

musical dimensions, in which the others are used to support and articulate these two. For instance, in 'Sextets' for violin and piano (1966), the contrapuntal pitch strands are articulated most obviously by means of their instrumental distribution and then by timbre/attack (viz. staccato—legato, arco—pizzicato, normale—sul tasto—sul ponticello) and register, while the rhythmic strands are articulated by their dynamic level.

Apparent from the works performed was a consistent development of compositional resource in the interplay, on both small and large scale, of symmetrical and asymmetrical partitioning and combination of sets, and in the evolution of an original and flexible rhythmic language, arising from the desire to exploit fully the potential of serial intervallic scaling of this dimension.

The aspect of Babbitt's work which could be considered his most far-reaching innovation is the generation of both small and large scale form from the set, without reference to existing formal archetypes, except where these are rigorously re-interpreted in terms of set structure and manipulation. For example, the opening of 'Partitions' for piano (1957) employs a hexachordally degenerate all-interval set, while the six subsequent sections are delineated by sets derived from the four trichordal generators within the hexachord in different pairings. Babbitt's best-known work, *Philomel* for soprano and tape (1964), is a re-interpretation of a scena drammatica with its distinct recitative—arioso—aria layout, re-defined in this context by set partitioning, extracted interval sequences, and timbral and registral distribution. The presentation of entire twelve-note sets in the soprano part is reserved until the third section, the culminating aria.

The word-setting of *Philomel*, as of his other vocal works, such as the Two Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1955), is characterized by naturalness of declamation which brings forcibly to notice the fact that the rigour of the compositional procedures is not chosen for reasons of masochistic self-discipline, but for its adaptability to differing situations. Discussion of Babbitt's work has centred on the general question of the validity of 'totally organized' serial music. However, we believe that, even for composers of opposed stylistic persuasions, his work could have significance which does not stem from the simplistic issue of whether or not he is a Champion of Serialism.

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Letters to the Editor

Sir,

There are certainly arguments in and behind Tim Souster's letter (*Tempo* 89). The first, I think, is that it appears curious that Mr. Stadlen should wait twenty years before acknowledging the 'emergence' of Boulez; if true (and I have seen nothing in Mr. Stadlen's previous writings to suggest that it isn't) this would seem not only curious but inadmissible in a critic who is known to have a specialist interest in serial music.

The next question is one of critical preference: a "desire to elevate Boulez, above Stockhausen in particular" is surely no more inherently puzzling than a desire to elevate Brahms, above Wagner in particular. Personally, I can think of many reasons for such an elevation, but at this level (and in both examples) feel that a direct confrontation between Messrs. Souster and Stadlen on this issue would indeed be of greater critical interest than my own views.

Finally Mr. Souster impugns Mr. Stadlen's concern with the notation of new music. The latter's "anxiety about the way the score works" is represented as an irrelevant interference with proper critical functions. But, leaving aside

matters of individual judgment and discretion, it is surely axiomatic that the full force of musical criticism depends on the ability of the critic to give certain assurances that his most substantial comments will retain their validity in the face of future performances of the work, or interpretation, criticised; certainly, most critics would be "happier men" if they only had to prosify about unrepeatable experiences. In principle, then, though perhaps not in substance, Mr. Stadlen is right: if he feels that a certain notation is deficient in ensuring the repeatability of the musical experience he has to criticise, he has a genuine cause for professional concern.

Yours, etc.

G. W. HOPKINS

Sir,

Mr. Keller mentions (*Tempo* 89) having seen and spoken to Matyas Seiber at the Donaueschingen first performance of Ligeti's *Atmospheres*, even distinctly remembering the lively argument. At that time Seiber had been dead almost exactly a year; *Atmospheres* is not dedicated to Seiber, as Mr. Keller says, but to his memory. I suppose the argument distinctly remembered relates to another piece by Ligeti, *Apparitions*, first performed at the ISCM Festival in Cologne in June 1960. Seiber was present there and presumably Mr. Keller was too. This slip of memory would not, however, deserve special mention, were it not for the sad fact that Ligeti's *Apparitions*, which not only marked a definite stylistic turning point in post-serial musical development, but is also a masterpiece in its own right, now seems to have been almost forgotten. For every ten performances of *Atmospheres* there is at most one of *Apparitions*—which is difficult to understand or find any objective reasons for. *Atmospheres* has now been recorded many times, but there is still no recording of *Apparitions*.

Mr. Keller is probably quite right when he criticizes me for not having perceived what is musically new in Ligeti's *Continuum* for harpsichord. Admittedly I was rather puzzled by the piece, and was still so at the time of my article (*Tempo* 88). Now I think otherwise. The perpetually changing rhythms, being the result of an ingenious harmonic construction developing through the whole piece, are undoubtedly as new as the harmonic sound colour technique in the choral piece *Lux aeterna*, where the chromatic cluster technique, begun in *Apparitions*, was for the first time completely abandoned.

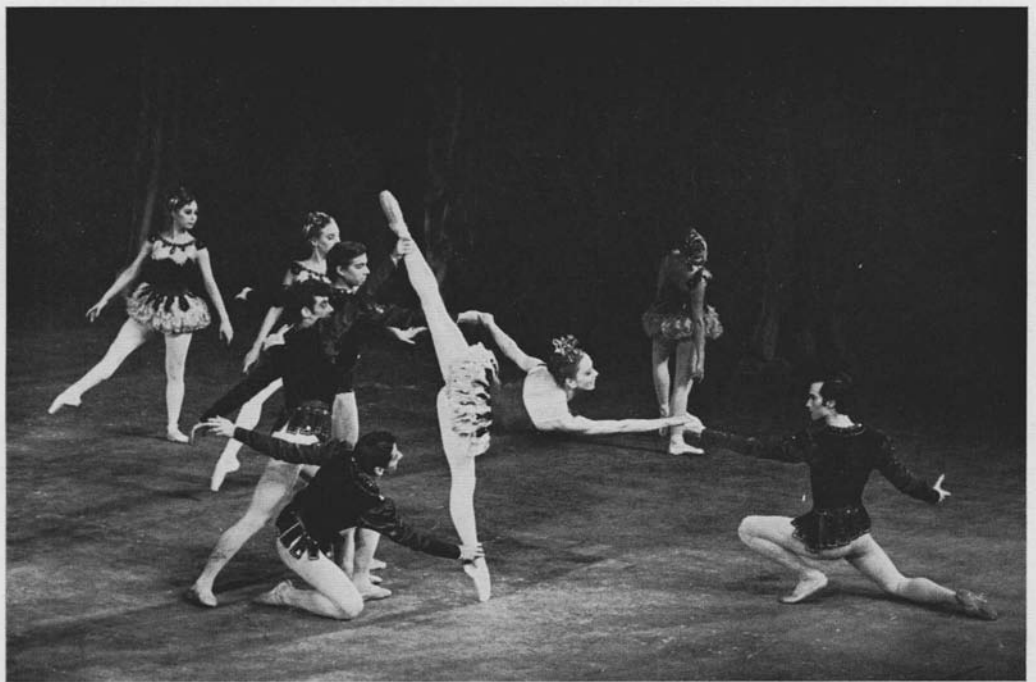
As for my reticence about the Wind Quintet, only the first three movements of this had been completed when I wrote my article. The subsequent appearance of the complete work has of course helped me, like Mr. Keller, to understand the new element in *Continuum*. The eighth movement of the Quintet, which Mr. Keller singles out for description, offers an almost complete technical parallel to *Continuum* in compositional technique, up to the solo horn entry—though the music itself is quite different. Even more interesting from this point of view is the recently composed second study for organ, *Coulée*, which on paper at first seems to be almost a duplicate of *Continuum* (of which it was originally intended to be only a transcription); although the techniques are the same, however, musically, as the composer has observed, the organ piece is something quite distinct. I think Mr. Keller has perceived very well this special quality of Ligeti's musical mind, which always produces, as he says, "a marvellously new musical game". Whether the musical substance is 'new' or 'old' does not really matter.

Yours, etc.

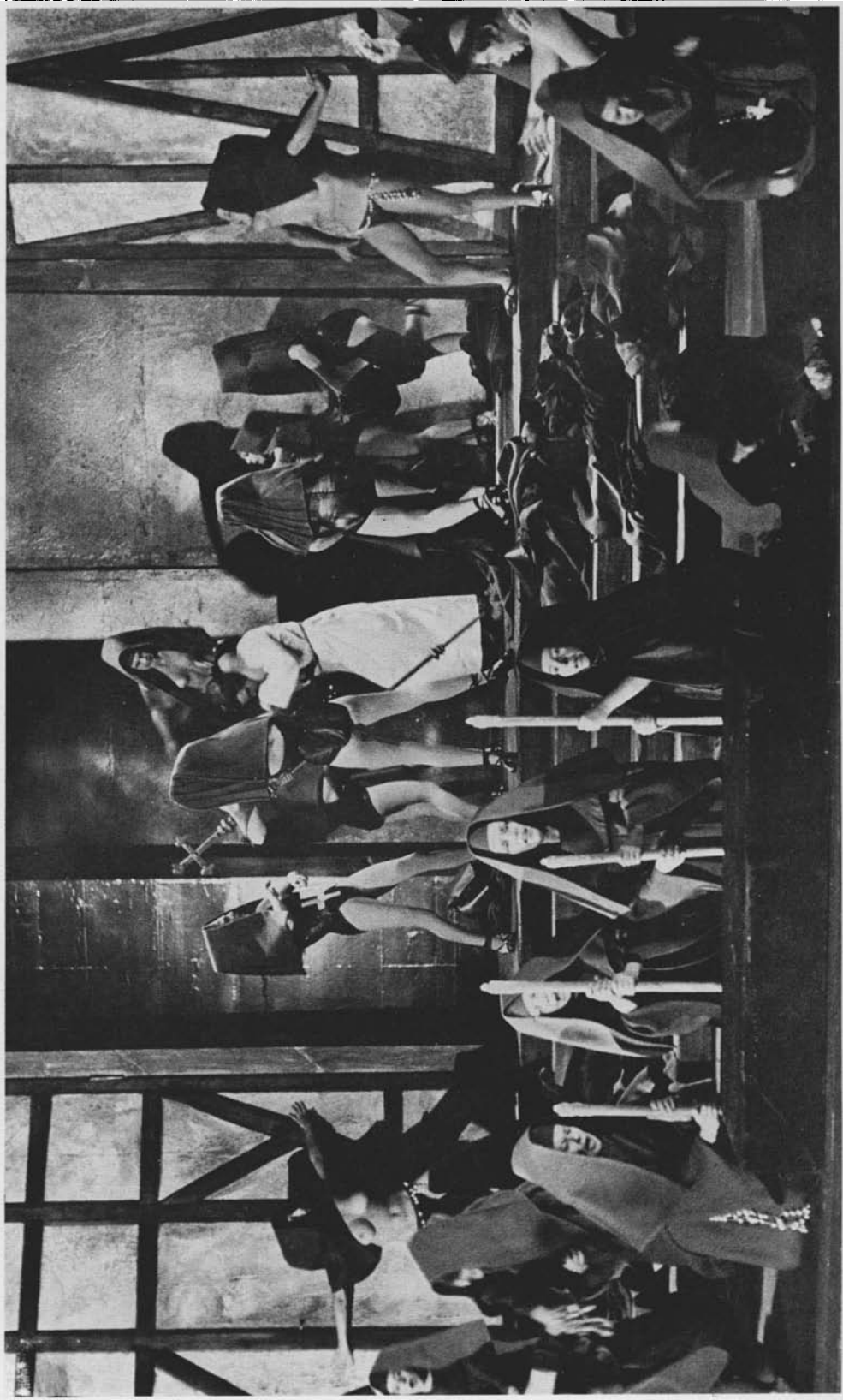
OVE NORDWALL



from the New York City Ballet's production of Prokofiev's *The Prodigal Son* (choreography by George Balanchine, designs by Georges Rouault). Photograph by Roger Wood (London).



This scene from the New York City Ballet's production *Jewels*, to music by Fauré, Stravinsky and Tchaikovsky, is from the second movement, 'Rubies', to the music of Stravinsky's *Capriccio for piano and orchestra* (choreography by George Balanchine, scenery by Peter Harvey, costumes by Karinska). Photograph by Martha Swope (New York).



from Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* at the Frankfurt Opera (producer Josef Svoboda, designer Václav Kaslík, costumes by Jan Skálický). Photograph by Günter Englert.