

Tempo

A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF MODERN MUSIC

Edited by Colin Mason

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 51-36700

The banning of Ginastera's opera *Bomarzo* in his native Argentina, referred to on p. 21, is a bad decision, and a disheartening one for the authors. Although the composer has the reassurance of the two successful productions in the United States to sustain his faith in the work in the face of such a setback, the ban does, for the time being at least, rob him of the encouragement and stimulus of what would probably be an even greater success in his own country—not to mention the substantial material rewards that could follow if it were to find, as it would obviously stand more chance of doing at home than anywhere else, a place in the opera house's regular repertory.

Such obstacles may not be able to halt, even if they may impede, the career of a major composer, but they may deflect him from a course for which he is particularly well fitted. Bartók is an example of a composer with a considerable gift for the musical theatre who was too discouraged to go on trying after the age of forty, owing to the suppression of his three existing dramatic works on political and 'moral' grounds. Political intervention also, of course, profoundly affected the work of Prokofiev and Shostakovich, on the purely musical level as well as on other levels. But as Prokofiev's career showed, and as censors well know, even greater than the need for freedom from such intervention is the artist's need to speak to his own people, to an audience who by virtue of having the same cultural and historical background as his own are most likely to be interested in him, and to understand him completely.

It is the need that the Argentine ban on *Bomarzo* frustrates, and the same frustration is what makes the life of most artists in exile hard, even when they suffer no economic hardship. Andrzej Panufnik, whose music is the subject of another article in this issue, is one of many in our own time who have suffered in this way. In his case it is particularly ironic that so soon after he 'chose freedom' the musical scene in Poland changed so much for the better that her composers at home were able to come right to the fore of the European avant-garde. Even more ironical is the fact that his methods have something in common with those of the younger Polish school who have been foremost in writing so-called 'textural' music, and may even have served as a pointer for them in this direction. It is more than possible that if he had felt able to remain in Poland he would have become involved in that movement and would have become, like Lutoslawski (one year his senior), one of its leaders, whereas exile and isolation have denied him this stimulus, diverting him on to a harder, solitary path, and perhaps even—as is suggested by his disclaimer now of much sympathy with the avant-garde (see p. 13)—altering the direction of his work itself by making him, unconsciously and against his natural inclination, want to emphasize the difference between himself and his compatriots who remained behind.