

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

from HANS KELLER

Bill Hopkins wins his case, but not mine; he reinvents mine for the purpose (TEMPO 129): '... if Hans Keller (Letter, TEMPO 128) turns back ... 35 issues ... (TEMPO 95) he will find that I agree with him about mastery too ... except that it can never be the whole story ...'. Where or when did I say or imply that mastery could be the whole story?

As a writer, lecturer and, last but not first, as a teacher, I have devoted decades to both defining and defying mastery—to the extent of placing Bruckner's lack of mastery well above—beyond—Mahler's supreme mastery. And if Bill Hopkins thinks that 'language, properly used, cannot but reduce what it refers to', my reply is that understanding never reduces: if language aims at confining itself to the articulation of understanding, the problem doesn't arise, even though language may seem to demean itself improperly on the way.

London, N.W.3

SANDOR BALASSA**Hajak (Tresses)***for soprano and chamber ensemble, Op. 2*

Hajak is a setting of a poem by Charles Vidrac in a translation by György Ronay. Commissioned by Hungarian Radio and completed in 1979, it supersedes an early work of the composer's on the same text written in 1964. It received its première at the Budapest Festival of New Music on 29 September 1979, and the first British performance will take place on 12 January 1980, in the Wigmore Hall, by Josephine Nendick and the Capricorn Ensemble.

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