

## OBITUARY

### PÁL JÁRDÁNYI

"Justifiably may we cast our wondering glance on this composer who divided his life between art and science. A unique phenomenon. The intellectual driving-force of the musicologist is led by the inclination to get acquainted with what exists, but that of the composer is to create that which does not yet exist. The two types of inclination belong to different intellectual states and temperaments. In Bartók, however, both came harmoniously together. One gave rise to the other, gave it stimulus. Both were nourished from the same source: folk music. To learn about Hungarian music and to place it in the sphere of higher art: this was the highest aim of his life."

It is already a year since Pál Járdányi wrote these sentences in memory of Bartók. Could he have guessed that with these words he had also characterised himself, and would his incredible modesty also have exaggerated the gulf which separated him from the so highly prized great master to whom he was paying tribute? His terrible and consuming illness as well as his pitifully early death was, for our natures, hardened with catastrophes though they may be, an immeasurable shock.

He was one of our leading scientists. Already as a young student of composition, he studied ethnography at the university. His thesis was a monograph study of the place called Kide in the Siebenbürgen. As a professor at the Music Conservatory he collaborated in the vast folk music edition of the *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae* (the musical arrangement of volumes I and IV being his own contribution); and from 1959 he devoted all his energies to the problem of the systematization of melody. The compilation of Vol. VII of the collection, as well as the planning arrangement of the following volume, still testify, after his death, to his intellectual leadership. A recapitulation of his ordered arrangement also appeared in German under the title *Ungarische Volksliedtypen* (two vols., 1964, 360 melodies with translations of the texts). The paper which he read at the IFMC Conference at Budapest in 1964 "Experiences and Results in systematizing Hungarian Folksongs," is preserved for us in the *Journal of the IFMC* (1965), Vol. XVII, part 2 (published as a special number of *Studia Musicologica*).

As well as being an artist and a scholar, Pál Járdányi was also a very complete personality. *Consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa*.

BENJAMIN RAJECZKY.

### ERICH SEEMANN

Professor Dr. Erich Seemann, former head of the German Folk Song Archives, died on May 10th, 1966 in Freiburg-im-Breisgau. Dr. Seemann's fame in folk song research spread far beyond the boundaries of Germany. This scholar, who rendered service both to the German and to the international cause of folklore and folk music research, was born in Stuttgart on January 14th, 1888. In Munich, under H. Paul, Fr. von der Leyden and Fr. Wilhelm, he studied German philology, folklore and comparative linguistics, and obtained his doctorate on the strength of a thesis on *Fabeln des Hugo von Trimberg*. After 1918, his plan matured for a scientific study of *Swäbischer Volkslieder*, with their melodies. His collecting activities and the study of sources linked with them brought Erich Seemann in contact with the founding of the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv in Freiburg. John Meier kept the promising scientist

in his institute which was then in the process of formation and entrusted him with the work of the "Volkslied" Section in the collection *Deutsche Volkskunde* (Berlin and Leipzig 1926). Seemann entered into the service of this folklore research institute with the collected edition which takes into account both the text and the melody and relates the two. From that time the investigation of German folk song and of its international relations became his life's exclusive work and he dedicated forty years to it.

In numerous papers and investigations, he decisively led the development of comparative folksong research to the point of its being an important discipline in international folklore. As one who knew almost every European language, he was in a position to conduct his research and teaching activities on a truly comprehensive basis and thus to make the Freiburg folk song institute a centre of international research. His preference lay in the European folk ballad: he devoted many of his studies to Slavic folk song and its relationship to German folk song. From 1935 Erich Seemann was co-editor of the German scientific folk song publication *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Melodien* which was published for the German Folk Song Archives, and which at present comprises five volumes. After the death of John Meier, Erich Seemann assumed sole direction of the Archives in 1953. He retired in 1963. His friends and colleagues, both at home and abroad, brought together for his seventy-fifth birthday a *Festschrift* containing numerous contributions to the inter-ethnic expansion of folksong together with a bibliographical summary of his scientific works (*Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, Jg. 9, Berlin 1964, edited by Rolf Wilh. Brednich). Death has taken Erich Seemann away from a wealth of work and plans which comprised for the Council of Europe a *Europäischen Balladenanthologie* and a four-volume edition of *Lieder aus der ehemaligen deutschen Sprachinsel Gottsee* (in Jugoslavia). With Erich Seemann, folk song research has lost one of its most prominent representatives. His colleagues and students mourn a man who unselfishly dedicated to the service of science his far-reaching knowledge and working skill throughout his life, and whose personality will remain an example to the younger generation.

ROLF WILH. BREDNICH.

#### STEUART WILSON

Sir Steuart Wilson who died on December 19th, 1966 will be remembered by members of the IFMC as the Vice-Chairman of their inaugural meeting in 1947. Born in 1889, he was a musician whose lively interest ranged widely over his profession. As a singer he will be remembered as an incomparable Evangelist in the Bach Passions, for his interpretation of the music of his own age—Boughton, Elgar and Vaughan Williams, as well as of the classics, where Schubert was one of his greatest loves. In opera and oratorio and song he brought the fruits of his classically English education, Winchester and Cambridge, as well as his studies with Jean de Reszke and Sir George Henschel to serve his art. He was a translator, an organiser and the founder of The English Singers. He took part in many Festivals and sang in the British National Opera Company, who were largely responsible for the re-introduction of Mozart's operas in England. He was an able and understanding administrator in later life, working in the newly formed CEMA (later the Arts Council), the BBC, the Royal Opera House and as Principal of The Birmingham School of Music. In all these posts his understanding and care of his colleagues and their art was outstanding.