

Tempo

A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF MODERN MUSIC

Edited by Colin Mason

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The death in New York on December 12 of Victor Bator, the Executor of the Bartók Estate, came at the moment when the New York Bartók Archives, which he founded, had achieved one of the projects always closest to the composer's heart: the publication of his three-volume collection of *Rumanian Folk Music* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, c. £17). (A review will appear in a future issue of *Tempo*). The immense labour of seeing this through the press was undertaken by Dr. Benjamin Suchoff, a Bartók scholar associated for many years with the Archives, latterly its curator, also author of a useful study of *Mikrokosmos*, and a valued occasional contributor to *Tempo*. His enlightening study of Bartók's Sixth Quartet in this issue is based on the sketches of the work in the New York Archives, and gives some indication of the great interest of the vast mass of material lodged there, and of the facilities that the Archives offers for research. For although *Rumanian Folk Music* is the first major publication sponsored by the Archives, it is by no means that institution's first achievement. Aware of the importance of the material entrusted to him, and of his responsibility towards it, Victor Bator recruited scholars and other helpers in the task of ordering and cataloguing it, and making it safely accessible to researchers, while himself seeking by all possible means to persuade other possessors of important material, either to lodge it in the Archives or to provide a copy.

Some idea of what was done is given in his 'History and Catalogue' of the Archives, published in 1963: 'From the letters we extracted dates, names and places which promised further information about Bartók or about further sources where correspondence, papers or reviews connected with him might be hidden. The letters have, of course, also been used as references for data about Bartók's musical and folk-music works. Dates, comments and biographical details about the works are indexed in a card catalogue, enabling scholars to find cross references to any letters or papers which are of interest in one or another respect. Manuscripts and original letters in the Bartók Archives are preserved by two methods. Every autograph, manuscript or otherwise unique paper is first of all photostated. A large proportion of the money spent so far on the Archives has been for this process, which enables scholars to use the Archives without subjecting the precious original papers to wear and tear.

Anyone who has worked in the Archives can testify to the excellence of the organization of the material, and to the wholly admirable facilities for carrying out research there. It is a model of what such an institution should be, and Bartók scholars will remain forever indebted to Victor Bator for his vision in setting it up and for so splendid a realization of that vision.

Subscribers and readers are owed an apology for the unavoidably delayed appearance of this issue. The Spring issue will be published in May, the Summer issue in July, and the Autumn issue in September.