

EDITORIAL

There are countless music-lovers the world over who lay no claim to understanding (in any logical sense) the music they enjoy, and some are amazingly perceptive. Only think of the meagre audiences of cognoscenti that would be left us without that great body of pure amateurs. True, they must be led through the maze of the contemporary scene by an informed elite. But in the last resort their response will also be the ultimate test of that elite.

Roberto Gerhard, 1965

GERHARD *always insisted that for the general listening public, familiarity with new music was likely to be more effective than explanations and analyses. Yet 'the meagre audiences of cognoscenti' were for the greater part of his life the only ones that could claim any kind of familiarity with his own music. Until his sixties none of his mature works was published or recorded.*

In 1956, the year of his 60th birthday, a general publishing agreement was arranged with Keith Prowse, through the good offices of Patrick Howgill, whose father, the late R. J. Howgill, was then the BBC's Controller, Music, and was always a staunch friend of Gerhard's work. Also in that year, William Glock—who was to succeed R. J. Howgill in 1960—published in The Score and IMA Magazine the first collection of articles on Gerhard. Until that historic issue, writings on Gerhard had been few and very scattered. Edward Sackville-West's pioneering study of his music had been published in an arts magazine, and was not addressed to a primarily musical readership.

In that respect as in others, Sackville-West's article was true to Gerhard's principles. The fact remains that the general 'discovery' of Gerhard in the 1960's (in which the BBC's Music Division under Glock, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Colin Davis, had played so important a role) owed much to his highly personal relationship to the New Music movements of the day, and hence to precisely those specialist circles beyond which he had always looked. Significantly, recognition did not to any great extent embrace earlier works which were unrelated to the preoccupations of the 1960's. Indeed, Gerhard himself tended to be cautious about those works: having achieved a remarkable break-through in 1965 with the Concerto for Orchestra he preferred not to risk confusing the picture at that stage by re-introducing pieces from his Spanish years, however essential he felt them to be in relation to his oeuvre as a whole.

The present issue of TEMPO has evolved almost of its own accord from an initial plan simply to include in our 'inter-war' series a study of the music Gerhard wrote in his native Spain. Investigation of the possibilities in that field soon disclosed much wider needs. For instance, the relationship between Gerhard's early work and what followed is clearly in need of reappraisal now that the transient attractions of novelty have worn off and musical substance alone survives. Meanwhile, Gerhard's established reputation as an almost Janáček-like late-developer has not, in the changed economic and other circumstances of today, led to increased 'familiarity' with his late works. Nor has the literature increased in proportion to the reputation: after a quarter of a century, the September 1956 issue of The Score has remained until now the only collection of writings about Gerhard. If this, its modest sequel, helps remind us all of how much is still to be achieved in the fields of Gerhard research, criticism, and performance, it will have served its purpose.