

MUSIC THAT HELD US TO THESE RHYTHM

Hot Londoners "Accommodated Themselves" to New Form of Ballet Art.

From the London Times.

We are either surprisingly quick or else surprisingly careless in accommodating ourselves to new forms of art. London audiences have settled down calmly to a new development of the ballet after a comparatively short ac-

acquaintance with it; and now that the Russians are leaving us, it would be well to co-ordinate our ideas before they return with something even more startling.

L'Oiseau de Feu and Petrouchka were the first heralds of a new order of things. Then came *L'Après-midi d'un Faune and Jeur*. The first two began to liberate the music and to make it more definite and more directly illustrative of the stage. The second pair did a similar service to the art of gesture, and owing to the indefinite texture of Debussy's music the dancing became the all important thing. Finally, in *Le Sacre du Printemps*, M. Nijinsky and M. Stravinsky, working together, have achieved something that, in spite of its defects, is a step nearer to a real fusion of music and dancing.

M. Stravinsky utilizes the most amazing and complex rhythms with the utmost skill. He is so preoccupied with them that he has made no attempt to please the ear. He apparently intends the actual sound of his music to convey nothing more than the idea of something primitive and unformed, and has done exactly what he wanted. The most primitive sound known to Western ears is the bagpipe; the music of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, considered in terms of sound only, is simply an extension of that. It seems hardly necessary to consider it as a real foretaste of the music of tomorrow, for M. Stravinsky has already shown himself so adaptable as a composer that his next ballet is no more likely to resemble *Le Sacre du Printemps* than that itself resembles *Petrouchka*.

*Le Sacre du Printemps* is at best an

experiment in another direction, and not an entirely successful one. The two precludes are a mistake. The first one was probably considered necessary to secure an atmosphere before the rising of the curtain, and the second was doubtless inserted to stifle conversation; but neither achieves its object, and the second, at any rate, is near dullness with no movement or color on the stage to help it out.

Taking the music harmoniously as a whole, it is evidently more intentionally bizarre than sincere. As long as the 12-note scale is in general use the continual employment of keys a semi-tone apart is not likely to become acceptable. Busoni has shown that the major and minor of the same key can be used simultaneously, presenting two aspects, a kind of stereoscope view of the same thing; and our ears are becoming accustomed to regard all the keys, both major and minor, not as distinct points to be reached by modulation, but as twenty-four transpositions of one scale.

But until we learn to accept an interval smaller than the semi-tone as our unit there are certain clashes that will probably never please even the most catholic ear. Realizing to the full the vital importance of rhythm in this case, M. Stravinsky has let the actual sound of his music look after itself.