of all forward-looking composers, the influence of an outstanding individuality such as Stravinsky is bound to manifest itself in diverse musical climes. We have only to inspect certain works of Malipiero and Casella in Italy, Poulenc and Milhaud in France, Goossens and Bliss in England, and Griffes and Jacobi in the United States to discover how potent is the hypnosis of this young Russian.

Whether or not we may consider this influence advantageous is purely a matter of personal perspective. With all respect to the value of the grotesque and exotic in art—we have ourselves contributed our fair quota—it is questionable whether an epoch devoted almost entirely to the bizarre will lead us anywhere except into a cul-de-sac. Not that creators of music will ever again return to the apple-dumpling harmonies of the Romanticists, or the T-square rhythms of this school; neither, we trust, to the long-spun melodic line, drooling sentimentality with every suspension, and emotionally anchoring to regularly placed buoys in the form of stock cadences.

No, there must be no turning back, even to the virtues of our ancestors. Let us, however, not confine ourselves to any group of rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic formulae. With all our desire to evolve new forms of expression, let us not entirely dehumanize our product, for finally all music must be something more than a clever or witty commentary on our experience.

Emerson Whithorne