

STRAWINSKY

NOTE—For reasons of uniformity, we have used throughout this issue the spelling of Strawinsky's name which he himself uses.

This issue of TEMPO is largely devoted to the study of Igor Strawinsky's personality and achievement. It does not claim to be a comprehensive statement—his personality is too complex and the range of his achievement too wide for that. But it is, at any rate, a tribute by serious people to one of the most distinguished musicians of our time.

Strawinsky is now sixty-six years old. He has been famous for 36 of those years. Between 1910 and 1917, the time of his association with the Diaghileff Ballet, he composed four major works—*L'Oiseau de Feu*, *Petrouchka*, *Le Sacre du Printemps* and *Le Chant du Rossignol*. After the first world war he did not go back to Russia, but settled in Paris. In 1925 he paid his first visit to the United States. Now he has made his home there.

During all this time he has been, and remains today, restlessly creative, pursuing the needs of his own development without much concern about the opinions of the world. In this he rather resembles Picasso. His style, like Picasso's, has passed through a variety of "phases". Like Picasso's, not all of his work is by any means easy of acceptance. Like Picasso, he has come in for a flattering share of critical obloquy. Like Picasso, he is sustained by an immense technical grasp of his medium.

To those who heard them first, the early works were a revelation—and a revolution. By those coming later who have, so to speak, grown up with them, they are accepted as part and parcel of our musical heritage. No programme is now made daring by the inclusion of the *Fire Bird* music. And *Petrouchka* has joined the classics of the ballet. This same generation, and an even younger one, is beginning to discover the riches of his more recent, less heard compositions. Works which, after an initial explosion of 'agacement', had been quietly relegated to the archives, are now making their way back into performance. *Renard*, *Mavra*, *Le Baiser de la Fée*, *Apollon Musagète*, are cropping up on the stage, in the concert hall, on gramophone records, all over the world. Only the other day, in Zürich, *Persephone* and *Les Noces* were chosen to open the "Musik Festwochen". The *Symphonie de Psaumes* (1930), has now been generally recognized in its true perspective. More recent still, *Jeu de Cartes* and *Scènes de Ballet* have enhanced the ballet repertory of our own day, and a new ballet, *Orpheus*, given its first appearance in New York (see "Notes and News") will be an important event of the Venice Festival in September. Strawinsky's latest composition to be completed is a Mass, which is likely to be heard for the first time during the coming autumn or winter. Now he is engaged on an opera, *The Rake's Progress*, for which W. H. Auden has written the libretto. The completion of this is only to be expected within another year or so, but it may be confidently awaited as yet another landmark in a remarkable career.

