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*THE HOME BOOK
OF MUSIC APPRECIATION*

THE HOME BOOK OF Music Appreciation

BY HELEN L. KAUFMANN

AUTHOR OF

Minute Biographies of the Great Composers

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION



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DUES RENDERED UNTO CAESAR

IT WAS William James, I believe, who made the statement that anyone can write a book. All that is necessary, he said, is to read what other people have written, and write the same thing in one's own words. While this is something of an oversimplification, albeit humorous, I acknowledge gratefully the help of other writers in assembling and clarifying my ideas. Many of the books listed at the end of this volume have been of great assistance to me.

I am grateful to the composers, performers, and managers whose triple alliance has provided the excellent performances I have been privileged to attend. Discussions with all sorts and conditions of men have further stimulated laggard thought-processes.

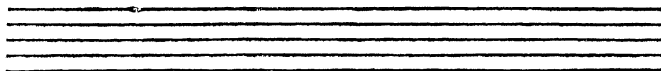
To Arthur Loesser, best of friends, I owe a special debt. He took time from his overflowing schedule of activities as concert artist, teacher, and musical critic, to read my manuscript and make kindly comment and correction, purely as a labor of love.

To Russell Ames, to the staff of the New York Public Library, to the many who have contributed, knowingly or otherwise, to the making of this book, I wish to express my grateful appreciation.

HELEN L. KAUFMANN

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INTRODUCTION

MILLIONS of people are hearing music today who never heard it before. Performances in concert halls are more numerous than ever. People put down the admission price, receive a ticket, and sit quietly for a couple of hours for the express purpose of listening to music. Low priced and free concerts, added in growing numbers, permit still others to hear music in that time-honored dignified fashion. The concert has become democratized.

These listeners are, however, only a few of those for whom music is a part of their daily lives, a necessity, an ever-needed friend and solace. The radio and gramophone are responsible for an enormous increase in the number of music lovers. In 1941, there were 12,000,000 radios, 2,000,000 radio-gramophones sold in the United States alone, each a source of musical enjoyment and education. They do not require a two-hour session of concentrated attention in a selected spot. They leave to the listener how long, and under what conditions he wishes to listen. They supply music day and night, in the concert season and out. Their contribution is as complete and artistic as any that is made in the concert halls. Music heard thus in

the bosom of the family, surrounded by all the comforts of home, has a special appeal. The audience need not go out to seek it, since it comes to them.

But half the fun of listening to music is in knowing what you are hearing,—not only becoming familiar with it, though that in itself is a big step, but being able to analyze its beauty and explain its charm. The more clearly you understand, the greater will be your enjoyment, whether the subject be cooking, mathematics, gardening, or music. Radio commentators have done wonders, in their brief broadcasts, to point out to the vast microphone audience something of the meaning of music. It is for others to carry on, and in more leisurely and thorough fashion feed the interest aroused by their comments.

Some people love music, though they know nothing about it. Others know a little, and would like to know more. Still others have studied and forgotten. For all of them, this book has something to offer. The information it contains is based on personal experience of listening over many years. It draws upon reading and research, upon the opinions of other musicians, in attempting to furnish a simple yet satisfying explanation of how to appreciate the most beautiful of all the arts. It is offered in the hope that, among millions of listeners, a goodly number will be found who will discover, in its pages, a key to genuine appreciation.

PART I
THE MATERIALS OF MUSIC

I

PITCH: THE UPS AND DOWNS OF MUSIC

SOME years ago, a friend who is a physics professor said to me: "I never can think of any inanimate object as being dead. That wooden table under your hand, which to you doubtless appears wholly without life, to me is a moving mass, as alive as you or I. Its molecules, too small to be seen even with a powerful microscope, are pushing and shoving against one another, each struggling to maintain its existence in the seemingly inert body of wood. The same is true of the stone pavement on which you walk, the water you drink, the clothes you wear." I looked at that table with new eyes. If chairs and tables, trees and stones which we call dead possess vitality and motion, how much the more does sound—which comes trembling through the air in live vibrations, is received by a live instrument, the ear, and transmitted to another live instrument, the brain. When you hear music—that is, when your ear and brain receive these live vibrations—if you do not respond with an interest as lively as the provoca-




tion thereto, it is because you never really listened to sound, you merely heard it.


A thorough analysis of the properties of sound belongs in the domain of physics. However, some of the conclusions of physicists, applied to music, bring a keener realization of the miracle which calls itself musical sound. What does it consist of, this sound? Is it particles of matter? Can it be seen as well as heard? Can it be measured? Is it hot or cold, fast or slow, masculine or feminine? When the physicists reply that sound consists of vibrations, they tell a complex story in a word, for several groups of vibrations are to be reckoned with. There are the initial vibrations produced at the source, and the resultant ones which travel through the air in the form of waves, and the vibrations of the eardrums which receive them. When a sound is thrown into silence, it is like a stone flung into a peaceful pool. Ripples, beautifully regular, starting at the point where the stone disappeared, go undulating outward in ever widening concentric circles, until they are stopped by the banks of the pool, which vibrate with them, noiselessly and imperceptibly. The "plop" of the sound is carried in exactly the same fashion by waves; the ear is the bank which stops them. Unlike good children they can be heard, not seen.

There is a certain sybaritic quality to these sound-waves, in that they are partial to warmth. They travel faster through warm air than through cold, swim through water faster than through the air, and are transmitted most quickly through glass and iron. When investigators first undertook to measure the velocity of sound, their method was primitive enough. They fired a cannon, and

made notes of the time it took the boom to travel over a certain measured distance. They decided that, at a temperature of 32° Fahrenheit, sound-waves moved at the rate of about 1,100 feet per second. That is streamline travel. No wonder the modern city dweller has nervous breakdowns in view of the army of sound-waves, unpleasant as well as agreeable, which assault his eardrums daily at that rapid rate.

Certain hairsplitters maintain that sound is no sound unless someone hears it. That is to say, the stone can plop in the pool as loudly as it pleases, but if the sound-waves go lolloping off without an ear to receive them, there is really no sound. This is the same form of sophistry practiced by the sad observers who believe that beauty is only in the eye of the beholder, and that, unseen, it has no existence, that there is no such thing as absolute beauty of sight or sound. With them I beg to differ, but you are privileged to form your own opinion. The question is one which gives rise to hour-long discussion whenever it is broached.

Assuming, in order to satisfy everyone, that there is someone listening, he ought to know that when a musical sound is uttered, its waves, more rapid than the vibrations of a humming-bird's whirring wings, are fully as regular. When they come evenly spaced like this  or this  or this  they fall pleasantly on the ear, and are dignified by the adjective "musical." Conversely, such disagreeable noises as the squeak of unoiled machinery or the roar of subway trains are not to be confounded with music, for their waves, if photographed, would look jagged as a streak of lightning,

something like this . The listener subconsciously wards off from his eardrums such badly-timed and unrelated sound-waves as these, while welcoming with serene satisfaction the arrival of the regular, properly timed waves which he knows as music.

The timing of the waves is the result of the number of vibrations set in motion by the original disturbance, and, to a lesser extent, of their intensity. When the wind blows gently through the trees, a low murmuring sound is produced, no less musical than the sweetest strains from the concert hall. Just before a storm the wind rises to fury, the branches toss wildly, and the low murmur becomes a high whistle. A whole gamut of sounds between the two rises and falls in symphonic variety, depending upon the velocity and intensity with which the branches are struck by the wind. Why does the pitch of the sound change in that fashion, or, to put it differently, why is it low one minute, high the next?

A common experiment which might help the questioner to answer his own question can be conducted with an elastic band. Loop one end around a hook or nail, and hold the other, not pulling it too tight. Twang it, and listen carefully to the sound. Draw it tighter and twang again. Experiment with it at different tensions. Use your eyes as well as your ears. Pluck it softly, then more forcefully, and notice the difference in the way it acts and the way it sounds. Presently you will arrive at the conclusion reached by the Greek Pythagoras, two thousand years ago. When a mathematician like Pythagoras decides to play with a piece of string, that's news, especially when

his deductions are such that all the experiments of subsequent investigators have failed to alter them.

Pythagoras noticed, as you doubtless did, that the more quickly the plucked string vibrated, the higher the tone produced; also that the vibrations were speeded up by tightening the string. When the shortened or tightened string is set in motion, the arcs it describes can be seen to be smaller and correspondingly more numerous than those when it is long and loose. This is the elementary principle of pitch. The entire marvelous structure of melody and harmony is reared upon it.

When Pythagoras continued to play musical cat's cradle, he proceeded from the general to the particular, and worked out a set of laws. He discovered, for instance, that a string half the length of another could be depended upon for a tone of twice the number of vibrations, which proved to be the counterpart of the original tone, eight steps, or an octave higher. A string two-thirds the length gave forth two-thirds the number of vibrations, producing a tone five steps above the original, known as a fifth. From there he went into square root formulas and complicated calculations having to do with the tones produced by strings of varying length, weight, and tension. He, or somebody, also observed that, aside from the difference in pitch, long loose thick strings do not give nearly so clear and agreeable a sound as thin light ones. All of these discoveries came in very handy in building instruments as well as playing and listening to them. The seven identical octaves of the modern piano would be an impossibility without them.

A few people are born without the ability to distinguish

differences in pitch. They are said to be tone-deaf. If caught young, and drilled carefully, they can be taught, but they start heavily handicapped for they are deprived of the keen perception of those subtleties of sound upon which compositions depend for their effect. I assume that you can tell instantly whether a note is higher or lower than another, for if you cannot, neither this book nor any other can bring you the ability to enjoy music.

When the discovery was made, long ago, that the pitch of a sound was changed by increasing or decreasing the number of its vibrations, the next step was to establish an arbitrary home-tone which could be used as a point of departure for other tones. A great many experiments were made before a note of 256 vibrations per second was decided upon. It is called C, and is the constant from which others are measured. The tuning-note used in the concert hall is not C but A, to meet the needs of the violin section, to whom the A is all-important. When you listen to the tuning of string players in a symphony orchestra, you will notice that the oboe gives them one note, which they repeat until their own A strings reproduce it exactly. That is a note of 440 vibrations per second, the accepted concert pitch for A in this country. If you can fix unshakably in your memory the sound of this A of 440 or the C of 256 vibrations per second, you may find yourself able to call the names of other notes from their relation to that one. You will then have what is called *relative* pitch, an extremely useful talent in the higher fields of musical listening. And if perchance you discover that you have *absolute* pitch, that is, that you can call the name of any note whatsoever without even stopping to figure out its rela-

tivity, you are a fortunate individual indeed, the possessor of a rare natural gift.

The diatonic scale upon which you will practice your talent, or at least try to find out if you possess one, is the practical application of the elementary principle of pitch. Western music is almost entirely built upon the diatonic scale. The Germans call a scale a ladder of tones, and it is a good name, for by means of it you climb up and down from a note to its octave on regularly spaced rungs. The English name, scale, is taken from the Italian *scala*, which also means ladder.

As the first rung, let us take the C of 256 vibrations per second. There are twelve easy steps between this and its octave, the C of 512 vibrations per second. They are so easy that they are called half steps, or half tones, and when you conscientiously ascend or descend one rung at a time, without skipping, you are singing or playing a chromatic scale, that is, a scale which consists entirely of half tones. You are bound to get impatient, however, and occasionally take two rungs at a time, since they are so close together. When you do, you will be singing or playing whole tones. You may have heard that the diatonic scale has seven tones. That is because of the whole steps people insisted on taking.

Definite scales have been worked out, with a place for each step and each step in its place. The *do-re-mi* you probably learned in school will help you to fix in your ear and your mind the sound of the diatonic scale. C is called either 1 or 8; as *do* it comes both at the beginning and the end of the scale. The diatonic major scale of C is dia-

gramed as follows, the large spaces representing the whole steps between tones, the small the half steps.

1	2	3 4	5	6	7 8 (or 1)
C	D	E F	G	A	B C

Each note is a whole step from the next except 3 and 4, 7 and 8, which are printed close together in the diagram to indicate the half steps. *All* major scales are constructed on that pattern; it is one to which there are no exceptions. Whatever note you start on as *do*, or 1, (and you can build a scale on every single tone and half tone) the spatial differences remain constant. There is always a half step between 3 and 4, 7 and 8, or between *mi* and *fa*, *ti* and *do*, in the major scale. This is an arbitrary arrangement. Nature had nothing directly to do with making the C major scale the standard by which music was measured. It was Man, in seventeenth century Europe, who decided upon this scale as the satisfactory basis of a musical scheme which was adopted by all of Europe. The diatonic major scale was developed from the medieval church scale, or mode, which had been developed from the Greek mode before it. The term tetrachord, specifically applied to the two four-note groups of the diatonic scale, is a relic of this Greek ancestry, the tetrachord being the notes to which the four strings of the Greek lyre were tuned.

When the major scale predominates in a piece, the mood of that piece is likely to be a cheerful one. Such songs as *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Come Lasses and Lads*, and *Funiculi, Funicula* are inevitably in the major, so is the Hymn of Joy in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and the

Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage Overture by Mendelssohn.

A change in the location of the half steps results in a scale of another sort, called the minor scale. If you can learn to distinguish between major and minor, as you hear them in various pieces, you will be greatly aided in your understanding of the moods they express.

There are two kinds of *minor* scales, harmonic and melodic, making the vocabulary of sadness double that of gladness. The melodic minor goes up the scale by one formula and descends by a modification of the formula, while in the harmonic minor, ascent and descent are identical.

The little mark \flat after a letter in the diagram means that the note is lowered a half step. When it is to be raised a half step, which is sometimes necessary, too, to make the formula come out right, the mark \sharp called a sharp is used. (In criticizing intonation, people often remark that a note was sung or played sharp or flat, by which they mean that it sounded too high or too low.) The symbol \natural called a natural is placed beside a note that has been flatted or sharped, when it is to be returned to its natural place. In written music the symbols are placed before, not after, the notes. Since you are going to listen to music, not read it, you need not at this point probe into the mysteries of sharps, flats, and naturals, and where and when and why they occur, so long as you retain the sound of the major and minor which have so much to do with determining the mood of a piece and its effect upon you.

The melodic minor is diagrammed as follows:

Pitch: The Ups and Downs of Music

Going Up

C	DE \flat	F	G	A	BC
1	23	4	5	6	78

Going Down

C	B \flat	A \flat G	F	E \flat D	C
8	7	6 5	4	3 2	1

The harmonic minor handles the 7, or ti, differently from the melodic. It is diagramed:

Going Up

C	DE \flat	F	GA \flat	BC
1	23	4	56	78

Going Down (the same)

CB	A \flat G	F	E \flat D	C
87	6 5	4	3 2	1

The half steps remain as they were on the return trip, apparently content with their position. Both minors have in common the flatted third or mi, that is, the half step between 2 and 3, and by listening for this, and for the raising and lowering of 7, the ear gradually learns to distinguish the minor from the major.

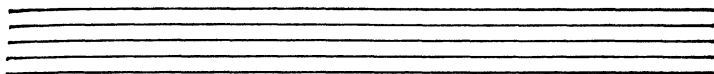
Familiar songs in the minor mode are surprisingly difficult to find. If, as is supposed, the major mode urges us to do, the minor to suffer, we are assuredly a race of doers. Our hymns, spirituals, and folk songs are in the major, and a search through several collections has brought to light only an occasional minor tune like *The Raggle-Taggle Gypsies*, or the Russian *Ochichernyia* (Black Eyes). Numerous examples of larger works in the

minor rush to mind, however: Beethoven's "Fate" *Symphony in C Minor*, Schubert's "Unfinished" *in B Minor*, Mozart's popular *Symphony in G Minor*, and so on.

If you really want to fix this difference in your ear, spend your next free half-hour at the piano. Every key on the piano is a half step from the one beside it, be it black or white. Find your octave and run up and down it, playing every note. You will be playing a chromatic scale. After that, try playing a major scale, being careful to place the half steps where they belong. Do the same with the minor and listen, listen, listen. You may start by doing it as a mathematical exercise; you will end by finding it an exercise in music, and in emotional reactions.

You are fortunate to be living today when you are asked to grapple only with major and minor scales, or modes, as they are also called. The ancient Greeks used the eight-note scale, but varied it with eight modes instead of a mere two, called Dorian, Hypodorian, Phrygian, Hypophrygian, Lydian, Hypolydian, Mixolydian and Hypomixolydian, with the half steps differently situated in each one. The later Greeks even added two more. Trying to remember where the distinguishing half steps occur is confusing, and there is no reason why you should, although if you were taking a thorough course in the history of music you would probably be required to memorize them. But it is interesting to know that our major scale has actually the same steps and half steps as the Greek Lydian, and our minor as the Hypodorian, with one half step changed, so we owe the ancient Greeks not only much of our general theory about pitch, but some of its practical application.

Composers of today experiment with Greek modes and with others. They experiment with pitch, splitting half tones into quarters and even eighths, hoping thereby to produce a greater variety of effects. Yet the songs of ancient India, of the Balinese and many African tribes, and of our own American Indians make use of just such fractional differences in pitch. The modern composer who uses them is creating nothing new, but indicating his preference for the scale of some ancient folk other than the Greek. You will be conscious, as you listen, of the fact that when the music is not major or minor it falls oddly on your ear. And until you have reached a very advanced point you will cling to your knowledge of those two as your shield and buckler against confusion.



II

DYNAMICS: ITS LOUD AND SOFT

SUPPOSE, like a child with a set of blocks, you take the tones and half tones of the diatonic major and minor scales, and play with them. Every block, or note, is of the same size as every other, of the same shape and color and quality. So, when you sing your scale, you must show no favoritism, but keep an even quality of tone, hold each note exactly as long as the next, do not permit one to sound louder or softer than another. It will not be long before you become bored with your game, for the effect is hopelessly monotonous, an empty shell of sounds which resemble musical performance only in so far as they are not-unpleasant sounds of varying pitch.

Do not despair. Life can be breathed into the empty shell and you can do it. Your own ingenuity will probably lead you to perform instinctively those acts which cause even the simple scale to become dynamic, which, according to Webster, means "characterized by energy, forceful . . . the opposite of static." There are as many

ways of bringing this about as there are ways of infusing life into a personality. Three are outstanding. One is by varying the *duration* of the tones, so that not all are of the same length. Another is by varying the *quality* of the tone produced. And a third, the one usually dwelt upon in the textbook discussions of musical dynamics, is by varying the *intensity* of the sound.

The method of varying the *duration* of tones is not haphazard, but an orderly, mathematical process. Assuming that all notes were created free and of equal length, they did not long remain so. The monotony of pieces of identical lengths, played at identical speed, and made up of notes of identical duration was not to be endured. Let us suppose some composite legendary reformer took the matter in hand. First, he broke up long notes into shorter ones, and those again into still shorter. He took as his unit a whole note, expressed in musical notation like this \circ . This he proceeded to carve into halves \smile , quarters, \jmath , eighths \mathfrak{J} , and further multiples of four. He made a rule that when he placed a dot after a note it was to be held one-half its length in addition to its own value. He figured that it was pretty tiring to keep making sounds without an occasional recess between notes, and that he could fit his notes better into his rhythmic scheme if he worked out a system of rests which corresponded in value to the notes. Thus, when the sign — appeared, there was a rest which lasted as long as a whole note, — a half, — a quarter, — an eighth, and so on.

Having gone this far in mathematics, and found it good, he was impelled to go a bit farther. He divided the simple melodies he made when he changed the duration of indi-

vidual notes, into mathematically equal groups called bars or measures. A fixed number of beats to a measure seemed logical. His reward was immediate and gratifying, for while now there was orderliness in the marshaling of his material, within the measure he still could make use of many combinations of tones of different durations.

He made pieces of different lengths by using more or fewer of these measures; by hastening or retarding the speed with which he played or sang them, he changed the duration, not only of individual notes, but of the whole. The rate of speed at which a piece is played is called its tempo. He noticed that he himself, as well as any listener who happened to be around, felt quite different upon hearing a piece played at a fast, lively tempo, than at a slow one. And he drew his own conclusions as to the importance of tempo to vitality, and listened very closely to that aspect of musical performance after it had been called to his attention.

Sing your C major scale, as you did in Chapter I, in an even tone, making each note a whole note of four even beats, counting 1, 2, 3, 4 on each note:

C	D	EF	G	A	BC
4	4	44	4	4	44

The only variety in the performance is provided by the differences in pitch; otherwise it is as dull a succession of sounds as the drip-drip of water from a leaky tap.

Now try it, for example, like this, counting on each note the number of beats indicated below it:

C	D	EF	G	A	BC
4	2	11	1	2	14

Placing small blocks among the large in this way, to return for a moment to our analogy, not only gives ingenuity an outlet, but makes the scale assume a degree of life and vigor. If, while singing it, you think of it in divisions of four beats, and accent the first of the four each time you come to it, you will be marking the rhythm, an element so important not only to dynamics, but to the architecture of music, that it rates a chapter to itself. If you want to proceed with your experiment, adding and subtracting measures, varying the length of the notes within them at your pleasure, singing fast, medium or slow, you will find yourself with a growing appreciation of the influence of duration upon the vitality of music.

Duration has much to do with the emphasis which also adds to vitality. It works on the principle of the father who calls his son to him for a spanking, not with the usual friendly "Bill," or even an admonitory "Willie," but an awe-inspiring "*William*," with fell intent lengthening the first dread syllable. There is no doubt in Bill's mind as to the emphasis nor the reason for it; that prolonged first syllable tells him all he needs to know. Composers secure emphasis and meaning in much the same way.

In order that there may be no mistake as to the speed, or *tempo*, at which he wishes his composition to be played, the composer stipulates it as definitely as possible. Even when he gives the most careful instructions, however, there is bound to be variation, according to the ideas of the interpreter. Sometimes the tempo is fixed by a metronome, a mechanical instrument with a pendulum, which is set to tick regular beats at different rates of speed. Even so, the tempo may not be absolutely as the composer

wishes, for there is still latitude for the artist in interpreting those other orders with respect to dynamics, which frequently interfere with the tempo. A whole language exists for indicating the desired tempo. For instance, a piece marked *grave* or *lento* is to be played very slowly, an *adagio* slowly, an *andante* at a walking pace, *allegretto* a little faster, *allegro* fast, *presto* even faster, *prestissimo* very fast indeed. There are further tempo instructions, mostly in Italian, such as *rallentando*, getting slower; *affrettando*, getting faster; *a tempo*, returning to original speed, and many others which you come to know as you see them in program notes and hear them applied in performance.

Of course, each composer has his own idea of what he means by fast or slow. Do not be surprised if you hear an artist say, "It's a Beethoven *allegro*, not a Mozart, so I took it a bit slower." He has studied the composer's directions and the mood of the piece, as well as the contemporary musical scene, and in his judgment Beethoven intended that particular *allegro* to be so played. Such individual characteristics become familiar to you as you listen alertly to the works of different composers, especially if the artists are conscientious in attempting to fathom the composer's wishes. You must not forget that the artist or conductor has his own ideas of tempo, the composer has his, and you have yours. So by the time a piece actually reaches your ears, it has been subjected to several interpretative processes, designed to make more expressive or dynamic the composer's music. Some modern composers pooh-pooh the Italian terms, as well as the less frequently used German or French. Percy

Grainger directs that certain passages be played walk-ingly, talkingly, dancingly, skippingly, chatteringly, hopping by descriptive accuracy in English to avoid having his tempi distorted and his mood misinterpreted. For the most part, however, the customary Italian is still in use. Tradition dies hard.

Not only duration and tempo, but the colorful and variable factor known as tone-quality, or timbre, can make music glow with life. You know what a vast array of musical instruments there is, each kind with its own distinctive quality of tone. You'd never mistake a flute for a trumpet, or a harp for a piano, even while both are playing the same note. Further, within its own group, each instrument is an individual whose personality is expressed in terms of tone-quality, so that a connoisseur can pick out a particular violin by its tone, and call it by name, like an old friend, though there may be dozens of other violins singing for his attention at the same time. And, to go further still, there are infinite possibilities on the same instrument for variations of tone-quality, ranging from shrilly piercing wails to low sonorous murmurs.

The explanation of this phenomenon of differing tone-quality puzzled students of sound for years. Many theories had to be eliminated before a satisfactory one emerged. Even that is difficult to accept, since its first requirement is that you disbelieve your own ears, which tell you that you are hearing a simple tone which you can recognize and call by name, when in reality you seldom or never hear a simple tone. There are hardly any in existence. If you did, you'd call it dull and flat, and demand a reason for its lack of luster and brilliance. What

you do hear is a compound made up of a number of tones. The strong fundamental, which gives the note its name, C, D, E, and so on, has contributory overtones, whose singing, properly blended with the fundamental, gives brilliancy, richness, and resonance to the whole.

Take again the rubber band or string which vibrated so obligingly when you plucked it. To your eyes, it appeared that the whole string was vibrating in one piece. So it was, but if you had keen microscopic vision, and looked at your rubber band very closely, you would have observed an interesting phenomenon. It was vibrating in small regular segments also, those segments each producing tones of different pitches so faint as to be almost inaudible. All of these tones, related to the mother-tone though different in pitch, are the overtones, and as they come vibrating through the air, hovering above and around the mother-tone, they constitute a family group known, in its entirety, as the partial tones. It is for the instrument-maker and the artist to regulate the size of this family of overtones, and by selecting only those who can play together congenially, to keep the family harmonious.

On what basis is this selection made, you ask. Every tone has many more partials than meet even the trained ear. How can anyone tell which ones to select? The fact is that the partials obligingly arrange themselves in a series called the harmonic series. For example, the partial which sounds most strongly, directly above the fundamental tone, is its octave; the next is five tones above that, the next again an octave above. When unwelcome partials not in the series obtrude themselves, the out-

come is jangling and unpleasant. This is one family group which sticks together homogeneously, refusing to welcome outsiders to its bosom with any degree of hospitality. The first six members are most easily identified. As they go higher in pitch, they decrease in power, and although their number is legion they are sensed as a musical aura, pleasant but undefinable.

In his delightful book, *The Story of Musical Instruments*, Mr. H. W. Schwartz tells of a professor who amused himself by cutting out blocks of wood, each of which resounded to a definite pitch. He selected those in the harmonic series related to C as a fundamental. One after the other he dropped them on a table in their order in the series: first C, then its octave C, followed by G, C the octave above, E, G, and C. When he gathered them together and dropped them all at once, a musical chord sounded, with C strongly predominating. When he added to the group other blocks pitched in odd tones not in the scheme, and let them fall together, confused noise, not a resonant chord, smote upon his ear. If you have one of the wooden toy xylophones which you are willing to sacrifice to science, you can verify his findings by performing the same experiment.

You can hear overtones for yourself at the piano, if you care to take the trouble. Play, or better still get someone else to play one note very loudly, depressing the right-hand pedal which sustains the tone, and holding down the note as long as it sounds, while you listen closely just above the strings. As the fundamental tone which is pressed down dies away, you should hear in the after-tones not only its octave, but at least the fifth note above

the octave—its two strongest overtones. If you cannot, please do not assume that I am deceiving you; try again and again and eventually you will succeed. And gradually, as you listen with keener ears, you will come to recognize the presence of overtones of greater or less intensity and number in every musical performance, hovering in the air as the fury of sound dies away. You will welcome or dismiss them according as the sound pleases or displeases you.

When you listen to concert artists with your ears cocked for overtones, you will make some interesting observations. Each artist possesses his own distinctive timbre, which is as much a part of him as his personality. Yet, at the same time, each plays his instrument with all the varieties of tone quality and color of which it is capable, a seeming contradiction. Furthermore, he plays it differently under different circumstances, altering its quality according to the mood of the composition and his own mood. You will find it difficult to put your finger on the attributes peculiar to each one, however fully persuaded you may be of their presence.

The explanation is not only to be found in overtones, though they play the biggest part. The nationality, education, experience, personality, musical taste, technical equipment of the artist, and nature of the instrument he plays; his health, his mood of the moment, the size and character of the hall, climatic conditions, are just a few of the variants which produce differences in tone-quality. But in reality their effect is indirect, they act upon the overtones. To recognize their power, then, is not to weaken but rather to support the statement of Helm-

holtz, the German physicist, that "the character of a musical sound depends chiefly on the number and the proportionate strength of the partial tones of which the sound is composed."

Technical rules guide the artist to the tone-quality he desires. If you watch a string player, for example, you will not fail to notice that, when he places his bow upon the strings somewhere near the middle, a rather faint, hollow sound greets your ears, whereas if he bows on that part of the string nearer to the bridge he will draw a clear, strong, resonant tone. Moreover, the force with which he attacks the string, the tension of the bow and the amount of rosin on it, the smoothness or roughness of the finger with which he stops it, all militate for or against the desired timbre. When there are too many overtones, or too noisy ones appearing in the wrong proportions, the tone is tinny. For a golden tone, find the golden mean. When a string is plucked with an ivory or metal pick, there are a great many overtones, often too many. The quality of tone of the finest mandolin, for example, does not compare with that of a violin, or even a guitar, plucked with the fingers. The kind of string, whether gilt or silver, thick or thin, loose or tight; the kind of object which disturbs the string, be it bow, plectrum, pick or hammer; the material of which it is made; the exact place on the string which is attacked; the amount of resonance inherent in the particular instrument, affect the overtones. Correctness of pitch also exercises an influence. If, with an ear for quality, you listen to a singer off-key, the mixture of unfriendly overtones will afflict you with uneasiness, as though you were the unwilling witness

of a family quarrel—which is exactly what you are at the moment.

There are devices for making listening easier by enhancing the effect of overtones. All of them make use of the principle of resonance, or sympathetic vibrations. When the tone-vibrations are caught up in the right way, and at the right moment, they induce these sympathetic vibrations in whatever trap is set to catch them. Blending with the original vibrations, the sympathetic ones cause the tone to become more sonorous. They increase the number and regulate the relative intensity of the overtones, and present to the listener a much improved brand of sound. In the violin, the entire elastic wooden body acts as a sound-box, to send out, in enhanced beauty, the vibrations which come quivering down via the bridge over which the strings are stretched. The soundboard of the piano is a carefully calculated device which transforms into the rich, live tones of the modern piano vibrations received through a bridge from the strings. In the voice there are half a dozen such adjuncts—the cavities of the pharynx, the mouth, the chest, the nose, and the head, adjustable by the singer to secure the degree of resonance his song requires.

Intensity of musical sound is generally held to be the very essence of dynamic variety, intensity meaning its degree of loudness or softness. A tone becomes louder or softer according to the amplitude and extent of the vibrations which cause it, and the corresponding disturbance of air in the ensuing sound-waves. When the rubber band is plucked forcibly, it describes arcs of wider circumference than when it is lightly touched, and those arcs

push the sound-waves along with just that much more force. The interpreter of music is, in a sense, a dictator, distributing power to the notes which constitute his henchmen proportionately as he wishes them to sound with greater or less intensity. Perhaps by no single test can you so well determine how much innate musical taste and knowledge you have as by your appreciation of the meanings implicit in the exquisite shadings, the magnificent climaxes, the rise and fall of sound which impart color and emotional significance to the music you hear.

The loudest music is not necessarily the finest, although some audiences appear inclined to think so, and to bestow their applause accordingly. A soft passage treading on the heels of a thunder of sound, like the quiet melody immediately following the storm in Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, is more eloquent in that spot than the most impressive blast. Contrast enhances its effectiveness. Passages of moderate intensity are needed in the gamut of expression. It all comes down to the adjustment of intensities to one another in such a way as to create a language for those thoughts and feelings which words are powerless to describe.

After a concert you will find little groups discussing its dynamic intensities over their beer, attributing this or that meaning to the fact that a certain passage was played loudly (*forte*) or softly (*piano*), as the case may be. Perhaps they are protesting that it was marked *fortissimo* (very loudly), yet that all the performance suggested was a *mezzo-forte* (moderately loud). You may hear them proclaim rapturously that nobody achieves an orchestral *pianissimo* (very soft) like Toscanini, who inspires eighty

men to produce a resonantly beautiful sound which is hardly a whisper.

When the composer wants to indicate a rising tide of passion, anger, grief, or other positive emotion, he changes intensities. The word *crescendo* (*cresc.*) or this mark < commands that the sound grow louder, whereas *diminuendo*, (*dim.*) or this > asks for the direct opposite. Whether, like Nick Bottom's lion, music "roars you as gently as any sucking dove," or actually makes noises worthy of the king of beasts, the composer has his reason. The determination of what that reason may be adds untold zest to the listening process. The more music you hear, and the more heedfully you listen to its varying intensities, the more intelligent, as well as sensuous, will your enjoyment become. Whether or not you succeed in divining the composer's exact mood and meaning, you will find in the sheer consciousness of swelling and diminishing sound a rewarding satisfaction.

III

RHYTHM: ITS PULSE

FROM the moment when, a newborn infant, you utter your first wailing *wah-wah*, *wah-wah*, to the end, your life is inexorably governed by rhythm. You breathe, walk, chew, your heart beats, your very thoughts occur with pulsing regularity. Rhythm is so much a part of you that you realize its presence only when something occurs to impede its flow. If bronchial disturbance, lameness, toothache, heart palpitations, or mental illness shatter the rhythmic regularity of any one of these functions, your entire system rises in wrath and resentment.

Rhythm has been called the fourth R in education. It starts so long before the school age that by the time children go to kindergarten they are practically post-graduates. They march, gallop, and swing as directed by music, with keen and quick comprehension of its rhythmic commands. Because it is so essential a part of your being and education, you too greet it as an old friend when you meet it in music. You may be tone-deaf to differences in pitch, color-blind to dynamic shadings, indifferent to changing intensities. Still you waggle your head and tap

your foot with instinctive enjoyment when you hear a piece with a pronounced rhythmic beat. It echoes the pulses beating within you.

For this reason jazz is popular with people who may not know one note from another. They are captivated by its insistent beat, and carried unresisting to a point where their world sways to its rhythm. Once they are convinced that, in the higher realms of music, the rhythmic spell, while more restrained, is not so very different from that which already holds them, that they may beat time with their feet and nod their heads as rapturously to a Beethoven symphony as to *The Music Goes Round and Round*, their insistence that they "can't listen to serious music" gives way before an incredulous realization that there may be something in it for them after all if they approach it by way of rhythm.

Nobody can resist a military band. When it swings down the street a parade collects behind it for the sheer pleasure of marching. Whether the followers are soldiers, pacifists, suffragettes or communists, they meet on the common basis of a steady ONE-two, ONE-two, with the accent on the first of the two steps. When "Everybody's out of step except my Johnny," it is Johnny who must look to himself. The majority are sure to be right when the beat is as rigidly defined as it is in a good march. Such diverse tunes as Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever* and Wagner's *Wedding March* from *Lohengrin*, the French *Marseillaise* and the Yale *Boola-Boola*, are all in march time. That is, they are written with either two or four beats to the measure, with the accent on the first and third beats. Within the measure, there may be two or four

quarter notes, there may be eighths, dotted notes, notes of varying duration; still the beat of ONE-two persists.

In songs where the rhythm of the words coincides with that of the music, your assurance as to the fundamental beat is made doubly sure. The hymns *Adeste Fideles* ("Come, All Ye Faithful") and *Ein' Feste Burg ist Unser Gott* (A Mighty Fortress is Our Lord) are simple illustrations of this happy marriage of rhythm in words and music, especially with the words in the original language. You can probably think offhand of a dozen other hymn-tunes of the same pattern. With their two-beat pulse throbbing in your consciousness, try a few more of the songs you know, placing the accent on the emphatic syllable in words and music. *Dixie*, *Turkey-in-the-Straw*, *Way Down Upon the Suwannee River*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Tramp Tramp Tramp the Boys Are Marching*, leave you at liberty to walk, march, or clap at any speed you desire as long as you hold the two-beat pulse.

If, however, you slip into *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean*—as every songster seems to do sooner or later—you will find all your efforts to stick to two beats futile. You have to make a concession, and sing three beats if your words are to make sense, something like this:

My/Bonnie lies/over the/Ocean-/ --
 My/Bonnie lies/over the/Sea--/ --
 My/Bonnie lies/over the/Ocean-/ --
 Oh/Bring back my/Bonnie to/me--/ --

You can waltz yourself as footsore to that Bonnie beat of three as to *The Beautiful Blue Danube*, or Victor Herbert's *Kiss Me Again*. The waltz, like the march rhythm,

appears in simple and complex, popular and classical music. Instead of four quarter notes to the measure, there are three (or three half notes, eighth notes, or whatever the unit of measurement may be). The important thing to remember is that the waltz has three beats, with the accent traditionally on the first of the three.

Your sense of the poetic meter of words in songs is a valuable crutch upon which to lean for the first steps. So, too, is whatever instinct you may have for the dance. There is a primitive joy in giving yourself over to the rhythmic ecstasy which must find vent in action, be it dancing, singing, or discreetly wiggling the big toe inside the shoe. Such a release adds immeasurably to the freedom of enjoyment, and instead of being repressed as evidence of the original Old Nick, should be encouraged as a stimulus to creative listening and creative composition. The savages did so. When their big drums spoke the strangely eloquent language of steady, repeated beats, their physical responses were varied enough to incite the drummers to explore new rhythms. Over the throbbing of the big drums they evolved, on additional little drums, series which were fascinating in their variety. They didn't stick to the accent on the first beat of the two or three either, but placed stress wherever they pleased both in big and little drums. In their savage way they practiced polyrhythms, the pitting of differently accented groups against each other in bass and treble, as sophisticated composers often do. And it all sprang from the dance. Such modern schools of the dance as the Jacques Dalcroze and Mary Wigman—the former Swiss, the latter German—depend for their material upon the metric and

melodic patterns of highly sophisticated compositions. They give a complete course in rhythmic education through corresponding bodily movements.

Sooner or later you will be thrown upon yourself, without words or dance to help you. If you are at a symphony concert, placed where you can watch the conductor, you will find him a helpful substitute for the words of a song or the steps of a dance. For his good right arm tells you the "time" as unfailingly as a clock, while his left gives other orders. The right arm is invariably at the top of its stroke just before the beginning of a measure, bringing the baton *down* on the first beat. You will be able to count either One-two, One-two-three, One-two-three-four, and the place of the accent will be indicated for you by the left hand, and by the energy of the stroke on the accented beat. That right arm is the helmsman steering the players away from rhythm trouble, holding them to the strait and narrow path of rhythmic righteousness, guiding your listening as it guides their playing. For you to see as well as hear a symphony concert while you are in musical swaddling clothes is helpful.

When the composer writes his music he states his rhythmic specifications clearly. Although each measure represents a unit, paradoxically the rhythm is indicated by a fraction written at the beginning of a piece. The denominator tells the kind of note that constitutes a beat, the numerator the number of beats to the measure. Thus $\frac{2}{2}$ calls for two half notes to the measure, and the unit of measurement, or beat, is a half note J . Four quarter notes are marked $\frac{4}{4}$, or sometimes with a broken circle, C, a medieval symbol for two-beat rhythm. Three quarter

notes to the measure is written $\frac{3}{4}$. This is waltz time, as is three eighths $\frac{3}{8}$ also. Six eighths $\frac{6}{8}$ may be divided into two or three; that is, it may be played in waltz or march rhythm, depending upon the place of the accent.

One catch in this apparent simplicity is that the rhythm need not remain throughout as indicated at the beginning of a piece. The composer has carte blanche to change it as often as he pleases, inserting the fraction which indicates the change. Players and listeners are obliged to pay close attention if they are to make the quick adjustments required by these changes.

Sometimes composers overreach themselves in taking advantage of this privilege, partly because of the nature of their inspiration, partly because they are trying to spare you monotony. They flit from one fractional command to another within a few measures, subjecting you to continual breaks and changes. An exaggerated example is a bit from the modern composer Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*, in one part of which the composer sees fit to change the rhythm at every measure. The untrained ear cannot follow such lightning jumps, but should be forewarned of their likelihood, and able to recognize their share of responsibility for the restless jagged effect of such music.

If, in order to sense the rhythm of a piece, you needed only to recognize the difference between Oòmpah and Oòmpahpah, the whole problem of rhythm would be too simple to dwell upon. But do not be misled by this deceptive simplicity. First of all, as previously mentioned, the place of the accent can be changed both in the bass and the treble, and frequently is. The accent may even

come in a different place in the treble from what it does in the bass without destroying the general rhythmic unit, as in Gershwin's *Fascinatin' Rhythm*. You will become increasingly aware of those misplaced accents which are the characteristic of syncopation, and which appear not only in jazz, but in much serious music. You will perceive the play of accents against one another in bass and treble which is known as polyrhythm. The note-patterns woven above the bass, and lastly the larger rhythms within a piece, will also engage your attention. Note-patterns belong in a discussion of melody, which is the Siamese twin of rhythm, so that separation of either from the other is a major operation. Like the leaves of a tree, which cast the shadow of an ever-shifting design on the sunny ground, notes and rests create a pattern which moves with flickering beauty. Watching the leaves you become aware of a rhythmic ebb and flow which, while not steady and regular, silently imposes certain restrictions on the pattern. In music these restrictions are definite, and are softened but not removed by the character of the note-pattern around them. As Aaron Copland explains in his excellent book, *What to Listen for in Music*: "Even in a simple piano piece there is a left hand and a right hand at work at the same time. Often the left hand does little more, rhythmically speaking, than play an accompaniment in which the meter and rhythm exactly coincide, while the right hand moves freely within and around the metrical unit without ever stressing it." What is true of the piano is true of other music. The pulse beats steadily and with pronounced accent in the cello of a string quartet, and in the basses and percussives of an orchestra, setting the

meter as in poetry, while a pattern is woven above it, conventionally in the same meter, but using all the variety of pitch, duration, and dynamics that the composer is able to summon. Thus the two are joined in a rhythmic union which is concerned with the measure-to-measure pulse of the piece.

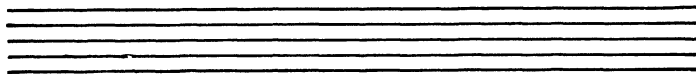
There is a larger rhythm for which you must also be on the lookout. It is concerned with the distribution of groups of measures in such a way as to create a combination of balance and of flow. Music has units of measurement which can be compared with those used in language. In the latter, letters are selected and, spoken with a certain accent, make a word, which has a rhythm of its own. Words lead to phrases, these to sentences, and sentences to paragraphs, each with its individual rhythm within the large group which makes up the entire composition. In music, a single note may be said to represent a letter, several letters a measure, which is comparable to a word. Several measures make a musical phrase, several phrases a musical sentence. A musical sentence ends in a cadence, or falling, a dying away of the sound identical with the dropping of the voice at the comma, period, or other punctuation mark at the end of the spoken phrase or sentence. A cadence may even represent a question, with an imaginary interrogation point. Or an exclamation. Musical sentences grouped together form a section or paragraph, and several such sections a composition, or movement of a composition. The rhythmic arrangement of the sections, and of the sentences and phrases within them, is no less important to the flow of the whole than are the lesser rhythms of the metrical pulse. In fact, the balancing

of phrase against phrase, the even distribution of emphatic sentences, the pulsing of large units, each pulsing individually within itself, impart the true rhythmic interest to a piece.

If you are in the habit of reading aloud or of being read aloud to, you know how naturally the intonation of the voice indicates the dividing lines between rhythmic units when the reader is paying attention, and how, when he is not, he falls into a mechanical singsong. Both have a certain rhythm, but the voice is much less monotonous when the reader is aware of the larger group divisions. In a musical performance, which is reading aloud from music instead of books, the same is true. The interpreting artist does his best to separate one group from the other, watching not only the rhythmic pulse but the pattern above it, the larger rhythms which result from the grouping, first of three or four measures together, and of those with the next, the repetition of certain groups for balance and others for emphasis, and so on. The beginning of a group may be indicated by a catch, or a pause, or an accent, or a sudden *piano*. The end may come as a drop in the volume of sound, or an increase to a towering climax.

It is not necessary for the artist to separate one group from another by exaggerated accents, long pauses, or emphases. Listening with all your ears not only to the rhythmic beat, but the pattern above it, you will come to recognize the larger rhythms which result from the grouping, first of three or four measures, then of those with others. You will see how one group is balanced against another, creating a rhythm within the rhythm. You will watch for the beginning and the end of a musical idea. Ex-

perience will bring you recognition of these large pulses, and of the rhythmic hierarchy which extends from the lowly single measure to the piece in its entirety. You may have heard critics say admiringly of a conductor that he "kept the line." This was their tribute to the steadiness of the rhythmic pulse pumping the stream of music; to the nice balance of the rhythmic groups within the piece; and to the consistency with which the dynamics followed the rhythm. Rhythm means, by derivation, "a steady flowing." Allow yourself to go with, not against, the flow.



IV

MELODY: ITS TUNE

MELODY and rhythm are the Alphonse and Gaston of music. They are perpetually deferring to each other, with "After you, my dear Alphonse," and "Not at all, after *you*, my dear Gaston," like the two well-known characters in the comic strip. The fact that rhythm is dear to the heart of the savage who, knowing nothing of melody, singsongs in a monotone diversified only as to beat, gives the priority to rhythm, in many opinions. On the other hand, the tune of a piece is what catches your ear, if anything does. You think of it immediately the word music is mentioned. To many listeners, the words tune and music are synonymous. The tune sticks, and you go out whistling or singing it if you have liked it well enough. So you are within your rights if you choose to put it first. As a matter of fact, it is not important to decide which of a pair of twins preceded the other into the world, so long as you can tell them apart.

You may find it not so easy to get on a friendly footing with melody as you at first suppose. Like rhythm, it has a disarming air of informal simplicity, an invitation to step

up and get acquainted, especially when you define melody as tune and let it go at that. You will meet it without strain when it appears in *Three Blind Mice*, or *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* or a familiar hymn like *Now the Day is Ended*. And if, even in this seemingly elementary guise, you turn on it a powerful searchlight, you will see it disintegrating before your eyes into smaller, simpler units than the one you started with, as, under the spell of the hypnotist, a jug split into fragments before the fascinated eyes of Kipling's Kim, then joined together again into a symmetrically rounded whole.

Melody is both more and less than tune. By definition, it is "the successive sounding of tones so related to each other and disposed in such order as to form a coherent expression," or, less pedantically, "a succession of sounds pleasing to the ear." Actually, it is made up of small elements, called motives, each in itself pleasing, if we take a broad view of that word. Notes of different pitch and duration, as few as one and as many as twelve, are the motives which, joined together, make a melody. A simple example of a two-note motive is the call of the bobwhite or the cuckoo, as musical as any sequence devised by man. Haydn thought so, for he used the cuckoo call "as is" in his *Toy Symphony*, and Beethoven also wrote it into his *Pastoral Symphony*. Even the one-note fanfare with which acrobats are greeted at the finish of a particularly daring feat, a single tone delivered several times with different duration and force, counts as a motive. The first three notes of *Three Blind Mice* form a complete motive, the line "They all ran after the farmer's wife" another, and the two balanced in repetition, make a complete melody.

As to four-note motives, the *Merry Widow Waltz* is introduced by a charming one, and so it goes. *Ragging the Scale* makes of that eight-tone exercise a catchy tune, a motive complete in itself, yet permitting of interesting experiment in motion and design, the two elements without which no melody is successful.

How are you to recognize motives, if no one is beside you to point them out? And why make the effort to do so? Why not be content just to sing along when the tune strikes your fancy? Singing along mentally—but inaudibly—is a method of participating in performance, which heightens your feeling for the melody. One test of a melody's merit thus becomes its singability, but that should not be the sole test, otherwise many excellent pieces will find themselves condemned simply because at first blush they do not lend themselves to internal vocalization. It is the very preconception of melody as a one-piece, easy, singable tune which blocks the acceptance of new pieces that dangle no such lyrical bait. If you want to put yourself into the receptive state which casteth out fear and prejudice, you will put away all such preconceptions. You will readjust yourself to a concept of melody as a collection of fragments, or of group ideas, called motives, assembled like building blocks in a structure, or like parts of a design, each having its place in the whole. As in all principles of construction, the more nearly perfect each unit, the more the entire composition approaches perfection. Each note in a motive, and every motive in a melody should be indispensable, its omission a serious detriment to the beauty and nobility of the whole.

It is essential for you to develop a musical memory so

that, once you have heard a motive, you will recognize it when it recurs. For there is a great deal of repetition of motives; only when you have schooled yourself to hold them in mind does the melody assume the likeness of a tune. If it is difficult for you to remember, try to work with one motive at a time, follow it through a short piece, noticing how often it is used. Sometimes you will meet it in the identical form in which it was first propounded, inserted in such a way as to produce the symmetry which makes for beauty of design. Exact repetition of motives is used in simple melodies, and it is well to begin with melodies of this kind, like *Three Blind Mice*. Frequently, however, the motive is repeated in slightly different form, adding a soupçon of adventure to your ability to unmask it, giving you a genuine glow of accomplishment when you actually are able to put it in its place in the design, not as a new motive, but as an old one which has been modified.

The finer the performer, the more clearly do the motives stand out. Limned in various tone-colors, complementary or contrasting, they emerge as separate entities or flow into one another, like the colors of a painting, certain ones being high-lighted for emphasis. The rhythm may be changed or intensified at an emphatic spot, or the important motive placed or accented so as to draw attention. Where there is an accompaniment, it helps to define the melody. Harmony goes so closely hand in hand with melody that most people subconsciously supply harmonic color when given a melody. That is, the chords which are associated with those note progressions come into their minds as an accompaniment, not expressed, but understood. Rhythm gives melody motion, harmony gives it

color, while the melody not only contains the germs of the design, but, more than any other single attribute, contributes to your emotional satisfaction. The three constitute the Holy Trinity of music.

Do not start with too complex a melody, any more than you would select a problem child for your first venture into the probing of human motives. Take the simplest thing you can think of, a lullaby, like the German *Sleep, Baby, Sleep* (Schlaf' Kindlein, Schlaf'). The three-tone motive, "Sleep, Baby, Sleep," immediately repeated in the second line, "Your father's tending sheep," is followed by a second motive in "Your mother shakes the plum-tree" also repeated, and the song then returns, in the last line, "Sleep, Baby, Sleep," to the first motive. Expressed in letters, it can be diagramed: A A B B A. Go on from this to other simple songs you know and then proceed from folk songs to other forms. The Dvorak *Humoreske* immortalized by Kreisler's violin, the Paderewski *Minuet*, the Rubinstein *Melody in F*, straightforward, familiar melodies all, will submit to your scalpel without demur. And presently, you will find yourself at a symphony concert, intent on hearing the beginning of a piece because then the leading motive is announced, and following with the concentration you would bestow on a prize detective story the adventures of that and succeeding motives in the symphony. When you have reached that point, you will have gone far indeed.

The melody is usually to be found in the upper voice of a piece—at any rate, that is the first place you look for it. Changing its place is a way of securing variety, adding to its complex charm, and keeping you guessing. A favorite

device of musical examiners is to play a well-known piece, place the melody in the bass instead of the treble, and confound unwary applicants by demanding that they extricate and name it. Henry Purcell, the post-Elizabethan composer of madrigal and roundelay, once played that trick on royalty itself. Commissioned to write a birthday ode for Queen Mary, he used as a bass the tune of *Cold and Raw*, a song to which she was unusually partial. The Queen had once called for it at what Purcell considered an inappropriate moment, and this was his way of rebuking her. But he didn't quite succeed, for she seems not to have recognized its presence, hidden in full view as it was, so Purcell had the satisfaction of working off his ire without the unpleasant consequences which usually follow the taking of such liberties with a queen. Contrapuntal writing, of which more later, places the melody frequently in one of the inner voices, where it plays hide-and-seek, challenging you to rout it out. In many of the works of Bach and Mozart especially, it is so perfectly woven into the fabric as a whole, that it can barely be separated as a complete line of melody, although all the time it is perceived as standing out from the rest by reason of its beauty.

H. E. Krehbiel said that "Melody is Harmony analyzed; Harmony is Melody synthesized," a pithy summary. It takes no account, however, of melody as one of the most powerful elements, not only of design, but of emotional expression in music. Analyze as we may, the appeal of melody to the emotions is the undeniable, irresistible, essential appeal. The love motive of Tchaikowsky's *Romeo and Juliet Overture* is poignant, not because

it can be dissected without difficulty, but because it conveys a world of intensity in its simple line. Suppose you know that an ascending sequence in melody is stimulating, positive, indicative of ambition, effort and struggle, while a descending motion, contrariwise, has a quieting, relaxing effect. Such generalizations, good to have encountered and tucked away in the recesses of the subconscious, come to naught in the presence of a great melody, which defies them all to plumb the mystery of its emotional effect.

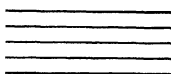
Nobody knows why it is that we like some melodies and dislike others. "That reminds me" is perhaps a more potent argument for or against our liking than we admit, or even realize. The French author Marcel Proust, in *Swann's Way*, makes of Swann's happy associations with the *Vinteuil Sonata* so vital an influence, that it compelled him to positive action when, other things being equal, he might have hung back, and so altered the entire course of his life. The picture of the drawing room where he first heard it, which rises before him with nostalgic intensity when he hears even a few measures of the sonata, is shared by the reader. And if a literary excursion can thus impress, it is doubly true of a personal experience, especially an early one, which, connected in some way with a remembered tune, comes back with all the original poignancy of pleasure or pain, when the tune is heard. A young man told me that the *Miserere* from *Il Trovatore* happened to be played on a passing hand-organ one day while he was being spanked when he was a small boy. He said that he never could hear the tune in after life without a rueful nether stinging which ruined his enjoyment of the music, no matter how beautifully it was sung. The sights and

scents, the thoughts and feelings of the past, reawakened by music, influence your response uncontrollably, albeit you struggle against their spell. "That reminds me" has much to do with your like or dislike. So does "O, I remember that!" Like an old shoe, familiar melody is restful and comfortable. You can allow yourself to be carried along by it without listening too intently, without trying to analyze or grasp its inner meaning, content because it sets up sympathetic vibrations in the memory.

Yet, even if you have heard only the best music during your youth, (and who has?) and base your liking on the wide and cultivated field of your knowledge, you still are definitely limiting yourself if you allow your sole test of a melody to be its familiarity. Granted that it is as pleasant to meet a familiar melody among a lot of new and untried ones as an old friend in a strange and potentially hostile gathering, and that you are entitled to all the satisfaction such an encounter entails, it is shortsighted to shut out the possibility of making new friends at the same time as you enjoy the old ones, bringing to the enterprise a set of standards which will help you to select those you can love and trust and those whose acquaintance you can dispense with.

A bad melody has distinct and definite shortcomings. It is sometimes monotonous, redundant, boring in the frequency and meaninglessness of the repetitions of motives within it. It may be cheap and vulgar, strident and unprepossessing. Possibly it is slovenly, with loose ends that are never tied up, like the untidy hair of a slattern. It may be dull and neutral, or merely commonplace and uninteresting. It may be jumbled and incoherent, filled with mo-

tives which do not hang together, which simply fail to make sense. Do not forget, however, that seeming incoherence is often due to your own inability to discern a pattern which, as you become more expert, assumes clarity and meaning. There is a wide gulf separating intricacy from confusion, and simplicity from banality. The ability to pick the right side of the gulf is the result of analysis as well as instinct, thought as well as feeling, judgment as well as tradition.



V

HARMONY AND COUNTER- POINT: ITS TONES IN COMBINATION

BREATHES there a man with ears so dead that he has never heard barber shop harmony? Though the electric razor has brought shaving back to the home, the so-called barber shop chord still survives from the day when a man's face was lathered to the strains of the vocal quartet in the tonsorial parlor. While the bass, or deep voice of the group boomed one note steadily (a device termed a drone bass), the tenor and baritone, with another bass, or two tenors with bass, sang above and below, one holding the melody, the others selecting at random any notes which made a pleasing sound. Their song always revolved around a comfortable combination based on the *do* of the song they were singing, the whole series being known as barber shop harmony. Although they dubbed this sport harmonizing, neither the quartets nor their tonsorial audiences knew harmony as such. They played with blended

voices for the fun of it. As to the names of the chords, or the rules which govern their use in classical composition, they probably did not know that rules existed.

Yet they were fearlessly touching the hem of the garment of harmony which cloaks music, and you may do the same with equal fearlessness. Do not let yourself be daunted by the fancy terminological trimmings which have been pinned on to it. You may caress its rich fabric, examine the individual strands of its supple elegance, and marvel at the artistry of their interweaving, without knowing a triad by name. For the appeal of harmony is to your own hunger for the beauty in blended tones, for the enrichment of a melody by the solid underpinning of congenial chords. Your perception of transitions from major to minor is an invaluable heightener of your harmonic enjoyment. Trust your ear. You may feel more confidence in it when you have equipped it with a little knowledge of what goes on as chord succeeds chord. But do not allow technicalities to cloud your eardrums, shutting out the sounds themselves, for it is through them that the music speaks to you.

When three or more notes are sounded together in "pleasing" relationship, they form a chord. It is hardly necessary to mention that "pleasing" is an elastic adjective. A chord agreeable to one person may be highly distasteful to another, and furthermore, what is pleasing today was quite the reverse so short a time as a decade ago, taste being subject to change without notice. The story of the development of harmony is a story of change.

There was no harmony in the earliest recorded music, the songs of priests. They were simple melodies, sung in

unison, with one voice, with all the singers praising God to a very primitive tune. No instrumental accompaniment, no part singing, nothing but a single line of melody in a limited range of intervals characterized these efforts, which were called plain song, an appropriate description. Scholars have deciphered the Greek plain song, which was as pure as Greek art, with loving care, and many fragments of it are embodied today in the Gregorian chants of the Catholic church. But a French monk named Hucbald, who lived in the tenth century A.D., took exception to the monotony of unrelieved unison. He decided that praise in two voices might not only be twice as acceptable to the Lord as praise in one, but undoubtedly half as tiresome both to sing and listen to. He tried the experiment of two voices singing at an interval of a few tones apart. He liked it, so did the other monks. Crude as it was, his experiment was successful, and his two-part songs, called organum, came into general use. Monks in other countries welcomed the diversion from the monotony of unison liturgical chants, and built further simple combinations. Presently they were singing two different melodies which sounded equally well together and separately, a product they called discant. From this point, other voices were added, and polyphonic, or many-voiced singing in the church developed by easy stages. Until the sixteenth century, harmony as such was not recognized, although, since two or more parts were sung at once, forming chords, harmony was a far from silent partner of polyphony. Harmonic do's and don'ts were evolved from the necessity for making two or more strands of melody blend. But for several centuries after Hucbald, all the stress was on find-

ing melodies for the church which sounded well if sung each by itself, and equally well if blended with the others.

Some time between 1225 and 1250, meanwhile, a song was being circulated in England which introduced polyphonic singing into the weekday as well as Sunday life of the people. It was called *Sumer is icumen in*, and was sung in a special way, called a round. The first singer sang the line "Sumer is icumen in, Lude sing cou-cou"; while he continued with "Groweth sed and bloweth med And springs the wode new," a second would start on the first phrase, "Sumer is icumen in etc.," then a third and a fourth, each one continuing to the end and then starting all over again. When four voices proclaimed four different parts of the melody, each complete, and harmonizing with the others, the effect was quite lovely. The song has a simple beauty which causes it to be sung today by madrigal groups and school children, not alone because it is a historical landmark, but because it is good music in its own right. A line of descendants, serious and frivolous, claim it as ancestor: the French round, *Frère Jacques*, the English *Chairs to mend* and *Scotland's Burning*, the German *Ach, wie wohl ist's mir am Abend*, and so on down to *There was a Hole and the Hole was in the Ground*. When one melody is complete before the next starts, and all start on the same note, it is called a round, whereas in a canon, the melodies overlap. The notes of one part are strictly imitated by the others, at a distance of an interval which sounds well, (say a fifth or a third above or below) and this canonic imitation is an element in instrumental as well as vocal writing. If a round or canon happens to have a humorous twist, like *I went to the animal fair*

it is called a catch, probably because, as the words were "caught up" by the singers, a ludicrous turn to match them was given to the music. Whatever the name applied to describe it, *Sumer is icumen in* opened a door through which marched exponents small and great of the art of polyphonic singing in secular life, a similar service to the one performed by Hucbald for the church.

For a while, secular threatened to engulf religious polyphony. Church writers, in their polyphonic zeal, embodied in the religious service melodies taken indiscriminately from the streets and brothels, in fact from any source which offered tunes that could be utilized. Pierluigi Palestrina, (1525-1594), a composer who for many years was choir master of St. Peter's Church in Rome, descended upon these unworthy purveyors of song like an angel with a flaming muckrake. He purified by example, for in all the vast collection of hymns, lamentations, litanies and masses from his pen, there is not one jarring or vulgar melody. He was not above writing secular music, but practiced the same delicate discretion here, with consummate taste playing the voices against one another, "punctum contra punctum," point counter point. Literally translated, this means note against note, and the word counterpoint is used to describe music which plays one note against another in certain prescribed ways. It describes the study of horizontal part writing in general, and more specifically, the melodies written against a fundamental subject, the *cantus firmus*, or fixed melody. Before J. S. Bach, the rules governing such writing were so strict that they formed a body of knowledge known as strict counterpoint, which every would-be composer was

obliged to master before putting pen to paper. Bach freed counterpoint by demonstrating that within its frame, liberties were permissible which did not impair, but actually increased the expressiveness of polyphonic writing. Since his day, a system of free counterpoint has developed. Individual voice parts wander here and there with fewer restrictions, intervals formerly forbidden now go unproved, chords which do not fit into the "pleasant" group are allowed, and so on. The counterpoint of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, of Debussy and Schoenberg is very different from that practiced by the predecessors of Palestrina, by Palestrina himself, and by his great contemporaries, Orlandus Lassus of Munich and Thomas Tallis of London. But the *cantus firmus* is still the corner stone of the contrapuntal structure, the difference being that now it generally originates with the composer himself, whereas in the early days it was either taken from an already known secular tune, or from Gregorian plain song.

Dignified counterpoint, with its *cantus firmus* and improvisational excursions, furnishes the pattern for so undignified a descendant as jazz. Sidney Bechet, Louis Armstrong, and Bix Beiderbecke stem from Palestrina. They take a popular tune like *St. Louis Blues* or *Dinah* as a *cantus firmus*. They have it sung, or played on trumpet or clarinet or other solo instrument. And above, below and around it they weave, employing all and more than all of the devices known to their contrapuntal ancestors, on clarinet, trumpet, piano, drum, or saxophone, the voices of the swing band, a pattern which is the delight and despair of imitators. This is hot music. It is also counterpoint. You may be interested in supplementing the

hearing of music by Palestrina and his contemporaries with a diversion into jazz, listening to it with ears attuned to echoes from the past.

Polyphonic music is described as horizontal because when it is written, each melody makes its own line across the page, in contrast with music which presents a melody in the upper voice, with chords below to sustain and accompany. As the notes to be sounded simultaneously in a chord are set down one above the other, monophonic writing, with melody above and chords below, looks vertical, and is often so called. The distinction is a somewhat artificial one, for the motion of the chords parallels that of the melody, and by that token is also horizontal. As an aid to determining the type of piece by a glance at the music, the distinction has its value.

When, in the sixteenth century, the voice was supplemented by musical instruments, harmony began to come into its own. The restrictions on writing imposed by the limitations of the human voice, which could not manage too difficult an interval between notes, gave way as the resources of the viol, the lute and the harpsichord were revealed. The soprano-alto-tenor-bass combination was duplicated in instrumental writing, which became elaborately and ambitiously polyphonic. Then along came Johann Sebastian Bach to do for instrumental polyphony what Palestrina had done for vocal. With one hand he skimmed off its impurities, with the other he poured new and legitimate resources into it. He elevated it to a pitch of supremacy which represents the ultimate. No composer has surpassed Bach in polyphonic writing. His separate melodies have inevitability, individuality, and sturdy solid

strength, and at the same time are fitted together with all the fragile refinement of the minute parts of a fine Swiss watch. The elemental harmonies in which they blend, daring in their own day, appear all that is restful and right to our tired modern ears.

Bach neglected no resource toward the realization of contrapuntal perfection; he utilized to the full all the already known devices. To appreciate a few of his characteristics is to acquire a new interest in hearing polyphonic music, so that you do not, like one hapless concert-goer, leave the hall and take a walk around the block whenever a piece by Bach is played because you simply cannot sit through it.

When a motive as sung by one voice or instrument is repeated by another, either exactly, or on a different step of the scale, or with slight changes that do not alter its essential outlines, it is said to be *in imitation*. Sometimes the imitation is like an echo, delivered *piano*, remote and wisp-like. Sometimes it is emphatic, insistent and aggressive. Imitation is a form of mimicry practiced in polyphonic music, the repetitions being one or many, always occurring in different voices. Transposition, on the other hand, is not a polyphonic concept, but a device in general use. When a motive is repeated deliberately in another key or tonality—that is, using another than the original *do* as the center but retaining the identical relationship of the tones—it is said to be transposed. Very beautiful effects and changes of color are secured by thus lifting a motive or a whole piece into a different environment, the harmonies being changed to correspond. Bach tossed motives in imitation and transposition from one voice to

another as easily and gracefully as infielders speed a baseball to the different bases. From the soprano to an inner voice, then perhaps to the bass and back to the soprano, they go in frequent but not wearying repetition. That the repetition does not become tiresome is due to still further devices aiming at variety. Sequences are used. These consist in the repetition of the same melody or part of a melody starting on different steps of the scale, and uttered by the different voices. The orderly progression of these sequences up or down establishes a sense of solidarity and neatness. Bach went in for the inversion of motives also, retaining their rhythm and intervals, but turning them upside down from time to time and from voice to voice. He used the *stretto*, especially in his fugues. *Stretto* literally means "tied tight," quickened in time. The quickening produces an overlapping of motives, so that a second voice answers the first with a second motive while the first, or main one, is still going on. It is a dramatic treatment. The doubling or halving in duration of the notes of motives in repetition, known respectively as augmentation and diminution, is another method of disguising the elusive motives. These are but a few. When next you hear a Bach composition, try to track the melodies from voice to voice, to recognize them wherever, and in whatever guise they occur. It is a rewarding form of sleuthing. Most important of all, do not lose sight of the marvelous whole in your attention to its parts; the blended tones multiply the satisfactions experienced in hearing the individual voices. If you are aware of both, you will have captured the essence of polyphonic writing, and will be

prepared for the enjoyment of the harmony which enriches both polyphonic and homophonic music.

When men went seriously about harmony, the business of building chords, they attacked the problem as one in construction. They built solidly from the bottom up, resting their chord on a firm foundation called the root. The three-note chord do-mi-sol—the root, the third, and the fifth of a scale—is called a triad, and is the primary building unit in harmony. Triads can be made on every note of the scale. Those built on the tonic, the fourth and the fifth as roots, for instance, have as pleasant a melodic relation as any tune made of the intervals alone; the study of harmony is the study of the relationship of triads and chords such as these to one another. It is a motion study of chord progressions. Without going deeply into the technical aspects of harmony, you will be repaid for devoting some time and thought to the triad. It is not only in constant use itself, but is expanded into other, more complicated forms. By adding an interval of a third to the top, a chord of the seventh is obtained; adding still another to that, a chord of the ninth, and so on to modern chords of the eleventh and thirteenth. These are beautiful and interesting chords, but they do not always appear in the same guise. The education of your ear to the recognition of the triads on which they are based should be your first step toward familiarizing yourself with them as entities.

Like scales, triads may be major or minor, depending upon the relation of the first to the third. When the third is dropped a half step, like the mi of the minor scale, a

minor triad results. $\begin{matrix} G \\ E \end{matrix}$ is a major triad, $\begin{matrix} G \\ Eflat \end{matrix}$ a minor triad. $\begin{matrix} C \\ C \end{matrix}$

Minor harmonies are largely responsible for the creation of a mood of sadness or apprehension—they help to establish the minor mode. Triads become augmented or diminished when half tones are added or subtracted

respectively. $\begin{matrix} Gsharp \\ C \end{matrix}$ is an augmented, $\begin{matrix} Gflat \\ C \end{matrix}$ a diminished

triad, the total number of half steps in major and minor being altered in each case by one. Still another change is rung by shuffling the notes of the triad. When any tone other than the root is at the bottom, the triad is said to be inverted. If the third is taken as the base, the triad is

said to be in its first inversion— $\begin{matrix} C \\ G \end{matrix}$ is the first inversion $\begin{matrix} E \\ C \end{matrix}$

of the C major triad. With the fifth at the bottom, it is $\begin{matrix} E \\ G \end{matrix}$ in the second inversion— $\begin{matrix} C \\ G \end{matrix}$. Since major and minor,

diminished and augmented triads can be built on every step of the scale, can be inverted, and are used in all these forms in chords of the seventh, ninth etc., it is obvious that the study of them all, and of the possible relationships between them which make for aural satisfaction, can become a life work. In lieu of the ambition to make it so, a little time spent at the piano playing triads in major and minor, in all their inversions, up and down the scale and at other intervals which suggest themselves as

offering possible melody, even trying different chords of the seventh and ninth as you grow bolder, will prove a pleasant entering wedge to understanding.

As chord units are put together, shifted, and fitted into their pattern, they are governed by regulations devised entirely for aural comfort. When, for example, a composer decides to change *do's* in midstream, a procedure known as a change of key or tonality, he does not jump abruptly from one key to the other, rocking the boat as he jumps. Following the exigencies of his melody, he may decide that he wants to change from the key of C major, let us say, to D minor. By way of softening the transition, he considerably writes a series of chords which lead gently, or modulate, from one key to the other. Such a modulation may consist of one or many chords. Its effectiveness is a matter of the composer's ingenuity in the selection of chords which are suitable and beautiful, and do not depart too radically from the rules of modulation.

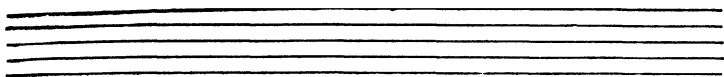
Much of the tradition of harmony rests upon this basis of consideration, to which modulation owes its being. The preparation for a chord, the statement of the chord, and its resolution are the three steps which represent, or did in classical parlance, the normal treatment of a harmonic group. To the composer, the emphatic chord is like an honored guest. He leads up to its coming with lesser chords of preparation, which clamor for the climax of statement, or arrival. Then he slopes them down to the resolution which marks the end of the piece or some part of it, the guest's departure. This ending is called a cadence—a falling—like the dropping of a voice at the end of a sentence. The cadence which closes a piece is on the

tonic chord, the chord of the *do* in which the piece is written. The tonic is often called the home chord, the solid basic harmony in a world of changing sound. The return to it is in the nature of a home-coming for the weary wanderer through harmonic twistings and turnings.

In the restless world of today, many people do not go home regularly, while others have no homes to go to. It is natural that harmony should follow suit and rebel against that invariable return to the home chord. It wants to stay out, go to a movie, anything rather than go home. So the final chord in modern music often remains unresolved, leaving you hanging open-eared, awaiting the tonic harmony which never comes. Many an audience is fooled into applauding before the end, or withholding applause when it is due, because one unresolved cadence sounds so much like another that there is no way of telling when the composer has finished. The classic composers leave no doubt in your mind, but some others take pleasure in flouting the good manners learned at their harmony teacher's knee. Not for them the traditional modulation, gentle preparation, statement and resolution. Not for them the "perfect cadence" from the fifth or dominant to the home chord or tonic, at the end of a piece. They even disdain the plagal cadence, from the fourth or subdominant to the tonic at the end, endeared by the A-A-A-men of hymns. They have learned to think vertically, in chords, as easily as they formerly thought in single notes. And the chord units in which they think can often not be traced to the triad or any of its variations. Even an old hand is frequently baffled by the apparent lawlessness of modern harmony. If he, how much more so the inexperienced

listener. The latter, to be sure, has a certain advantage in that he does not resent *the infraction of rules with which he is not familiar*. He can not dutifully gasp with disapproval of chords so scandalously related as to be banned from all proper gatherings of their kind by the Emily Posts of harmony. To him, there is nothing scandalous about any chord relationships.

After listening carefully and often to the chords in common and loving use, you come to realize them as absolute unities, each with its own personality, its own complexion. The fusion of three or more tones, which makes of a chord not a sum in addition or subtraction but a grand total of blended elements, a complete entity, is the very essence of harmony. If you are aware of it, you can delight in barber shop chords and their derivatives, without rejecting the rich combinations favored by Beethoven and Brahms, or making a wry face at the experiments of the moderns, Stravinsky and Schoenberg. With a little knowledge and a great deal of tolerance, you will extract a kernel of beauty from the divergent harmonies of them all.



VI

FORM: ITS ARCHITECTURE

THE composer who writes well-tailored pieces shapes his compositions to fit his material. Rhythm, melody, harmony and tone color, spread out on his cutting-table, wait to be snipped and shaped and assembled into a coherent and artistic whole. Shaping is a craft which can be learned by any tailor; it is creative inspiration which makes an art of the shaping. Many pieces built strictly according to prescribed forms lack the inspiration and originality of the masters who developed those forms. They are like factory-made clothing, a mechanical product lacking style or individuality, and are discarded without ceremony by those who look upon music as an art.

In listening, you will profit by knowing a few of the forms most generally used, the better to appraise the art which informs them. In the vernacular of music, form has a twofold meaning. In a general sense, it is used to classify the framework into which the composer sets his design. Its more particular significance has to do with the kinds of design within the framework, and the methods of presenting themes and expounding ideas.

Generally speaking, the moulds into which vocal and instrumental music are cast are successful or the reverse in proportion to the extent to which they fit the material. There must not be so much compressed into a small mould that it threatens to burst its bounds, nor so little that it hangs limp and empty. In other words, a symphony cannot be expressed in terms of a dance suite, nor a bit of folk song spread thin into an aria. In fact, the composer is free to invent a form if, among the assortment at hand, he finds none that suits his material.

If he is writing for the solo voice, he starts from an early and satisfyingly balanced medium, the folk song, a strophic verse and chorus of the type immortalized in the English ballad song, *Barbara Allen*. A series of stanzas sung to the same tune, with a recurrent refrain which is always the same, is the ideal form for poems of this ballad type, and for simple narrative folk tales. Yet when Schubert set to music the tale of the Erlking, he achieved breathless, dramatic interest not by repetition of a refrain, but by writing music which followed the words and echoed their significance. This was the *art song* form, which Schubert perfected; in Germany it is called the *Lied*. It differs from folk song in that it is what the Germans call "durch-komponiert," that is, "composed through," following the words in a long continuous line from start to finish. The lyric or dramatic arias which are frequently borrowed from the opera to grace recital programs are larger and more ambitious than art songs, but are also "durch-komponiert." They are longer but similarly nonrepetitive vehicles for the expression of tremendous emotion or philosophy.

Although motets and madrigals are contrapuntal forms associated with the composers of the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, they have served as the basis for much of the ambitious choral writing which followed. The motets, sung frequently "a capella," that is, as in a chapel, without accompaniment, have their counterpart in the church anthems of today. When they are expanded into dramatic or religious vehicles for large mixed choruses, they are called cantatas, or oratorios, depending upon the purpose for which they are intended. Cantatas were often written for special occasions, and are not necessarily as serious as the oratorio, which is an ambitious dramatic effort. The mass, a polyphonic vocal work, forms a part of the Catholic liturgy, and is wholly religious. The most dramatic vocal demonstration, in which vocal and instrumental writing on a grand scale is required, with a subject to match in grandeur, is the opera. Its combination of stage action with the musical interpretation of that action by voices and orchestra challenges the gifted composer whose musical concept is too large to be contained in ordinary vocal or instrumental forms.

Instrumental music developed after vocal, but it did not lag behind in variety of forms. The solo instrumental piece with or without accompaniment, intended to exploit the qualities of a single instrument, is a voluntary offering, which may be in any form the composer wishes, and called by any name he likes. He may write waltzes, studies, mazurkas, polonaises, reveries, or any kind of dance, as Chopin did for the piano. He may affix descriptive titles as Debussy did in *Gardens in the Rain*, *Children's Corner*, and *The Girl with Flaxen Hair*. Cradle

songs and meditations on the one hand, brilliant flights like Tartini's *Devil's Trill* for violin and piano on the other, are evidence of a wide choice.

The concerto represents the high point of solo writing, for here the conception must embrace the symphony orchestra as well as the solo instrument it accompanies. When you hear a concerto with piano accompaniment, you may be sure it has been arranged, and is not being played as originally written. The effect is never wholly satisfactory. The display of virtuosity which is one object of a concerto is only half the pleasure of listening. For in a truly great work, like the Beethoven or Brahms piano concertos, soloist and orchestra participate in a dialogue that is nearly equal. The latter should not be rated as an accompaniment, so well-rounded is its development of the material propounded by the solo instrument. Concertos have been written for practically every known instrument, and even for small combinations treated as a solo unit. They provide the box-office attraction for many a symphony concert. They are traditionally in three movements, separated as though they were three separate pieces, although sometimes, as in the Conus *Violin Concerto*, all are played as one, or two movements are played together without a break, as in the *G major piano concerto* by Beethoven. The orchestra usually presents a small introduction, called a "tutti," (Italian for "all,") because all the instruments play. Sometimes the solo violinist or cellist plays along unobtrusively in a tutti, to sing out with solo brilliancy when his turn comes. Whole sections may be joined together by tuttis which present new material and at the same time give the soloist a breathing-space.

In a concerto, the solo instrument is allowed to show off all by itself, without accompaniment, in a section called the *cadenza*. This is usually provided for at the end of the first or second movement, sometimes both. The performer is permitted to supply his own *cadenza* if he wishes, improvising on the themes of the concerto, displaying his virtuosity to the top of his bent. However, many composers write *cadenzas* themselves, or their friends do so for them. They do not trust the performer as a composer.

A concerto is very much like a sonata for two instruments, a dialogue. True, sonatas are written for single instruments, but even then, the instrument carries on a conversation with itself, giving all the right answers to the questions it addresses to itself after the fashion of certain vaudeville comedians. In the wealth of sonatas for two or more instruments—there are as many combinations as there are instruments in existence—the dialogue becomes a conversation between voices of different timbre and equal importance. The piano part of a sonata with another instrument is frequently spoken of as the accompaniment. That is an error, the piano part is fully the equal of that written for the other instrument. Sonatas are written for more than two instruments, in fact, for whole ensembles, and usually consist of an Allegro, an Adagio, and a Finale. The first is cast in what is known as sonata form, adding yet a third to the meanings applied to the overworked word, sonata, which originally signified “something that was sounded.”

Many instrumental roads lead to the Rome of the symphony. When composers started to write music for per-

formance at the courts of kings and princes, they had to bear in mind the size of the room in which it would be presented, and so they wrote "musica da camera" or music for rooms, which we call chamber music. Duets, trios, string, wind and piano quartets; quintets; sextets; everything up to an ensemble of twenty pieces is classed as chamber music. Thanks to the small number of instruments, the composer of chamber music can achieve a purity of effect, lightness and delicacy, and sharp-edged outline which result in a cameo rather than a statue. When he comes to write symphonies, he seizes a heavier chisel to quarry out his musical thought. Since he deals with eighty-odd instruments, at least four times as many as a large chamber ensemble—the number can be increased to over a hundred—he works on a heroic scale. The four-movement tradition is practically universal in chamber music (with the exception of the sonata) and in the symphony. The Allegro, the lively first movement, with possibly a few measures of slow introduction, sets the tone, and presents the important thematic material which is later to reappear in other movements. The second movement, more meditative and deliberate, is traditionally an Adagio or Andante or some such leisurely tempo. Usually in a contrasting key as well as tempo, it presents new subject matter in measured, stately form. The third movement may be a dance-like minuet and trio, or a scherzo, a carry-over from the dance suite. The Finale, or last movement, is a grand summing-up, a "Lastly, my friends," a peroration which is usually brilliant, rapid and exciting, a blaze of fireworks to top off soberer entertainment.

There are some forms of writing for the orchestra

which are not in four movements. The Overture, for instance, which in some cases originated as the introduction to a dance suite, in others as the piece played before the rise of the curtain in the opera, appears on many orchestral programs, and is in one movement. The symphonic poem, a single-movement descriptive piece which follows a poem or a story, is well suited to some types of romantic writing. There are a number of ways of dodging what is known as absolute music, in which the thought is not necessarily communicable in words. Program music, such as the symphonic poem and the overture, freer and more rhapsodic than the absolute symphony, permits the composer to explain his intentions in words. The ready-made associations thus presented prepare you for the hearing of the music which follows. The orchestral suite, which may or may not be program music, originated with the dances written for court entertainments by Lully and Couperin and Scarlatti. The enticing names Sarabande, Gavotte, Gigue, Branle, Pavane, Courante, Minuet, Bourree, Forlane, evoke a picture of rustling brocades above toes daintily pointed in the various dance figures. Unrelated and unlimited in number as the movements of the suite were, gradually, as composers decided to join them together, a species of unity of purpose and mood crystallized into the unity of key and subject of the symphony.

Within such frameworks as these, the music disposes itself in prescribed designs, of which three, the sonata form, the variation form, and the fugue, turn up in most of the instrumental music you are likely to hear. The sonata and variation forms are primarily harmonic, while the fugue is in the category of contrapuntal writing. Need-

less to say, there are numerous other forms described in the textbooks. And there are more than a few composers who have cast aside traditional form, as they have traditional harmony, melody and rhythm, in the attempt to blaze new trails. Even so, you will appreciate their successes and failures the more for knowing something of the tradition they are spurning.

In its most elementary manifestation, sonata form has the appearance of an old friend, the simple folk song in the A B A pattern, that is, the statement of a main motive A, a contrasting motive B, and the restatement of the main motive A, with a possible repetition of one or both motives. Song and dance are responsible for the A B A form, which sprang up because it fitted the words as sung, and the figures as danced in certain dances, particularly in the rondo. In the sonatas written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the beginnings of sonata form can be discerned, although in those days a sonata simply meant something that was sounded, or played, and the only connection between the two is the fact that the first movements of most sonatas are traditionally in the sonata form. This is built as follows. After the statement of the first subject or theme, usually a brisk, energetic strain of unmistakable melody, there may be a few modulating measures or a slight development of that theme. Then a second subject is announced, based on a different key. Sometimes it may be in a contrasting mode, minor if the first was major, or vice versa. The announcement of these two themes constitutes the Exposition section, A. It is followed by the feature which most decidedly differentiates the sonata form from merely an enlarged song form,

namely, the development section. This is like the free play period of the modern classroom. While it lasts, the composer is at liberty to take his subjects apart and put them together again, to toss and worry them as he wishes. He breaks them into short bits and phrases, inverts, augments, or diminishes them, modulates back and forth, harmonizes in any and all keys. He juggles sequences, imitations and transpositions, changes rhythms—in fact, he is given not alone liberty, but license to develop his thought to the utmost. In the development section he has his big opportunity to spread out everything he knows, but if he is wise, he exercises restraint and holds something in reserve, bearing consistently in mind the purpose of the development section. It should exploit the already stated thematic material, without introducing new basic motives and themes.

After the giddy, often puzzling whirl of the development section, B, the return to the theme A, called the recapitulation, falleth as the gentle rain from heaven. Especially does it so appear inasmuch as, when restated, both themes have the same tonal center or key, that, is, the tonic or *do* of the scale on which the first theme is based. The return to those harmonies restores the sense of rounding out and completion of the story.

“Papa” Haydn, famous Austrian composer who lived in the latter half of the eighteenth century, did so much for the sonata form, among other things, that the paternal title could have been bestowed upon him for that service alone. He made a definite, clear-cut pattern out of the muddy and muddled attempts of his predecessors. He blue-penciled with editorial ruthlessness all unnecessary

and extraneous matter; separated exposition from development, development from recapitulation, replacing with clear and logical chord-successions *the meaningless flourishes he found*; added an introduction at the beginning, and in many instances a coda at the end, the first designed to put the hearer in the proper mood, the latter to leave him that way. Literally a coda is a tail, the wagging of which dignifies and amplifies the ending of a section or a piece. It is new material in the spirit of what has already been heard, and none the less beautiful for being a mere appendage.

Composers subsequent to Haydn availed themselves thankfully of his clarification of the sonata form. Mozart may have been more gracious, brilliant and aristocratic in the working out of the development sections, and Beethoven more profound, but Haydn laid the groundwork for both.* Music was to Beethoven the expression of a spiritual state, and the development section the answer to his prayer to be enabled to reveal that state in its full beauty. Nowhere more than in these sections of his various compositions does the wonder of his works appear.

Since the sonata form is used in the first movements of symphonies, sonatas, concertos and chamber music, it is worth going to some trouble to make friends with it. You may thank your lucky stars for those considerate composers, Mozart and Haydn, who put the needs of the hearer first, and designedly made the structure so obvious that all who run may read. When you have listened atten-

* The name of Carl Philip Emanuel Bach, son of the great Johann Sebastian and precursor of Haydn, is closely connected with the development of the sonata form and its application in delightful piano works.

tively to a few dozen pieces of sonata form by these two gentlemen, who were so prolific that you have any number to choose from, you will approach Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms with new ears. More complex though their treatment is, they still adhere to the sonata form, and it can be ferreted out in their works as in the others, by patient listening.

The variation form is one you may pursue in the slow movements of the same sonatas, symphonies, etc., to which you have tracked the sonata form. It is a frequent, though not a consistent habitué of slow movements, and appears independently also in individual pieces. Like sonata form, it is an outgrowth of dance and song forms. The Elizabethan composers William Byrd, John Bull and Orlando Gibbons pleased themselves by writing variations on a simple song, treating it successively in different fashions—lively, rugged, smooth, humorous, etc. In France by way of variety, composers were adding, in the “double” or repetition of a dance theme, trills, roulades and whatever embellishments occurred to them as likely to prevent dancers from becoming bored with the restatement required by the dance figures. But it was not until Handel and Haydn added transposition and syncopation to the simple devices in use that the theme with variations became really interesting. In listening to a piece in variation form, it is essential to seize the initial theme with a bulldog grip and keep your teeth sunk in it with a tenacity that refuses to let go even for a moment. Keep singing it mentally while listening to its variations. If you can retain it despite the distraction of the operations performed upon it by the composer, you will find yourself enormously

entertained by the diversity of those operations. But once you lose the theme, the variations become meaningless, even dull, since they possess interest mainly as heard in terms of the original, and of the composer's success in departing from, while adhering to that original.

You may have an opportunity to hear the thirty variations on an aria in G major, the famous, but seldom played *Goldberg Variations* written for the harpsichord by Johann Sebastian Bach, and also played on the piano. Sir Hubert Parry, in a detailed analysis, calls attention to the fact that Bach took the harmonic framework on which the aria is constructed, and built thirty movements upon it. In thus securing variation by means of harmonic, more strongly than melodic manipulation, Bach demonstrated that modifications of a set of chords can be made as acceptable as modifications of a melody. Nevertheless, the idea was not taken up to any extent, until Beethoven who was very fond of the variation form, enlarged upon it, and established the balance between harmony and melody which imparts much of the charm to variations as we know them.

How are you to know the variation form when you meet it? It is one of the most readily recognizable. The first few variations after the original proclamation of the theme are usually tied fairly closely to the thematic apron-strings. They present only the most obvious departures from the original, just enough to give a sense of change. It is only as one variation follows another, that the composer "goes to town," gradually coming to the point in the later variations where he disguises the theme so completely that you may have difficulty in finding it. A theme can be varied

harmonically, rhythmically, melodically, and contrapuntally, one at a time or all together. There is no telling what a venturesome composer will attempt. Your recollection of the theme is your bit of cold iron that you touch to keep your mind clear while he weaves his magic spell. A slight pause between variations generally permits you to gather your energies afresh. Even without the pause, cadences to the *do* (or tonic) give a hint that one variation is ending and another about to commence. If you have failed to follow one, you may have better luck with its successor.

Fugue form deals with thematic gymnastics which are more contrapuntal than harmonic in design. The fugue returns in principle to the canon and round, the "Sumer is icumen in" kind of thing. It announces a subject which, as somewhat loosely defined by the Italian pedagogue Cherubini, should be "neither too long nor too short, but just the right length." This subject, once propounded, instead of following the course charted by the sonata and variation forms, takes wary flight. It plays hide and seek, going from voice to voice with an interweaving that befuddles the listener who has not learned to hold to the theme as his rock and his salvation. In a simple fugue, the procedure is something like this. The subject is announced, and is immediately "imitated" by the second voice in a different key. A third voice enters, repeating the subject as it appeared in the beginning, a fourth again as in the second, and the chase is on. While the second voice is answering the first in another key, the latter broaches a new subject, contrasting in rhythm and melody, and known as the counter-subject. Be sure to fix both subject and counter-subject firmly in your mind.

Then you will not be baffled by the voices, first in parallel then in contrary motion, the chase of parts of melodies from voice to voice, the harmonic interludes which throw obstacles in the way of your pursuit, or the passages in free style, known as episodes, which are interjected into many fugues as hazards in the contrapuntal chase. Fugues are known as two-part, three-part, etc., according to the number of voices which enter the chase. J. S. Bach wrote a series of studies which is to all intents and purposes the Bible of the Fugue. It proceeds from an open, comprehensible fugue treatment of a simple subject, to a complicated manipulation of the same subject in three, four and five voices. In this exhaustive treatment of the subject of *The Art of the Fugue*, Bach squeezes it as dry as a morning orange after you have extracted the juice.

Dryness is, in fact, supposed to be one mark by which you can always know fugue form. An often quoted definition brands it as "a piece of music in which one voice after another comes in, and one listener after another goes out." But the listener who goes out is a deluded mortal, deliberately turning his back on an exciting musical experience. He would never leave a football game in that way, yet a fugue is musical football. The football subject is followed with intense concentration as it is tossed from player to player, fallen upon by all in a body, seized by one player and carried for awhile, then snatched by another. It is never at rest. It is always the same, whether smeared with mud from the field, or of shining new pigskin. When finally it is carried over the goal line in a touchdown, all the players converge toward the coveted point. This moment represents the *stretto* in many a fugue, the

climatic section where entries crowd in, overlap, overtake one another, push and jostle. Just as there may be no touchdown or several, in a game, there may be no *stretto*, or several, in a fugue. Both become the more thrilling for its presence, as you will agree when you have learned to play the game of "subject, subject, who's got the subject" which constitutes so large a part of the enjoyment, not only of the fugue, but of every musical form.

PART II
ITS TOOLS OF EXPRESSION

VII

THE HUMAN VOICE DIVINE

ONE instrument we have always with us, the voice. It sticks closer than friend or creditor, ours to command. When we wish to use it we need not ceremoniously remove it from a case, nor fold it tenderly in a silken scarf, like a violin, nor wait for it to be hoisted about by truckmen, like a piano. Locked away safely within us, it awaits only the signal to issue forth. Snow White and her dwarfs "whistle while they work"; most people prefer to sing, that being the natural, instinctive release for the music within. There is truth in the old saying that "a singing man is a happy man, for man never sings when he is in pain or misery, or is plotting miserable things."

The mechanism of the delicate instrument by means of which the "singing man" releases his happiness is a marvel of simplicity. When an air current sets in motion the membranes called vocal cords which lie, one on each side of the throat, the effect is the same as when the rubber band was plucked. A musical sound is produced, and is carried, after the fashion of all sound, by never-resting sound waves to eardrums poised to receive it. The air current is

supplied and controlled by the lungs and their muscles, and naturally, the stronger the current, the greater the volume of sound. The larynx, perched atop the windpipe and irreverently called the Adam's apple, is a sound-box whose vibrations give the tone its resonance. Supplementary sound-boxes are the mouth, and the passage up from the throat, behind the nose. The pitch of the voice is changed by the loosening or tightening of the vocal cords which represent the strings on this special type of stringed instrument. When the cords vibrate along their full length (they extend quite far down into the chest cavity), the tone is known as a chest tone, because it seems to be so definitely placed in that region. When, on the other hand, the cords vibrate only partially, with the throat relaxed and open nose, a head tone is produced. The latter possesses a smooth and open quality, lighter and clearer than a chest tone. A voice teacher is judged in part by his success in enabling his pupils to "place" their voices, and as a listener you will soon be able to tell whether head or chest tones are being used, or possibly the stomach tones of the ventriloquist.

Men's vocal cords and resonating cavities are larger than women's, and their voices are pitched about an octave lower, otherwise there is no difference in the two mechanisms. But all voices are not of the same quality and range, though they be of the same sex. For convenience, they have been classified in three groups. The female soprano, like the male tenor, sustains the upper part in a chorus, and generally carries the melody. A soprano may be a coloratura,* with the ability to perform rapid

* But not all coloraturas are sopranos.

passages and high trills in bird-like fashion, and with a range that carries her up to a high F, à la Galli-Curci or Lily Pons. She may be lyric, which means that she sings a melody in a light high voice, fluently, perhaps even sentimentally, but without the high-pitched gymnastics of the coloratura. Dorothy Maynor, the exquisite negro soprano is of that order, so was the late Alma Gluck. Finally, she may be a dramatic soprano, like Kirsten Flagstad, who projects her song with dramatic intensity, yet with no sacrifice of soprano range and quality.

The male equivalent of a soprano, the tenor, may be lyric, dramatic or heroic. Caruso was probably all three. When the tenor voice takes on unusual depth in range and quality, it is realistically described as a "robust tenor," or, in Italian, "tenore robusto." It approaches in quality the baritone, which lies halfway between tenor and bass, in the same position as does a mezzo-soprano voice that lies somewhere between soprano and contralto. Many of the finest solo songs have been written for baritone, as John Charles Thomas' varied programs testify. In its lower range, the baritone becomes a bass-baritone, while in the growly depths, it is known as basso profondo, or low bass. Chaliapin had the outstanding bass voice of our time, strikingly endowed with resonance and intensity even at its lowest point. The female contralto matches in quality and range the male bass, and both suffer equally from a paucity of songs written for their limited but intensely moving types of voice. Ernestine Schumann-Heink was of Chaliapin's generation, a great contralto whose booming organ-tones still haunt remembering ears.

When you go to hear a solo singer, you had better first

docket the voice according to its type. You will notice at the first note he sings whether he runs to head or chest tone. You will also size up the quality of the voice, whether it is rich, full and sweet, or acid, metallic and unpleasant. Perhaps you have been annoyed by a voice that wobbled and shook, creating a tremolo. You may be pretty sure that something is wrong with a singer's breath control if he persistently maltreats his voice and your ears in this fashion. An exaggerated tremolo, as well as other unpleasant vocal sound effects are due to faulty breathing. The quality and pitch, particularly of sustained notes, suffer when the breath is not properly rationed. The rhythm and phrasing of the song become distorted, unless a breath is taken at exactly the proper moment and with exactly the proper amount of force. Yet a singer must not fall into the opposite error, of drawing breath ostentatiously and audibly. The more natural and unobtrusive his control, the more pronounced his art. There are probably as many breathing "methods" as there are singing teachers, but here, as elsewhere, the natural method is the best. The breath is not alone of paramount importance in maintaining the "line" of a song, but in the "attack." "Attack" is nothing more than the way a singer begins a song or a note. It should be firm, clean and confident and the release of the note no less so. "Scooping" up to a tone, and holding on to it lingeringly before releasing it, blur the outlines and detract from the effect.

The Singer's Alphabet, a Summary in Rhyme, issued by Maria Hutchins Callcott in London in 1849, covers the ground of possible deviation from the strait and narrow path of correct singing, in a fashion which is amusing if not wholly poetical.

“Singers! No teeth, no tongue, no palate-veil
Allow, against *vibration* to prevail.
Of all the double vowels *U* alone
Requires the voice to hold the *second* tone.
To noble Awe and Oh, and charming Ah,
Be loath, ye singers, e’er to bid farewell;
But let no stifled form of *E* or *Err*
Ee’n for one moment in your voices dwell.

You scarce can make the consonant too strong,
Tho’ you may make it very much too long.”

These hints are thrown out as an aid to your appraisal of a performance. Few as they are, they serve to indicate that singing, although a natural manifestation, is likewise a great art. The atomizers and food phobias, the complexes against catching cold, the emotional excitability and temperamental vagaries of professional singers are better appreciated when the delicacy of their instrument, and the handicaps under which they use it are understood. Yet much is to be said for the conclusion reached by the composer Rossini, that a singer, to be a singer, needs but three things, voice, voice and voice.

In appraising the singer, do not lose sight of the song, which has its independent beauty, whatever the fashion in which it is projected. From the audience point of view, the union of words and music which constitutes song is most successfully consummated with benefit of singer. Yet, songs have their intrinsic integrity apart from performance. Words are their staff of life. Excepting in the few instances where a composer elects to dispense with them and

write "vocalises"—songs without words—you may depend upon the words to give the meaning of the song. If they happen to be in a language you understand, you are fortunate, for the music follows them, phrasing as the words are phrased, placing musical accents where the words demand emphasis. Unfortunately, even the best translation cannot exactly reproduce the meaning, poetic quality, rhythmic line and phrasing of the original. Take, for instance, the lovely song written by Tchaikowsky to the poem by Goethe which opens with the lines,

"Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt
Weiss Was ich leide."

The translator has paraphrased this,

"None but the lonely heart,
Knows what I suffer."

As the word "Sehnsucht" is sung in the original, there is a world of "yearning to see" on the prolonged note, a wail of nostalgia, to which the English "lo-o-nely" fails to do justice, while the change in order brings the musical emphasis to an entirely different place than in the original. Yet, to understand the words in a translation is a great deal better than not to understand them at all, and for this reason, translations are distributed with the programs of many song recitals. When they are not, you will find it repays you to look up the songs in advance. I have experimented many times in hearing songs of which I knew the words' significance, and those to which I came totally unprepared, and find there is no comparison in the extent of enjoyment when I actually knew what was going on. A

good singer uses both enunciation and pronunciation to make his diction clear and comprehensible, and you are within your rights in judging a song by its words, its music, and the aptness with which the two are fitted together.

The accompaniment plays no small part in projecting the music and its poetic context. Between the tum-tiddy-um-tum of the simple folk song accompaniment, and the rounded fullness of the sophisticated piano part of a later day, there is a world of difference. In the latter, there is a veritable duet between voice and piano, with the piano now supporting, now answering the voice, following, amplifying, and sustaining it, accentuating its rhythm and phrasing, its dynamic nuances. The accompaniment can make or break song and singer. It provides a harmonic supplement to the melody carried by the voice, while the words act as a rhythmic guide for both. It must be strong enough to give steady, concentrated support, yet so tactfully unobtrusive that never does it steal the limelight—in other words, a perfect chaperon. The more you know of the part played by the accompaniment, the greater will be your respect for the good accompanist. The old belief that any disappointed soloist can become an accompanist has long been displaced by the realization that accompanying is an art in itself, and a difficult one at that.

The accompaniment is less important to folk song or dance, which consist of a series of stanzas with a repeated refrain, usually fitted to a tune already in existence. Whether folk song arises as the product of a single, unknown composer, or as a spontaneous group collaboration, its primary requirement is a good tune. As the stanzas go on and on, sometimes thirty strong, and the same refrain

is dinned between each, it has to be a sturdy tune that will stand so much repetition. It needs to be highly adaptable also, able to reverse its mood if necessary when new words are supplied to it. For example, an English drinking song, *Anacreon in Heaven*, was selected by Francis Scott Key during the War of 1812 as the tune to which he scribbled the words of the *Star Spangled Banner*. In the ecstasy of his relief that after a night-long bombardment, Fort McHenry had not hauled down its flag, an English drinking song was the first tune that came to his mind! Yet, when his patriotic words are sung with all the dignified fervor that patriotic vocal cords can supply, never a thought is given to the jovial mood in which the tune was originally conceived and sung. The same is true of the rough soldiers' marching song, *John Brown's Body Lies A'Mouldering in the Grave*. Under the transforming pen of Julia Ward Howe, it became practically a new song, solid, ringing, magnificent, a *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, beginning "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." Such songs have their place on the music rack of the family piano, children bring them home from school, they are "music in the air." More of your present appreciation of song than you realize rests upon them, buried deep as they are in your musical subconscious.

Appreciation of art song, on the other hand, involves the breaking in of a new pair of musical shoes, though fortunately not a stiff or painful one. Art song is not many leagues removed from folk song, it merely proceeds from a different premise. Where folk song fits the words to the tune, art song reverses the process. The composer starts with words, and writes his music to fit them. If you love

poetry for its own sake, it can only be an enhancement of pleasure to hear it glorified by music. In its simpler moments, art song is hardly less melodious than folk song. It flowered in the expressive Lieder of Schubert, Schumann and their successors. It has no repeated stanzas, no refrain. The music dogs the footsteps of the poetry from start to finish.

Although those indefatigable initiators, Haydn and Mozart, tossed off art songs among their other works, they did not particularly excel in this form, but did better with the operatic aria and recitative. It was not until the rise of Franz Schubert, as fine a lyric genius as ever spun a tune, that art song really came into its own. Schubert wrote songs that were the essence of pure melody, unsurpassed in the balance and coherence of the words with the music, and in their romantic and dramatic outpouring. Like Moses in the wilderness, he had merely to strike a seemingly arid spot with the staff of his inspiration for a stream of refreshing, sparkling melody to gush forth. In the short thirty-one years of his life (1797-1828), he composed more than six hundred songs, many of them doubtless as familiar to you as folk songs, accepted without thought of who was responsible for their irresistible melody. The Schubert *Ständchen* (Serenade), the *Heidenröslein* (Hedge Roses) and *Erlkönig* (Erlking) you probably recognize. *Die Schöne Müllerin* (Beautiful Maid of the Mill) and *Winterreise* (Winter Journey) song-cycles contain many well-known songs. *Der Tod und Das Mädchen* (Death and the Maiden), *Der Lindenbaum* (The Linden-Tree), *Ungeduld* (Impatience) and *Gretchen am Spinn-*

rad (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel) are a mere handful of those regularly found on recital programs.

While the poet Goethe inspired many of Schubert's settings, his successor, Robert Schumann (1810-1856) turned by preference to Heine for inspiration. Schumann evinced more discrimination in the choice of texts than did the prolific Schubert, and wrote one third as many songs. His music is so romantic that it borders on sentimentality, yet it glows with warmth, and occasionally with a flash of humor lacking in Schubert. Schumann's instrument being the piano, he wrought by preference in terms of that instrument, and bestowed such loving care upon the accompaniments that they bade fair to outshine the voice. Whereas in Schubert's songs, voice and piano were equal, in Schumann's the honors are not even. The accompaniments to *Frühlingsnacht* (Spring Night) and *Aufträge* (Messages) are examples of this tendency. Other beautiful Schumann Lieder are *Ich Grolle Nicht* (I Do Not Complain), *Der Nussbaum* (The Nut-Tree), *Die Lotus Blume* (The Lotus Flower), *Die Beiden Grenadiere* (The Two Grenadiers), and *Im Walde* (In the Woods).

Robert Franz (1815-1892) has been called a "polyphonic Schubert," for his songs glorify melody in both voice and piano parts. Strongly influenced by the church, he wrote two hundred and seventy-nine Lieder, remarkable for a tender serenity of spirit. Franz relied for many of his effects upon unusual modulations, rhythmic variation, and the subdued colors of the ancient modes, which he applied to his modern song. A few of the most characteristic are *Im Herbst* (In the Fall), *In Meinem Auge*

(In My Eyes), and *Schlummerlied* (Lullaby). Contemporaneously with Franz, Johannes Brahms, (1833-1897) filled the chinks and crannies between his larger works with songs of solid worth. *Mainacht* (May Night), *Minnelied* (Love Song), *Liebestreu* (Constancy), *Wie Bist Du Meine Königin* (Thou Art My Queen!), *Der Schmied* (The Smith), *Botschaft* (Message), *Sapphische Ode* (Sapphic Ode) are designed for those with a nicely cultivated taste for art song; the *Wiegenlied* (Cradle Song) is sung by children everywhere. Its well-known first lines, "Guten Abend, Gut' Nacht, Mit Nelken Bedacht" (Good evening, good night, With flowers bedight), used as the signature for a popular radio program, have found their way into thousands of homes, paving the way for appreciation of Brahms' more profound vocal writings. A master of form and expression, he applied to song writing all the skill which made his later works conspicuous for their depth of thought and feeling. His accompaniments also touched a high level of attainment. Hugo Wolf (1860-1903) who wrote for no other medium than the voice to any extent, went Brahms one better in the matter of accompaniments. He entitled one volume *Lieder für Stimme und Klavier* (Songs for Voice and Piano) giving the piano equal importance with the voice in the very title. Writing wholly by inspiration, alternating periods of feverish activity with long barren months of despairing search for the poem that would unlock the prison restraining his thought, Wolf was truly the distracted genius of tradition. When the spirit of creation did abide with him, however, the remarkable freedom and originality of his product reached a new high level. So seamlessly did he join music to words

that it appeared the two must have sprung together from his brain. *Gesang Weylas* (Weyla's Song), *Zur Ruh* (To Rest), *Auch Kleine Dinge* (Also Small Things), are individual songs gleaned from various collections, while whole volumes of settings to the verses of Mörike, Eichendorff, Goethe and others, are remarkable for characterization and workmanship. Richard Strauss, whose contribution of over a hundred songs, including the touching *Zueignung* (Devotion) and *Allerseelen* (All Souls' Day), brought the Lied to our own time, never surpassed Wolf at his best.

Song recital programs are still pretty heavily weighted with German Lieder, in preference to those of other countries. Somehow, the Teutonic brand of sentiment expressed in art song awakens an immediate response. It "clicks." But there are others. The Russian Moussorgsky, musical patron saint of peasants and children, has produced plenty of fine songs, *The Flea* being one that hops gaily from program to program, stinging one audience after another to laughter. A long list of other Russians—Glinka, Tchaikowsky, Rubinstein, Gretchaninov, Rachmaninoff, Borodin, Stravinsky, wrote songs, many of them touched with the earthy, direct warmth of their national folk song. The cool lyric note of Edward Grieg sounded in Norway, his *Ich Liebe Dich* being one of Kirsten Flagstad's favorites. The Finnish Sibelius writes song as well as symphony, and the Scandinavians Gade, Svendsen, and Sinding have brought offerings to the international feast.

There are those who lean toward the French, preferring the Gallic lightness of touch, the creation of an entire atmosphere as opposed to an emotional mood, the draughts

of clear cool water in distinction to the often syrupy drink of the "durch-komponiert" German Lieder. The songs of Debussy (1862-1918) are typical. There are two sets, called *Proses Lyriques* (Lyric Prose), and *Fêtes Galantes* (Gay Festivals), impressionist music set to impressionist poetry. *Mandoline* (Mandolin), *Nuit d'Etoiles* (Night of Stars) and *La Chevelure* (The Head of Hair) are among the best loved of the Debussy songs. His contemporary, Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) set with grace and clarity the luscious poems of Verlaine in a series, *La Bonne Chanson* (The Good Song) and another, *Cinq Melodies de Verlaine* (Five Melodies of Verlaine), which his admirers consider superior to any others in the language. Other Frenchmen—Duparc, Ravel and César Franck said their highly effective say in song also. As for the other nations, the Spanish have concentrated on the dance, and the Italians on the opera. Both possess admirable folk songs, but in art song they offer little. Composers all over the world are scribbling songs in such numbers that the simmering down process of a decade or so is necessary before any proper selection can be made from their array. But enough art songs by recognized composers have been mentioned to keep you busy for some time to come.

When you listen not to one voice but to groups of voices, perhaps you will find yourself on more familiar ground than in the realm of art song. Few of us have not sung in a group, willy-nilly, at some time in our lives, even if we have to go back to school days or college glee clubs for our memories. One of my own is concerned with the song *Lead Kindly Light*, sung in unison by the whole of Public School 87, with a refrain that I firmly believed to

be "Lead Thou me-ow," and so sang with all the lung-power at my command. Such school choruses, even with the wrong words, community "sings," church choirs, glee clubs and choruses give opportunities to anyone with a whole-hearted desire and half a voice to participate if he wishes. If not, he can always cheer the participants from the sidelines. The ease with which we can join in, the closeness of singing to everyday life, and the fact that the voice is always at hand, cause many of us to feel more comfortable listening to a large chorus than to its instrumental counterpart, the symphony. The Bach *B Minor Mass*, weaving from human as well as instrumental voice to voice, is followed understandingly by those who ordinarily shun instrumental polyphony.

Particularly those listeners who are familiar with Catholic ritual have the form of the Mass so firmly in mind that they are bothered not at all by its somewhat lengthy six movements. They recognize the Kyrie as "contrite," the Gloria as "jubilant," the Credo "majestic," the Benedictus "rapt," the Sanctus "angelic," and the Agnus Dei "prayerful." These characterizations point the meaning of the traditional Latin words, unvarying no matter who supplies the music. Palestrina (1525-1594) and other writers of his day,—e.g. Thomas Tallis, Orlandus Lassus, and Vittoria,—vied with one another in writing Masses distinguished by the purity and religious feeling which befitted music destined for church use only. Later writers, inoculated with the virus of showmanship which accompanied the development of instrumental music in dramatic performances, produced Masses for performance outside as well as within the church. They made use of orchestral

effects, great massed fugal choruses, soli, duets and quartets. The Bach *B Minor Mass* is a marvel of the interweaving of voices and orchestra, of huge choruses and solemn solos and ensembles. Written for the church, it is also a concert piece as effective in the secular hall as in the religious surroundings for which it was intended. The Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* is another famous concert Mass. Requiem Masses for the dead have nine parts instead of the customary six, three additional movements to honor the departed. Mozart, Cherubini, Verdi and Brahms all wrote magnificent Requiem Masses, performed infrequently with the exception of Brahms' *German Requiem*.

To follow a Mass, knowing the Latin words, or reading them with comprehension as you go, makes both the pattern of the music and its changing moods the clearer. To be able to read the score, pursuing the theme from voice to voice on the printed page, is to have your eye confirm what your ear receives. Yet many of those who have learned to read a score decline to make use of their knowledge at a performance because they find it interferes with the subtler delights of listening with what the Germans call "gespitzte Ohren"—ears both pointed and sharpened. So even if you are not among those who follow the line with your forefinger on the page, you can still enjoy with your mind and ears the music of these great Masses.

Motets, Masses, cantatas and oratorios are sufficiently like one another to be discussed in one breath. The Mass, as described, is a liturgical piece in six movements for mixed voices, glorifying God in the Highest, originally intended for the church only, and there sung without instru-

mental accompaniment, later extended to the concert hall, where instruments were added. The motet, serious if not invariably sacred in character, went direct to the Bible for its texts. But the tune was frequently anything but Biblical, any street tune which happened to fit the words being pressed into service. These street tunes took their place in the church with seeming respectability, until Palestrina's reforms banished them. Through the sixteenth century, they were generally sung "a capella," that is, without accompaniments. But their secular cousins, the madrigals, enticed them with demonstrations of the effectiveness of accompanied song, so that gradually they also permitted themselves that luxury. Motets were sung by groups of men and women at betrothals and weddings, funerals and coronations, and similar events connected with the church but not restricted to it. Madrigal groups of today present these old-world motets, madrigals, catches, glees and rounds, to the delight of their audiences.

Cantatas (literally pieces to be sung) enlarged the scope and field of choral writing. Like the instrumental suite, they consist of a variety of songs, strung together loosely, with instrumental accompaniment. Recitative, chorus, duet, and aria all have their place in the cantata, which was usually composed for a special event such as an official installation, a wedding, or a church festival. J. S. Bach wrote his humorous *Coffee Cantata* for some such occasion. The cantatas you are most likely to hear are the *Passions* of Bach, which are cantatas plus, with the congregation joining in all the choruses. They have been compared with the medieval miracle plays, and truly,

in the two *Passions* which survive the five that Bach presumably produced, the music is a miracle. The tale of the last days and the death of Christ, related by a narrator with antiphonal choruses, soloists, and orchestra has an unutterably touching effect, no matter how often it is heard. *The Passion According to St. Matthew* and *The Passion According to St. John* tell their story with such pity and power and beauty that no composers after Bach attempted to retell that story, although they continued to write cantatas which stand midway between the Mass and the highly complex oratorio.

The oratorio is a massive arrangement of epic grandeur, using soloists, chorus, organ and orchestra. The subjects are of necessity heroic. It may be considered as a dramatic form of church service on the one hand, and a religious type of dramatic performance on the other. It is just a step from the opera—in fact, if the participants put on costumes, and appeared with a background of scenery, you would be hard put to it to define the difference. Saint Saens' *Samson et Dalila* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* have been so produced, almost as effectively as though they had started out to be opera in the first place. George Friedrich Handel, (1685-1759) was the most diligent of oratorio writers. He just happened to like that form of expression. While *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Samson*, *Saul*, (the last-named with the famous *Dead March*), are all well known, the *Messiah* is almost hackneyed. It contains the *Hallelujah Chorus* which caused a phlegmatic English audience to rise from their seats with excitement when it was first performed, establishing a precedent that has endured ever since. The touching contralto solo, *He Shall Feed His*

Flock, and the soprano *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth*, from the *Messiah*, are among the great songs of all time. Haydn trod in Handel's oratorio footsteps with *The Seasons* and *The Creation*, the latter an exceedingly dramatic presentation of the events of the seven days in which God created the world. *The Heavens Are Telling the Glory of God* and the splendid fugal chorus *Achieved is the Glorious Work* are only two of many choruses well within the capacity of average performers. That is more than can be said for the *Finale* of the *Ninth Symphony* of Beethoven, a choral based on Schiller's *Ode to Joy*. There is little joy in the heart of the soprano obliged to sing fortissimo for much of the time in the topmost register of the soprano voice. Although this *Finale* is a stirring and beautifully written portion of the symphony, it might have sounded even better had the composer been more considerate of his singers' throats.

When you attend an oratorio concert, you must be prepared for fixed conventions. The mixed chorus files impressively upon the stage, the men a black and white background for the women in white or pastel-colored evening dresses. When they rise, at a signal from the conductor, the tremendous rustle is like a deep sigh. The massed chorus, the orchestra in front of them, the organ at the side, all appear so elaborate that unaccustomed spirits are apt to droop, wondering what they will have to sit through. The suspense before the first note is intense, and no wonder, for that note tells much about the quality of the performance to follow. The unanimity of the attack, its decisiveness and clarity are the index of the kind of training the chorus has received. Soprano, alto, tenor and

bass must blend harmoniously and unhesitatingly in a magnificent chord, possibly alone, possibly sustained by accompanying chords in organ, orchestra, or both. As the work proceeds, the pitch must be maintained—that is, the voices should not sag to a lower level, as they have a tendency to do in group singing, nor rise above the set pitch, falling into one error in avoiding another. The voices of the soloists soaring alone, now in the recitative which most resembles spoken speech, now in the dramatic aria, now joined together in duets, trios, or quartets, should be well matched and perfectly controlled. The enunciation of the words must be distinct and comprehensible. Most important, they should think and speak consistently with the thought of the composer, should themselves be under the spell of a song before they can hope to project it effectively. The orchestra should hold to its task of support and harmonic enrichment, while the organ should be assertive of its color rights, yet subservient to the voices. A certain amount of rustle preceding such a performance is excusable.

The chasm which yawns between the monosyllabic folk utterance of the carefree childhood of song, and the elaborate oratorio of its maturity, appears at first glance to be unbridgable. Yet the principles of beautiful song and singing are identical on both sides of it. Whether the single voice be multiplied by two or two hundred, and whether the treatment is of one theme or many, is a difference of degree. The cobweb bridge which joins folk song to oratorio may be crossed by anyone with the wit and the will to traverse the intermediate stages of song.

VIII

THE PIANOFORTE

EVERYBODY plays chopsticks. They are the residue, sometimes the only residue, from early piano lessons or childish games. As well as any highbrow piece, they serve to illustrate what goes on inside the great black box of the modern piano when you depress its keys. To know what the mechanism is, at least approximately, and who made it what it is today, is to listen with a keener realization of what that most popular of all instruments has to offer, and what it of necessity withholds.

When you lift the lid of the modern grand piano, you see what looks like a harp lying on its side, and it is even possible that by some process of association the word *harpsichord* flashes through your mind at sight of the stout wire strings of graduated lengths, drawn taut, harp fashion. Harpsichord was the family name of the early precursor of the pianoforte, taken from the picturesque Italian “arpicordo” (strings of a harp). These instruments were much closer to the harp than is our modern piano, for their strings were plucked by little, claw-like quill or leather pieces akin to the fingers of the harpist, and the twanging

sounds thus produced bore little relation to the rich vibrant tones of the piano. They had very little carry-over, and sounded best when the keys were struck lightly, a heavy touch creating more jangle than tone. Yet they created a not unpleasant disturbance of the airwaves while they lasted, and the harpsichord became a sweet and welcome member of the lute and viol groups and other small orchestras that officiated at the song and dance of royalty and commoner up to about the middle of the eighteenth century. In those days, composers played the harpsichord, as today they play the piano. It was the usual thing for a composer to sit at the harpsichord when his piece was performed, occasionally lifting one hand to beat time for the other musicians, while with the other playing chords that held them to his desired rhythm. He frequently omitted to write out the individual parts, and for himself jotted down only a set of figures as symbols for the chords he intended to use in playing the bass part. This was called a "figured bass," in Italian "basso continuo." The players were obliged to improvise on that bass, and he to fill in the gaps when their ingenuity failed. Resourcefulness in rattling off embellishments to cover empty places on the spur of the moment was one measure of a composer's skill, and since it was impossible to produce a sustained note on the harpsichord, those embellishments consisted of runs and trills and rapid figures, which can be found in abundance in the works of the Englishmen Byrd, Purcell and Gibbons, the French Lully, Rameau and Couperin, and the Italian Scarlatti.

The spinet and virginal were early varieties of the harpsichord. The latter, a great favorite of Queen Elizabeth's,

was supposedly so called in deference to the Virgin Queen, but commentators have so far overcome their desire to flatter royalty as to admit the assumption that, since the virginal was a lap instrument used by young maidens to accompany their songs, it may have derived its name from them. The harpsichord is often heard in concerts of old music—heard, that is, when its feeble tinkle is not drowned by the robust voices of the modern instruments of the ensemble. A number of artists have taken the trouble to master the particularly fleet finger technique required for the manipulation of the two or more banks of keys, by means of which a certain limited variation in tone-quality is possible when the stops provided for that purpose are used. Incidentally, chopsticks sound splendid on the harpsichord, with their succession of staccato notes that might well have been written expressly for that instrument.

The harpsichord was popular even with Mozart and Haydn, although by the time they appeared, the piano had been invented and was becoming established. Both men were past masters at the harpsichord and balked somewhat at the necessity for acquiring a brand-new technique of the piano. They had no way of telling if the piano had come to stay, or was merely a flash in the pan. Mozart eventually did become a competent pianist, but the harpsichord was his first love, and to the end he played on it whenever circumstances permitted.

His immediate predecessor, Johann Sebastian Bach, was no less partial to another of the piano's ancestors, the clavichord, first cousin of the harpsichord. It was one hop closer to the piano in that its strings were not plucked,

but struck by little metal hooks called tangents. The tone of the clavichord was like the still small voice of conscience, save that it was much sweeter. It could be heard to advantage only in the most intimate surroundings. Not for its mild note the concert hall. It was possible, by rocking the hand back and forth on the keys in what the French called "balancement," the Germans "Beben," to cause the tone to vibrate, and within a tiny range of intensities it could be made to sound somewhat loudly or softly. It was more responsive, in its quiet way, than the harpsichord. J. S. Bach approved and encouraged a system of tuning it to the "tempered scale," (our diatonic scale) which much improved it in the matter of intonation. Into the forty-eight preludes and fugues of his series, *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*, (The Well-Tempered Clavichord) (or Piano), he poured a wealth of material admirably designed for either instrument. Not only did these pieces sound well on the clavichord for which he presumably intended them, but on the piano, which had been invented during his lifetime.

The new instrument, supposedly invented by the Italian Cristofori in 1711, was baptized forte-piano, or pianoforte, because unlike its ancestors, it could be played both loud and soft, forte and piano. It had been in existence for over sixty years, and had undergone a number of improvements before it was manufactured to any extent. Johann Christian Bach, a son of Johann Sebastian, persuaded the English public of its merits by the simple expedient of playing it for them, and the firm of Broadwood, the oldest piano firm still in existence, started to manufacture the fascinating new instrument there in 1773. Our

own Thomas Jefferson in 1771, in an order to England for household goods for the bride he was bringing to Monticello, wrote astutely: "I must alter one article in the invoice. I wrote therein for a clavichord. I have since seen a Fortepiano, and am charmed with it. Send me this instrument instead of the clavichord: let the case be of fine mahogany, solid, not veneer. The compass from double G to F in alt, and plenty of spare strings; and the workmanship of the whole very handsome and worthy of the acceptance of a lady for whom I intend it."

Jefferson had reason to specify a solid mahogany case. For the early piano suffered a great deal from the expansion and contraction of the wooden cases, and of the sounding boards on which the wires were strung. Strings broke frequently, being made of iron wire which could not stand the high tension required to keep them up to pitch. When they did not break, they stretched, and the piano was out of tune more often than in. Hammers struck the strings to produce the tone, but the damper, the little felt block which not only strikes the string when the key is depressed, but prevents it from sounding by resting upon it when not in action, was the product of a later day. The present complete system of pedals is also a later development.

In the modern piano, the strings are made of the finest steel wire, strong enough to endure terrific tension. They are strung on a frame of metal, and can be kept in tune, given a reasonably even temperature, for several weeks. The simple act of depressing the key of the piano, even for chopsticks, sets in motion a train of incidents leading up to the production of the sound which, like a train of

thought, occurs more quickly than one can tell about it. The depressing of the key, which is visible to the eye, releases a hopper inside the piano. The hopper causes the hammer to fall on the string. At the same time, it lifts the damper from the string. And in addition to all this, it checks the hammer on its rebound from the string. Magical hopper! All of this is required to produce one tone. But after that the tone must be beautified. The sounding board, which lies under the strings, is the good fairy who places resonance and sonority in its cradle at birth. The pedals are a trio of attendant fairies. On the extreme right is the damper (inaccurately called the loud) pedal, which holds up all the dampers as long as it is held down and thereby prolongs the tone, adds to its volume, and brings out its overtones, evoking sympathetic vibrations in other strings. The soft, or shifting pedal, is at the extreme left, and its function is the opposite of the damper pedal. It makes possible the hushed pianissimo, the subdued sound-colors, by which contrast is achieved. The middle, known as the sostenuto pedal, holds up certain dampers, thereby sustaining a tone or chord so that its sound is prolonged while the rest are dampened. Of all the devices which have conspired to give to the piano some of that singing quality which is the soul of music, the pedals do the most obvious service. The seven and a quarter octaves of the modern piano as compared with the four of the ancient, the white ivory keys which distinguish the naturals from the ebony black of the sharps, the many devices for securing easy action and expressive sounds are all refinements. But the pedals are the most miraculous of them all, as you will discover by playing your chopsticks with

pedal effects. The difference in quality and volume will amaze you—it hardly sounds like the same piece when played through with different pedals.

Besides amazing you, it will probably also give you a new interest in listening to piano performances. You may have enjoyed watching the fingers before. Now try watching the feet and listening carefully at the same time. Pedaling constitutes about fifty percent of what is generally called “touch.” Ignace Paderewski, one of the great virtuosos of our day, used to vibrate on the key with his finger in the manner of a violinist, and his admirers averred that due to this he and only he, could make the tone vibrate and sing. But while the audience was breathlessly intent upon his fingers, his feet were pumping busily at the pedals and this, not his digital actions, performed the miracle they so admired. The speed and clarity and certain dynamics of a performance depend on the fingers, but the tone quality, emotional color and interpretative subtlety are mechanically the effect of thoughtful pedaling.

It is not surprising that the piano should be the most popular of the instruments. Wholly self-sufficient in its capacity for expression, it also is highly socialized, blending amiably with another instrument or voice. It is equally at home in the living room and the concert hall, in solo and ensemble. It enables composers to work out their most complicated symphonic ideas on its patient keys. It invites the amateur. Since its notes are ready-made, anyone capable of a little drudgery can learn to play on it, tone-deaf and music-dumb though he be. Its tonal unity and harmonic completeness compensate in part for its one great

limitation, that, in spite of all its gadgets, it cannot achieve the unbroken singing line of a melody as given out by voice, strings, or winds. That limitation must always be taken into account in piano performance. Vladimir Horowitz recently said: "The moment I conclude that the piano is nothing but an instrument of percussion, to be beaten or whacked in order to make rhythm or some hard percussive sound, and not as an instrument on which to sing, and not as an instrument with the unique and divine resource of the pedal—in that moment I shall lock up the instrument, and certainly never again play!" The story of the development of the piano is the fight against the initial handicap of percussion, while the history of piano literature is that of the adaptation of material to the instrument as it improved and developed.

In the early days, as we have seen, the dance suites fed to the harpsichord were delicate morsels, bits of pastry with tracteries of sugared icing. The most satisfying of these tidbits were provided by Domenico Scarlatti (1687-1757), who wrote over six hundred harpsichord pieces, solidly constructed, cleverly manipulated. Not content with chasing his hands up and down the harpsichord in every type of brilliant improvisation, Scarlatti crossed them as well in showy fashion, to strike but a single note, a form of display which became the delight of young pianists. His sonatas and études, like those of Rameau, Lully and Couperin, are usually played on the piano, to which they bear transplantation extremely well if the hand that lifts them is light. J. S. Bach's magnificent *English* and *French Suites*, the *Italian Concerto*, and the various *Partitas* are today an accepted part of the pianist's reper-

toire. So too are the sonatas of Haydn and Mozart, many of them designed for the harpsichord. They must be heard with their original purpose in mind before you can wholly accept the polyphonic coloratura which constitutes a large part of their charm.

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) did as much as any one man could to supplant the harpsichord with the piano. Besides teaching a strong, virile technique which accorded admirably with the latter, he wrote many sonatas and studies to develop the fingers, and prepared executants to cope with the difficulties of the compositions of Beethoven. For that great genius was the first composer to take the difference between piano and harpsichord seriously enough to adapt his writings specifically to the piano. You will notice the difference in texture between a Mozart and a Beethoven piano sonata—the rich harmonic foundation, the dependence upon a succession of chords in place of a series of frolicsome sequences, the solid melodic line, and above all, the immense expressiveness of Beethoven. He knew full well the resources of the piano, for he was an accomplished performer, who found in it the first complete single instrument capable of translating his epic utterances. To a few of his thirty-two sonatas he attached names, such as the *Appassionata*, the *Pathétique*, and the *Lebewohl* (Farewell). The *Moonlight* was so christened by sentimental friends, not by Beethoven himself. The names are not needed to bring you his message, for these sonatas are among the most expressive pieces of piano literature. His five titanic piano concertos, played by every virtuoso worthy of the name, have, in addition to a rich and glowing piano part, a no less lambent accompaniment

by the orchestra, and plentiful cadenzas (unaccompanied sections for the solo instrument), some of which he himself composed.

If you are to listen to piano recitals with pleasure, you will want to differentiate between the styles of writing of the greatest composers of piano music. Just as the leg-of-mutton sleeves and high collars of the nineties contrast with the hoop skirts and la-de-dahs of the Victorian years, and those with the streamline tailoring of the twentieth century, so do the classic, the romantic, the impressionist, the ultra-modern and neo-classic succeed each other with definite differences in presentation. There is overlapping, of course. A composer of the romantic school writes classical pieces, and vice versa, but piano literature is so voluminous that even an arbitrary classification is better than none.

Haydn and Mozart, and other early exponents of the harpsichord, are of the classical school, which in modern language might be described as the school of extroverts. With them, music came first, the expression in it of their own personal emotions later. Their piano pieces contain plenty of melody, written with charm and grace, with meticulous contrapuntal care on the one hand and clean, somewhat restricted harmonic intention on the other. Beethoven, the bridge between the classic and romantic, might be called a classic-romantic. His early sonatas and other piano pieces have much of the extrovert quality of Haydn and Mozart. In the later sonatas and in the concertos, there is a distinct change; he expresses subjective emotions. As his inner life became more intense, its translation into music was inevitable. You will be helped to some de-

gree in placing the Beethoven works you hear by noticing the Opus number, marked by the abbreviation Op. next to the name of the work to be played. Opus means work. Editors have labeled works, when their composer has not already done so, according to their date of publication, which in some instances approximates the date of composition. They also have grouped pieces published or composed within a certain period, or logically belonging together for some reason, as numbered items under one Opus number, e.g. Opus 9, Number 1, 2, and 3. Opus 1 No. 1 marks a composer's earliest known *publication*, which is obviously not necessarily his first *composition*. In Beethoven's case particularly, the numbering of his enormous output is not chronologically descriptive of his working life, and there are instances of early works published late in his career and numbered in the higher brackets, which must be taken into account. Nevertheless, it is worth while to take heed of the Opus numbers of his works, as a probable indication of whether a piece was written in his early, middle, or late period.

The most admirable editing of this sort was done for Mozart by a German, Doctor Köchel, upon whose careful listing of Mozart's works is based the complete edition published by Breitkopf and Härtel. The letter K printed before a Mozart Opus number, which you may notice on your printed concert programs, indicates that it is the number given in the Köchel edition.*

Beethoven's contemporaries, Schubert, who was called the "little Beethoven" and Weber, were, like himself, classic-romantic in feeling, with the stress on the romantic.

* Dr. Alfred Einstein, the eminent musicologist, has made a new edition of Mozart's complete works.

In Weber's *Concertstück* (Concert Piece) and *Invitation to the Dance* there is an old-fashioned reserve which you are quick to sense behind the gay but formal phrases which cloak the emotions. Schubert wrote a number of long sonatas and two big fantasies for the piano. His smaller pieces, the *Marche Militaire* (Military March) in D, *Moments Musicaux* (Musical Moments), *Impromptus* and *Waltzes* have the melodious charm of his songs, and this makes them very enjoyable. But they contain not so much of that personal emotion which places the songs in the unmistakably romantic category. Even in the ambitious piano sonatas, which represent a more serious effort, he was more detached than in writing for the voice. His *Wanderer Fantasy* is probably the most romantic of his piano works.

Robert Schumann was the first pronouncedly romantic composer for the piano. When he felt emotional, he fell onto the piano stool as readily as others fall on a friend's shoulder. While courting Clara Wieck, he wrote love letters in the form of burning piano pieces. Fortunately, she understood his language so well that not a syllable was wasted on her. Three of his greatest piano works—The *Davidsbündlertänze* (Dances of the Davidsbündler), the *Kreisleriana* (Sketches of a Group), and the *Noveletten* were written under the stress of the changing moods incidental to the difficulties of his wooing. The tender *Kinderszenen* (Scenes of Childhood), which contains the well known *Träumerei* (Dreaming); the *Fantasiestücke* (Fantasy) with its questioning *Warum* (Why) and the *Albumblätter* (Leaves from an Album) all had their origin in his inner life. *Carnaval* (Carnival) and *Faschingsschwank* (Carnival Merriment), described in musical pictures the

merriment of carnivals, yet, pictorial as they were, they also conveyed the emotions attendant upon the scenes depicted. Schumann was steeped in German poetry, and many of his piano works can be paradoxically described as the songs without words of those poets. He wrote, in 1839, "I used to rack my brains for a long time . . . but now I scarcely ever scratch out a note. It all comes from within." The warm tide of his feeling surged especially into his piano compositions. The instrument had by that time been perfected, and to his wife, Clara, one of the greatest pianists of all time, he could entrust their interpretation. His genius thus had a freedom of expression of which he availed himself to the fullest.

Schumann was one piano giant of this group, Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) was another, who indisputably stands on a peak of considerable altitude, master of the language of the piano in its uttermost refinements. His feeling toward his chosen instrument was all understanding solicitude. He studied its moods and capacities, its foibles and failings, as a mother studies her child. Thus he transcended many of its limitations by catering to them. Chopin saw music for the piano as a picture ablaze with color, a poem of exquisite subtlety, a design of lacy intricacy and delicacy. At the intimate soirées where he played for a few chosen friends in his living room lit only with candles and the flickering firelight, his music sang out in the fullness of its sincerity. An ardent patriot, he translated to the piano keys the political struggles of his country, Poland, as well as his personal struggles. His *Revolutionary Étude* is a masterpiece of polemics in music. The names of his pieces do not matter. They are called études

and preludes, mazurkas, polonaises, ballades, scherzi, nocturnes, valse, etc., and are known by their key signature, as Valse in A flat, Polonaise in F sharp, et cetera. He has been described as "a great master of style, a fascinating melodist, as well as a most original manipulator of puissant rhythm and harmony." He found new ways of brightening old dance forms, he found new forms and presented them in an original way. His pieces, romantic, sentimental and heroic, are intimate in their feeling, poetic in their refinement, thunderous in their proclamation.

At the opposite extreme from Chopin is the Hungarian, Franz Liszt. Like Chopin, Liszt was conspicuously brilliant as a virtuoso, but there was little resemblance between them as composers. What in the music of Chopin was delicate, subtle and suggestive, in Liszt became a thundering bravura, a show of crackling pyrotechnics illuminated by strongly personal feeling. The lyrical *Liebesträume* (Dream of Love) and *Waldesrauschen* (Rustling Woods) overitalicize the emotional side. The *Campanella* (The Bell), an old war-horse of recitalists, has brilliant, assertive passages in octaves all over the piano, a technical *tour de force* expended on rather ordinary thematic material. The *Rhapsodies Hongroises* (Hungarian Rhapsodies), elaborate settings of his national folk-dances, are melodious, spirited, colorful, and noisy. As virtuoso and teacher he did more for the piano than as composer. His fantastic keyboard facility has become legendary, and the difficult pieces he wrote in order to demonstrate it are renowned largely because of their technical brilliancy.

A post-Romantic whose feelings were held sternly in check by his intelligence was Johannes Brahms (1833-

1897). He wrote rhapsodies, intermezzi, capriccios, ballades, waltzes, and romances for the piano, as Chopin did. But they are imbued with a depth of feeling, and an intellectual maturity, that are as much a part of Brahms as are charm, refinement and delicacy of Chopin. He wrote three magnificent sonatas, and three great sets of variations, one on a theme by Handel, one on a theme by Paganini, and one, for two pianos, on a theme of Haydn. It is impossible, in a small space, to give him due credit for the varied rhythmic devices, the thickened and enriched harmonies, the polyphonic resourcefulness and the largeness of his utterance. He adhered to the rules and the spirit of classical form, but did not permit his inspiration to be "cabin'd, cribbed and confined" thereby.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918), whose first important compositions appeared in France when Brahms was ending his career in Austria, presented an entirely new approach to the piano. He used the instrument to create a shimmering cobweb of sound, a cobweb heavy with the morning dew, iridescent in the rising sun. It was spun of the delicate threads of impressions, and came thus by its name of impressionist music. Debussy was the discoverer and arch-composer of music which was expressive not of the intellect, not of the emotions, but of the impressions, highly subjective, heard as through a veil, vague, and blurred in outline as impressions are apt to be. In conveying impressionism to the piano, Debussy utilized methods of his own. When he himself played, he "wooed the piano with a caressing, frequently a glancing touch," as though he feared to frighten away his creation by too rude an attack. He used a whole tone scale as the basis for his har-

monies, varying them with chromatic sequences strange but pleasing to the ears of the twentieth century. To emphasize the absence of a fixed tonality, he changed the tonality frequently in the course of a piece, producing a translucent, almost transparent background, like a water screen, a maze of blended patterns. His piano pieces, fluid in line, exert the fascination of the partly known, partly guessed. His twenty-four inspired *Preludes*, two sets of *Images* and his suite, the *Children's Corner*, with its delightful *Golliwog's Cakewalk* appear most frequently on programs, but he wrote many other works for the piano, for he regarded this instrument as an ideal medium for the music of impressionism.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) in *Jeux d'Eau* (The Play of Waters), *Miroirs* (Mirrors), the *Pavane pour une Infante Défunte* (Pavane for a Dead Infanta), the *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* (Noble and Sentimental Waltzes), and *Gaspard de la Nuit* (Gaspard of the Night) produced pieces of admirable subtlety, also in the impressionist manner. Scriabin the Russian found in the shimmering, shifting harmonies of Debussy the perfect medium for expressing the mystical philosophy which was the root of his being. But on the whole, few composers have been as successful as Debussy in capturing the very moment when there smote upon the consciousness gardens glistening in the rain, clouds, fireworks, a sunken cathedral with mysteriously tolling bell, a festival, or what not.

The transparent veil woven by the impressionists was rudely rent by the World War, which brought men, and musicians, face to face with a grim reality from which there was no escape into beautiful but fragile impressions.

Discord was in the world, and discord touched the world of the piano. A new school of composers came into being, and found in the piano an instrument ready-made to reproduce the most Philistine works. Either they wrote harmonies in a number of tonalities all at once, and called their works polytonal, or they acknowledged no tonality at all, and called their works atonal. Rhythm was the anchor that kept their pieces from drifting into utter confusion. The "Six" in France—Milhaud, Durey, Honegger, Auric, Poulenc and Tailleferre, created in France a vogue which spread to other countries, for works which, in their disregard of rules of harmony and form, seemed to express the psychology of a world temporarily deranged. Schoenberg's piano works, based on a twelve tone scale, are percussive rather than persuasive. Highly complicated, they require a tremendous amount of study to make them moderately comprehensible, and even after long study, they show no trace of classic harmony or symmetry. The linear counterpoint of Hindemith, the experiments in classic, romantic, and atonal writing of Prokofieff, may be evidences of a transition period. Already the pendulum is swinging back to the neo-classic, or new-classic composers who turn for relief to the safety and sanity of the fathers of music. Many of today's pieces are mechanistic, like the age in which they are written, and give little emotional satisfaction in comparison with those of the past. Others, like Rachmaninoff's, hark back to the days when a melody was a melody, and music an emotional safety valve.

You will find some of these composers on the program of any piano recital you attend. You will hear their concertos at symphony concerts. Others, too, will be repre-

sented, unknown to you, and not mentioned here, since this is not a complete catalogue of works for the piano. This need not confuse you. Hold fast to your knowledge that groups in each stage of growth had a style of their own, the result partly of the development of the piano as an instrument, partly of the point in the world's history in which the composers were living. When you have established to your satisfaction what manner of piece you are to hear, you may settle back to an appraisal of the performance.

As you listen, ask yourself a few questions. Does the pianist appear to enter fully into the spirit of the composer as you understand it? Does he play Mozart one way, Beethoven another, Brahms still differently? Does he *invite* his instrument to give forth, or does he bully it into so doing? Is the tone resonant and sonorous or hard and percussive? In this respect, the piano is one of the most abused of instruments. Is the rhythm steady, the melodic line as continuous as the piano permits? Is there a variety of color in the interpretation, with nuances of loud and soft, or is it monotonous and neutral? Are the pianist's fingers fleet, his passages clear and sure? Is his pedaling interesting, or does there seem too much of one, too little of another pedal? Does the architecture of the piece stand out clearly, thanks to due emphasis on its sections, intelligent phrasing, carefully worked up climaxes? Do the right and left hands work with or against each other? And so on. The more you hear, the more you will want to hear, if you listen questioningly. There is much more to be said after a performance, than this, overheard in a lobby: "Well, he didn't play good, but he played awful loud."

IX

THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ALL ITS PARTS

WHEN Alice in Wonderland found herself in the midst of a caucus of dodos, flamingos, and other odd animals all talking at once, and put her hands over her ears in an attempt to shut out the noise, she acted as the novice at a symphony concert would like to act. The conglomeration of sounds made by all those strange-looking instruments is unintelligible, not to say terrifying, so that he, like Alice, is tempted to cover his ears and implore them to speak one at a time. However, as they cannot accede to a request of which they are not even aware, his next best plan is to try to listen to one voice at a time until he has become acquainted with the individual sound of each, shutting out the others as well as he can for the time being. There is comfort in the fact that, numerous as the members of the modern orchestra are, from eighty to a hundred, they are not playing as many different kinds of instruments.

The first thing the novice should fix in his mind is the fact that the many instruments he sees actually fall into but four groups or choirs, set apart from each other by differences in the material of which they are made, the method of producing sound from them, and the quality of the sound resulting from these differences. They are known as the string, woodwind, brass and percussion choirs. Each of them is a family, and like other families, subject to differing voices within itself. In fact, four is a number to conjure with in the symphony orchestra, for at least three of the four choirs sing within themselves, in four-part harmony, the equivalent of soprano, alto, tenor and bass.

The string choir, the prima donna, is large, as befits a prima donna. In bulk, it constitutes sixty percent of the entire orchestra. The violins sing soprano, the violas alto, the cellos tenor or baritone, and the double bass, bass, all together forming so complete and satisfying a whole that many delightful pieces are written for string orchestra alone. The glory of a great orchestra is in its string section. When the human voice is not being likened to the sonorous beauty of a violin, the violin is being compared with the voice. The close contact between instrument and performer in both cases make voice and violin practically one with the artist. The violin, tucked under his chin, vibrates not only as the strings are stopped by his fingers, but as he reacts emotionally to the music. It is one of the most expressive of instruments, its pulsations those of the human soul and body. The fingers of the left hand must be swift, strong and dexterous, since their warm, firm pressure on the strings actually sets the pitch of the tones

that sing when the bow is drawn. The fingers are said to "stop" the strings, and when two or more strings at once are stopped the resultant chord is a "double-stop." The right hand, which holds the bow, achieves the combination of pressure and relaxation, of flexibility and weight, necessary to produce the shades and qualities of tone desired. The bow is to the violinist as the breath of the singer to his song, all-important in securing quality, continuity, clean attack and color. Different bowings are used to produce different effects. When the bow is laid fairly flat, near the bridge, the tone is at its loudest; when applied on its side, so that but a few hairs come in contact with the strings, away from the bridge, it becomes a mere whisper. Sometimes the bow is permitted to jump rapidly, touching the string only long enough to produce a quick, short note, a "spiccato," much used in light, dainty passages. When the notes are connected so they merge smoothly without a break, the effect is "legato," or joined together. Legato notes are joined on a single bow whenever practicable. If the passage is so long that several bows are required, the change is made as smoothly as possible. The right wrist is so relaxed that no break is perceptible when down-bow (from nut to head) is changed to up-bow and back again. A smooth legato is a minimum essential of melody, an indispensable element in the unbroken line that is its very essence. Short, disconnected notes, sharply accented, are called "staccato"; quick repeated notes with a shivery effect a "tremolo." A device encountered sometimes in orchestral playing is called "col legno", (playing not with the horsehair but with the wood of the bow bouncing on the strings), found in passages where a sense of mystery

is to be created. Again, the bow may be idle, while the fingers pluck the strings in a "pizzicato," used a great deal for rhythmic accompaniment, and occasionally in melodic passages. When the violinist places his fingers on the slender strings of the instrument, he applies a rocking pressure, a "vibrato," which enormously enhances the quality of the tone, causing it to pulse and throb exactly as the voice does. When, however, he lays a finger lightly either on the open string, or on the string already stopped, a cool pure tone called a "harmonic" or flageolet is produced, which compares with the ordinary vibrato tone as a choirboy's high treble with an opera singer's round maturity. One more effect that must be mentioned is obtained by the "sordino" or mute, the soft pedal of the strings. When you see the string players reach into a vest pocket and abstract therefrom a small metal or wooden piece which they fit upon the bridge of the instrument, you may expect an immediate change in tone quality. This gadget, by keeping the bridge from vibrating freely, causes the tone to become soft and muffled.

You are likely to encounter these terms in your program notes, or to hear them mentioned. They describe effects in common use not on the violin alone, but on the other instruments of the string choir. The concert master, who is the leader of the first violin section, drills the men under him and sets the pace, indicates bowings, fingerings, and methods of securing the effects indicated by the conductor, while the second violins also have their leader. All the choirs may be split up or "divisi" into smaller groups within the group.

The viola, several inches longer and wider than the

violin, is permitted to cuddle under the player's chin despite its size. It gives forth a somewhat nasal, deep-bodied tone, thanks partly to its ample body, partly to the fact that its four strings are tuned an interval of a fifth lower than those of its first cousin. The violin is tuned at G for the lowest, D, A, and E, whereas the viola starts on low C, and goes on to G, D, and A. Both were known in the babyhood of instruments as "viola da braccia," arm-fiddles, while the cello claims the thin-toned viola da gamba, or leg fiddle, as ancestor and like it is held between the knees. The cello is tuned like the viola, that is C, G, D, and A one octave lower. The bass viol, or double bass, the deep-voiced grandfather of the strings, looks like a monstrous cello, and booms like one too, but it is much too large to hold between the knees. The man who plays it must add to his height by climbing on a stool in order to reach the finger board with his left hand and the strings with the bow in his right. It is tuned like a violin in reverse, E, A, D, and G, with E as the lowest, and that is *very* low, being four octaves below the violin E. While they are all only too happy to sing out a melody when the music permits them to do so, that privilege falls most consistently to the violins, with violas and celli next. No melody is assigned, except in rare cases, to the double basses. Perhaps that is why the men who play them, perched on high stools the better to get at their clumsy instruments, look so sad. They saw earnestly away at a rhythmic accompaniment, or pluck their strings in a booming pizzicato, or even play passages, with grim concentration on the pulse which is their special province. Nevertheless, the bass viol can be played as a solo instrument, as

witness bass viol recitals played by Serge Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The harp that once through Tara's halls is an honorary member of the string group, plucked instead of played with a bow. The only one of the plucked instruments that has any claim to richness or fulness of tone, the harp is likewise the only plucked instrument included in the orchestra. Its series of stretched strings differ in pitch as they do in length, and each is capable of sounding only one note. A great many strings are required because new notes are not created as on the bowed instruments by "stopping," but by plucking the string of the required pitch. The harp is like the piano in this respect and is sometimes included in the percussion group. "Arpeggio," that is, the playing of the notes of a chord in rapid succession instead of simultaneously, much used in piano and other instrumental accompaniments, originated with the harp, and means "harp-like." "Glissando," or the sweeping of a whole series of strings in rapid succession, is another beautiful harp effect, which makes you think of plashing fountains, moonlight and romance.

If the strings are the backbone of the orchestra, the woodwinds are no inconsiderable part of its remaining skeletal structure. They boast of a triple soprano section, with the flute and piccolo as coloraturas, the oboe doing the lyric honors, and the clarinet the dramatic. The bass clarinet often sings alto, so does the English horn, with the help of some of the other low-pitched variants of the soprano group. The bassoon may be a baritone or a bass, and the contra-bassoon is definitely in the lowest register. The woodwinds are on the whole gentle souls, more ethe-

real than earthly. In comparison with the strings, theirs is a neutral beauty.

The flute, on which lovers in savage tribes breathe forth the tender passion, does not make its primary appeal in the orchestra as a vehicle for seduction except in such rare instances as Debussy's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* (The Afternoon of a Faun), where it woos the nymphs in accents to disarm the most virtuous. Yet it is expressive in its own remote fashion. Having few overtones and not much vibrato, its tone is one of unusual purity, the differences in color in the upper, middle and lower registers giving it nuance. It is used at times to proclaim a plaintive melody, again it hides unobtrusively among its playmates as one voice in the harmony. Most often, it and the impish piccolo, higher in pitch, are found doing difficult gymnastics with the utmost agility. They are the finest acrobats in the orchestra, specialists in speedy passages, runs, and ornaments. The modern flute, made of metal though still termed a woodwind, has a range of three octaves, with the supplementary piccolo to take care of the highest soprano notes. It is played horizontally, the player changing the pitch by pressing various keys, while he breathes into the opening to set up in the horizontal column vibrations which produce one of the sweetest tones in the orchestra.

The oboe, the lyric soprano of the woodwinds, is blown vertically. A double reed made of two thin lips of cane held in the player's mouth is the sound producer, while the air column inside the pipe reinforces the reed vibrations by synchronized vibrations of its own. The player looks as though he were "sucking cider through a straw." The instrument was known to the French as *haut bois*, to the

English as hautboy or high wood, and its tone is characterized in the lines

“And then the hautboy played and smiled,
And sang like any large-eyed child,
Cool hearted and all undefiled.”

The mellow, reedy song of the oboe is so distinctive that it stands out whenever sounded. Only two are required to make all the oboe noises generally needed in the orchestra, noises usually limited to short melodies sung charmingly and with dignity. Not for the oboe the agile leaps and somersaults of flute and piccolo. The dignified lyrical measures usually assigned to it create a mood of pastoral innocence and repose not in any way akin to the insanity which is supposedly in store for all oboe players—or so at least runs the superstition. Possibly you recall the oboe solo in the exquisite *Andante* which introduces the Scene of the Departed Spirits in Gluck's opera, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, one of the most touching passages in all music, or the sobbing oboe passages in the deeply moving moments of Bach's *Passion According to St. John*. When the strings of the orchestra tune they take the A from the oboe, since that pitch is stationary. It is easy to tighten and loosen the strings of the others to accord with it.

The English horn, pitched a fifth lower than the oboe, produces a tone even mellow and reedier through its double reed. It is especially effective in music of a reflective or melancholy order. According to Forsyth's *Orchestration*, “In expressing ideas of sorrow and regret, the instrument seems to have more personality than almost any other in the orchestra.” This alto oboe may have been

christened "English horn" in the same way as the violin belonging to a famous virtuoso became a Stradivarius. The rumor was circulated that he had bought a Stradivarius fiddle for \$50,000. After the story had gone the rounds, he was asked for the details. "It wasn't a violin, it was a viola," he admonished. "Its price was five thousand dollars, not fifty. I didn't buy it, I sold it. And it wasn't a Stradivarius, it was an Amati." The English horn is neither English, nor is it a horn, and there are various theories as to whence it derives its name. Some say from the hornpipe, an early ancestor of indeterminate geography, others that in its youth it was called cor Anglais or English horn to distinguish it from the cor, or French horn.

The clarinet, whose sometimes shrill dramatic soprano is familiar in symphony and swing, is blown with a single, not a double reed, and has a complicated system of keys. Soprano and alto clarinets, tuned differently, permit of a wide range. This instrument possesses extraordinary flexibility in fast passages, and great variety in color. When allowed to work its will on a melody previously presented by the flute, it demonstrates to perfection the difference between the two instruments. The pallor of the flute is suffused with the healthy flush of the clarinet, while neutral, sexless purity gives way to an abounding vitality. There is nothing over-refined or precious about the clarinet. It is a warm and welcoming instrument, wherever encountered.

The clarinet can be humorous too, although as a rule that function is relegated to the bassoon, a big black pipe doubled back on itself, dotted with silver stops like the coat of a dragoon. Its abysmally deep voice and talent for

staccato notes have given it first place as the clown; when you hear a deep throaty instrumental chuckle, you are safe in ascribing it to the bassoon. It is not, however, exclusively restricted to a humorous function, for it fills up the harmony, helps out the melody, furnishes an accompaniment and supplies a bass, as the left hand of the pianist does. The contra-bassoon, larger and deeper, like the bass viol, descends to those depths of sound whence there is apparently no returning.

The saxophone which occasionally doubles for the clarinet in a band supplements it in the symphony orchestra. Made of brass instead of wood, but played with a single reed like the clarinet, the saxophone has a fascinating blend of reed and brass tone which gives it a strange appeal. Invented by Adolphe Sax in 1840, in Belgium, it became inordinately popular in military and dance bands in America, although nothing was farther than jazz from its inventor's mind. It can "moan, laugh, cackle, titter, squeal and grunt." In its lower register, it sounds like a cello, and has on occasion pinch-hit for that instrument. There are at least five differently pitched saxophones in general use, comparatively easy for an amateur to play, although presenting as many difficulties as any other instrument to truly artistic performance. An eloquent if informal bit of brass, it has come to be highly esteemed for many purposes, and like the clarinet accepted as a legitimate member of the symphony orchestra. A solo rhapsody for saxophone and orchestra by Debussy and a chamber concertino by Jacques Ibert, played by Sigurd Rascher at a New York Philharmonic concert in 1939, attested the expressiveness of this instrument in the hands of a master.

So much for the gentle woodwinds. The brass choir is not so ingratiating a group, partly because of the innate quality of the metal, which sometimes smites the eardrums as Joshua's trumpet the walls of Jericho, in a fashion that threatens to bring them tumbling down. The horn, trumpet, trombone and tuba, the four parts of the brass choir, interpose no reed between the player's lips and the instruments, but make use of those lips (the position of which is called the *embouchure*), to aid the stops in altering the pitch. The horns are the least strident of the lot, in fact, they can produce comparatively velvety tones, particularly when muted. They suggest the woodland, and hunting calls, and romantic assignations, joyous, loving, portentous, or mournful. They have tubing wound artistically about, like a large intestine, within the circumference of the encircling brass pipe, an expedient adopted when the hunting horn which was the ancestor of the modern French horn became so unwieldy at its full straight length as to be impossible to hold. The horns carry most of the romantic and dramatic solos given to the brass choir.

The trumpet, long associated with military parades, is dazzlingly effective as a solo instrument in the orchestra, although its restricted gamut and very pronounced tone quality limit its usefulness. It comes out strong in climaxes, in simple dignified proclamation, in music of pomp and circumstance. When it was young, that is, in the early days of the orchestra, it was used interchangeably with the horns, but as it grew to manhood its voice changed, and a complicated system of valves, gradually introduced, made it more flexible, and equipped it to play faster, more exacting passages.

The Jekyll and Hyde of the brass choir is the slide trombone. While the lips of the player govern the pitch to a certain extent, producing the whole tones, the slide on the instrument creates the half tones, or semitones, which fill the gaps between. Thanks to this smooth slide, the trombone can smear and slur, running up and down consecutive notes in a harp-like glissando which fits as well in the jazz band as in the symphony orchestra. That is the Hyde of it. On the other hand, Berlioz, master of orchestration, considered it an "epic" instrument, "with all the deep and powerful accents of high musical poetry, from religious accents calm and imposing, to the wild clamors of the orgy." It supplements in great moments in the symphony orchestra the "hot licks" it utters in the jazz band. The tuba, the big brass monster slung over the shoulder, is the rumbling bass of the brass choir, brutal, powerful, inexorable.

There remain only the percussion instruments, those which when beaten respond with a boom, crash or tinkle. The large double drums to the right rear of the orchestra, which look like brass cauldrons with a sheepskin stretched over the top, are the kettledrums or tympani. As anxiously as any white-capped chef hovering over the brew in his kettles, the tympanist presides over them. He tightens or loosens the head by means of valves at the sides, according as the pitch is to be raised or lowered. With two sticks, fitted at the ends with great balls of leather, hard or soft as required for volume, he now beats thunderous rhythms, now subsides into a murmuring, but always rhythmic accompaniment. No sinecure this, although it looks easy. It calls for impeccable rhythmic sense, absolute pitch and

a manual dexterity and power of concentration sufficient to permit him to tune in the midst of all the noise. The *tympani* are the center of the array of percussion instruments known as the battery. Other drums are needed too. The symphony orchestra apes the savage in that it employs different big and little ones for big and little effects, the bass-drum and the side or snare-drum being most common. Unlike the *tympani* they are indefinite in pitch, and are used for rhythmic emphasis, for military rolls and tattoos, etc. The snare-drum has catgut strings called snares stretched underneath its skin head to catch vibrations, causing them to sound dry and rapid and somewhat harsh. The bass drum rumbles a deep, dignified boom-boom. Jazz bands use a trap drum, familiarly known as the traps, which permits the player to beat the bass drum and the cymbals at the same time by working a pedal with his foot, leaving his hands free to tickle the snare-drum. This practical one-man battery is not found in the symphony orchestra, however; its usefulness is limited to the band. Drums, cymbals, bells, triangle and tambourine, introduced for special effects, are not considered indispensable, but are present when the music calls for them. The *tympani*, deep and vibrant, are most eloquent in conveying suspense or anxiety, explosive joy or sorrow. Drums and clashing cymbals often go together in the depiction of a battle scene. Tambourine and triangle connote festivity, gypsy dances, Spanish gardens, fountains and moonlight.

Extras, as in the movies, are brought in to increase the numbers of the orchestra from time to time, and are fitted into whichever choir they seem to belong with. The

proportion is about sixty percent strings (of which the violins alone constitute forty percent), thirty percent woodwinds and brasses (fifteen percent of each) and six percent percussion, with a few percent leeway to be taken up by one choir or another as needed.

A resident extra in many symphony halls is the pipe organ, most at home in the church, but frequently mustered into the ranks of the orchestra. The pipe organ is a magnified, electrified, and mechanized version of the pipes of Pan, which you recall as a set of reeds of different lengths upon which the god breathed his love for this or that nymph. Pipes of varying length and pitch parallel Pan's reeds in the organ. But there are many more of them, arranged in sets according to tone quality, and blown not by lung power, but mechanically. When an organist depresses a key of a modern instrument, he sends through the pipes an electrically controlled rush of air which causes them to sound. Fifty or sixty may sound simultaneously, uttering the same note in different timbres. He has under his fingers from one to seven keyboards, called manuals, used for loud, soft, swelling, diminishing, solo, accompaniment, sustained bass, etc., and supplemented by pedals worked with the feet which also control the swell of tone and the combinations of keys or stops. No wonder that the organ tone not only is a spectrum of all tone colors of the orchestral instruments, but has a larger diapason or range than any, a range extending from two octaves below their normal lowest to a pitch considerably above their highest. The voice of the organ booms over the most clamorous orchestra, richly enveloping its song in a smooth, seamless blanket of sound. Modern sci-

ence has also produced small organs, portable electronic instruments like the Everett Orgatron, the Hammond Organ, the Ranger-Tone, and others, which are frequently substituted in symphony halls that contain no built-in organs.

The conductor, the general at whose command the army of instrumentalists springs to attention, does his best work at the rehearsals which precede the concert. By the time you have the opportunity to admire his eloquent back, graceful gestures, and the facial expression by which he communicates his wishes to his men, careful and frequent drilling has educated them in the meaning of his every motion. With the baton in his right hand, he beats the time, strictly and intelligibly, the first beat in every measure down, the last up regardless of what occurs in between. Tempo and stress, attacks, holds and releases of notes are the business of this hand. His left hand knoweth what his right hand doeth, and works along with it in congenial partnership, indicating nuances, phrasings, and tone-quality, cueing in the men, moulding the piece to his heart's desire. He should know his score practically by heart, have a working knowledge of every instrument of the orchestra, an ear so keen that he not only detects any deviation in pitch or quality but knows whence it proceeds, a knowledge of music which is broad enough to select varied and interesting programs, a judgment of men which enables him to select his players wisely—for his is the right to hire and fire—enough personality to dominate his orchestra, and enough magnetism to hold both them and his audience. A large order! No wonder that people say "I heard Toscanini last night, or Koussevitzky, or

Stokowski," as though the conductor, and not the men playing under him were wholly responsible. As a virtuoso performing on the most complex of instruments, and as a guide to your listening, he is worthy of your close attention, so long as he does not threaten to monopolize your interest at the expense of the music.

The music will become less of a puzzle to you when you have made friends with the four choirs and their director. It will take time. If you watch as well as listen, having first studied pictures of the various instruments, your doubts as to whether that reedy note comes from oboe, English horn, or bassoon, will the sooner be resolved. You will not be too much disturbed to find the choirs "divisi" or divided for the enrichment of harmonies and multiplication of effects. You will accept with equanimity the presence of differently pitched oboes, clarinets, and horns, added to increase the range of the limited woodwind and brass choirs. And you will recognize as visitors those instruments which make short guest appearances with the orchestra.

The keener your perception of the differing tone-qualities and their connotations, the more assured will be your appreciation of the rapid game of catch-as-catch-can which instruments play with material provided by the composer. If you have taken to heart the hints on form in a previous chapter, you have no doubt as to the desirability of picking out the main and subsidiary themes which are presented at the very outset of the first movement of a symphonic work. Since the first movement is in sonata form, the composer plunges at once into his game of statement and restatement, development and recapitulation,

sending motives or bits of them from one choir to another, from one section or instrument of the same choir to another, challenging you to follow their tantalizing course. Meanwhile, he does not permit those instruments not concerned with the melody to remain idle. The "rests" they have are few and far between, and not of long enough duration to lay them open to the accusation of idling on the job. The rhythm is the primary preoccupation of the double basses, percussion, tuba, and in part the bass clarinet, which emphasize it in voices alternately booming, mumbling, moaning and thundering. The middle voices of the harmony are taken care of by the tenor trombone, viola, English horn, alto clarinet, French horn or cello, while to the upper voices in each choir fall most of the plums of melody. Never forget that a great deal goes on at once, and do not be disturbed if it takes a long time and much careful listening before your heart opens simultaneously to all the different voices.

X

WHAT YOU HEAR AT A SYMPHONY CONCERT

THE snap reply to the question, "What will you hear at a symphony concert?" is, "Symphonies, of course." But before you place your folding chair among the seats of the mighty to whom the grandiose symphonic form is an open book, you should do a little preliminary scouting. Otherwise you may come to the erroneous conclusion of a once-bit, twice-shy layman, who asked, "Seriously, isn't a symphony saying, with boring repetition which covers many pages, what could be better stated in one?" He had started his concert-going from the wrong end, taking up a post-graduate subject when he was hardly prepared for an elementary one. It is pretty difficult to rush full tilt into the hearing of a classic symphony unless you either know something about it specifically, or have worked up to it by first listening to simpler orchestral works. Program music, as distinguished from absolute music, is best to begin with.

Program music tells a story, paints a picture or a per-

son, a mood or a philosophy connected with some aspect of the world outside the music itself. It is easily linked with your own extra-musical experiences and associations. The composer helpfully gives his piece, and possibly its separate parts, descriptive titles, and also writes out a more or less lengthy explanation of what is in his mind as he writes, and what he wishes you to have in yours as you listen. You may be one of those who set up associations, in half-dreamy fashion, while you listen; program music provides you with associations, ready-made, on which to build your own. The program is to the piece as the inter-linear translation is to a book in a foreign language. The many voices of the orchestra make it a peculiarly eloquent medium for summoning the desired images. So, in addition to program pieces written for the orchestra, others originally intended for a single instrument are often transcribed for the orchestra, where they assume added drama and color. One of the most pleasing of these is *Pictures At an Exhibition*, written for the piano by Modeste Mousorgsky and admirably translated to the orchestra by Maurice Ravel.

Absolute music invokes no external aids to understanding. It bases its appeal upon melodic and harmonic content, design and workmanship alone. The power to move and thrill which is inherent in musical sound is exercised upon you without words of explanation. You may give it your own associations, you may receive it purely as sound, you may analyze it intellectually, or you may be so completely at a loss as to what it means that you do not enjoy it at all. Remember, the mere fact that the composer has not stated his program is no proof that he did not have

one. Just as there is no such thing as a tone so pure that it is wholly without overtones, there is no music so pure that it is wholly detached from human experience. Only the cherubim and seraphim can produce strains of that kind. The symphony orchestra, heavenly though it sounds, is earth-bound, and the music it discourses is inevitably related to the life around it, so that the distinction between program and absolute music is by no means hard and fast. So-called absolute music contains passages as dramatic, imaginative and suggestive as any in program music.

Listen first, however, to all the program music for the orchestra that you can lay ears on. Study the written explanations carefully before you start to listen, then reread them later to check up. Try to hear the same piece repeatedly, until you are thoroughly familiar with the story and the way it sounds in music. This does not become tiresome if you really listen, for at each repetition you will fasten upon some effect not previously noticed, with all the satisfaction of the explorer in new territory. Do not decide at once whether or not you like program music in general, or some particular piece of it, but reserve judgment until you have heard the same piece at least a half dozen times. Use one piece to prove to yourself that it is not impossible for you to enjoy *something* at a symphony concert. Once your impression is unshakably favorable, listen differently. Apply what you know about melody, rhythm, harmony, et cetera. If it is a fine piece musically, it will stand solidly without its program, secure in its musical content. When you have arrived at the point of realizing program music in that fashion, it is time for you to take the next step, your goal being to enjoy a symphony on its own terms.

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, there is a painting which, during my childhood, held me enthralled for many a Saturday afternoon. Entitled *Between the Devil and the Deep Sea*, it depicts a negro, alone, on a dismantled sailboat. On one side a waterspout towers above him, on the other a man-eating shark displays sharp fangs in an anticipatory grin. It is not a very good painting, but the stolidity of the negro, the horror of the choice before him, the tragic implications of the picture, made an impression that was not erased by all the masterpieces of the Louvre. That is a program picture; everyone should have, somewhere in his memory, an equally good yarn narrated in music.

One which answers the description, minus the horror, and with the welcome addition of humor, is Paul Dukas' *L'Apprenti Sorcier* (The Sorcerer's Apprentice), a twentieth century French composition, one of the most typical of program pieces. Briefly, it tells of the sorcerer's apprentice who, while his master is away, makes an experiment in sorcery on his own account. In the magic syllables he has eavesdropped, he commands the broom to perform his task of carrying water to the house. His glee when it obeys turns rapidly to dismay when, all available vessels being filled with water, he suddenly realizes that he has forgotten the formula commanding his slave to desist. To music which swells as his fright mounts, he seizes the broom and breaks it over his knee. There is a moment of quiet, a sigh of relief when he believes he has turned the trick. Then, to his horror, both halves of the broom start toting water with redoubled energy that floods the house and threatens to engulf it and him. In an enormous cre-

scendo, the water-toting motive recurs faster and faster, a frenzy of activity, an orchestral uproar of fear, self-reproach and despair. Just as the music reaches a climax, the master returns. He quiets the turmoil, and allays the fear, sending the broom back to immobility and the apprentice to grateful subservience. The steady inexorable rhythm of the violins as the broom comes and goes, comes and goes, the mounting excitement expressed in accelerated tempi and growing volume of sound, the pregnant moments of quiet, the majestic motive of the master magician, tell the story as clearly as words, once you have the key to their meaning. And aside from the story, the music itself is melodious, clearly revealed, full of realistic instrumental effects.

Another piece brimming with effects is Rimsky-Korsakoff's suite *Scheherazade*. Subtle Scheherazade, spinning her thousand and one tales for the Sultan, her husband; spurred to eloquence by the knowledge that her life depended upon holding his interest, could have selected no words more graphic than the music woven about them. Each of the four movements conjures its own image: *The Sea and Sinbad's Ship*; *The Story of the Kalender Prince*; *The Young Prince and the Young Princess* and *Festival at Bagdad—The Ship Goes to Pieces on a Rock Surmounted by the Bronze Figure of a Warrior*. The ominous, thunderous theme expressive of the threatening Sultan, contrasted with the graceful feminine melody of his consort sung by violins and harp, crop up here and there throughout the suite, a reminder that the incidents which are narrated enclose another story, that of Scheherazade. At an outdoor performance of this suite in Stockbridge,

Massachusetts, in the summer of 1939, a terrific thunderstorm broke at the moment that the ship split upon the rock, an effect not planned by the composer which considerably enhanced his efforts and those of the orchestra. A suite originally consisted of pieces of dance music loosely hung together and this original purpose is evident in *Scheherazade* and other modern symphonic suites.

Both the symphonic suite and symphonic poem are program pieces designed for the orchestra. The symphonic poem, a one-movement symphony with a program, was an idea of Franz Liszt's. Before Liszt wrote *Les Préludes*, in 1856, Hector Berlioz' programmatic Symphony *Fantastique* had appeared, a gold mine of new ideas of orchestration. Berlioz knew instruments as no composer before him, his *Treatise on Orchestration* is one of the authoritative works on the subject. In fertility of resource he was unique, and the Hungarian Liszt did not hesitate to follow his French lead in composing *Les Préludes*, the first symphonic poem. The philosopher Lamartine's question, "What is Life but a series of preludes to that unknown song of which Death shall intone the first solemn note?" suggested the program. It has two short themes which discuss life ingeniously from the aspect of love, struggle, disillusionment, conquest and triumph. Written with genuine feeling, if somewhat flamboyantly, it is tuneful, expressive and extremely popular. Liszt wrote thirteen symphonic poems, among them *Mazeppa*, *Orpheus*, *Tasso*, and *The Battle of the Huns*. The form became popular and was used by other late nineteenth century composers. Saint Saens' *Danse Macabre* (Dance of Death) and *Rouet d' Omphale* (Omphale's Spinning-

Wheel), César Franck's *Psyche* and *Les Djinns*, Borodin's *On the Steppes of Central Asia*, and Smetana's *My Country* are often heard.

But Richard Strauss (1864-) was the master creator of symphonic poems, which he called tone-poems. He reduced to naught all preceding attempts to introduce realism into music. The effects he initiated, criticized at first as shameless and vulgar, gradually came to be looked upon as classic of their kind. In his *Sinfonia Domestica*, husband and wife bill and coo, the baby cries, the couple argue, quarrel and make up,—the details of domestic life are exposed with sometimes tender, sometimes humorous musical comment, in an amazing variety of sound-effects. *Don Quixote*, which presents a narrative in music of the harassed Don's wanderings, is famous for a flock of sheep which bleat realistically, a windmill inviting the knight to tilt with its whirling arms, and a Dulcinea whose mock-sentimental love theme punctuates the tale of his knightly adventures. *Tod und Verklärung*, (Death and Transfiguration) is a profoundly moving and uplifting philosophical excursion culminating in a plangent affirmation of faith by the brasses. In an entirely different mood is *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, which depicts the checkered career of a lovable scapegrace who ends on the scaffold with an astonished note from the clarinet as the culprit dangles from the end of the rope. Others are *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life), *Don Juan*, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spake Zarathustra) and *Macbeth*. Strauss combines and utilizes all the instruments of the orchestra with a sweeping lavishness and photographic accuracy which are extremely helpful in introducing you to their individualities.

Over and above which, a Strauss tone-poem arouses an enormous emotional excitement, a breathless sense of living along with and sharing in the experiences set forth by the music. Among the composers contemporary with Strauss who have written symphonic poems, none has struck so forceful and individual a note as he.

Overtures also are program music, inasmuch as they are usually transplanted introductions to operas, which offer in the concert hall a sample of the materials of the opera. Gluck's overture to *Iphigenia in Aulis*, one of the earliest, is one of the purest and most classic in outline and uplifting in mood. You cannot go far in music without meeting the delightful Mozart overtures to *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *The Magic Flute*. The first-named, according to H. E. Krehbiel, "puts the listener at once into a frolicsome mood . . . drawing none of its material from the music of the play . . . laughing and singing its innocent life out in less than five minutes." In *The Magic Flute*, on the other hand, the chords of the introduction, reiterated later in the overture by the woodwinds, are heard in the opera as well, and the connection between overture and opera is close.

Weber's romantic overture to *Der Freischütz* (The Huntsman) is programmatic in a different sense than Mozart's. From the moment that the French horns sing the hunting call and hymn which usher you into the woodland, the thematic material consists of the Leitmotifs, or characteristic themes of the opera itself. In this respect, Weber anticipated Wagner. *Oberon* and *Euryanthe* are other Weber overtures which display the same characteristics, "the horns of elfland faintly blowing" in *Oberon*

giving a foretaste of the opera which follows. Rossini's *Barbiere di Seviglia* (Barber of Seville), Smetana's *Die verkaufte Braut* (Bartered Bride), Johann Strauss's *Fledermaus* (The Bat) and Bizet's *Carmen* overtures, light, gay and melodious, are favorites in the concert hall.

Although the material of the opera is not invariably foreshadowed in the overture, the advantage of knowing its story and something of its music is illustrated by a glance at the overture to Beethoven's *Fidelio*. He wrote four known as the *Leonore* overtures before he was satisfied with one. All are occasionally performed, but he preferred Number III, the one most frequently given in concerts. A trumpet call off stage represents the climax of the overture and of the action in the opera. It occurs at a moment of extreme suspense. Leonore, the faithful wife of Florestan, unjustly imprisoned by Pizarro a political enemy, has disguised herself as a young man, aide to the jailor, hoping thus to effect her husband's escape. She has despairingly completed the task of digging his grave under orders from Pizarro who, dagger in hand, is about to attack his victim, when the trumpet call is heard, first faintly from afar, then louder and closer. It proclaims the arrival of a just governor to defeat the villain's plan. A message of freedom and hope, it falls climactically into the excited, despairing medley of sound, while the quiet song of love and thankfulness which ensues is one of the loveliest in all music. Not to know this story is to miss the significance of the music. As a general rule, it is a wise precaution to read a brief synopsis before hearing any opera overture, even in concert form.

Other overtures, which have no story save that they

were written for some special occasion, are found in the repertoire. They are called overtures although they do not "open" or introduce anything. Of this order are the dainty fairy music of the *Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*, which Mendelssohn wrote at seventeen, as part of the incidental music to Shakespeare's play. He may have intended to make an opera of it but never did. Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture*, and Tchaikowsky's martial *1812*, like others of their kind, were written to celebrate or deplore an important public or private event. The overture is of value as a link between program and absolute music. It will help you to modulate from one emotional key to another, from the subjectivity of program to the universality of absolute writing.

The symphony to which you proceed after having received your baptism of program music is actually a sonata raised to the *n*th power. Its four movements parallel the three of the sonata, plus one, as seen in a magnifying mirror. It is a mural as against a canvas, a form which developed in size and complexity as the orchestras themselves developed. Johann Sebastian Bach wrote for a small ensemble, consisting of strings, harpsichord and occasional other instruments which he felt would be effective in particular pieces—perhaps an oboe and a bassoon, perhaps a flute and oboe. Like a rambling old country house to which wings are added *ad lib.*, the orchestra grew unbalanced and cumbersome when other, less skilful composers added instruments as they saw fit. Haydn, that good housekeeper, instituted a grand spring cleaning, sending to the rummage sales the instruments he considered superfluous, and retaining only those essential to

symmetry. He left something which approximates the modern orchestra, clarified and compact, and with it a body of music admirably adapted to it.

Haydn defined, more by example than by precept, the requirements of a symphony. As you will recall, he helped to establish the sonata form, which is the first movement of the symphony. He composed between a hundred and a hundred and twenty-five symphonies, excellent morsels on which to try symphonic teeth already sharpened on program music. They are clearly written and melodious, an open and shut presentation with few devious or complicated passages, the kind of music you like whether or not you know anything about how or why or when it was written. Structurally they are clear, harmonically in the best tradition, melodically tuneful. Mozart's forty-nine symphonies and thirty divertimenti, sparkling and spontaneous, are equally comprehensible. Three, the *Haffner*, the *G Minor*, and the *Jupiter* have had the most persistent appeal, if frequency of performance is any indication. Mozart appeared in no wise dashed by the symphonic form, but wrote with the same spontaneity for forty instruments as for four, the orchestra of his day being about half the size it is today.

Most of the great composers of the past, many of the well-trained men of the present, have written symphonies which approach as a limit, as in mathematics, but never quite touch, the nine monumental symphonies of Beethoven. These stand unique. Although you will find Haydn and Mozart more transparent, in a sense easier to grasp, do not delay too long the hearing of the Beethoven symphonies, for when you begin to understand his thought,

and to perceive the beauties of the form in which he cast it, you will have gone a far way toward penetrating the mysteries of symphonic literature.

The great Beethoven was not above letting it be known when he had a program in mind, proving again how blurred is the line between absolute and program music. His *Third*, called the *Eroica* or Heroic, he described as his tribute to Napoleon, "composed to celebrate a great man." It does not follow the hero's life, as Strauss did in *Heldenleben*; if it did, the composer would hardly have put the funeral march in the second movement, and followed it with a jubilant scherzo and finale. But it fully conveys Beethoven's hero-worship of the man he mistakenly held to be the savior of France. His later disillusionment is not recorded in the music. Of the opening of his *Fifth Symphony*, that famous four-note motive proclaimed at the top of the orchestral lungs, Beethoven remarked "So Fate knocks at the door." Throughout the first movement, the knocking continues, the four-note theme being developed with astounding completeness. The *Fifth* is accordingly called the *Fate* Symphony. The *Sixth*, known as the *Pastoral*, is definitely programmatic. Its five movements have descriptive titles. The peasant merrymaking, with folk-dance and song, interrupted by a thunderstorm, followed again by the serenity of clear skies, contains a realistic imitation of the sounds of nature. Thunder growls in the tympani, birds twitter in flute and piccolo, the shepherd gathers his flock together with an oboe call. It is full of the instrumental effects dear to the musical realist.

The *Seventh Symphony* Wagner called the "apotheosis of the dance." It is much more than that, but the inter-

pretation given by the dancer Isadora Duncan in her prime brought out the dance element in it to a surprising degree. Even the sublime slow movement, than which there exists a no more deeply moving piece of music, permitted of a series of tableaux of great nobility and classic repose. The *Ninth Symphony*, written toward the close of Beethoven's life, is the most philosophic, probably the most difficult to understand. The finale of this work, Schiller's *Ode to Joy* sung by a mixed chorus with the orchestra, is the culmination of four movements of thoughtful exposition and profound feeling, a cry of hope and faith which sums up the purpose of the symphony.

To enjoy the Beethoven symphonies without studying them in detail, you must hear them again and again. At each hearing, you will notice something that escaped you before. As themes or motives become familiar to you, you will follow them with increasing relish from choir to choir, singing them to yourself as you learn to know them. The magnificent sweeping line of the whole, the mood as indicated by key, color, harmony and rhythm, the thought, at first so difficult to follow, give you much to feel and ponder. The clearer they become, the more deeply does the emotion in this "absolute writing" impress you.

Once you know your Beethoven symphonies, those of the composers who wrote more personally, the group known as the Romantic composers, will give you great pleasure. Schubert, Schumann, and Mendelssohn wrote heart-warming works replete with melody. Two of Schubert's are "required" in the symphonic curriculum. The *Unfinished*, in B minor, which has two movements instead of the usual four, is so tuneful that the theme of the first

movement was used as a waltz song in an operetta *Blossom Time* based on Schubert's life. The Schubert *C Major* is described as of heavenly length, though to many a listener it appears more lengthy than heavenly. The themes are beautiful, but they are repeated so relentlessly as to become wearisome. Schubert wrote nine symphonies, but only these two are played to any extent.

Mendelssohn is kind to his listeners, for although he does not write out scenarios for his symphonies, he gives them titles indicative of the atmosphere they create. He makes the great Reformation hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, the backbone of his *Reformation Symphony*. He writes a *Scotch* symphony, and an *Italian* symphony, after his travels have so thoroughly imbued him with the spirit of those countries that he is able to translate it into music of more than ordinary charm and expressiveness.

Schumann, last of the trio, gave titles to two of his four symphonies. The *Spring Symphony*, No. I, in B flat major was written in the flush of happiness of his early married life. He wrote to Wilhelm Tauber, who was about to conduct its first performance in Berlin, "Could you infuse into your orchestra . . . a sort of longing for Spring? . . . The first entrance of the trumpets, this I should like to have sounded as though it were from above, like unto a call to awakening; and then I should like reading between the lines, in the rest of the introduction, how everywhere it begins to grow green, how a butterfly takes wing and, in the Allegro, how little by little all things come that in any way belong to Spring. True, these are fantastic thoughts, which only came to me after the work was finished." In the last movement, he pictures the farewell of

departing Spring as he has pictured her coming in the first, with light-hearted charm and gaiety. The *Symphony No. IV*, in D minor Opus 120, was the second he wrote, although numbered IV, and is the product of the same happy period, but more introspective and personal than the *Spring Symphony*. It is played without a break between the movements, with recurrent themes as the connecting link. In the *Rhenish*, the composer depicted the festivities of life along the river Rhine in a tone picture enlivened by the swing of the country dance, the stately measures of cathedral music, and the sentimental strains of the romanza.

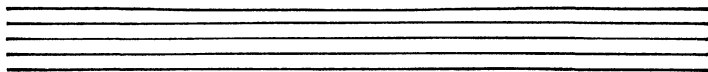
The year 1940 marked the centennial of Peter Ilich Tchaikowsky (1840-1893). His many orchestral works did not require the fillip of centennial celebration to summon them from obscurity. They are not among the neglected masterpieces gathering dust upon the shelves. So familiar as to be household words are his six numbered symphonies: No. I in G minor, *Winter Dreams*, No. II in C minor, *Little Russian*, No. III in D major, *Polish*, No. IV in F minor and V in E minor, and the lacerating No. VI in B minor, the *Pathétique*. They abound in haunting tunes, in big climaxes for the brasses that blast you from your seat, in harmonies that wash over you like a warm perfumed bath, and in emotional states so uninhibited that they require no interpretation even for the unmusical. Tchaikowsky described himself as "a sensitive." His acute reactions to pleasure and pain were transferred to his music with the equivalent of literary license. Those to whom music spells primarily emotion cannot have enough of the symphonies, or of his other orchestral works. He

wrote in many forms,—songs, chamber music, operas, and solo pieces, but most freely and lovingly for the orchestra. His symphonic fantasies, *The Tempest* and *Francesca da Rimini*, the Fantasy Overtures to *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* are among his best. His concertos for violin, piano, and cello are distinguished for the warm current of emotion which flows, neverceasing, between soloist and orchestra.

Johannes Brahms, upon whose four mighty symphonies descends the mantle of Beethovenesque grandeur, refrained from symphonic expression until he was forty years old, which may explain the rich maturity and structural perfection, not to mention the philosophic quality of these works. Only a few decades ago, critics knit dubious brows at Brahms' syncopations and cross rhythms, free sprinkling of unusual intervals, and crowded color schemes. The use of violas and woodwinds in place of violins in solo passages, their playing as choirs oftener than as individuals, and the frequent interjection of horns and trombones produced a texture of peculiar depth and thickness, which seems muddy until the ear becomes accustomed to it. The first symphony has been described as "pathetic," an individual and personal utterance. The second, in D major, is "pastoral," the third, in F major, in a mood of "heroic resignation," while the fourth, in E minor, is the most introspective, "a philosophic commentary on the tragedy of waning life." Thick lyrical themes, a Rembrandt texture, unshakable structure and emotional depth characterize them all.

To discuss the entire concert repertoire of symphonies is not my plan. When you have acquired a solid underpin-

ning of Haydn, Beethoven, the romantic composers, and Brahms, you will be prepared to cope with the others. Just one word of warning in closing is indicated. Defer hearing works which you are warned in advance are long and complicated, lest you become discouraged with the symphony before you have had an opportunity to discover that it is not, as one bewildered listener complained, "a conglomeration of noises," but a unified, coherent, emotional and thoughtful work of art.



XI.

THE OPERA: THREE ARTS IN ONE

AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD whose mother took her to the Metropolitan Opera House for a performance of *Hansel and Gretel* sat enraptured and silent throughout the afternoon. On the way home, the mother broke the silence to ask, "Did you like the music, dear?" "Music!" the child turned astonished eyes upon her. "*Was* there music?" Her interest had been so concentrated on the dramatic portrayal of the familiar fairy tale, that it rejected everything else. Instead of trying to watch the action, listen to the singers and orchestra, and follow the libretto all at once she bestowed her attention on the part that most interested her. The opera divides its allegiance between several arts, she gave hers to one at a time.

If you love a good fight, you will be partial to this form of art, for opera is a battleground of conflicting elements. As words and notes live on separate planes, the libretto is often at odds with the music. Play and music find it as difficult to lie down peaceably together as the proverbial

lion and lamb, and singers and orchestra battle over which can make the most noise. Moreover, throughout its historical development, composers have argued back and forth as to the relative importance of this or that element, of libretto, versus action, versus music, and have stressed one at one period, its opposite at another. "Opera," the word, is the plural of the Latin "opus," meaning "work"—a collection of works, a fusion of elements which can be welded together only with the blowtorch of genius.

When you are first exposed to the opera, you may be more hilarious than respectful. The amorous antics of pot-bellied tenors in moth-eaten fur trimmings, the halting of the action while the prima donna delivers a long aria, the unmotivated performance of feats of valor for love of a bumpy heroine in virginal white, the death scenes sung in a healthy fortissimo, may be so amusing that you forget to be uplifted. But after you have had your laugh, there remains much to be seen and heard. Varied as are the types of opera in the repertoire, they have points of likeness in treatment. Vocally, they divide the *solo* honors between what is called "recitativo" and "aria," the *ensemble* honors between groups which range from two singing a duet to a large chorus of a hundred or more. Instrumentally, the orchestra has stepped out of its early rôle of meager accompaniment to become an integral part of the dramatic-musical scheme, so important in itself that to disregard it is impossible. Dramatically, the posturing and overacting, the incredible plots and equally incredible libretti are being slowly modified. It has gradually appeared that a good singer is not of necessity a bad actor, and vice versa, and that correct costumes and décor de-

tract not at all from effectiveness. Thanks to improved diction, the libretti are more plainly understood than formerly, and more critically received, and in a few cases have been revamped to their vast improvement.

“Recitativo,” or recitative, one form of operatic solo, bears a strong resemblance to recitation. It is elocution, the speaking of a piece, a carry-over from Greek tragedy, in which a declamatory passage was inserted into the play, accompanied by a few scattered chords of music, whenever the action seemed to require explanation, something like the cut-back in a movie. In the sixteenth century, certain Florentines decided to revive this Greek custom, but they made a pretty dull affair of it. Monotonous as to voice and with the barest skeleton of an accompaniment, it was well-named “secco,” Latin for “dry,” in distinction to “stromentato,” where the instrumental accompaniment is more elaborate. Recitativo appears in the opera today much as it did in the early days, whenever formal dialogue or explanation of the action is required. But the aria is the vocalist’s true glory. By definition a simple song or air, in the opera it becomes an extended solo, delivered according to a set convention in the full glare of the spotlight. It enables prima donnas and male principals to touch off their best vocal fireworks. They considered themselves slighted if the composer did not write special arias for their special talents, hence to the vanity of singers, rather than the exigencies of dramatic action can be traced many elaborate arias. Be the subject love, sorrow, remorse, jealousy, the weather, a new dress, or a bowl of soup, it receives its measure of display. Many arias are nevertheless so lovely that their presence re-

deems a whole opera or, borrowed from their context, a whole concert. They become by repetition as familiar as folk song (e.g. *Mon Coeur S'Ouvre à ta Voix* (My Heart at thy Sweet Voice) from Saint Saens' *Samson and Delila*, or *Celeste Aïda* from Verdi's *Aïda*.)

Like arias, small ensemble numbers are often dragged into the dramatic action by the heels, inserted because the composer likes them, not because they are essential to the action. In Beethoven's *Fidelio*, an exquisite quartet is heard early in the first act, when Leonore voices her fears for her husband's safety, Marcellina her love for Leonore disguised as the youth Fidelio, Rocco the jailor his hopes that Marcellina will marry Fidelio, and Jacquino the flouted suitor his love for Marcellina. The action of the play stops completely while these four harmoniously voice their hopes and fears, yet no one in his musical senses would want a single note omitted. When the ensemble is woven logically into the action, the effect is even better. The love duet of Faust and Marguerite with interpolations from Mephisto, in Gounod's *Faust*, for instance, falls easily into place in the dramatic action, at an emphatic point in the play as in the music.

Large choruses are introduced sometimes with a reasonable appearance of ease, sometimes clumsily. Peasants sauntering about a market place, guests at a banquet, soldiers and sailors with sisters, cousins and aunts are privileged to burst into part singing at a moment's notice. Nobody questions their right to comment in song on the action of the play and its personages. A tavern may be invaded by regiments of vocal infantry, while at the same time, by one of those operatic coincidences, the square

outside is crowded with enough of the town's female population to round out a mixed chorus. Even so obvious a dramatic trick is permissible. Whether the chorus relieves tension by an agreeable interlude, or heightens it by emphasizing a situation, it provides color and motion on the stage, and a vocal element indispensable to the grand total.

The question of the relative importance of the orchestra and singers is a battleground strewn with the bodies of exhausted vocalists and irate conductors. This is especially so since the so-called reforms of Wagner have glorified the orchestra. No tender-hearted person can sit unmoved through the efforts of soprano and tenor to rise above the magnificent but overwhelming orchestral din in many parts of the *Ring* cycle and *Tristan and Isolde*. Yet this is preferable to the forlorn tinkle of harpsichord and strings in a few rationed chords which, in the operas of antiquity, left the voices naked and ashamed. Nobody would want to revert to those accompaniments once he has known the modern orchestra. Its infinite range of color and design creates a gorgeous, independent tone picture. As the colors of costumes, voices and scenery are revealed on the stage, they are amplified and deepened by the orchestra. Orchestral and dramatic climaxes occur as one, at one and the same moment. Emotional effects become cumulatively exciting as the orchestra emphasizes them. Personages are characterized in different timbres by different instruments. The opera orchestra is a full symphony orchestra, specializing in program music with all the resources of stage and singers thronging to its aid in dramatizing the story or program.

Volumes have been written, telling the stories of all the operas, describing the music, and characterizing the composers. For detailed analyses of that kind, you are referred to those volumes, some of which are named in my bibliography. The high spots in the history of the art since Jacopo Peri's *Euridice*, its first crude appearance in 1600, can be illuminated by examining a few typical operas. You will not hear *Euridice* today, nor will you hear the works of Monteverde, who improved on Peri's model. The famous lamentation "Lasciatemi morire" (Let Me Die) alone survives from Monteverde's opera *Arianna*. And enough bits of his *Ritorno d'Ulisse* (Return of Ulysses) and *L'Incoronazione de Poppea* (Coronation of Poppea) remain to demonstrate that the devices he introduced enhanced the emotional expressiveness of his operas far beyond those of any one who preceded him. His free use of recitativo with above-the-average accompaniment, of pizzicato and tremolo, and of the different choirs of the orchestra in polyphony, was new to his day. However, the study of the history of the opera from living models begins over a hundred and fifty years after Peri's *Euridice*, with the production of Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Written in 1762, this work, when revived some years ago at the Metropolitan, cast a spell which has endured. In its own day, it turned a page in the history of opera.

Gluck thought the declamatory concerts in costume which passed for opera in the eighteenth century silly and meaningless, and had no hesitation in saying so. In his preface to *Alceste*, he expressed his ambition "to attain a grand simplicity" in the Greek manner, and "to put an

end to abuses against which good taste and good sense have long protested in vain." The existing rules, he declared, were made to be broken, and he suited the action to the word. He made the overture an important and expressive section, he made the music interpretative of situations in the plot. In the arias he gave to his principals, irrelevant and useless ornaments were banished, nor were the singers obliged by the command "da capo" (from the beginning) at the close, to bore the audience and themselves with unwelcome repetition. In Gluck's opinion, once was enough. The value of pause between numbers not merely as punctuation but to express emotion, the use of the orchestra also to that important end, contributed to his purpose of making the music "second the poetry by enforcing the expression of the sentiment, and the interest of the situations, without interrupting"—or weakening—"the action." No less a man than a Gluck, and a determined, experienced, and original Gluck, could have effected as many changes at one time as he did, and even he had to fight every inch of the way, and write a great many operas to prove his point.

Orfeo ed Euridice is a good example of his style. The story is both touching and dramatic, and creates the more convincing illusion for being taken from mythology. The Greek poet, Orpheus, inconsolable after the death of his beloved Euridice, prevails upon the god of love to permit him to seek her in Hades, and bring her back to earth. He finds her, but while leading her back, he disobeys the god's command not to look upon her until they have regained the upper regions, and to his horror and remorse, he sees her fall lifeless at his feet. Despairingly, he draws

his dagger to take his own life, but the god of love, relenting, revives Euridice and restores the lovers to a united existence. The lament, *O, Che farò senza Euridice* (O, What Shall I Do Without Euridice), uttered by Orfeo when he loses his beloved for the second time, is an aria familiar to many who have never heard of Gluck and his *Orfeo*. The mourning chorus which opens the opera, the chorus of happy shades in Elysium, Euridice's joyous aria when she encounters Orfeo in Hades, are direct, pure melody. So great is the appeal of this music, that it is surprising that more of the one hundred operas of Gluck should not have become known. *Iphigenia in Aulide* (Iphigenia in Aulis), *Iphigenia in Tauride* (Iphigenia in Tauris), *Alceste*, *Armide*, *Paride ed Elena* (Paris and Helen) belong to the same reform school of writing as *Orfeo*, yet only some of the overtures are played, while the operas themselves lie neglected.

The sparkling operas of Mozart, close to Gluck's in time, are far removed in style. For the dignified posturings of mythology, Mozart substituted light, human-interest plots, blest with humor as well as melody. Some historians call them aria operas, because one melodious aria after another pours forth without effort. In the connecting passages between the arias, Mozart placed his own version of recitativo, a rapid amusing patter with a few well-chosen chords of accompaniment. His style, modeled on that of preceding Italians, was imitated by subsequent Italians, who wrote as he did, save that they discarded even his modified recitativo wherever possible. Three of his operas, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro), *Così fan Tutte* (Thus Do All Women) and *Don Giovanni*

(Don Juan) have unusually good Italian libretti supplied by Lorenzo da Ponte; *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (The Escape from the Seraglio) and *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) are in German. The handling of the orchestra as an element of independent beauty, the depiction of character and situation with humanity and humor, the ornate and rococo but sparkling and delightful vocal parts, and above all, the melody, aristocratic, rare, a melody of the past with a charm wholly its own—by these shall ye know the operas of the incomparable Mozart.

Don Giovanni is the only one which is heard with any frequency on the large stage of the Metropolitan. It is less of an "opera buffa" (light chamber opera) than the others, although its subject, the amours of the libertine Don Giovanni, and the rascally tricks played by his servant Leporello, is handled with a light touch. The Don flits gaily from mistress to maid, from peasant to aristocrat, leaving a trail of irate husbands and lovers burning to avenge their broken-hearted women. In a mocking aria, *Madamina, il catalogo*, Leporello recites to Donna Elvira, his master's latest victim, the list of the gentleman's conquests. It is a catalogue tantalizing both in the clever musical patter and in the subject matter, one of the great arias of the opera. One of a different order, sung in duet form by the Don with Zerlina, a rustic bride whom he aims to ensnare, is *La ci darem la mano* (Give me your hand), often abbreviated to *la ci darem*. It is replete with melody, and with the delicate harmonies characteristic of Mozart. The Don's brilliant drinking song, *Fin ch'han dal vino* (Now that they've wine), the charmingly concilia-

tory *Batti, batti, bel Masetto* (Beat me, beat me, dear Masetto), sung by Zerlina in an attempt to smooth her jealous bridegroom's ruffled plumage, Don Giovanni's serenade, *Deh vieni alla finestra* (ancestor of Stephen Foster's *Open Thy Lattice, Love*), and finally Donna Elvira's emotional *In quali eccessi* (Into what excesses has he fallen!) are endearing arias, which flow into your consciousness and settle there to create a deep inner contentment.

Beethoven's single opera, *Fidelio*, chronologically next (1805), is often disparaged as being dramatically inept. Yet nobody denies that the music has beauty, the libretto makes sense, and the story, a typical romantic interpretation of conjugal devotion, is good operatic material which affords numerous opportunities for arias bearing the mark of Beethoven's genius. The villain Pizarro's cry of triumph when he sees his schemes apparently about to materialize, *Ha, welch ein Augenblick!* (Ha, what a moment!) fairly epitomizes the spirit of malignant revenge. Fidelio's indignant protest, *Abscheulicher, wo eilst Du hin?* (Wretch, whither are you hastening?) follows close upon it. The chorus of prisoners at the end, blinking at the sunlight so long denied to them, as they praise God's mercy for their release, is sublime in the depth and sincerity of words and music. There is little recitativo in this opera, but numerous asides and soliloquies which carry on the story. The orchestral score, thicker in texture than Mozart's and of velvety smoothness, is admirably proportioned to the voices; it knows its place, and keeps it.

It is strange that the romantic operas of Carl Maria

von Weber, which injected a new humanity and continuity into operatic writing, should be little known today save as their overtures are played in the concert hall. *Der Freischütz* (The Enchanted Huntsman), *Oberon*, and *Euryanthe* are all three based upon fairy tales colored by Weber with the subjective emotional quality of the romantic school. Their overtures, containing the best of the melodies, present a capsule version of the operas for concert production, while the operas themselves are interesting chiefly for the innovations which Weber introduced. *Der Freischütz*, produced in 1824, is probably the best of the three. Weber characterized his principals by musical motives not far removed from the Leitmotif later attributed to Wagner, and which Wagner made peculiarly his own. Weber's use of motives, the unusually imaginative tone-coloring of his orchestral accompaniment, and the achievement of a musical continuity new to his day, sent the romantic operas of other men off on a new tack while his own modestly faded out of the picture.

The truth is that Italian operas have been consistently more popular than German. There was something in their temperament that permitted Italians to write and enjoy with complete freedom from self-consciousness what in other hands, would have appeared absurdly unreal, sentimental and ridiculous. Opera was a natural expression for Italians. Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, who came upon the scene shortly after Weber, simply carried away the public, beginning in their own country, but widening their influence to take in all of the world, Old and New. Rossini was the big man of the three. When he went to visit Napoleon in Paris, and bent to kiss the imperial hand,

Napoleon restrained him with the remark, "There need be no ceremony between emperors." His *Barbiere di Siviglia* (Barber of Seville), *William Tell*, *La Gazza Ladra* (The Thieving Magpie), and *Semiramide* (Semiramis) have been criticized as superficial and facile, all surface and no substance. Yet people like Rossini's operas and always have, and demand not only the galloping measures of the *William Tell Overture* but the whole opera. Rossini it was who recognized the expressive possibilities of the brass choir of the orchestra, and who played on the religious sensibilities of his audience by giving the prima donnas ardent prayers to sing when the world was too much with them. He wrote recitativos with rich accompaniments, and made use of enormous crescendos to express the surge of emotion.

Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* contains, besides a mad scene to end all mad scenes, a florid sextet dear to singers, horn-players and organ-grinders. His other operas, *L'Elisir d'Amore* (The Elixir of Love), *La Figlia del Regimento* (The Daughter of the Regiment), *Don Pasquale*, and *La Favorita*, are often coupled with those of Bellini—*I Puritani*, *Norma*, and *La Sonnambula* (The Sleep-Walker), which they resemble in style. All are modeled faithfully according to Rossini's successful pattern. The lesser yet considerable talents of Bellini and Donizetti swim to fame like dolphins in the wake of the whale.

If Rossini is a whale, Giuseppe Verdi is a mammoth. His is without a doubt the greatest name in Italian opera, some think in all opera. *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* (The Troubadour), *La Forza del Destino* (The Power of Destiny), and *La Traviata* (Lost Lady), *Aida*, *Falstaff*, and

Otello, are names to conjure with. Verdi probably wrote more successful operas, numerically and qualitatively, than any other composer. He did not bother with theories, but wrote for orchestra and voice with a fine impartiality, and with the ease of one who was not obliged to translate into the language of the opera, since he actually thought in that language.

La Traviata is one opera which should be heard early in your operatic education, since it is one of the most gratifying in melody, despite the coloratura leading rôle, and can be followed with ease. Verdi wrote it in his fortieth year, in the prime of his career. Its story, which follows that of the well-known French *Camille*, concerns Violetta, a French courtesan, and her love for Alfredo. Urged by his father, she relinquishes the love which means all the world to her, in return for which Alfredo, misconstruing her sacrifice, heaps reproaches upon her head. In the end he is undeceived, and returns to her, repentant, to find her dying, a victim of tuberculosis. The story is tragic, but Verdi dwells skilfully upon its happier aspects; even a death scene does not dim his sparkle for long. When the curtain rises, Violetta and Alfredo are at a banquet, enlivened by music of the gayest and liveliest. A rousing drinking song for Alfredo, *Libiam nei Lieti Calici* (A bumper we'll drain) is sung by Violetta and all the guests. When the rest of the assemblage goes off to dance, the two lovers remain behind, singing tenderly of their first meeting. Violetta then, left alone, sings one of the great arias of the opera, *Ah, fors è lui* (Perhaps 'tis he). Midway in the song her mood changes, she mocks herself for her solemnity, and with the words *Sempre libera*, (Al-

ways free), consecrates herself anew to a life of pleasure. The aria is florid and ornamental, difficult to sing and rococo, yet it brings down the house in proportion as the singer emphasizes the contrast between the quiet contentment of the first and the forced gaiety of the latter part. Others from *La Traviata* that you will soon recognize are *Non sapete* (Don't you know?) a baritone aria sung by the father pleading for his son; *Dite alla giovine* (Tell the maiden), Violetta's message to Alfredo's sister for whose happiness she relinquishes her own; and *Alfredo, di questo cuore* (Alfred, from my heart), a concerted number sung by the lovers, Alfredo's father, and the guests who have witnessed Alfredo's reproaches. Finally, in a mood of quiet resignation, the opera ends with Violetta's *Addiò al passato* (Farewell to the past), and *Parigi, O cara* (O beloved Paris).

No less to be recommended than *La Traviata* is the same composer's *Aïda*, widely publicized as the opera in which live elephants appear, and in which the aria *Celeste Aïda* is sung by the tenor. Like the old lady who liked *Hamlet* because she found it so full of quotations, you will find yourself encountering, with the delight of meeting old friends, the priests' chorus, the triumphant march of the returning Egyptian armies, and Aïda's prayer for pity, *Numi, Pieta* (Priests, have mercy). The background of plot and counterplot, the picturesque setting, the emotional and artistic excitement of the musical score, establish a whole tradition of Italian opera, a tradition to which a large segment of the faithful cling stubbornly, regardless of changes in opera technique since 1871, when *Aïda* was first produced.

From the France of this period, meanwhile, come at least two additions to the operatic repertoire. Gounod's *Faust* was first produced in Paris in 1859, and there has been no lack of opportunity to hear it since then. The musical snobs dismiss it as over-theatrical, over-simplified, over-popular, and over-whatnot. Yet think for a moment of the lilting waltz of Marguerite's song when she receives a gift of jewels from Faust and exclaims, *Ah! Que je ris de me voir si belle!* (Ah, I smile to see myself so beautiful), also her ballad, the *King of Thule*, the soldiers' chorus, Mephistopheles' serenade under the innocent Marguerite's window, and her ringing redemption song after her fall and imprisonment. Such arias succeed one another, so tuneful that you hum them for weeks afterward, with no thought of offending the dignity of grand opera. The story of *Faust* appeals to all the bourgeois virtues, while its music has neither the pre-Mozartean classicism, the Mozartean Italianism, nor the Weber romanticism. It is Gallic music touched with Rossini and enriched with a towering libretto based on an appealing play.

Bizet's *Carmen*, produced some years later, written by a Frenchman with nearby Spain as its background, is described as the perfect opera. Carmen, the fickle cigarette girl who lures her soldier-lover, Don José, to his ruin, only to spurn him for the bullfighter, Don Escamillo, and who finally pays the price of death at Don José's jealous hand, won from the public far greater loyalty than she herself was capable of. The part of Carmen is a juicy plum for an ambitious soprano, for it permits her to hold the center of the stage before a fascinated

group as she sings the famous *Habanera*, the gay gypsy song, and others which draw heavily on her grace, charm and vocal gifts. The *Toreador* song sung by Escamillo is known to every schoolboy in the irreverent parody, "Toreador-a, Don't spit on the floor-a." The choruses, distributed among Carmen's smuggler friends, Don José's brother soldiers, cigarette girls and bullfight crowds, are not only brilliant, contributory to the action, and full of Andalusian fire, but are introduced with unusual tact and logic. As for the orchestral part, the *Overture to Carmen* is worn threadbare with concert repetition, the accompaniment is dazzling and unusually well balanced with the voices. The opera was greeted with moderate applause at its first performance, which poor Bizet is said to have quit in tears before the end. During the ensuing months, his initial disappointment was eased by repeated performances, but he did not live to know that his Carmen later entrenched herself so securely in the public heart that even a Wagner could not dislodge her.

That is indeed an achievement, for Richard Wagner is the *Führer* of opera. His disciples have shouted "Heil Wagner" so long and loud that the feeble voice of the opposition has been completely drowned. That they acclaim a genius, nobody denies. But the shadow of that genius athwart the operatic map of the nineteenth century is too black and all-enveloping for the comfort of minorities. Wagnerian mannerisms, without the originality that made them bearable in him, are deplorable as they appear in the writings of his contemporaries and of subsequent composers. The glory of Wagner lies largely in his handling of the orchestra. Music-drama à la Wag-

ner is symphonic opera, as compared with the singers' opera which preceded it. As it was said of Disraeli that he thought in empires, so it might have been said of Wagner that he thought in symphonies. His orchestral scores are no painful bringing together of single instruments or choirs in studied effects, but a rush of voices coming together with an inevitability which is overpowering. The rich texture created by interwoven strands of melody, and the plangent insistent tone-color produced by unusual harmonies, imperiously command attention. Wagner's use of the orchestra, apart from the fact that it is louder than others, is unique. Bass clarinets and English horns, freely used, splash on bold new colors, essentially Wagnerian. Divided string choirs, the exception rather than the rule before Wagner, became a regular device after he showed the way. Harmonies and progressions, many of them chromatic, many of them using unorthodox intervals, further stamp the orchestrations as "made by Wagner." Most distinctive, as you know if you have ever been exposed to a Wagner opera, is the weaving of the Leitmotifs into the orchestral fabric. A few notes, constituting but a single short phrase, are used to characterize personages, significant stage properties, dramatic events, even thoughts, a different phrase for each. They are the Leitmotifs, or lead motives. More than eighty such motives appear and reappear in the *Ring* series of four operas—*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*. They may be heard, in the orchestra and in the voices, foreshadowing events before they happen, being repeated during the event, and returning afterward, like a fleeting but poignant memory. The same motives recurring in all

four operas, which are already bound together as a connected narrative, emphasize the cycle idea. Several hearings are required to fix the most important ones in your mind, and none but a Wagner "fan" attempts to remember them all, not because they are so difficult, but because there are so many of them and they are so cannily utilized.

Rienzi, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin* are early Wagner. They are broad interpretations of romantic opera, containing premonitory rumblings of the thunder of the *Ring*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*, the products of Wagner's mature genius. These are works of a conception to match the gigantic sculpture of Rodin's *Thinker*. The adaptation of the ancient legends made by Wagner himself is good theater, so too are the libretti, written by the composer. Voice and orchestra feed the drama without ceasing. To be sure, protracted soliloquies and orchestral interludes slow up the action, and the repetition of motives is so stressed as to become wearisome at times. In the last act of *Tristan*, the hero spends forty-five minutes reviewing his past life in a musical March of Time before he finally expires. Only the fanatical Wagnerite does not confess to becoming restless during this scene, and during the hour-long Sunday school preaching of Gurnemanz the High Priest in the first act of *Parsifal*, and the endless soliloquy of Wotan, King of the Gods, in *Die Walküre*. On the other hand, the thrilling ride of the Walküre, the fire music when Brunnhilde is hedged about with protecting flames until the fearless Siegfried comes to her rescue, the orchestral rustle of the woodland, with the clear soprano bird-song to interrupt

it as Siegfried sets forth on his adventures, the Good Friday Spell in *Parsifal*, and other rewarding moments compensate. There is no lightness or humor in these operas, which are serious, not to say ponderous, from beginning to end. *Die Meistersinger* was Wagner's one foray into humor. Here he condescended to laugh, or at least to smile. Possibly the general lack of humor marks him as the perfect *Führer*.

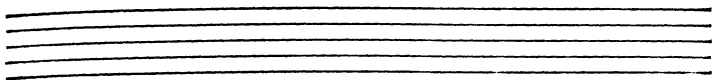
After Wagner, the deluge of imitators. Richard Strauss is the most successful of these, the Strauss of tone-poem and art-song, talents which lent themselves readily to the opera form. His tragedies *Salome* and *Elektra* are dark with Wagnerisms, and his comedy *Rosenkavalier*, like *Die Meistersinger*, has symphonic orchestration to support its humorous plot, gay waltzes and lyric arias. The latest notable contribution is Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. Like Wagner, Berg wrote his own text, and stressed the part of the orchestra above the voices, employing ultra-modern dissonance vaguely reminiscent of the most daring of Wagner's harmonies.

A music drama of the twentieth century which, to its everlasting credit, remained outside of the Wagnerian orbit, is Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Other operas are to *Pelléas* as the hard brilliance of diamonds to the softly glowing pearl. A mystical opera, it creates and maintains its illusion so subtly that the audience, transported to another world, questions not what magic has effected the miracle. No thunderous deities, no heroes armed with non-shatterable swords, nor heroines to be won by the heavyweight champion, no sonorous climaxes in orchestra

or voice are to be found in this gossamer creation. One thinks and speaks of it with bated breath, for it represents all that is gentle and innocent, reserved and aloof, elusive and mysterious. Its murmurous silences pregnant with meaning, the seemingly vague orchestral background for voices equally vague, the dialogue sung almost conversationally, the consistently silvery color make it a unique work. Its strange quiet is like a prolonged benediction. When Golaud, Mélisande's husband, tortured by jealousy of his young brother Pelléas, drags Mélisande across the floor by her long golden hair to make her confess, she only murmurs plaintively, "Je ne suis pas heureuse" (I am not happy), probably the most pronounced understatement ever made on the operatic stage. The whole opera is one long understatement.

Composers of all nations have attempted the difficult but rewarding operatic form. The library of the Paris Opéra contains hundreds of scores, placed there because of their merit, which have nevertheless not been produced. Some American composers have won enthusiastic if transitory success. Italians other than those mentioned including Puccini, Leoncavallo, and Mascagni have continued on Verdi's line. The Russian Moussorgsky's *Boris Godunoff* is one of the most barbarically splendid of the modern contributions. One could go on and on; there is an opera to fit every taste. You cannot expect to enjoy one opera as well as another, nor even to sit in a state of continuous rapture through the few with which you may be familiar. The alliance of the arts here is too complex to permit of near-perfection in every department simul-

taneously with every other. The most you can hope for is to enjoy the high spots, endure the low, and make of the whole a richer experience by the intelligent attention you bestow upon each part of it.



XII

THE BALLET

AS POPULAR as the opera has become in America, just so unpopular did its first cousin, the ballet, remain for many years, and on much the same ground—it is too artificial for forthright Americans. Opera is orchestra plus voice and drama, ballet might be described either as opera minus voice, or orchestral music plus dancing. Those pluses and minuses hardly afford sufficient explanation for the torpid interest in ballet here, nor for its omission from most discussions of the various forms of music. For the musical element is decidedly worthy of consideration, with or without the choreographic art which makes the dancers' every move a feast for the eye.

Concerning the prejudice against the dance *per se*, several explanations present themselves. The Puritans who frowned upon the doings around the maypole at Merry-mount back in the sixteen hundreds were a prolific lot, whose descendants inherited the frown along with the other sterling qualities of that first censorship committee. Their conviction that the dancing foot is of necessity a cloven hoof persists, not alone in religious circles, but in

many good people who, if charged with it, would stoutly deny any such carry-over. An additional cause for prejudice is that ballet dancing has long been regarded as a sissy art, to which no hundred percent American male gives countenance. As a profession, he shuns it, leaving it, as the Germans leave children, church and cooking, to the women. The most positive arguments against the ballet are brought forward, however, when people unearth old memories. Perhaps it was the dancing class to which they were dragged in their youth, scrubbed and protesting, on those sunny Saturdays when all outdoors invited them. Or they recall with a squirm the "treats" to children's pantomimes and ballets, where adipose fairies galumphed gracelessly across a badly simulated stage fairyland; where a child toe-dancer in dirty white tarlatan skirt performed an interminable and boring *pas seul*; or where animals in hideous masks leaped and bounded intimidatingly, scaring them out of their wits. The *Dance of the Hours* from *La Gioconda* performed by an earnest troupe at the Hippodrome some years ago left a permanent distaste for concerted ballet in many a young spectator. Perhaps it was one of these who, during the period in New York when the Albertina Rasch ballet was appearing in every musical play, was heard to murmur at one of them, "Good heavens, are they breaking out in another Albertina Ras(c)h? I'm going home."

The opera is responsible for some of the prejudice against the ballet, because opera ballets have not been all they should. When, early in the nineteenth century, ballet divertissements, so-called, were introduced, there was not much attempt to assimilate them into the body of the

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opera. They remained an extra limb, *dangling*, a little awkwardly, as though they didn't quite know why they were there. Even so, at that time the demand for ballet in opera was insistent, especially in Paris, where the popularity of an opera depended in great measure upon its ballet. The very moment when the dancers were to flit from the wings was decreed by the fashionable audience. It had to be during the second act, in order that those who lingered over their coffee and cigars during the "unimportant" first act might not miss the ballet for which they attended the opera. That the art should suffer under such a system was inevitable. Dramatic and musical unity often had to be disregarded. Extra music was hastily written and inserted by the composer if he happened to have omitted to include it in the first place. When Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was first produced in Paris, in the middle of the century, it contained no ballet since in his opinion none was called for. The protest was immediate and vociferous. Bowing to the clamor, he grudgingly inserted one, but added insult to injury by placing it in the first act. The Jockey Club, a group of Parisian dandies, staged a small riot at the performance, with hissing and catcalls to express their displeasure, and *Tannhäuser* was actually withdrawn for a time on that account. Yet, despite this inauspicious beginning, the dance of the houris of the Venusberg in *Tannhäuser* is a rewarding addition to the opera, both as music and dance. The inconsistencies of some other ballets with the operas are more pronounced. The music to which the Egyptian priests in Verdi's *Aïda* perform their solemn dance, effective as it is, is more Italian than Egyptian; the Kermesse in Gounod's *Faust*,

which should be a Flemish peasant dance, is, in part at least, a French salon waltz; in Moussorgsky's *Boris Godunoff*, an opera of medieval Russia, the court dances to a nineteenth century tune. And so it goes. Great ballet troupes may bring their all to the opera, but unless the music supports their efforts, they cannot convince the public of the sincerity and integrity of their art.

Prejudices are doubly amusing if you consider the origin of the ballet. It started as a religious manifestation, a dance of religious ecstasy toned down to solemnity by the priests. In ancient Egypt, religious dancers were called *awalín*, or wise ones. In ancient Greece, the worship of the gods through the dance was an honorable and beautiful custom. Nothing in these religious beginnings ought to bring a furrow to the brow of the Puritan. Along with the altar ballet, the folk dance of the people flourished, so also, as time went on, did the dignified pirouettes of the aristocratic salon. In the medieval period, they all influenced one another, and inspired a dance art fit for the court of a king, which is exactly where it took up its abode. Louis XIV of France tripped the light fantastic toe to the tunes of Lully and Couperin until his embonpoint banished the lightness, and he had to compensate by ordering ballets specially written for the theater, where he could view them at his ease from the royal loge. Meanwhile, ballroom dancing became freer and more democratic. The waltz wave which swept Europe in 1800 carried aristocrat, bourgeois, and proletarian off, or rather, onto their feet. Polkas, mazurkas and square dances vied with the waltz, and all influenced the formal ballet. In the same way, the jazz of

today is syncopating its way into the so-called classic dance.

France did her part, but to venerable Russia goes the credit for the modern ballet in all its glory. For many years, Russia surpassed all other countries in developing the art of the dance. The Russians had theaters supported by the state. They had composers who were ready and willing to turn out music as directed by the choreographers connected with those theaters, music with the virtue of having been written expressly for the purpose for which it was used. They had large Imperial ballet schools in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, public schools of the dance, to which poor as well as rich might come for training. All the students were rigorously drilled, and since in Russia the ballet was not marked "for ladies only," men as well as women played prominent parts in the ballet company.

When, early in the 1900's then, a genius like Diaghileff appeared on the scene, he found in Russia, his native land, fine material ready to his hand for the execution of his ideas. And such ideas as he had! Their imaginative extravagance and originality shook the conservative walls of the Marinsky Theatre, where dancers impeccably trained in the tradition of classic ballet by the Frenchman Petipa were pirouetting and entre-chatting as ballet dancers always had. Diaghileff envisaged something freer, more dramatic, and infinitely more lavish in pictorial effect. He went to Paris, the land of the brave and the home of the free in art, taking with him not only his ideas, but an admirable troupe of dancers, including the choreographer Michel Fokine, the artist-designers Léon Bakst and Alex-

andre Benois, and the composer and conductor, Alexander Tcherepnin. In the life of the star Nijinsky, written by his wife, there is a vivid account of those days in Paris when great ballets were being born. Upon the groundwork laid down during the twenty years from 1909 to Diaghileff's death in 1929, is erected the best in ballet today. Many of the creations conceived in that decade are danced by successors and imitators, while the gorgeous choreography and specially arranged or composed music have served as models for new works.

Those to whom music is primarily an emotional experience were overwhelmed by the impact of these highly expressive dances. There was nothing merely pretty or superficially pleasing about the Diaghileff ballets. They were not a series of classic posturings, interesting only to the initiated, but dramatic, highly moving, continuous emotional experiences conveyed by pantomime and music. The pantomime provided a set of deeply realized associations which could not but intensify the reaction to the music. Pygmalion loving his Galatea into life was no more a miracle worker than Diaghileff vitalizing the ballet into a genuine emotional experience.

The impetus Diaghileff gave to the composition of ballet music was incalculable. When he found existing scores that could be rearranged or orchestrated for his purpose, he thankfully seized upon them, and many of his well-known creations were danced to the works of Chopin, Schumann, Tchaikowsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Weber, Scarlatti, Cimarosa, Handel, Fauré, Rossini and Strauss. On the other hand, he commissioned from comparatively unknown young men works which turned out to

be masterpieces. He supplied the golden spark that fired their ballet talent. He may be said to have made a great man of Stravinsky. Works by De Falla and Prokofieff, by Debussy, Ravel and other young Frenchmen, flowed into the Diaghileff international reservoir. After the World War, the group of young originals in France who called themselves "Le Six" wrote many works for him. The comparative effectiveness of the ballet danced to ready-made as compared with made-to-order music is debatable, but there is cause for gratitude in the fact that the needs of the ballet should have provided an incentive for so many talented composers. Under the supreme test of playing the music without the accompanying dance, the best of these works maintain their appeal as especially colorful examples of program music. Their program is written in the dance.

An example of a ballet set to already existing music is Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Scheherazade*. Here no liberties were taken with the highly pictorial music, but the story was altered from the narrative of young love supplied by the composer to a passionate tragedy which seemed to Diaghileff to express the music more completely, although the composer's family decidedly objected to it. The same barbaric quality, without the tragedy, is found in the Polovtsian dances from Borodin's opera, *Prince Igor*, which were lifted bodily from the opera and performed by the Russian troupe to applause as tumultuous as the ballet itself. The music called upon the male dancers to perform those incredible leaps in which they seemed to cover the entire stage in a single bound, creating a mood of savage

exultation which recurs whenever you hear the music, once you have witnessed the ballet.

There are numerous examples of music especially created for ballet use. Before Diaghileff came on the scene, Tchaikowsky had tried his hand at supplying the pupils of Petipa at the Imperial Ballet School with some music, explaining, "I wrote it partly because I wanted the money, but also because I had long had a wish to try my hand at this kind of music." It was a successful experiment. *Le Lac des Cygnes* (The Swans' Lake), is an arresting combination of a romantic tale with the ultra-romantic music Tchaikowsky so well knew how to write. He followed it with *La Belle au Bois Dormant* (The Sleeping Beauty), and the perennially popular *Casse-Noisette* (Nut-Cracker) Suite. This amusing fairy-tale is the story of the toys that came to life on Xmas Eve and staged a mock battle in which a nutcracker, saved from defeat by its owner, Marie, is transformed into a prince, and flies with her to the court of the Sugar-plum Fairy. At the court, a series of dances is held in their honor, containing an Overture, a March, a *Danse de la Fée Dragée* (Dance of the Sugar-plum Fairy), *Danse Espagnole* (Spanish Dance, also called *Chocolat*), *Danse Chinoise* (Chinese Dance, also called *Thé*), *Danse Arabe* (Arabian Dance, also called *Café*), a *Trepak* (Russian National Dance), a *Danse des Mirlitons* (Dance of the Kazoos), all ending with the charming *Valse des Fleurs* (Waltz of the Flowers). The dances are most attractive, the music, gay, humorous and light, is utterly pleasing.

These were drops from a faucet which Diaghileff turned on full force. The first work he commissioned from the

then young Stravinsky was the orchestration of Chopin's piano prelude, Opus 28, No. 7 for Fokine's exquisite ballet, *Les Sylphides*. Having won success with this, Stravinsky embarked eagerly upon the composition of the music for *L'Oiseau de Feu* (The Fire-Bird), a fairy-tale ballet aglow with youth and innocence. It is in four parts. In the first, the gallant prince Ivan, while hunting, enters the enchanted garden of the magician Kastchei the Deathless, where he captures a beautiful bird with wings of flame. Moved by her pleading, he releases her, retaining only one feather in token of her gratitude. This incident is described in the score by means of delicate harmonies on the strings, blended with the cool notes of the celesta which sounds like a delicate xylophone and looks like a small piano. Capricious rhythms and a faster tempo enliven the music upon the entrance of the Fire-bird. Then, in Part II, as Ivan hides behind a tree, the princesses held captive by Kastchei enter and perform a round dance to the tune of a Russian peasant song. While the oboe carries the melody, the harp and strings throb sympathetically in accompaniment, a gentle idyll in contrast with what follows. For Part III, the entrance of the magician Kastchei, is signalized by a clash and clangor expressive of the grotesque and fantastic rout of monsters who accompany him. When Kastchei detects the presence of Ivan, he threatens to strike him dead, but the Fire-bird's feather wards off the spell, and she herself returns in time to cast a counter spell of slumber on the magician. To filmy harmonies under a bassoon lullaby, Ivan and his princess escape. In Part IV, their wedding is celebrated, a traditional Russian wedding to the sound of a folk song

glorified by the orchestra into a resounding paean of hope and joy.

Petrushka, Stravinsky's next response to Diaghileff's command, was in striking contrast to the comparatively naïve *Fire-Bird*. Like the wooden doll Pinocchio whose adventures as unfolded in Collodi's book are dear to the hearts of the children of today, *Petrushka* is a puppet, endowed by the showman, his master, with an abortive mind and heart. The ballet is a story of puppet love. It ends in tragedy when *Petrushka*, pursued from the puppet booth, is cut down by his rival, the Moor who has won the heart of his beloved ballerina. But the showman displays the sawdust body of *Petrushka* to the alarmed crowd at the fair, who have witnessed the murder. "You see," says the showman, "he was only a puppet." Meanwhile, the ghost of *Petrushka*, wan and despairing, appears above the booth, waving disconsolate arms in protest. In the orchestra a trumpet squawks weakly as the limp body falls lifeless upon the roof. *Petrushka* is the symbol of man in unequal combat with circumstances over which he has no control, the unoffending victim of forces stronger than himself. He has a pathos only partially realized in the music. For Stravinsky wrote this ballet with a cool objectivity which indicates that the plight of his hero does not move him as did the tale of the Fire-bird. The music, carefully calculated, mechanically inventive, is surprisingly unemotional. Possibly he became obsessed with the problem of carrying into music the movements of automata, or possibly the trivial happenings which culminate in disaster are not sufficient to shake him out of his Russian fatalism. He seizes every opportunity for humor, and

nowhere is a more mirth-provoking musical incident to be found than in the love dance between the ballerina and the Moor, wherein the ungainly fellow steps on her feet to heavy dark chords in the bass, while her twinkling white toes are artfully pictured in the treble. In contrast with the puppet music are the folk melodies and street songs which reflect the milling of the crowds around the puppet booth before and after the show, the hurdy-gurdy with its patient dancing bear, the rhythmic evolutions of nursemaids, coachmen and grooms, the comic lurching of the drunken merchant, and the provocative dance of his gipsy companions.

Still another facet of Stravinsky's art is displayed in *Le Sacre du Printemps* (The Rites of Spring), inspired by *The Golden Bough*, Frazer's book on savage superstitions and taboos. It represents a primitive sacrificial rite in which, after games and dances by the entire company, a young girl is led into their circle. Her head crowned with leaves and a basket of Spring flowers in her hand, she dances continuously in a sort of ecstasy, beginning vigorously, growing slow and faltering as she weakens, until she falls to the ground from exhaustion. As her lifeless body is carried off, the others break out in a wild celebration, more abandoned than anything that has preceded, with every indication of the thoughts toward which a young man's fancy lightly turns in the Spring. The *Sacre* is the most uncorseted of ballets. When it was first performed in Paris, women fainted and the audience was worked up to such a pitch that quiet was restored with difficulty. The music is savagely frenetic. The rhythmic shuffling of many feet determinedly dancing the chosen

victim to her doom is heard in the basses, steady and inexorable, mounting in intensity until the moment when she falls to the ground. The orgiastic rites with which the others then welcome the Spring create an excitement faithfully registered in wild excursions of sound from the orchestra. This is music which lifts lifelong repressions, providing so drastic an emotional catharsis that no program notes are required, even without the ballet, to insure the proper, or improper, reception of its message.

Other ballets written by Stravinsky are *Le Chant du Rossignol* (The Song of the Nightingale), *Pulcinella*, *Les Noces* (The Wedding), *Apollon Musagète* (Apollo Musagète), *Mavra*, *Le Jeu aux Cartes* (The Card Game). With the three already mentioned, they have served as models for many contemporary composers, and may well become the nucleus of your own ballet experience, since they represent so congenial a union of music and choreography.

Debussy's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* is as coolly silvery as the *Sacre* is ardent. When Nijinsky arranged the dances which depicted the pursuit of nymphs by an amorous faun, he saw them as two-dimensional, the figures presenting themselves only in profile, like bas-reliefs on a Greek vase. The filmy music, which suggested sighing trees, a plashing mountain stream, and the plaintive piping of the faun, is likewise two-dimensional, and the effect of the whole is exquisite. *Jeux* and *Le Martyre de Saint Sebastian*, the latter danced by the famous Ida Rubinstein, are others by the same unerring hand.

Another of the ballets composed for Diaghileff which has found lasting fame is De Falla's *El Sombrero de Tres Picos* (The Three-Cornered Hat). Gorgeously set by the

famous Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, danced by Leonid Massine and the superb Diaghileff company, alive with gypsy vitality in such native dances as the vito, jota and farruca, this ballet did not confine itself to the castanet clashing, stamping, twirling and shawl waving which usually pass for Spanish dancing. Carl Van Vechten said of it, "The dancers evolve the most elaborately intricate rhythms, creating a complexity of effect that defies any comprehensible notation on paper." They were inspired by music no less intricate and expressive. When De Falla agreed to rewrite for Diaghileff a little pantomime piece which he had already sketched, he brewed a compound of all the gaiety, drama and color inherent in a comic tale. The Miller, jealous of his seductive wife, resents the advances made to her by the elderly governor in his three-cornered hat. She encourages the governor in order to tease—and test—her husband, and a series of humorous misunderstandings ensue, which culminate in the governor's being given a good drubbing by the miller's friends. As a climax, his three-cornered hat is trampled upon, final symbol of his discomfiture. This is one of the jolliest and most alluring of ballets. The scenes flash by in dazzling succession. The miller's dance suggests all of his conflicting emotions, his wife's coquetry is expressively indicated, and the villagers twirl with irrepressible gaiety.

When, as an innovation, certain dancers converted well-known symphonies to the uses of the ballet, they raised a hornets' nest about their ears. *Les Présages*, danced to Tchaikowsky's *Fifth Symphony*, and *Choreartium* to Brahms' *Fourth*, caused many music-lovers to raise the cry of desecration. What right had the dancers, they

asked, to turn the symphony to such base uses? The ballet, they asserted, is not needed to interpret a symphony, which requires no interpretation, and furthermore, to dance a symphony is to gild the lily. That controversy is in the past. The danced symphony has been accepted. When Isadora Duncan brought Beethoven's *Seventh* to this country, after dancing it abroad, and put into its projection all of her artistic skill, she not only created a furor, but endeared the symphony to many who had shied off from it before it was presented to them in this form. To conceive a dance worthy of a symphony is difficult, but not impossible. There must be no stumbling or halting, but a splendid sweep in the grand manner, a true fusion of the choreography with the great implications in the music. As Ernest Newman put it, "The dance must run in harness with the sequence of shapes and moods in the music."

Ballet is not to be regarded as a sugar-coating for absolute music, but rather as one very delightful form of program music. It clarifies the composer's intention for those of you who are more eye than ear-minded. It gives those who love music primarily for its rhythm a field day, a physical and musical experience shared with masters of rhythm. American composers are increasingly finding in the composition of ballet music a congenial medium. Henry Gilbert's negro ballet, *In the Place Congo*, John Alden Carpenter's *Skyscrapers*, *Krazy Kat* and *Birthday of the Infanta*, Virgil Thompson's *Filling Station*, Paul Bowles' *Yankee Clipper*, Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid*, Herbert Kingsley's *Terminal*, Kay Swift's *Alma Mater*, Elliot Carter's *Pocahontas*, Robert McBride's *Show Place*,

and numerous others are evidence of the upswing in ballet interest in this country. Building on the Diaghileff tradition, they are evolving a realistic, highly humorous, indigenous art which is bringing the ballet into high repute.

Further evidence of this advance is to be found in the popularity of ballet companies, native and imported. The School of the American ballet had as one of its offshoots the Ballet Caravan, which specialized in performances of the works of American composers. Others are the American Ballet Company, under the supervision of Georges Balanchine, and Dance Players, led by Eugene Loring. Numerous workers' groups are presenting in ballet form their ideas for social betterment. The Chauve-Souris Company, with its interpolated bits of Russian ballet and its beloved *March of the Wooden Soldiers* came with the genial Balieff from Russia a decade ago. The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, with Massine, pays frequent visits. Shankar and his East Indian troupe, whose movements are the essence of grace and whose native music is a marvel of varied rhythm and exotic melody, will not soon be forgotten. The Jooss ballet and the Mary Wigman groups bring their interpretation of music past and present. Martha Graham and her dancers have made notable contributions, likewise Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, Angna Enters and Agnes De Mille. There is no dearth of ballet presentations. And while you look and listen, you may find yourself agreeing with Havelock Ellis that "Dancing is the loftiest, the most loving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is no mere translation or abstract from life, it is life itself."

XIII

HOME MUSIC

A FAVORITE story in musical circles tells of a newly rich lady who engaged a string quartet to play at her first evening party. She was completely overwhelmed when four artists presented themselves, for she expected a one-man show. No less well-intentioned and ill-informed was the very effusive lady who approached the first violinist of a string quartet group after a performance, gushing, "Oh, that was *so* lovely! Does your quartet also play the Tchaikowsky Fifth *Symphony*?" While, on that same evening, a young man came up to the second violinist and asked timidly, "Please, Sir, may I examine your instrument? I've always wanted to know what a second violin looks like, and in what respect it differs from a first."

This trio of stories is told to illustrate a few of the misconceptions about chamber music, which need not be so mysterious as the stories would seem to indicate. On the contrary, it is cozy, intimate music for the home, and once you are in the know, it becomes to you one of the most satisfactory forms of home music in existence. Not that the day is past when you listen, appreciatively or resign-

edly, while the daughter of the house renders a selection on the piano after being sufficiently coaxed. The parlor vocalist, too, still has her place, a considerable one. And far be it from me to decry the joys of group singing around a piano, or in the close harmony of a vocal quartet. The beginning of many a beautiful friendship for music is to be found in such gatherings. But the joy of chamber music for home consumption transcends them all, so great is the variety of instrumental combinations, and so large the body of literature by the finest composers available for such combinations. Chamber music—from the Italian *musica da camera*—is music intended for a room, (in Italian *camera* means room or chamber) as distinguished from concert music. You can readily see how so large and loose a classification permits of latitude in the kind and number of works included. Yet chamber music seems to frighten the very people who would most enjoy and profit from its acquaintance. They regard it as a special art with which they have no concern, not as ideal food for home consumption by music-hungry laymen. The small number of performers, the intimate character of the music, and the circumstances under which it is performed are a direct invitation to friendship. The impression that none but Ph.D.'s in music are worthy to receive its message is unfair. Designated as "the delight of the performing amateur and of the listening connoisseur" it appeals also to a large group of non-connoisseurs to whom the "consort of sweet sounds" of a string quartet or other small group may become a source of infinite delight.

The explanation of the aristocratic aloofness associated with chamber music is not far to seek. It was born in the

dwelling places of the wealthy. As late as 1843, a Mr. Henry Banister published in London a snobbish little volume called "Domestic Music for the Wealthy, or a Place for the Art and its Professors." But there is no reason why it must remain among the wealthy. The drawing-rooms of kings and princes of the church and state in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries resounded to sonatas for one or more instruments, to duets, trios, quartets and small orchestras in all manner of combinations. The music for these entertainments was especially commissioned and great composers flocked to kiss the hand of patronage thus extended to them. Some even attached themselves to princely households, and since they thus gained an incentive to write some of the loveliest works in musical literature, they did not object to the arrangement. It must be said for the patrons of the past, that they made an effort to keep up with the Joneses in the number of compositions their pet composers presented to them, so the crop was bountiful. There are composers to-day who look longingly upon those days of kindly patrons, for then at least a man could be sure that what he wrote would be performed, that he would have a hand in the performance, and that he would not starve.

Most favored of those who basked in the sun of patronage was Franz Joseph Haydn, who for over thirty years held a steady job in the household of the benign Prince Esterhazy, whose court patronized home music with a vengeance. For performance in the prince's spacious salon, Haydn wrote eighty-three string quartets, besides any number of trios, sonatas, and orchestral works. He set the feet of the string quartet on the richly carpeted floor of

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the salon, but he also set them on the classic path along which they have led other composers. And best of all, the works he turned out in such abundance for his patron delight present-day listeners as much as they did the satin-knickerbockered and bewigged gentlemen of their own day. His was the first twenty-four carat metal in the golden age of chamber music, which he inaugurated, and which Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert continued.

You will recognize a Haydn quartet by several marks. Aside from the clarity with which the sonata form is used, previously alluded to, and the naïve joy of living which pervades them, they give the first violinist very great importance, so that at first hearing you may receive the impression that a string quartet is a piece written for a leading violin and subdued accompanying strings. As a matter of fact, the ideal string quartet acknowledges the first and second violins, the viola and cello which compose it, to be free and equal, and partitions the musical material among them with the utmost justice possible in a fallible world. The composers who followed Haydn worked to this end, and by comparing their works with his you may determine their degree of success in achieving it.

Mozart was so grateful to him for the spade-work he had done that he inscribed to Haydn six of his finest string quartets. He always maintained that from Haydn he learned all that he knew about this form of writing. The complete list of chamber music by Mozart covers three and a half printed pages of a sizable encyclopedia, proving him a highly receptive disciple. Mozart delighted also in groups somewhat larger than a quartet—septets, octets, nonets, and so on. He also employed horns and wood-

winds with the strings most effectively—his clarinet quintet is a striking instance of the beautiful blending of string and clarinet tones. And it is difficult to see how his twenty-six string quartets could be improved. They are clear and clean, yet full of the warmth of subjective emotional expression. A little short one which he wrote at the age of fifteen, K No. 156 in G major is an excellent one for you to hear at once, simpler and more comprehensible than his great C major quartet, but with the same kind and degree of charm. Whether he catalogues his other chamber works as divertimenti, serenades, or marches, they have under their sparkle a certain depth of thought and feeling which is absent from Haydn's works of the same order. You will hear few programs of chamber music, either in private or in public, which do not offer you a draught from the bubbling spring of Mozart.

Beethoven and Schubert also acknowledged their indebtedness to Haydn, although they did not put their acknowledgment in the form of a dedication. Beethoven had patrons, with whom he quarreled to his sorrow, even going so far as to call his most influential supporter, Prince Lobkowitz, a donkey. But the names of Count Razumofsky and of Prince Lobkowitz, wealthy nobles both, took more luster from their inscription by Beethoven on quartets than from the achievements of the men who bore them. These quartets are the wonder of chamber music. Between the six limpid early quartets, Opus 18, and the complexities of the mature Opus 135 lies a lifetime of suffering. There are sixteen quartets, an eloquent record of Beethoven's growth and development.

The string quartet, like the symphony, consists of

the usual four movements, the first in sonata form, the others optionally in the sonata or some other form, with the exception of the third movement, which is called the menuetto or scherzo, and has an attendant trio. The menuetto is a dance-like figure in two sections, each of which is repeated; then a new little section occurs, in a different key and of an entirely different character, known as the trio, followed by a return to the menuetto, which is then played through without repetition. It was the menuetto which Beethoven transformed into the meatier and more substantial scherzo, altering, without destroying, its original character. The string quartet is the most typical, readily attainable, and purest form of room music, and many of the observations about it apply equally well to other combinations of instruments. When Beethoven wrote string quartets, he displayed a Jovian impartiality in the assignment of parts to the different instruments. In fact, before a first performance of one of his works, he wrote to each member of the Schuppanzigh Quartet to "outshine his fellows in the way he played the solo sections," of which there were enough to keep each player on the alert. Not only are the parts justly divided, but the whole forms a succession of chords in marvelous harmony, while at the same time each voice speaks for itself. Every nuance is marked meticulously. You will hear frequently a *forte*, followed by a *piano subito*, a sudden softness, an immediate soft note or passage with no decrease in volume leading up to it. This effect he uses repeatedly and most expressively. Not that he disdains *crescendi* and *diminuendi*—he orders them scrupulously whenever he wishes them—but the

piano subito is his own device, which none other employs as he did. The Beethoven Adagios attain such sublimity, especially in the quartets he wrote in later life, as to cause a hearer to murmur reverently, "By their Adagios shall ye know them." A number of eminent quartet groups have given series of all the Beethoven quartets, playing two or three at a session, and those who care to listen have thus had a rare opportunity to familiarize themselves with these works. If string quartets pall, there are any number of other chamber music combinations from his pen which bring his great spirit directly into the home.

Franz Schubert's quartets are not written with the same close absorption in the distribution of the four parts as are Beethoven's. More unison passages for two instruments are found, thinning the harmonies, and the first violin has a tendency to elope with most of the song-like melodies, leaving a monotonous tum-tum for the others, especially the cello. He could not resist supplying titles to several, based on songs he had already written. Thus the *Quartet in D minor* has as the main theme of the slow movement his immortal song, *Death and the Maiden*. By that name the quartet is known and played at gatherings ranging from funerals to soirées. The *Quintet for Piano, Bass Viol, Violin, Viola and Cello*, based on his song, *Die Forelle* (The Trout) is a thing of flashing, leaping beauty and grace, like the trout it celebrates, its slow movement presenting a series of variations one lovelier than another. The *Quintet for Two Cellos, Violins, and Viola*, with its ineffable slow movement, has a message for all with an ear for noble melody. Schubert produced these, and other such works, with much less encouragement

Home Music

than his more fortunate predecessors. He was poor and unknown, and not very bright about picking up patrons. His chamber music works have faults. They are over-long and repetitious; like many after-dinner speakers, he had no terminal facilities. But they contain whole sections of writing so smooth and lovely, so song-like and complete, that you will willingly sit through their less felicitous moments.

The gift of melody was not denied to Schumann and Mendelssohn either, and both of them displayed it freely in their chamber music. Schumann deserted his beloved piano long enough to write some quartets, but his most successful work of this kind is the *Piano Quintet*, wherein the strings cluster around that instrument with all the devotion of a family of children around the mother. As for Mendelssohn, he wrote piano trios, string quartets, and ensembles with wind instruments, but he frankly preferred the orchestra for the pictorial effects he delighted in. Nevertheless, his *Octet for Strings* is the delight of chamber music players, the fugue finale in which the instruments enter one after another in a merry chase being a type of musical gauntlet-running which has caused many a performer to bite the dust.

Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, themselves a quartet of no mean order, form a closed corporation in chamber music. Berlioz, Chopin and Liszt provided home music of a different order, particularly Chopin and Liszt, whose piano pieces have enlivened many a quiet evening within four walls. They wore blinders, however, to shut out the temptation, if temptation it was, to write the sort of works initiated by the illustrious four. Such blinders

did not sit well on Brahms. Despite his interest in other forms, he bestowed passionate concentration upon violin and cello sonatas, trios, string and piano quartets and other combinations. His chamber music works have the Rembrandtesque texture associated with his symphonies, not too thick, since he thinned down his harmonies just enough to make them suitable for their medium without any loss of Brahmsian sonority. In combining strings with piano, he permits the piano to pour out its heart with a horn-of-plenty abundance, while at the same time he assigns to the strings harmonies of a depth and darkness which enable them to hold their own against that heavy instrument.

Some enthusiasts object to the combination of strings with the piano, saying that the percussion breaks the spell woven by the strings. See how you feel about that when you hear, first a string quartet, then a piano trio or quartet. Undoubtedly, in the latter, a combination of skilful writing and tactful performance is required to secure even a qualified balance of sound. With a pianophile as a composer and a determined virtuoso assigned to play the piano part, it follows as the night the day that the piano dominates, that the strength of ten fingers on the piano is as the strength of twenty on the strings, and that the latter sound as a timid accompaniment to a not always interesting solo. This is not chamber music in the finest sense. Never forget that in these small combinations, every man's voice should be heard equally with every other's. You should be able to hear each part as an individual thread, as well as an integral part of the harmony, and every fragment of melody should sound authorita-

tively above the rest for the brief moment it remains with one instrument or another. One of the great fascinations of chamber music is the fact that it is possible by careful listening to follow its dual life, first as a succession of melodious and logical chords, then as a combination of melodious, individual voices.

When a woodwind is combined with the strings, as in the clarinet quintets of Mozart and Brahms, or a Bach suite for flute and string orchestra, the reedy tone of the wind is so prominent that only at such times as it is allotted a few measures' rest do the strings really come into their own. Yet the woodwind provides a fine coloratura, playing about among the other voices, or soaring above them.

A young man who had always avoided classical music once allowed himself, in default of other escort, to be dragged to a concert of the famous Flonzaley Quartet, one of the finest groups that ever devoted itself to the cause of chamber music. Under the patronage of Edward de Coppet and the inspired leadership of Adolfo Betti, its first violinist, this organization gave public performances which were unique. The young man in question happened on one of these. To his utter amazement he sat enthralled from the first moment. As the strains of the Mozart *C Major Quartet* which headed the program died away, he stuttered excitedly, "I—I didn't know string quartets were like *this*. Why did nobody ever tell me?" Because it may be that nobody ever told you, either, I venture in inadequate words to give you an idea of the charm of this intimate music.

Go with me to the home of Mr. X, who throws open

his music room every Friday night to all who are willing to take musical potluck with him. Amateur and professional musicians come, bringing their instruments. The first violinist may be Heifetz or he may be a recent young graduate of a conservatory. It makes no difference, here both meet on common ground. The host has a large music library, and presently an animated discussion arises as to what is to be played, and who the performers are to be. On every piece he has noted in pencil when and by whom a composition was last played. This insures rotation, a favorite work not being repeated at too short intervals, nor by players who have previously had a go at it. Furthermore, it does not permit one who has played it before to excuse mistakes by pretending that "he is just reading it" and "never saw it before in his life."

Finally, the piece is chosen, the players singled out. They settle down in the center of the room, grouped around a lamp which throws light on the four music stands with the same impartiality the players are expected to maintain in performance. The rest of the room is in a semi-darkness to which the listeners silently retreat. Someone has said, "Let's start with an 'easy Haydn,' " and his quartet, Opus 64, No. 5, *The Lark*, has been chosen. The chooser overlooked the fact that this is a typical example of Haydn's propensity to make the first fiddle do most of the work—or perhaps he is playing first himself and wants to show what he can do. In the opening measure, the soaring theme from which the work takes its name is announced. Three quarter notes and a whole note, all of them of the same pitch, are followed by a jump to a sixth above, a melodious descent, and a throbbing trill,

leading to the cadence of the five-measure motive. The first violin, which has started the story, continues it, jealously clinging to its prerogative of leadership, throughout a first movement in typical sonata form, with a development section particularly rich in the bird-like runs and trills which justify the name of *The Lark*. The second movement is played, as the directions specify, Adagio, very slowly, Cantabile, like a song. It is for the most part soft and sweet, with a suggestion of sadness immediately dispelled by the jolly Menuetto and Trio. The Menuetto of *The Lark* has a cheery peasant swing, and is followed by a Finale played Vivace, very fast, very light, mostly with spiccato bowing. It requires perpetual motion from the first violinist, and solid support from the others, whose nimble fingers and bows supplement his in the rapid laughing passages with which the quartet gaily concludes.

As soon as the last note has died away, the talk comes to life. The players are surrounded. An enthusiast who is well acquainted with the piece embarks upon a critical monologue, interrupted by protests from the performers. He complains that the intonation wasn't always perfect; many chords sounded out of tune; why couldn't they have listened more carefully to one another? He quarrels with some of the dynamics, but compliments them upon the way they took the lovely soft *piano* ending of the first movement. The rhythmic accompaniment sounded uneven, and the structure wasn't always clear; didn't they recognize the various divisions of the sonata form? If the instruments which had the accompaniment had accented the first beat of each measure more decidedly, the rhythm would have held steadier. The balance, he

says, was none too good. Up to this point you have probably followed him, since dynamics and rhythm are an old story to you. But what is this about balance? You ask him to explain.

Balance is of the very essence of the string quartet. Like balance elsewhere, it consists of so weighing sounds against sounds that the scales tip evenly. It is a process of adjustment with the object of making each chord a rounded whole. It applies to all music, but in the string quartet, where no concealment of imperfection is possible, it is a matter for extra careful study. To secure balance, the four instruments must measure out quantity and quality of tone as if with a medicine dropper. The players should not only have instruments with a similar tone-quality, but they should practice together the exact part of the bow they will use, the exact degree of vibrato they will exercise, to secure unity. Furthermore, they should know the score by heart, so that they are aware which instrument is to sing out the theme, just how far they are to subordinate the accompaniment, just how much allowance they must make for the dynamics of a particular passage. They should be able either to lead or to follow, holding in their minds a clear picture of when and how to do certain things, and they must listen to one another as hawks watch their prey. Above all, they must listen. Many a good soloist falls by the wayside because he has not developed that ability. If he does not hear, how can he adjust the volume and quality of his own sound to that of the others, to secure the desired balance? When he has to echo a passage, how can he give an exact imitation if he has not listened with the utmost care? Again and

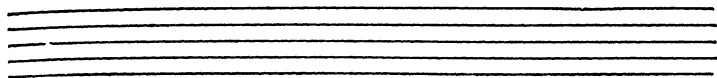
again in string quartets, the ball of melody is thrown from one instrument to the other without a break. There must be no departure from the balanced line other than that inherent in the individuality of instrument and player. Every cue must be snapped up unhesitatingly. A delicate business, and one which calls for super-acute ears if the balance of the quartet is to be maintained.

But the players are impatient to continue. They came to make music, not to talk about it. A distinguished pianist has just come in, and by way of contrast the Brahms piano quintet is placed upon the stands. It is an invitation few pianists can resist, and this one is no exception. In a few moments, the room is filled with the crashing chords of the opening. There is power and tragedy in that first movement, and a sonorous surge that fills every nook and cranny of the room. The broad lyricism of the second movement is pleasant after the stormy opening, especially as it is followed by a thunderous scherzo and an exciting finale. The Brahms quintet is strong meat, a work pressed down and running over with a wealth of material. You will not grasp it all at this hearing, nor at the next, but just enough of it to induce you to break into a cheer, along with the other guests, at its successful completion. By this time the crowd is thoroughly warmed up, and the preceding conversation is as nothing compared with the torrent of talk which now rushes forth. The players declare themselves to be both excited and exhausted by the music. Perhaps at this point the hostess tactfully suggests a temporary adjournment for the refreshments which are an invariable adjunct to a chamber music evening at home. Afterward, the playing goes on and on until the

wee small hours, and you will have no desire to tear yourself away until the last player has firmly packed up his instrument and departed.

If you can become acquainted with the classics of chamber music under conditions like these, your enjoyment is a foregone conclusion, and you will require little encouragement to browse further among the flowery fields where hosts of composers past and present have planted blooms for your plucking. Even though you may be able to enjoy them only in the less clubby concert hall, or on records, or over the air, their unquenchable "homeliness"—in the English sense—carries a direct appeal which you cannot resist, once you have awakened to it.

PART III
COMPOSERS AND THEIR WORKS



XIV

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS AND BE INFLUENCED BY COMPOSERS

THERE is no way of measuring the extent to which your feeling for a man's music is governed by your feeling toward the man himself. All judgments are more or less personal, even artistic ones, although we are loath to admit it. Yet it does not follow that, because you admire a composer's character, by the same token you enjoy his music, nor the converse. What is certain, however, is that understanding a composer as a man leads to a better understanding of him as a musician. This is true whether he pours forth "sweet strains of unpremeditated art" which seem to bear no relation to his private life, like Schubert, or whether his creative life is as autobiographical as Schumann's. The revelation to you of each one's music becomes a question of your success in divining his personal in relation to his artistic impulses. It is a fascinating field of exploration.

his workroom which shut out not only the sound of his sharp-tongued consort's voice, but all thought of her existence. In truth, he lived a double life. Before sitting down at his desk early in the morning, he dressed carefully, slipped on his finger the diamond and sapphire ring given him by his king, Frederick of Prussia, and with it forgetfulness of all save the music he wrote steadily for five or six hours without a break. He was superstitious about that ring. With it on his finger, his white wig carefully combed, black satin knickers pressed, ruffles at neck and wrist spotless, he reflected in his music the scrupulous neatness of his attire. That he should have been the man to prune and edit the orchestra and clarify the sonata form becomes wholly comprehensible, a logical result of the meticulous habits to which he adhered through all wifely attempts to disrupt them.

Had Bach not been more than an ordinary choir master and pedagogue, like those pedaling the organ in the churches of every little German village, his music would be no different from that of all the others. But Bach was a deeply religious man, so fervent that no profession of his abiding faith could be perfunctory. He was a family man; the survivors of the twenty children born to him gathered about him with their musical instruments in a family life that was harmonious in every sense. His tenderness toward them, and toward his young second wife, Anna Magdalena, he infused into his writing. The *Clavier Büchlein für Anna Magdalena Bachin, Anno 1722*, a book of little pieces written for and dedicated to her during their early married life as an aid to her efforts to play the piano, was a special tribute, which has delighted many

other beginning pianists. Essentially, he was a loving man, whose love reached out beyond the immediate personal relationships which it warmly enfolded to the greater love of the universe and the Almighty. Whether Bach rejoices, grieves, supplicates, or resigns himself to a will higher than his own, the abiding love in his heart casts its mantle over his musical utterances, gathering them into unity.

Whom else do you wish to know? There are so many, you cannot hope to become friendly, or even acquainted with them all. In the beginning, you had better concentrate on a few of the undeniably great figures of the past. They will serve as a nucleus for the expansion of your circle as time goes on. There was much beautiful and interesting music, there were many challenging composers before Palestrina and after Debussy. But for the present, it is expedient to allow these two to bound at opposite ends the list of those whose lives you will look into for the enhancement of your enjoyment of their music. Palestrina, Bach, Gluck, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn—perhaps Rossini—Brahms, Wagner, Verdi, Tchaikowsky and Debussy—there are deplorable gaps in the list, long as it may appear, but it must suffice as a beginning.

The bare bones of biography can be found in any encyclopedia or collection of thumb-nail sketches. A preliminary reading of one fixes your composer's nationality, place in history and the major facts of his life. But to recreate his personality, more, much more, is required. If your appetite for information has been sufficiently whetted, a book-length biography, possibly one in fictional form, is next in order. Like historical novels, such biog-

ographies can create for the layman an impression more lasting because of its picturesque vividness than that of a more erudite but less colorful book. Thus, Thayer's *Life of Beethoven* in three volumes, an admirable and thorough study of the greatest of composers, is less valuable for your immediate need than Romain Rolland's or Robert Haven Schauffler's less pedantic and more dramatic accounts. Last, but not least, read the letters of composers. They have a way of revealing interesting incidents omitted from biographies. Many of the men who are most eloquent in music are likewise prolific and entertaining letter-writers, notably Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Wagner. Their letters amplify the political, historical and musical background against which they functioned, and explain its connection with their own lives and their music. A list of books of biography and letters will be found at the end of this volume.

A leisurely perusal of the letters which Chopin wrote clearly illuminates the combination of ardent patriotism with susceptibility to feminine charm which dictated much of the music of this nostalgic Pole, who lived so much of his life in Paris that he appeared more French than the Parisians, yet ordered that some of the soil of his beloved Poland should be placed in his grave. He was versatile. From the trivial waltz he tossed off to please his mistress, George Sand, in honor of her pet dog chasing its tail, to the tragic *Revolutionary Étude*, wrung from him in his despair upon learning that Warsaw had been taken by the Russians, a whole range of pieces reflects his flitting moods. Passionately and spontaneously he poured into the piano

his reactions to the women he loved and hated, the politics he alternately applauded and deplored.

Wagner, too, was seriously affected by the political upheavals of the late nineteenth century. The sign in a German café, "Politics and Wagner may not be discussed here" linked two stormy subjects sure to provoke broken china and broken heads. In flight from political changes unfavorable to him, Wagner took refuge in Switzerland, where he composed the *Ring*. In the throes of love for his neighbor and patroness, Mathilde Wesendonck, he produced *Tristan und Isolde*. Picture him at the Asyl, his villa in Zurich, beret on head, craggy, irascible, yet with a driving power and charm that grappled his friends to him with hooks of steel. He sits in his study, playing the first draft of *Tristan* on the piano to Mathilde, and at the same time to Cosima, wife of his best friend Hans von Bülow whom she was shortly to leave to become Wagner's. That scene is vibrant with its participants' love and hate, passion and jealousy, as well as with the thunders of the music of *Tristan*. It was the kind of situation Wagner delighted in. Picture him struggling against financial odds, misunderstanding of his music, political chicanery, criticism of his morals, the jealousy of his unfortunate first wife Minna, who understood him not at all. He was a Gulliver in the toils of the Lilliputs. Wagner was a selfish, vain man of Gargantuan appetites, of whom it was said that he believed in renunciation for everybody but himself. His life was undoubtedly lived to an unusual degree around himself as the hero, to whom all else was sacrificed, for he was a play-actor who demanded the center of the stage first, last and all the time. From such a man

you must not expect delicacy or subtlety. He painted overwhelming oil canvases, but never a small portrait or delicate water-color.

Background, background. Political, historical, educational, sentimental, national—all are needed to round out the picture. Nationality is an interesting angle from which to approach your composer, for undoubtedly it plays a part as one ingredient, at least, in seasoning his writings. How potent its flavor is a moot question. The fact is that national idiom is elusive and indefinable, that it partakes of the spirit rather than the flesh. Music is known as the universal language, but it is a language of many dialects, the difference between one and another being a matter not of musical etymology but of feeling. French music is as unlike German as the French habit of life is unlike the German, yet to put one's finger on a spot and proclaim triumphantly, "Herein lies the difference" is impossible. The French have such a horror of boredom that they have brought upon themselves the accusation of superficiality. To them as a nation are attributed facile cleverness, quick wit, sense of humor and volatility of temperament. Fauré is selected by Eric Blom as being perhaps the ideal French musical ambassador, "his taste being greatly in excess of his mentality, his thought extremely tenuous but saved by his discretion from showing its triviality." This is a little hard on the French, whose receptivity to the promise of entertainment has made them the experimental station for many works which richly deserved recognition but which could not win a hearing from more conservative countries.

The Germans are such sticklers for law and order and adherence to rules that they ought logically to display a

reluctance to listen to anything which goes against the rules, and a tendency to sacrifice inspiration to procedure. Such is not the case, however. A certain extravagance in effects, and a leaning to mysticism are admittedly characteristic of German music. It is necessary to study the best men of both nations. National differences cannot be compounded without study of each individual composer, and hardly then. It is best to make no attempt to generalize about nationality, but listen closely and determine for yourself, if you can, whether French or German music is recognizable to you as such, and if so, on what points you base your recognition.

The stock Russian of drama and fiction is superstitious, dreamy and introspective, subject to fits of inconclusive philosophizing and self-pity which alternate with wild bursts of unrestrained gaiety. Check this picture against any Russian novel or play, and then listen to music picked at random from the catalogue of Russian composers. Tchaikowsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Moussorgsky and Borodin have many individual differences, the Soviet composers Shostakovitch and Mossolov write from quite another political and social angle, in up-to-date idiom. Does the Russian soul remain the same throughout, recognizable in all Russian music past and present because it is complex, agitated and unfathomable? It is for you to say.

The exploration of the national idiom is one approach ~~reluctant to listen to anything which goes against the~~ rules, and a tendency to sacrifice inspiration to procedure. Such is not the case, however. A certain extravagance in effects, and a leaning to mysticism are admittedly characteristic of German music. It is necessary to study the best men of both nations. National differences cannot be compounded without study of each individual composer, and hardly then. It is best to make no attempt to general-

Haydn, Handel and Mozart are of the classical tradition, Weber, Schumann, Schubert, Chopin and Liszt of the romantic, Beethoven a titanic half and half in both. Debussy created the impressionist school in music to match his friend Monet's in painting. Wagner fathered the music drama. Although groups overlap, and composers do not write consistently in the style you are led to expect, you can be guided—not too rigidly—by your knowledge of where to place them, their contemporaries and their followers in the whole grand pageant. Here is where dates are required to give you the orientation with other men of the period which is needed to increase your understanding of the composer under consideration. Although many of you have a revulsion against trying to remember the elusive figures which bound historical periods, you will find that holding on to a few dates will result in a more intelligent realization of your composer-friend's place in history.

Suppose you try getting acquainted with one of the great composers according to these suggestions. Take Franz Liszt, the Hungarian virtuoso-composer of the fascinating dual personality. On the one hand you see pictures of the benign Abbé Liszt, in black cassock and skull-cap, seeming to murmur his Catholic benediction from the printed page. On the other, you hear tales of his passionate nature, of the fury with which he flung himself at the piano, of his extra-curricular love affairs and illegitimate children, of his ardor in championing the "music of the future." Perhaps you hear a piece of his ultra-romantic music thundered by a pianist, or colorfully proclaimed by an orchestra. Perhaps you have swooned with emotion at the sentimental passages of the *Liebestraum*. Where, you ask,

is the Abbé in this music? His life offers some explanation of these contradictions.

Like Beethoven's, it divides itself into three periods. Born at Raiding, Hungary, on October 22, 1811, Franz was such a puny baby that his father had actually reached the point of ordering a little coffin when the infant rallied and decided to live. Thanks to the musical education provided by his father, and the interest of the Esterhazy family, to one of whom his father was steward, he played his first concert at the age of nine. Prince Nicholas Esterhazy was so impressed that he raised a subscription fund which enabled the boy to go to Vienna for further study with two great teachers, Salieri and Czerny. Here Beethoven heard him play, and imprinted on his young brow a laudatory kiss which has become historic, though there is no record of the boy's having worshipfully refused to wash the spot thereafter. As a child prodigy, he took Paris by storm in 1823, and for the next twelve years he made that city his headquarters, sallying forth on concert tours which were uniformly successful. These were the years when Paris idolized Chopin and Paganini, and when Berlioz was introducing the orchestral innovations that set the musical world agog. All were great technicians of the romantic school, and Liszt fell readily under their spell, declaring that he would like nothing better than to be known as the Paganini of the piano. He fell under a different kind of a spell when he met Mme. D'Agoult, the novelist who wrote under the pseudonym of Daniel Stern. It was love at first sight, though not first love for either of them. Liszt had already suffered one breakdown because of an unrequited passion for a sixteen-year-old country maiden, and

Mme. D'Agoult was married, although separated from her husband. However, the two eloped to Geneva, where they enjoyed eleven years of romantic companionship and produced three children before the cooling of their passion caused them to separate. During this period, Liszt the virtuoso flourished exceedingly, his tours taking him all over the world. Of him it might have been said, as it has been of Vladimir Horowitz in our own day, that when he played the piano, the wires smoked. He introduced a great many of his own piano compositions to the world, although he was canny enough not to force that point, but to place on his programs the works of contemporaries he admired. He was generous and tolerant to an unusual degree in extending both encouragement and substantial help. Causes as divergent as the relief of famine sufferers in Budapest and the completion of a Beethoven statue in Bonn found in him a generous donor of funds and personal service.

When, in 1847, three years after his parting with Mme. D'Agoult, he impulsively took as mistress the Princess Caroline Sayn-Wittgenstein, he entered upon a new phase of his career as well as his love-life. He ceased to roam about the earth playing the piano, and after spending some time at the Princess' Polish castle, settled in Weimar as conductor and musical director to the Grand Duke Alexander. Eleven years of prolific composition followed, during which he wrote most of his best-known works, including twelve of his symphonic poems, the form he initiated; the *Faust* and *Dante* symphonies; fifteen of his twenty *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, and a sheaf of smaller works. The encouragement he bestowed during these years upon his

friend Richard Wagner, who later married Cosima, his daughter by Mme. D'Agoult, reacted favorably upon his own talent as a composer, for the writings of his early years are insignificant when compared with the fruition during this Weimar period of concentration. Although Liszt conducted public concerts during this time, he did not attempt to juggle composing and piano-concertizing simultaneously, but wrote many orchestral and operatic pieces which he could himself produce at Weimar.

His religious excursion occurred when he was about fifty. He decided to make his peace with the church by marrying Princess Wittgenstein, but permission was refused him because of the opposition of her still living although estranged husband. The refusal did not cause Liszt to turn against the church in bitterness—perhaps it came as a relief! His Princess had grown stout, jealous and exacting. He settled in Rome for a period of prayer and meditation, and in 1865 took religious orders and the title of Abbé with them. The ritual of the church, the organ music and stained glass windows and rich processional so enthralled him, that oratorios and organ music claimed most of his creative energy for a few years, but apparently they did not satisfy him completely, for we find him returning to the fleshpots of Weimar and the artist's life in 1869. He did not forego the cassock and skullcap, which he found a picturesque addition to his wardrobe, but they proved no armor against worldly temptation. Middle-aged though he was, he embarked on a new series of romantic episodes which continued to the very end of his life.

His last years were devoted to teaching. Many of the disciples who sought him in Weimar appeared with dis-

inction on the concert stage to attest his eminence as a pedagogue. He died of pneumonia, contracted while he was on a jubilee tour in celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday. Like his idol Paganini, Liszt had so much of the showman, not to say charlatan, in his nature, that the sincerity of his religious conversion, the motives of his indisputable generosity, even his hypnotic pianism have been called in question. Envious colleagues quote with relish his remark in an unguarded moment that he wrote three fingerings on his music, the one he gave his pupils, the one he showed his colleagues (fiendishly difficult) and the one he actually played in public, the last of course being the easiest. Whatever his fingerings, his playing became a legend, his compositions maintain their popularity in the face of all criticism, and his supremacy as a teacher has never been questioned. Think of him as the showman par excellence, and you have the key to the seemingly glamorous life, of which he said when asked to write it, "It was hard enough to have lived it."

Not all of the composers can be summarized in a few words, but in most of their lives you will find some dominating element which explains them in relation to their music. Beethoven's deafness, which caused him to be outwardly gruff and rude and solitary, was an influence of immense importance upon the inner life out of which he created, and which gave his music its peculiar poignancy. Social by nature, fond of life and gaiety, exquisitely sensitive, he lived not as he wished, but as his tragic infirmity compelled. He was the loser, music the gainer thereby. The love of Robert Schumann for Clara, a devotion as rare as that of Elizabeth and Robert Browning, is a bright

thread running through his somber life to its tragic conclusion in an insane asylum. The wealth, culture and versatility of Mendelssohn, his sensitiveness to impressions of the travels in which his position permitted him to indulge, his rôle of friend-of-all-the-world could have led to his creating no other kind of music than he did. Franz Schubert, poor, ugly, and outwardly anything but a success, was able to surround himself with a circle of musical friends who believed in him, and who encouraged him when he sang and played for them the compositions which issued from his pen almost without his volition. Brahms, too, had his friends, especially Robert and Clara Schumann, to whom he was devoted. Even from them he withdrew for long periods, for he was a philosopher, and philosophers meditate in solitude. He wrote his music, said W. J. Henderson, "with uncompromising fidelity to idealism and utter disregard of all external devices for the sake of effect."

As you come to read the circumstances under which masterpieces were composed, and the stories within them, you will have data in addition to your knowledge of a man's life and character sufficient to enable you to form your own judgment as to the strength of the silver cord that binds him to his brain children.

XV

STORIES IN COMPOSITIONS

THERE has been a vast amount of story-telling in the double sense of untruth and narrative on the subject of the genesis of musical compositions. An interesting true-or-false quiz might be worked up, by turning upon stories long unquestioningly accepted the cold light of objective investigation. But why should we? Those stories are worth their weight in gold, good tales, as a rule, seen through a haze of sentiment created by the passage of time. In them, accuracy is not the primary consideration. They invite you to loosen the waistband of veracity, and enjoy at ease the mixture of fact and fiction about compositions and their composers, since, true or false, the stories add agreeable new vibrations and overtones to those within the musical sounds themselves.

It has been conceded that a piece is not entirely governed by the circumstances under which it was composed, any more than kittens born in an oven automatically become biscuits. There is, however, plenty of evidence presented by composers themselves as to the direct influence certain events of their lives have had upon their works.

One of the recognized examples of cause and effect is the Symphony *Fantastique* by Hector Berlioz.

This stormy composition, described by Olin Downes as a "convulsive symphony which affected a whole century of music," came into being because impetuous, red-haired Berlioz, aged twenty-six, fell head over ears in love with a cool Irish actress named Henrietta Smithson. She came to Paris, she played Shakespeare, she conquered Berlioz. The Paris of 1830 was sentimentally indulgent to the vagaries of lovers, but Berlioz conducted his wooing in a fashion wilder and more unreasonable than any that even Paris had yet witnessed. He haunted the theater between and during performances, despatched despairing notes from his garret to the stage door in a steady bombardment, threw himself at Miss Smithson's feet in the street, threatening to take poison then and there, besought her with every extravagant device known to the lovelorn to favor his suit. She dismissed his communications as the ravings of a lunatic until his Symphony *Fantastique*, or *Episode in the Life of an Artist* challenged her too clamorously, and amorously, to be disregarded.

Lest there be doubt in any mind, especially hers, as to its meaning, he furnished the symphony with a written program. His work, he said, represented the dreams of a young artist, who, driven by the coolness of his beloved to taking opium in the hope of death, in his semiconscious state becomes a prey to visions and nightmares. The first movement, called "Dreams, Passions," introduces the theme song which typifies the object of his affections, and which reappears in the succeeding movements, a constant reminder of the cause of his undoing. The second move-

ment portrays "A Ball," where he jealously stands by while she is courted by handsome, brilliant, and wealthy rivals. This is followed by a cinematic change to a "Scene in the Fields," a peaceful interlude during which he wanders contentedly, soothed by the shepherd's pipe and the gentle sounds of evening until the thought of his beloved again brings "disturbing and painful presentiments." In the "March to the Scaffold" of the Fourth Movement, the unhappy young man dreams that he has murdered his beloved. This nightmare march has a haunting rhythm, punctuated with the restless chatter of bassoons and the mocking blare of brasses. The deathstroke which terminates the dream has none of the humor of Till Eulenspiegel's squeaky end in Strauss's tone-poem about that lovable rascal. It is tragic. More so is the "Finale, a Witches' Sabbath," in which the composer paid his lady-love the dubious compliment of having her soul, at last coupled with his, received by witches into their eerie company.

Miss Smithson did not attend the first performance of the symphony. Possibly she had read the program notes. However, in the two years which elapsed between the first and second performances, things had not gone well with her. Unsuccessful stage appearances in London sent her back to Paris with a depleted purse and a somewhat chastened attitude. She was invited to "a concert" and found herself, unexpectedly, in a box at the performance of her suitor's symphony. Berlioz sat among the players, before the kettledrums. His "monstrous antediluvian hair rose from his forehead as a primeval forest on a steep cliff," according to an observer who described the scene with

relish. The pit was crowded with pale, long-haired youths in extravagant doublets and coats with velvet facings, who squired dames with high coiffures, leg-of-mutton sleeves, and short petticoats. Miss Smithson was the cynosure of all eyes as Berlioz directed extravagant roars and rumbles at her from his kettledrums, coupled with all manner of pleading and threatening grimaces. Convinced at last by these dubious methods that he loved her, she consented, after a number of stormy scenes, to become his wife. The marriage was an unhappy one which culminated in a separation, but their engagement baby, the Symphony *Fantastique*, lived on. Berlioz rushed with it into the field of orchestration like a conquering hero, splashing tonal colors with a firm hand weakened by no nervous tremor of adherence to tradition. He wrought in a very frenzy of emotion. The repeated use of the melody of the beloved enforced upon the composition a unity which later gave Liszt the idea of the symphonic poem, and strengthened Wagner in his conviction of the value of the Leitmotif. Berlioz' love affair was a far from negligible factor in subsequent symphonic writing.

You may picture Berlioz plunging and snorting like a great stallion as the heat of creation seizes him. Beethoven, too, gave physical vent to his emotions when in the act of composition, but the initial impulse was different. It is true that he raged up and down his room, singing aloud, snapping his fingers, trying chords at the piano, rushing to the music paper to write them down, springing up again as a new thought took possession of him. The neighbors used to gather on his stair landing to listen to the giant in the throes of giving birth. But Beethoven did

not write according to the inspiration of that moment. He kept on his work-table his own encyclopedia Beethovenica, the precious notebooks containing his material. In them, he had scrupulously jotted down, dated, and preserved the scraps of music which came to his mind on his solitary walks through the streets and in the country, or in the rare stimulation of society. Penciled on backs of envelopes or bits of paper loosely stitched together, in a musical shorthand immensely difficult for anyone but himself to decipher, these grimy little notebooks were the source from which he derived the cleanest and clearest of melodies. Scholars who have studied the notebooks have been amazed at the pertinacity with which he altered and polished and amplified his ideas, which he sometimes did not publish until years after they originally occurred to him. The Beethoven notebooks are a record of the fertility of one man's invention, and of the painstaking drudgery he considered indispensable before the product measured up to his exacting standard of excellence. He made six false starts on the last movement of the famous *C sharp minor Quartet*, and eighteen for one song of Florestan's in *Fidelio*, his single opera, to which, incidentally, he wrote four overtures before one satisfied him.

In fact, when he wrote *Fidelio*, he seems to have had more to contend with than any composer should ever have to endure. To start with, his health was poor. The singers in the cast nagged him continually to alter his score in their favor, each wishing to sing bigger and better arias than the other. The orchestra men were either unwilling or unable to follow his instructions, so that, a few days before the opening, he wrote in one of his letters: "All pp.,

cresc., all decresc., and all f., ff., may as well be struck out of my music, since not one of them is regarded. I shall lose all desire to write anything more if my music is to be played thus." But he did not lose the desire, for during the worst of his agonizing over *Fidelio*, he conceived and partly completed the *G minor Piano Concerto* and the *Fifth Symphony*. The latter he is said to have derived from Homer's *Iliad*, in the pages of which he found solace from the aggravations of operatic composition. When he wrote, in another letter, "The whole business of the opera is the most distressing thing in the world," he did not exaggerate. And then, to cap the climax, after all his efforts the première in Vienna was ruined, because Napoleon was inconsiderate enough to seize the city just at that time. In the general dismay, the cast sang to houses empty of all save a scattering of French army officers, and after but three performances, *Fidelio* was withdrawn.

Mozart was more fortunate than Beethoven in his operatic excursions. The opera form had a special appeal for him. He wrote to his father from Paris in 1778 when he was still very young: "Do not forget my ambition to write operas. I am jealous of everybody who writes one. I could weep with vexation when I see or hear an aria!" To this, his father's practical reply was: "In the opera you will of course be guided by the French taste. . . . If one can but win applause and get well paid, the deuce take the rest." It was during his father's illness that Mozart, while still a boy, had written his first symphony when in search of a quiet occupation that would not disturb the patient! But in the matter of an opera, Mozart was too fond of the Italian style to take the paternal advice that he follow the

French. The librettos of the Italian Lorenzo da Ponte exactly suited him. When he and da Ponte wrote *Don Giovanni* together, they took rooms in Prague directly across the street from each other, where, leaning from the windows, they could play their own balcony scenes of ideas and phrases. Mozart kept deferring the writing of the Overture, despite reminders that it had to be done, until, the day before the opening, it was still not written. Leaving the blank paper on his table, the composer went gaily off to an evening party with his wife, Constance. When he returned, late at night, he realized that there was no help for it, that the overture had to be written then or never. So he sat down at his work table, with Constance beside him plying him with punch and fairy-tales like another Scheherazade, to keep him awake. In that way, the overture was finished by morning, and was played without rehearsal by the orchestra that same evening. There is nothing sleepy about it, however. All the punch the composer imbibed went straight to his music.

A favorite story about Mozart involves two of his most famous compositions. As he sat in his study one day, dejected and ill, cudgeling his brains for a way to pay his arrears of debt and take care of the ever-present daily expenses, "presently he heard a knocking, knocking at his chamber door." Almost before he called "Come in," an ominous, grey-cloaked figure with covered face stood in his doorway. Without a word, the stranger handed him a letter, and immediately withdrew, as though whisked away. The letter contained an order to write a Requiem Mass as soon as possible, naming his own price. Mozart's sick fancy perceived in the stranger a visitant from an-

other world, come to pronounce his doom and invite him to compose his own requiem. Just previous to this, he had contracted with his friend Schikaneder for a comic opera. Schikaneder had shown him the libretto of *The Magic Flute* and begged him to see what could be done with it. He had replied "If I do not bring you out of your trouble" (Schikaneder needed money) "and the work is not successful, you must not blame me, for I have never written magic music." Here he was, then, caught between two difficult assignments, a bright comedy on the one hand, and the *Requiem* on the other. Putting the latter determinedly behind him, he climbed into a coach and was whirled away to a little garden pavilion near the Auf den Wieden theater, where Schikaneder had cannily suggested that he write the opera. The change of scene and the companionship of the members of the cast, who made much of him, roused him from his blues, and *The Magic Flute*, one of the liveliest and lightest of operas, was composed in a few weeks. It was like a final laugh at life, a spurt before the collapse. After the first few performances, which were mildly successful, he returned home, much depressed, and started the *Requiem*, writing with feverish energy, determined to complete it before death overtook him. But he was defeated. The power of suggestion, plus severe intestinal fever, proved too much for him, and he died before the work was completed. Perhaps you have seen the picture entitled *The Death of Mozart* in which the pallid composer is shown seated in a circle of friends, who sing a newly-completed part of the Mass while he feebly beats time. His death was the culmination of such a scene, and the only satisfaction left his widow was the discovery that

Count Walsegg, a wealthy amateur, was the mysterious stranger who had commissioned the *Requiem*. He had sent his steward, and had commanded secrecy because he wished Mozart to write it and permit him to pass it off as his own.

The *Requiem* mood, if not its form, pervaded much of the art of Frédéric Chopin, the melancholy Pole. The *Funeral March*, familiar to all who have ever lost a friend, was conceived as a separate piece, later included as one movement in the *B flat minor Sonata*. This sonata, like the *Revolutionary Etude* (C minor Opus 10 No. 12) is one long plaint for the downfall of Poland, as appropriate a subject for a funeral march today as on the day it was written. An almost equally somber work came from his pen during a terrific storm on the island of Majorca. He was alone in the house, George Sand, with her son and daughter, having gone to the mainland on some business. They had been detained there by the violence of the storm, and when they finally returned, dripping miserably, Chopin's sole greeting was a toneless, "Ah, I knew well that you were dead!" He had said so in music while he waited for them—the *Sixth Prelude in B minor*, a rainy funeral march. Fortunately, the other preludes written while in Majorca are more cheerful than is to be expected, considering the bad weather and smoky fireplaces, Chopin's chronic cough, and his difficulties with his exacting mistress, George Sand, and her jealous family. The *Rain-drop Prelude* presents rain as the bearer of a happier mood. The plash of the drops as they fall from the eaves is rhythmically reflected in a reiterated A flat in the accompaniment, above which a lovely melody flows con-

tentedly. On your concert program, this piece will probably be called simply the *Fifteenth Prelude, in D flat*. Chopin's works are usually mentioned by opus number and key, without descriptive title, which you are left to supply from your knowledge and powers of association. Henry Finck, the music critic, said "If all the pianoforte music in the world were to be destroyed excepting one collection, my vote would be cast for the Chopin preludes."

Chopin changed and polished, agonized and suffered, sometimes spending six months on a single page only to return to his first version at the end of the time. Franz Schubert worked otherwise. The tales of his uncanny facility are legion, that of the *Erlkönig* (Erlking), one of the greatest songs ever written, being typical. Two of his friends, Spaun and Mayrhofer, dropped in to see him, and found him striding up and down his little room, a volume of Goethe's poems in his hand, reading aloud, his funny, ugly face shining with enthusiasm. Barely stopping to nod a greeting, he finished the poem, then rushed to his table and wrote as fast as his pen would move. They waited just long enough for the ink to dry on the paper, then all three went to a nearby inn to try the new composition on the piano. Spaun and Mayrhofer confessed themselves interested, but puzzled. The song tells of a father's ride through a wild winter's night with his child clasped in his arms. The child whispers that he sees the Erlking beckoning to him, in wheedling tones inviting him to go with him. The father soothes him, saying it is nothing but the wind in the trees. They ride on. But suddenly the child utters a cry, sobs that the Erlking has hurt him. The father, shaken in spite of himself, spurs on

the horse, and wraps the cloak more warmly around his burden, but when he reaches the town, the child lies dead in his arms. Since a single singer has to represent a narrator and three different characters, the child, the father, and the Erlking, unfolding a dramatic tragedy with a thunderously dramatic piano accompaniment, the listeners' bewilderment is not surprising. Schubert was no singer to start with, and his attempt to play the piano and sing his new work can have done it scant justice. Nevertheless, that same evening when he and his two friends joined the rest of their little circle at the school they had attended as students, they urged Schubert to let them all hear his new song. After he had read it through, his friend Holzappel, a tenor, volunteered to try the voice part, reading it at sight. The group gave it respectful, though puzzled attention. The harmonies which sound so natural to us were then distinctly unorthodox. By departing from the beaten track, Schubert secured the dramatic emphasis he was after. But old Dr. Ruzicka, professor of harmony at the school, listened carefully, deliberated a few moments, then set the seal of his approval upon it, saying, "If Franzl does it, it must be right. His ideas come direct from Heaven." Franzl hardly heard the tribute. Already he was casting about in his mind for a new poem to set to music, for without one coursing through his mind he was miserable. *Who is Sylvia*, and *Hark, Hark the Lark*, he scribbled on the backs of menu cards in a beer garden, where he chanced upon a volume of Shakespeare's plays. *Die Forelle* (The Trout) was dashed off late at night, following one of the friendly gatherings which were his recreation after the long day in his dreary little room. The mel-

ody came to his mind as he walked home, and late as it was, he sat right down to set it on paper by flickering candlelight. When it was finished, he groped sleepily for the sandshaker, seized the inkstand, and instead of sand, emptied ink all over his fresh new manuscript. "What a calamity!" he wrote in narrating the incident, but fortunately he remembered the song the next day, recopied and preserved it for posterity.

Schubert plucked subjects along the way, wherever he found them, subjects of all kinds. Much of Schumann's music, on the contrary, hangs on the thread of his love for Clara Wieck, one of the greatest pianists that ever lived. If played in a certain order, some of his pieces can be construed as a complete love-story in music. It might start with *Warum*, the hurt, questioning little piano piece he wrote when Papa Wieck showed him the door and whisked Clara away from him to Dresden. A piano sonata in F sharp minor, Opus 11, dedicated to her, is a passionate appeal for her love, while the *Fantasie* he wrote under the stress of jealousy. Clara had been flirting, Robert didn't care for it, and took this method of telling her so. When finally he had served for her more than the Biblical seven years, and had won her despite her father's obdurate opposition, he sent her the *Davidsbündlertänze*, written, he noted, "with many a bridal thought." The bliss of their first year of marriage was reflected in several volumes of songs, two symphonies, and a number of piano works. He could not bear separation from her and when she went on a concert tour, he took an involuntary vacation from composition until her return. Her reward for coming back to him as quickly as possible after one of

these trips was the *Piano Quintet* and several string quartets, poured forth in the rush of joy at her home-coming. Exaggerated? Perhaps. But the union of pianist and composer bore fruit in compositions overflowing with a warmth and sincerity which make that strongest of appeals, the appeal to the heart.

The Russian composer, Tchaikowsky, was equally vocal in affairs of the heart. The *Romeo and Juliet Overture* was his reaction to being crossed in love early in life. In his twenties, he became violently attached to the prima donna of an Italian opera company, a lady appropriately named Desirée. Like poor Berlioz, though more tamely, Tchaikowsky sat in the audience at every performance, casting sheep's eyes at the lady, who was flattered, if not swept off her feet, by his advances. Undoubtedly she led him on, until he demanded marriage. Then the bugbear of two careers under one roof reared its ugly head. She would not give up the stage, he refused to follow her around, writing music in dressing rooms, known only as "Desirée's husband." Suddenly, while they argued back and forth, she married the tenor of the company, without by-your-leave or explanation. Tchaikowsky was hard hit, or imagined he was. Nevertheless, he continued to worship from a seat in the opera house, sobbing despairingly whenever his idol appeared on the stage. Just at this point, ironically, he was commissioned to write an opera on a great love story, *Romeo and Juliet*. He completed only the overture, into which he put an exquisitely touching and melodious love song expressive of all his pain and longing. Though it is sentimental, perhaps unhealthily so, it is a sincere cry of hurt love, recognized as such by audiences

the world over. In the *Pathétique*, his sixth and last symphony, he was depressed for other reasons. He was ailing in health; his countryman, the pianist Anton Rubinstein whom he greatly admired had passed him by on the street without speaking to him, which he construed as a snub; he had been indifferently received during his stay in America. Worst of all, his "beloved friend" Madame von Meck, with whom he had exchanged long and ardent letters, and who had subsidized him for years on condition that they never meet, had stopped corresponding with him. He was at the end of his tether, sunk in a despondency from which he could not rouse himself. Into the *Sixth Symphony*, which he felt would be his last, he poured all his frustrations and disappointments. Fitly subtitled *Pathétique* by his brother Modeste, it proved his swan song. His death, shortly after its completion, from cholera which, according to some historians, he deliberately aggravated by drinking unboiled water during an epidemic, was a fitting coda to his Symphony *Pathétique*.

The Romantic composers furnish the best stories, for they were the ones who most dramatically conveyed their personal experiences to their music. When Mendelssohn, a stripling of twenty, made a trip to the islands of the Hebrides, he naturally took in all the sights, and as naturally wrote a piece about them. One of the most impressive places he saw was Fingal's Cave, on the island of Staffa. It had long been known as the Cave of Music, because of the murmur of the tide against its cavernous walls when the weather was fair, and the thunder of the waves during a storm. When Mendelssohn entered the cave, the theme of the *Fingal's Cave Overture* came into

his mind, and haunted him so persistently that he jotted it down that same evening in a letter to a friend. For months after the visit, he worked on the overture, using as the main theme the snatch of melody which had rushed into his mind as irresistibly as the waves into the cave. Performed in London in 1832, it delighted the English, who relished the illusion of the sea, its constant motion suggested by the persistent repetition of the peculiar rhythm of the melody in the accompaniment, while swirling passages and chromatic sequences further enhanced the effect. It became one of the most popular of Mendelssohn's works.

A composer who wrote exquisitely of the sea at long range was Debussy. The only time he traveled on that element before he conceived *La Mer* (The Sea) was when he crossed by boat from Calais to Dover. However, he seems to have found in the English Channel a tabloid of the epic of the sea, for when he came to describe the emotions generated by that contact, his imagination supplied a picture which was poetic, descriptive and profound. Vague and formless as it seems when heard for the first time, it assumes as you come to know it the fluid and orderly sweep of the mighty ocean itself. In a letter written from Houlgate long after *La Mer* was published, he wrote, "Here life and the sea continue—the first to contradict our native savagery, the second to accomplish its sonorous going and coming."

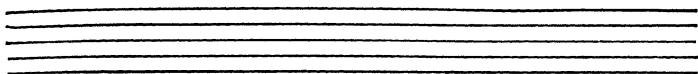
Debussy, like many composers, almost missed his vocation. His family strongly urged him to enter the navy. Verdi had even a narrower escape at the outset of his career. The obscure little country boy, having made good

as an organist, had taken his wife and two young children, and had settled in Milan. His first opera, *Oberto*, had been produced, and he was working happily on a second, a comic opera entitled *Giorno di Regno*. Suddenly, out of a clear sky, his children became critically ill, and despite all efforts to save them, both died. Shortly thereafter, his wife succumbed to the same mysterious malady. The grief-stricken young man forced himself to deliver the comic opera, but as was to be expected, it contained little comedy, and fell quite flat. Forthwith he insisted upon canceling his contracts for three more. Here the wisdom of the impresario Merelli saved the day and Verdi. While apparently acceding to the composer's determination to nurse his grief in solitude, he asked him as a favor for an opinion of the merit of Solera's play *Nabuco* (Nebuchadnezzar), which he thought of making into an opera. Verdi was too clever not to know what Merelli was after, and when he got home, threw the book on a table, probably with a defiant, "He can't fool me." As it fell, however, it opened, and Verdi's eye fell upon a line he liked. In spite of himself, he started to read, kept on reading, and required no further prodding from the impresario to set him to work. Before he knew it, the music of *Nabuco* was written, and the opera was so successful that Verdi never again mentioned abandoning his career.

Nabuco was the first of a long series of which *Aïda*, produced under happier auspices, was the climax. When the Khedive of Egypt ordained a double celebration to signalize the dedication of the Suez Canal upon its completion, and the simultaneous opening of the new opera house in Cairo, nothing would do but that Verdi must

write him an opera. The composer demurred, pointing out that he was an old man, he had no libretto, and Egypt was a long trip from Italy. But when Mariette Bey, a French Egyptologist, found the story of *Aïda* in an ancient manuscript, and showed it to him, he capitulated to it as he had to *Nabuco* many years previously. The romantic tragedy of the Egyptian prince Rhadames and the captive Ethiopian princess as revealed in hieroglyphs and old manuscripts captured his imagination. He spent months in Egypt before putting pen to paper. The grandeur of the Pyramids and the Tombs of the Kings at Thebes suggested many ideas to him, and he made use on the stage of reproductions of the handmade harps and long slender trumpets he had seen pictured in stone. The native songs he heard as he sailed the Nile in a dahabeah also created enough "atmosphere" to tinge his thought with a swarthy Egyptian color, so that, when the opera was produced, the triumphal march which is one of its great melodies became a march of triumph for the composer as well as for the conquering Egyptians of the story.

Some of you will dismiss these scattered anecdotes as having no bearing on the enjoyment of music. Others who have a highly developed story sense will find in them something tangible to seize in this most elusive of all the arts.



XVI

SOME AMERICAN COMPOSERS

THERE is no good reason for segregating American composers as though they were lepers, yet it has become the custom to restrict American works to all-American programs, conceding to the native composer only occasionally the privilege of being heard in the company of his peers of other nationalities. In devoting a separate chapter to him and his works, I have no intention of falling in line with this practice. I simply desire to give all the space and consideration possible to the music of our own country.

There are two special deterrents to your enjoyment of American music. In the first place, very little of it is familiar, even less than that of accepted composers from other countries. A lot of agitation has been required to secure such performances as have been given, which have been few and far between compared with the programs of music in general. Even a successful performance of an American work is not followed forthwith by a second and a third. Sometimes months and years elapse before, by dint of special pleading, pull and financial sacrifice, the composer secures a repetition. Prize-winning pieces are

played just once with alarums and excursions and a grand furor. Then they are shelved. Those who, impressed by the first performance, wish for the opportunity of rehearsing a work they long to understand, remain unsatisfied. By the time a second performance has been arranged, they have forgotten all about the first, and a new audience, with virgin minds, attends. The first impression has to be made all over again, and there is no second or third except for the few devotees who make it their business to follow up such performances. Furthermore, American music is not taught to the young either in the schools or conservatories. In consequence, save for the melodies of Stephen Foster, George Gershwin and other popular writers, Americans studying music are deprived of a basis of American tunes familiar since childhood. Some of them learn to know their Bach, Haydn and Mozart in school, but practically none of them is even distantly acquainted with MacDowell, Harris and Copland. Yet they cannot take American compositions to their bosom on a mere nodding acquaintance, since familiarity is nine points of enjoyment.

Unfamiliarity is curable, and it must be admitted that efforts are being made, for there are more opportunities to hear American music today than a decade ago. The second obstacle to enjoyment is more forbidding. In the century and a half since America became a nation, literally hundreds of composers have taken pen in hand, yet there is not one in whom the fire burns with a flame that sears and scorches you to the instantaneous recognition of genius. You can listen to a great deal of this music with pleasure and profit, and justifiable admiration of its

craftsmanship. But no qualified American has conveniently appeared as a landmark from which to reckon progress, and by which to appraise others. Posterity may possibly reveal one, either among those we tentatively acclaim, or among those unknown toilers who have never achieved the limelight, but we are still too close to them to apply the test of time by which is revealed the creative individuality of an unquestioned master. On the one hand, many American composers follow European models so closely as to neutralize their own character. On the other, they make the motions of striking out into an individual idiom, and are jumped on for their temerity in departing from the accepted classical ideal. They are damned if they do, and damned if they don't speak out. Still they persist, and the sum of all their efforts to date has been the creation of a musical atmosphere in this country conducive to the conception of great works. A prophet will arise, if he has not already done so; meanwhile we are left in the quandary of selecting, from the many, a few representative Americans.

At the risk of stirring up a hornet's nest by omitting some of the most estimable—to whom I apologize in advance—it seems only fair to give you an idea of what to expect when you run into the concerts, festivals and broadcasts of American music which are becoming more and more frequent. Certain composers' names recur on programs fairly often, and on that purely practical basis we have the honor of calling to your attention a dozen or so. All are of the twentieth century, many of them are still alive, and they are reasonably diverse as to style.

If you don't know your MacDowell any other way, you

probably know him through his piano piece *To a Wild Rose*, which was on every family's piano in the nineties. The fact is that this was one of the most insignificant of his works, retrieved by Mrs. MacDowell from the scrap basket to which he had consigned it in disgust. It belongs to the series of *Woodland Sketches*, of which *To a Water Lily* is almost equally hackneyed, and which MacDowell did not care for nearly as much as did his lyric-loving public. MacDowell was himself an accomplished pianist, and until you have heard his larger piano works you can have no idea of him as a composer. The four big sonatas, the *Tragica*, *Eroica*, *Norse* and *Keltic* have sweep, power, nobility and largeness of concept. The two piano concertos, written early in his career, are brilliant and melodious, favorite vehicles for young American artists making debuts. He was kind to the young American amateur, providing him with little pieces like *The Eagle* and the *Scotch Poem*, as well as *Virtuoso Studies* for the more advanced. The *Indian Suite* is the only one of his orchestral works which is often played. It contains many authentic Indian themes, not, as MacDowell was at some pains to state, as a label of Americanism, but because they appealed to him as good material. He divided the *Suite* into five parts, entitled I Legend, II Love Song, III In War Time, IV Dirge, V Village Festival. Each part can be played separately, and the Dirge particularly is often heard by itself. He wrote a great many art songs too—you may have heard *Menie*, *The Robin Sings in the Apple Tree*, or *Thy Beaming Eyes*—which have sensitive poetic feeling and a smooth lyric quality that bring them easy and immediate acceptance. You will find it easy to make

up stories to MacDowell's works, which are highly expressive in a romantic personal way. Like the Norwegian Grieg, for whom he cherished an admiration which amounted to hero-worship, he believed in converting into music the sights and sounds of nature, the poetry and Keltic sagas he read voraciously, the wife he adored and the dreams he dreamed. By nature he was all poet and dreamer. Those who believe that the America of the realists is the only one worth talking about do not consider MacDowell a true interpreter of the spirit of his own country. To them, he is a German-trained writer who wrought in the German romantic tradition. But they do not deny, and neither will you, his gift for writing close-knit, well-conceived pieces, with plenty of melody, sonorous conventional harmony, and adequate force to prevent his best works from appearing sappy and commonplace. His sensitivity to beauty imparts to them a faint fragrance of dried lavender.

MacDowell died in 1908, bereft of reason during his final years, due to events which wounded his tender spirit beyond healing. Charles Martin Loeffler (1861-1935), was as strongly impressionist as MacDowell was romantic. He sought to express in the most intangible of arts equally intangible impressions, and admiring Debussy as he did, it was natural that he should adopt for his form of impressionism an idiom closely akin to that of the great Frenchman. Doubly natural, since, although he settled in America as a very young man, his birthplace was in French Alsace, and his native tongue was French. The tall, blond man who for many years occupied the first chair in the viola section of the Boston Symphony knew his orchestra back-

wards and forwards, and enjoyed feeding it works of his own.

The *Pagan Poem* and *Memories of my Childhood* are probably the most personal, as they are the most popular; *La Mort de Tintagiles* (The Death of Tintagiles) and *La Villanelle du Diable* (The Devil's Pastorale) are also recognized adjuncts to many a symphonic program. You will find sections written in modes that you will recognize as being neither major nor minor. Loeffler studied early church music with mystical devotion, and used many of his findings in his own compositions. In the *Music for Four Stringed Instruments*, which he wrote in memory of Victor Chapman, a young aviator killed in the World War, he uses plain-chant, now swelling and diminishing in the bass like organ tones, now singing out in the upper voices. The purity and simplicity of these chants as themes make a strong appeal, especially in the second movement, *Le Saint Jour de Paques* (Easter Sunday), which depicts the solemn service in the cathedral, through which the happy song of the people outside is heard at intervals. He uses plain-song also in the symphony *Hora Mystica* (The Mystic Hour), and the *Canticum Fratris Solis*, a setting for solo voice and chamber orchestra of St. Francis' *Canticle of the Sun*. Loeffler's works are long, his thought involved, the thread of melody elusive, the modal digressions bewildering. Their appeal is to the scholar and mystic rather than to the casual incliner of the ear, and you will possibly find them heavy. However, they are well written, sincere, noble and deeply thoughtful, and worth the effort of analysis if you are equal to it.

The Swiss Ernest Bloch, another transplanted foreigner,

has become American by a process of absorption. His music presents its own type of difficulty, but it is generally more comprehensible than Loeffler's. It is intensely emotional, a helpful quality since the language of the emotions is most easily understood. True, in harmony, melody and rhythm, it inclines to the ultra, quarter-tones being used in the very first theme of the first movement of the string quartet. True, Bloch has written works of considerable length; his symphony *America* takes a good two hours. By the time you come to the concluding chorus, which Bloch intended as a national anthem to replace the *Star Spangled Banner*, the audience is delighted to rise and stretch, and sing as directed. (The *Star Spangled Banner*, however, still remains the national anthem.) Yet Bloch is seldom tedious, even when lengthy. The definiteness of his musical ideas, the solidity of his structure, the coherence and unity which enable you to follow his thought, and the warmth he pours over it all maintain your interest at a high level. *Schelomo*, a rhapsody for cello with orchestra, is beloved for its rich sonorities and the fervor of its utterance, and for the united front presented by solo instrument and orchestra, both being given almost equal importance. He has written a great deal of chamber music, including a string quartet and piano quintet, a sonata for viola and piano, and a *Concerto Grosso* for piano and chamber orchestra.

When he originally became a composer, he expressed a desire to interpret the Jewish spirit in music, and some of his themes are so close to the traditional Hebrew melodies that it seems hardly possible that they were originated by Bloch. Of late years, he has denied the call to write racial

music, and even expressed impatience at being expected to do so, but he cannot exclude from his music the qualities which are a part of his own rich personality, and which in turn enrich his music, however he may endeavor to repress them.

Henry Hadley, a New Englander born and bred, is quite a contrast to Bloch. He wrote so prolifically and in so many forms that "whether you look or whether you listen, you hear Hadley murmur or see him glisten" on programs. One reason for this is that he was a habitual prize winner. His prize-winning opera *Bianca* was presented in Chicago and New York. So also were two of his other operas, *Azora Daughter of Montezuma*, and *Cleopatra's Night*, the latter performed in the course of two successive seasons at the Metropolitan. *The Culprit Fay*, a Rhapsody for Orchestra, unlike most prize winners, has been heard many times; numerous symphonies and pieces of chamber music are not allowed to gather dust, while the songs he wrote for soloists and choruses are agreeable enough to be much in use. Most of his music is agreeable, with the additional advantage of presenting no serious technical difficulties. Written with the rapid facility of the craftsman who knows his trade, with the bland lyricism natural to a man with a song in his heart, it achieves a high mediocrity without ever soaring to great heights or sinking to the nether depths. Hadley was very eloquent in behalf of the American composer, and since he was founder and for many years president of the American Society of Composers and Conductors, and held many other honorary offices, his name came to be a symbol of the school of composers with whom he was associated.

These were mostly New Englanders trained in Europe, and include Horatio Parker, Edgar Stillman-Kelley, George Chadwick, Frederick Converse, and Daniel Gregory Mason.

John Alden Carpenter of Chicago utilized his British and American training to produce two jolly jazz ballets, *Skyscrapers* and *Krazy Kat*; a meditative, deeply poetical group of Oriental art songs from the Chinese and from the Indian *Gitanjali*, and to top it all, such orchestral works as *Sea-drift*, after Walt Whitman's poem, and the earlier and better-known suite *In a Perambulator*. The last-named, which translates the thoughts of an infant in its pram while its nurse flirts with the policeman and other daily phenomena occur, is a bit of pleasant musical whimsy in high favor.

John Powell of Richmond hovers on the outskirts of the group, his German-trained muse speaking with the drawl of the South, especially in the *Rhapsodie Nègre*, the overture *In Old Virginia*, and *Natchez on the Hill*. Powell's studies of American folk song and the sympathetic understanding with which he makes use of them have won his works countless performances on the air and in the hall. They require little elucidation, save to call to your attention that he traced many of the mountaineer and negro folk songs to a modal ancestry, and in using them fitted them with their logical accompaniments in the ancient Lydian, Dorian, Phrygian, and other modes. Mr. Powell's piece for chamber orchestra *At the Fair*, and other chamber music works have a delightful informality of spirit combined with a correct formality of writing.

When you come to the music of Howard Hanson, you

will have an active sense that the tender young sprout known as American music has pushed through the European soil which, while nourishing, threatened also for a while to smother it. Hanson started young, and kept going. He won the Prix de Rome in 1921, when, at twenty-five, he had for five years been successively Professor of Theory and Dean of the Conservatory of Fine Arts at the College of the Pacific in California. Immediately after the three years of foreign study to which the Prix entitled him, he returned to this country, and has since worked untiringly as conductor, composer, educator, writer and lecturer. His activities as conductor have influenced him to write primarily for the orchestra, although a large choral work, the *Lament for Beowulf*, the opera *Merry-mountain* produced at the Metropolitan, chamber music and other works, prove that he is not a single-track composer. The symphonic poem *Pan and the Priest* which deals with the struggle between a man's spiritual and physical self presumably refers to a personal conflict, since Hanson was reared in a strictly religious atmosphere at variance with the worldly life circumstances have compelled him to lead. His first symphony, the *Nordic*, also widely played, contains thematic allusions to the sturdy Swedes who settled Nebraska and from whom he is descended. His second symphony, the *Romantic*, a third as yet untitled, and the symphonic poems *Lux Aeterna* and *East and West* are the writings of a well-balanced, mature person.

Roger Sessions, a contemporary of Hanson's, is an intellectual musician whose works command great respect. He writes with solid seriousness and power, though his output to date has not been large. Among his works are

The Black Maskers for small orchestra, three symphonies, a piano sonata, a violin concerto, and a string quartet.

Another contemporary, Aaron Copland, has gone through various phases in his musical development, and has emerged with a style admirably fitted to his musical ideas. Somewhat inclined to be radical as to harmony and rhythm, it has distinct and strongly marked individuality. You may be startled by Copland's music, but you will not be bored. He has something to say, and knows how to say it. His is music of the age of efficiency, taut, nervous, so highly compressed as to be explosive at times, with not a waste note in it. When he appears on the stage to acknowledge applause after a performance, long-limbed, slow-moving, bespectacled, as relaxed to all appearances as his music is tense, you marvel at the contradiction between the man and his music. His concerto for piano and orchestra, an early work, made the critics sit up and take notice when Copland first played it in 1925. In the very body of the concerto were long, brilliant jazz passages, at that time a heretical innovation in a piece of serious music. Copland experimented for some time with syncopation, evolving rhythmic patterns of extreme ingenuity, then, when his youthful enthusiasm had somewhat cooled, he put it in its place as but one of the resources with which to enhance the expressiveness of what he had to say. In *El Salon Mexico* for orchestra, one of his most recent and popular pieces, he applies to the Mexican rhumba and other dances his studies in syncopation and more exotic rhythms. *Vitebsk*, a study on a Jewish melody for violin, cello and piano, is a racial wail which displays another aspect of his art. *The Second*

Hurricane, which he wrote in 1937 is a delightful little opera for high school performance, which stresses the American vernacular both in the libretto by Edwin Denby and in Copland's music. Slangy in a sense, it is not cheap. A high-gearred, staccato orchestral accompaniment supports songs written in the modern idiom yet sufficiently simple for children to sing. It represents a new idea in children's music, in this instance successfully developed. Copland is an original thinker, with an urge to create and a type of nervous energy which impart to his music a vibrant vitality, and make him one of the most challenging composers on the American scene.

Louis Gruenberg reversed Copland's process, in that he started with conventional rhythms and ended with jazz, not negro jazz but his own bleached version of jazz. *Vagabondia*, *The Enchanted Isle*, *Symphony Number I*, *The Hill of Dreams* and some chamber music belong to his soberer output. *Jazzberries*, *Jazz Epigrams*, *Daniel Jazz* and others are his tribute to serious syncopation. *The Emperor Jones*, a grand opera which employs Eugene O'Neill's play as a libretto, contains jazz, spirituals and other Negro elements used with the most serious not to say solemn intent. In his musical score for the motion picture, *The Fight for Life*, Gruenberg produced a rarely expressive accompaniment to a story of powerful dramatic and educational portent. Other composers too are beginning to find in the sound track a medium that is highly congenial to their talents. Copland's recent scores for *The City* and *Of Mice and Men* are noteworthy. Virgil Thompson has added to laurels won elsewhere praise for his scores for *The River* and *The Plough that Broke*

the Plains. Europeans of established reputation—Honegger, Milhaud, Korngold—have entered the field. You absorb good music today unconsciously along with the movies, another of the many indirect devices by which music seeks to attract you.

A man whose lectures you may have heard on the radio, whose articles you have possibly read in musical periodicals, and whose music you undoubtedly have heard or will hear, is Roy Harris. The energy which pervades his writing pervades his personality also, and he is here, there, and everywhere in the music world. The New York Philharmonic Orchestra played *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, a series of clever variations on that well-known patriotic tune, which caused Lawrence Gilman, music critic of the New York *Herald Tribune*, to comment approvingly that it might have been called *When Harris Comes Marching Home*. It showed the composer at his most resourceful and entertaining, and showed too that he was achieving a mastery of orchestral writing, most of his previous works having been for chamber music or choral groups. *Farewell to Pioneers*, also for the orchestra, is dedicated to the struggle of his forebears on their trek to the West. The fact that the senior Harris settled in Oklahoma, and that their son Roy was born in the wide open spaces and educated in California accounts for a breezy open quality, a Western twang in his writing evident even when he uses as thematic material the medieval church chants to which he, like Loeffler, is addicted. They are present in several of the dozen or more choral works to his credit. One of the earliest of these, a *Song for Occupations*, for an eight-part mixed chorus without

accompaniment, is an effective piece of class-conscious writing, notable not alone because Harris does not otherwise emphasize subjects of social significance, but also because it is such a strong piece, with easily followed song melodies and a kind of frenzied sincerity. His chamber music pieces present more difficulties, though many of them were written early in his career. The piano trio, piano quintet, and two string quartets are played comparatively often. Harris uses dissonance with a lavish hand, juxtaposing it with the medieval in a mating which is not so incongruous as it sounds. Antique Chinese objects lend themselves well to rooms furnished in ultra-modern style, and in the same way, the music of the monks settles comfortably into its niche in the idiom employed by Harris. Other American composers whose work deserves more than the mention space permits are Walter Piston, Arthur Shepherd, Harold Morris, Frederick Jacobi, Marion Bauer, and William Grant Still.

If Deems Taylor had written nothing but the two operas, *The King's Henchman* and *Peter Ibbetson*, performed at the Metropolitan in 1926 and 1930 respectively and on sundry occasions thereafter, he would still be entitled to an honorable place among American composers. But he has produced other pieces, smooth, humorous, and in a comprehensible idiom, which share the honors with the operas. The suites *Through the Looking-Glass* and *Circus Days* need, as the toastmaster would say, no introduction. In *Circus Days*, the crunch of peanuts and popcorn and the gurgle of pink lemonade emerge gaily from the blare and drumbeat and dust of the circus parade. Douglas Moore's *Pageant of P. T. Barnum* treats the

same popular subject. *Through the Looking-Glass* is a musical commentary on Lewis Carroll's book, in which Taylor hits off its characters—the White Knight, the Walrus and the Carpenter, and others. Taylor's notions on the subject of music in general and modern American music in particular, sane and constructive, are not in the least sensational. His experience as music critic and radio commentator has given him a certain perspective and made him wary of "stunning" effects, which are frequently tawdry and ephemeral.

An ingratiating, melodious and agreeable composer is Charles Wakefield Cadman, two of whose songs, *From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water*, and *At Dawning* caught the public ear in 1909 to the tune of millions of copies. Ill health in his youth proved a constructive factor in Cadman's life, for while he was under doctor's orders to live in the dry, clear air of the southwest, he spent a summer on the Omaha Indian Reservation. He had already written operettas and popular songs, and now became deeply interested in the tribal songs and dances of the Indians. Many of these he recorded and used in illustrated lectures on Indian customs. The opera *Shanewis*; the *Thunderbird Suite* for orchestra, and the suite for chamber orchestra, *To a Vanishing Race*; choral works *The Sunset Trail* and *The Father of Waters* are based on Indian melodies. All were written during the sixteen years from 1909 to 1925, when his preoccupation with the sing-song chants and rhythmic drumbeats of the red man was practically all-absorbing. Although he succumbed at times to the temptation of making sophisticated arrangements of primitive material, he performed a valuable service in

bringing the little-known songs of red Americans to the attention of their white successors. His works since 1925 have not dealt exclusively with Indians. *Dark Dancers of the Mardi Gras*, for orchestra with piano, takes as its themes the highly individual songs of the negroes of New Orleans, a subject stunningly treated some years earlier by another American, Henry F. Gilbert, in his ballet, *Dance in the Place Congo*. Cadman prefers his opera, *The Witch of Salem*, to *Shanewis*, and has set himself the task of producing an American opera to end all American operas. His sense of the dramatic and his facility and experience in writing make it a not impossible assignment.

Charles Tomlinson Griffes, a young impressionist who died at a Keatsian age wrote, before his death in 1920 a number of pieces far in advance of his time. If you have ever recited with elocutionary flourishes Coleridge's poem:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree,

you will follow Griffes' tone-poem, *Kubla Khan*, with more than perfunctory interest. At first, the dome shines dimly through a mist of filmy harmonies. Air and music clear as it bursts into full view, the doors are flung open to revelry, and a wildly accelerating whirl of dance music rises to a frenzied climax. Then, suddenly, all is quiet again. The music reverts to the misty mood of the beginning, the mood of one dreaming beside the sacred river which ran "through caverns measureless to man down to a sunless sea." *Kubla Khan* is the best-known of Griffes' works, but the *Poem* for flute and orchestra, and the *Roman Sketches* for piano, especially the *White Pea-*

cock, with its strange chromatic sequences, partake, as does *Kubla Khan*, of the virtue that is Debussy's. Because of the imaginative quality woven into its strand, the tenuous thread of fantasy in these works holds fast where many a sturdier one might have snapped.

You will probably be puzzled when brought face to face with the works of Charles Ives. Crisscross and confused in melody, harmony and rhythm, they are the problem children of American music. Even the manuscript looks like a Chinese puzzle, for it has no bar-lines, no key or tempo indications, no conventional guides for performers or audience. Yet many critics find, in the seeming confusion, an assertion of power, a dominant virility and originality, a deep philosophical purpose, a truly American note. They say that Ives writes melody of a new and different order. After a while, you may be able to discover it in his piano sonata, *Concord*, or his *Fourth Symphony*, or some of the hundred odd songs. The small-town band of Danbury, Connecticut, which accustomed his ear to off-pitch brasses and squeaky fiddles gave him the notion that his tone pictures of small-town life would be the more realistic if he introduced similar effects into them. As the old lady said when she kissed the cow, "It's all right if you like it." Whether or not you like it, the fact is that Ives was experimenting tonally and rhythmically long before the mesmeric rays of European atonalism penetrated to these shores. If an individual note is a desideratum, nobody can deny that he has struck it. As to the ultimate value of his work, he is perfectly willing to abide by your decision and posterity's. He has written fearlessly, as he pleased, and when he pleased, with apparently no thought

of the public. He gives away the manuscript of a song to anyone who expresses a desire to have it, heedless of royalty or reward. Some years have elapsed since he has produced a new work, due to the claims of the insurance business in Danbury and to his own ill health. But his many eccentricities and the unusual features of his writings have brought him publicity which, unwelcome as it may be to him, has caused the world to take increasing notice of both.

No discussion of American music, however brief, would be complete without a word about George Gershwin. His writings were, like Abe Lincoln's government, "for the people, of the people, by the people." He was one of "you," whoever you are. The little Brooklyn song-plugger whose musical comedy hits landed him and his family in a luxurious penthouse in Manhattan never lost his feel for his public. He knew where to place his musical punches. Never did this knowledge stand him in better stead than when he composed *The Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and orchestra. That brilliant distillation of jazz and art music took by storm not only those who heard its first tumultuous performance by Gershwin himself with Paul Whiteman's orchestra, but the millions who have since succumbed to its infectious spell. Its frank jazz irruption into staid conservative concert programs was a freak. Its acceptance by the pillars of musical society was a sign of a revolution which endured, for unlike many sensational novelties, the *Rhapsody* has steadily maintained its appeal, both here and abroad, ever since its introduction in 1924. Gershwin tried to duplicate its success in his piano concerto, which, however, never won the same recognition as the *Rhapsody*.

His last big job before his untimely death was *Porgy*, a Negro opera based on a novel by DuBose Heyward. *Porgy* is close to being a folk opera, with new folk songs created by Gershwin which have been sung and loved by people who never heard the opera. It is remarkable that a white man should so faithfully have captured the Negro musical idiom. Gershwin dresses it up with no near-Italian arias; the opera is straight drama with music. Had he lived long enough to follow it with others of the same kind, he might eventually have brought his kind of jazz to the Metropolitan. As it is, his fame rests largely on *The Rhapsody in Blue*.

Gershwin was thirty-nine when he died, in 1937. A whole flock of young composers are today writing music as good or better than the *Rhapsody*. Most of them have been given the thorough musical education denied to Gershwin, and are by so much the more able to express ideas freely and fearlessly. They have his joyous appreciation of syncopation and of good melody, they know that the voice with a smile wins, and they have more ideas than they know what to do with. The best of them have also a deep underlying seriousness based on a realistic attitude toward the confused world in which they find themselves. Not that they regard the world with a jaundiced eye, or write jaundiced music about it. Rather they are buoyantly hopeful of better days to come. Many of them are keenly aware of the social changes taking place. Earl Robinson's *Ballad for Americans* has caught on like wild-fire. William Schuman, Samuel Barber, Dante Fiorillo, Paul Creston, Hunter Johnson, Herbert Haufrecht, Paul Bowles, Norman Dello Joio, David Diamond, Morton

Gould, Henry Brant, Gian Carlo Menotti and other intrepid young men have written ambitious, thoughtful works. Most of these young men are on the under side of thirty. They bring a wholesome counterbalance to the men of the past, for they represent the world you know, the America of today. In their works, you can enjoy music which speaks eloquently of things with which you are acquainted in language that you can understand.

XVII

FIRST AID FROM RADIO AND GRAMOPHONE

POSSIBLY you do not live in or near a big city, where you can take concerts or leave them—and at this point we hope you want to take them. Even so, the foregoing chapters need not be wasted on the desert air because you lack the opportunity to hear music. Music is available to you in your own home, and with the minimum of effort. On January first, 1940, it was estimated that over forty-five million radio sets were in use in this country, in homes, in automobiles, and in portable form. Assuming that you are one of the millions of owners or users of these sets, you have only to twist a dial to hear all that, perhaps more than you wish. Practically every form of music is to be had for the twisting. If you are so fortunate as to possess a gramophone attachment to the radio, or better still a separate machine, you need never set foot outside the door to exercise your musical muscles, for apart from the thrill which communicates itself electrically from one to the other in a large concert hall filled with devotees, you

may hear and enjoy the masterpieces of the world equally well at home.

Radio has certain drawbacks, it is true. The half dozen big networks which spin a web of sound that covers the country mix good and bad indiscriminately, placing upon the radio audience the responsibility of tuning in at the right moment to the right program. It is disconcerting, to put it mildly, to have to listen to a current events commentator on the air when you are all set for a Bach chorale, or to a hot trumpet in place of a symphony, because you have been careless, or inattentive, or misinformed. But a twist of the dial sets you right. There are a few small stations with big ideals which have specialized in the best music, going determinedly counter to the assumption that public taste is necessarily low. All of the large stations put on many excellent programs. But there is still enough of a mixture on the air to pose a problem to the would-be discriminating listener.

Some of the drawbacks to radio are purely mechanical. It is difficult to secure accurate advance information about the programs to be played. Station WQXR in New York, which issues monthly an advance bulletin of events on that station, is an exception. Newspaper announcements are meager. Major events to come are described in detail in the Sunday music supplements of big metropolitan dailies, but during the week a symphony concert or important recital is simply set down as such, with the station name, leaving the listener in the dark as to what pieces will be played and by whom. If this is true of prominent events, it is the more so of the many obscure but excellent ones. Nor do the papers print criticisms excepting of

unique programs, so you are unable to check your own impressions with those of men whose business it is to listen. Furthermore, the radio is not yet so perfect an instrument of reproduction that it transmits the music identically as played. Due to its mechanical limitations, certain of the overtones are of necessity cut out, and the timbre is thereby affected. Moreover, since the orchestra is picked up and sent out through a single transmitter, you hear it as if with one ear instead of two. Unless it is a very finicky ear, your enjoyment is not noticeably lessened by this factor. But there are others. Static dwells in thunderstorms, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, elevators, trolleys, and telephones.* Petty annoyances crop up. Just when you are prepared to give yourself over wholly to enjoyment of a program, your family or friends interrupt, and start to talk to you while you are listening—something they would never dream of doing at a concert. Or the telephone rings, or the census-taker calls, or midway in the music the spell is broken by the advertising blurb for the commodity sponsoring the program. These are all disadvantages which must be recognized in sounding the praises of the radio. A broadcast is like a fine painting seen through glass. The music is not obscured, its form, color and meaning are quite clear, but something comes between it and you, something you would like to brush aside the better to hear.

Yet, when you consider the nature of radio mechanics, the wonder is not that radio is imperfect, but that we have it at all, that a mechanism has been developed by which

* Frequency modulation has recently eliminated static noises, and perfected the quality of radio sound, but the new transmitting stations it requires are still in the process of building.

the continuous rustle of unheard music in the air can be made audible to all who will tune in. Radio has been briefly defined as "the conversion of sound, or visual images in television, into electrical impulses which in turn are impressed upon the Hertzian waves for radiation through space, so that this energy can be intercepted at distant points and reconverted into similar electrical impulses for reproduction of the original sound." Because each sound has its own number of vibrations, it can be translated into electrical waves according to the number of those vibrations, known as "vibration frequency," and conversely back again from electrical into sound waves.

One moment in the infancy of broadcasting became musically significant due to the collaboration of radio's first cousin, the gramophone. In 1920, when there was no vigilant F.C.C. (Federal Communications Commission) to rule the air waves, a lot of amateurs were tinkering self-importantly and confusingly with sending and receiving sets. Dr. Frank Conrad of Pittsburgh became a little bored with his unrelieved diet of conversational persiflage with other amateurs within range. Instead of talking, he put on some gramophone music records one day, and was immediately besieged with requests for more. Being a perceptive business man, he conceived an advertising idea for increasing the sales of radio sets and parts, on the strength of his musical experiment. He suggested that a powerful radio station be built, from which regular programs of recorded music should be broadcast at specified times. Station KDKA in Pittsburgh was established by the Westinghouse Electric Company in accord with his suggestion, and succeeded beyond everybody's hopes. Sales mounted

rapidly. Obviously, music was on the air to stay. From this to the crowded schedules of today, with music occupying more than half of the total radio time, was a gradual development. The buzzing activity of the broadcasting studios is but one part of a vast scheme of relaying important events from all parts of the world. Concerts, operas, and performances of all kinds outside the studio are brought to you. Time on the air as a commodity, sold to advertisers, provides the funds for more and better music. Incidentally, the use of electrical transcriptions of recordings has raised many a mediocre program to the level of the best.

Assuming that you study with reasonable attention the announcements of forthcoming programs in the Sunday newspapers, you will undoubtedly mark with a big ✓ the high spots, and keep the radio sheet close to your machine all week. If you are interested in specifically educational programs, you will find a number of them, the most securely entrenched probably being the NBC Music Appreciation Hour, conducted every week by Dr. Walter Damrosch. Some years ago, Dr. Damrosch transferred to the air the concerts for young people he had conducted for many seasons in Carnegie Hall. Under his baton, the orchestra plays symphonic works, preceded by his explanatory comments on their form and meaning. The instruments of the orchestra are described, and the players step singly to the microphone for practical demonstrations of their respective tonal contributions. He also discusses the composers. In fact, his talks, while geared to the school room, need not be labeled "For children only," for they have thrown a substantial life-line to many adults who

find themselves floundering in the slippery bog of uncomprehended sound. Other commentators—Deems Taylor, Samuel Chotzinoff, Olin Downes—are on hand at symphony concerts with comments to lead you in the right direction. Station WOI, a small station in Ames, Iowa, offers with its early morning broadcast, *The Music Shop*, an illuminating series of comments, questions and answers. During the season of 1939-40, one of the national networks, the Mutual, sent over its stations the entire series of Bach cantatas, all of the Mozart piano concertos, and all of the Mozart operas.* In 1942, Music Hall of the Air offered a Mahler cycle. New York's municipal station WNYC, established under the aegis of the music-loving Mayor La Guardia, has devised notable programs. If you wish to be consciously educated, you will find no lack of opportunity.

Perhaps you are one of those who go to the radio only for entertainment, who would rather listen to Alec Templeton's parody of Dr. Damrosch's instruction than to the learned Doctor himself. You still may be trapped into enjoying the best, willy-nilly. After you have relaxed into your favorite armchair, with newspaper, cigarette, bedroom slippers and radio, for all the world like a magazine advertisement for any of those articles, you tune in your radio to a station which promises an hour of light entertainment. What happens? Rudolph Ganz, the delightful

* The same station, in the Spring of 1942, held an American opera festival on the air, presenting George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Douglas Moore's *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief*, Quinto Maganini's *Tennessee's Partner*, Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*, Aaron Copland's *The Second Hurricane*, and Deems Taylor's *The King's Henchman*.

Swiss conductor-pianist is announced as guest artist, and presently he is playing a Chopin prelude on the piano in between two jazz pieces by the orchestra, and you are liking it. Or the master of ceremonies familiarly invites a guest singer whom he addresses as Kirsten to do her bit, and she turns out to be Kirsten Flagstad, one of the finest sopranos the Metropolitan has ever thrown a roof over. The veriest lowbrow does not shut off the air-waves at this, even when he hears further that she is about to sing Brunnhilde's *Hoyo-to-ho* from Wagner's *Die Walküre*, or the *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde*. He is perfectly willing to listen, perhaps especially so when he discovers to his astonishment that he enjoys the unexpected high-brow piece. If, while twiddling aimlessly, he catches a strain that pleases him, and settles into his armchair to hear the rest of the piece, he is rather pleased than otherwise to learn from the announcer at the end that a Beethoven quartet, or a Mozart overture, or a Brahms waltz has reached him incognito, and has brought him pleasure.

It is possible to use both radio and gramophone in a planned, systematic fashion which bars twiddling, though few people do. From their haphazard musical finds they derive so much pleasure that they see no need to make any special effort. But, just as there are embryo litterateurs who doggedly read through the entire output of one author at a time, there are those who pursue composers with disc and dial in the same fashion. It is a not unrewarding project, though it may sound stuffy. It helps to differentiate the composers from one another, and to fix their characteristic musical speech in your mind, so that never will you confuse a Beethoven symphony with a Sibelius, or

a Bach chorale with a Roy Harris. You may even reach the point where you can hold your own in a music quiz with Oscar Levant or Sigmund Spaeth, especially if you supplement your radio research with recordings. Listening thoughtfully to these recordings, playing them repeatedly, analyzing each one carefully, you will acquire an astounding familiarity with the musical idiom of your chosen composers, and a corresponding enjoyment tempered to the individuality of each one.

If you are bent on grand opera, you are privileged to share that amusement with the idle rich free of charge. During the Metropolitan opera season, the whole country becomes a golden horseshoe on Saturday afternoons from two to five. Entire operas are broadcast directly from the stage of the Metropolitan, with explanatory comment on the dramatic action during the intermissions between the acts. Not only operas but many world-famous singers become known to you. Radio opera has certain advantages over the real thing. The opportunity to follow with the libretto in your own home, with lights turned high, denied you in the darkened opera house, enables you to become familiar with the words while listening to the music, and vice versa. Reading the words in this way in the original language while they are being sung, instead of hastily and superficially, in translation, just before a performance, fosters an intimate communion which does much to compensate for the loss of the stage illusion. Nor is that loss wholly to be deplored, for broadcast opera permits you to create your own illusion. Each of you, as he reads the impassioned lines of the love duet in the beginning of Act II of *Tristan und Isolde*, for instance, may picture lovers

worthy of such words and music. Your imagination is not dashed by the sight of a middle-aged tenor struggling to sing while a buxom soprano rests her head affectionately on his Adam's apple. Radio has its advantages.

Some part of an opera may so enrapture you that you feel you must hear it again at once. The chances are that in your record catalogue or my list you will find a recording of the aria or chorus or overture you like. You can then follow your radio treat with a gramophone session during which you repeat to your heart's content your chosen bit. Electrical transcriptions of parts, or of entire operas, are constantly being sent out by local stations large and small, supplementing for you the Metropolitan's radio season.

You may prefer to start your research with symphonic music, in which case the pickings are rich indeed. For each of the three large networks, the National, Columbia and Mutual, maintains its own orchestra, and broadcasts in addition the programs of orchestras in many American and European cities. Your reward for remaining glued to the microphone for a long winter's evening is the hearing of symphonic masterpieces as interpreted by Toscanini or distinguished guest conductors and the NBC Symphony Orchestra. The New York Philharmonic Symphony concerts are broadcast by Columbia on Sunday afternoons. During their gala anniversary season, 1941-2, not only John Barbirolli, their regular conductor, but Bruno Walter, Dmitri Mitropoulos, Eugene Goossens, Leopold Stokowski, Artur Rodzinski, and other guests were heard. Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, Washington, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the Fed-

eral Symphony orchestras from all over the country have each their little hour on the air. As if that were not enough, European and South American festivals are also relayed. You need only to grasp the hands outstretched across the sea and supported on air-waves to establish the warm current of friendship which flows between those whose musical sympathies are akin, however at variance their politics.

The number of chamber music broadcasts has leaped and bounded. The Congressional Library in Washington has specialized in programs of chamber music classics, made possible in large measure by those guardian angels of the string quartet, Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and Mrs. Gertrude Clarke Whittall. Such groups as the Musical Art, Coolidge, Gordon, Roth, Pro Arte, Budapest, and Kolisch quartets, and many others send you the works of masters of the past, and the best of the contributions of the present. This is true not only of the string quartet, but of all possible chamber music combinations, from the duet up to the chamber orchestra. You will hear such old favorites for the chamber orchestra as Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, Ernest Bloch's *Concerto Grosso*, and Bach's six *Brandenburg Concertos*, besides other delightful pieces, old and new. The small orchestra on the radio vies for popularity with the string quartet.

It seems hardly necessary to do more than mention the vocal and instrumental artists who present with benefit of electricity everything from the simple folk song to the elaborate concerto, and who, too, may be heard for the twisting. When Paderewski in 1939 played his first radio recital in America at the age of seventy-eight, (though he

had previously played broadcasts in England) he was catching up with scores of younger keyboard performers who had cast their art upon the air here. The violinists have had their say, from Heifetz, Kreisler, Menuhin, Szigeti and Elman down. Players of ancient instruments recapture the charm of a bygone day, playing the oldtime music written for harpsichord, recorder, lute and viola d'amore. Singers have come into their own on the air, and even the high soprano, formerly unpleasantly shrill in reproduction, today does herself justice both on the air-waves and the discs. Like the Rue de la Paix, the street in Paris through which all the people you have ever known will pass if you wait long enough, the radio and gramophone will eventually parade before your ears every piece of solo or concerted music worth knowing.

The large radio companies have gone further, and have commissioned new works. Six American composers, Aaron Copland, Louis Gruenberg, Howard Hanson, Roy Harris, Walter Piston and William Grant Still have recently launched on the air-waves symphonic works written to order. Chamber music competitions have been held, and the prize-winning works played on the air. Operas designed especially to meet the exigencies of radio timing represent almost a new form. One of the best of them, *The Old Maid and the Thief*, by the talented young American Gian Carlo Menotti, had its radio première in 1939, and thanks to its humorous story and equally humorous treatment in music and words, created much enthusiasm.* If you keep abreast of radio developments by tuning in on premières and

* More recent is *Solomon and Balkis*, a one-act opera by Randall Thompson, commissioned by the League of Composers, and given its world premiere on the air in March, 1942.

watching for announcements of novelties, you will be surprised at the frequency and variety with which new works are presented, and the interest they inspire in you once you have developed ever so fragmentary a listening background.

While on the subject of modern developments, let us not disregard the "hot music" which sizzles over the air and on the discs day and night, night and day. By hot music is meant, not the garden variety of ragtime or jazz, with steady, rather monotonous syncopated beat and simple syncopated melody. Genuine hot music goes further, in offering improvisation, often inspired improvisation, on jazz material old and new. It is in fact close to an art-form, regarded by many serious students as an important aspect of true folk music. They point to its ingenious rhythmic and melodic patterns as a subject for an entrancing study. They defy the virtuosi of serious music to match the resourcefulness and brilliance of the soaring hot trumpets and clarinets, or the inspired agility of the pianists who play with the other instrumentalists often unrehearsed ensembles which not only make sense, but create a complicated and expressive pattern. Regarded in this light, hot music affords both emotional and intellectual interest, so you need not apologize if you like it, nor even if you like it better than other forms. Its heat may eventually send you for contrast to the cool springs of the classics, though the two are not as antipathetic as their jealous guardians would have you believe. Whether or not you enjoy both equally, hold up your head and stand up for your right to prefer your music hot. You will be in good company.

On the gramophone, equally with the radio, records of

hot music are available along with all the classics. The mechanics of gramophones differ from those of radio, but the privileges attendant upon their use are substantially the same. An actual record of the vibrations of the musical sound is made on wax or some other impressionable material, a matrix is made from the records, and innumerable plates of durable material are then taken from the matrix. When the plates are placed on the gramophone, the process is reversed, the instrument playing back the records. Amplification is supplied by a sound chamber, while a needle traveling over the indentations in the records sets up the necessary vibrations. The early Edison machines came with a horn as amplifier. The records were pink wax cylinders, which had to be wrapped in cotton wool between times, which melted in the heat, and were so delicate that the indentations were obliterated by finger-marks if they were not handled with the utmost solicitude. Even if they were, their sound was anything but perfect, a scratchy, nasal imitation of music, with sudden lapses in volume where somebody's finger had touched a spot. The orthophonic recordings of today represent an astounding advance. They successfully combat the hum of machinery and the scratch of the needle on records, and create the illusion of a performance which is gratifyingly even.

The greatest advantage of the gramophone over the radio is the chance it gives you for repetition. You can play a piece over and over, setting your needle back to the beginning until you have mastered the difficulties as you cannot possibly do at a single hearing. You can stop your record wherever you wish, and go over the passages which are not clear to you at first, or repeat the main and sub-

sidiary themes until you have them thoroughly fixed, or debate on a structural division or a harmonic change with the music sounding directly in your ears as supporting evidence of your theory. Each time you do this, you need not play the whole composition through, you soon develop an instinct for putting the needle down on the record in the approximate spot you want. The privilege of making your own program and giving yourself exactly the kind of a concert you like eliminates the enjoyable element of the unexpected in the radio but at the same time frees you to take what you like, not what is given to you. You become the master of your musical fate, and if you do not select your evening's entertainment wisely, you have no one but yourself to blame.

The radio is often spoken of as the resource of the lazy man, and certainly dial twiddling is less of a bother than record changing. However, in so far as we give more appreciative attention to that for which we have to put forth some effort there is a great deal to be said for the gramophone. Having undergone the mental exertion of selecting a record, and the physical one of placing it on the machine, turning and changing it, the chances are that you will listen to it with more intense concentration than to the waves of sound which drift through the air and out of the machine without effort on your part. Besides, the odds are in favor of a superlative recorded performance as against a possibly mediocre broadcast. The very nature of the two media invites comparison of their results. Before an organization goes on record in the quasi permanent form of the disc, it undergoes long, patient rehearsal, endless repetition, an uncompromising drill. Even then a

dozen recordings of the much rehearsed piece may have to be made in the studio before one is accepted as satisfactory. The result is that the standard of performance is generally high, even on a comparatively insignificant disc. The exigencies of time and sponsorship on the radio do not as a rule permit of equally painstaking preparation for performances within the studio, although there are exceptions. Musical events broadcast from outside the studio, on the other hand, have generally been carefully rehearsed for public appearance, so that a reasonably high radio average is arrived at by lumping together superlative performances with those somewhat below standard. As to recordings, R. D. Darrell, compiler of the *Encyclopedia of the World's Best Recorded Music*, a volume for the shelf of the collector of records, has this to say: "A brave new world lies at the feet of the gramophone explorer. . . . A raucous acoustic toy while its material was confined to *Cohens on the Telephone* and *Up the Street* marches; a parlor music hall when turned to light overtures, salon pieces, and hackneyed opera arias, it (the gramophone) assumed significance when it grew bold enough to echo standard concert repertory." That echo grows louder and louder. You no longer need to strain to hear it.

It is hardly fair to put the radio and gramophone down as first aids. They are aids first, last, and all the time. Only since they have been perfected has music been brought within the reach of anyone who cares to listen. No longer a luxury, it has become a part of everyday life, so much so as to be practically a necessity. Not to hear it is to starve, to hear it with appreciation is to be nourished on the most sustaining of foods, food for the spirit. It makes no differ-

ence whether you find your greatest enjoyment in analyzing the materials, now that you know what they are, or in a heightened sense of the emotional and spiritual values of the music itself, or in the friendlier eye with which you look upon composers and their works, or in some other way of your own. The important thing is that you should listen willingly and receptively, taking any or all of the approaches which have been here suggested, and that, having listened with appreciation, you find yourself, your home, and all within it infinitely the richer for the experience.

THE END

PART IV
APPENDIX

WORD MEANINGS YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW

A. A tone, generally of 440 vibrations per second. The octaves, and the scales or keys associated with it.

Absolute music. Music that depends for its effect solely upon material, form, and procedure, not upon any stated program or story.

Absolute pitch. The instinctive recognition of pitch through hearing without the help of the keyboard.

A cappella. Unaccompanied, as in a chapel. Applied only to choral music.

Accelerando. Growing faster.

Accent. The emphasis on a tone or beat.

Accidental. A sharp or flat which does not belong in the key of a piece, but is inserted for effectiveness.

Accompaniment. The part which supports the melody.

Adagio. Slow; a direction for playing a piece. The name of a slow movement.

Ad libitum (ad lib.). As you please, to be played according to individual taste.

Affettuoso. Tenderly.

Agitato. Restless.

Air. A melody or tune.

Alla breve. $\frac{2}{2}$ time, with one beat to each half note.

Allargando. Growing broader and slower.

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Allegretto. Somewhat slower than Allegro, but still moderately fast.

Allegro. Fast, literally happy. The name of a fast movement.

Allemande. A stately German dance.

Alto. Abbreviation of contralto. Low voice, or instruments whose range corresponds to low voice.

Amoroso. Lovingly.

Andante. Walking time, slower than Allegretto. The name of a movement.

Andantino. Somewhat faster than Andante, between Andante and Allegretto.

Animando. Getting faster.

Animato. Fast and animated.

Answer. The imitation by one voice in polyphonic music of a theme proposed in another.

Antiphon. A verse or sentence sung by one choir in response to another.

Appassionato. Passionate.

Appoggiatura. A grace note or ornament.

Aria. An ambitious melody or song, usually found in opera or oratorio.

Arpeggio. A chord played sweepingly, as on a harp.

Assai. Very.

Atonal. Without tonality, i.e., without relationship of all tones and chords to a central keynote.

Attack. The way a tone or a phrase is begun.

Augmentation. The repetition or imitation of a theme, using the same but longer notes, which slows down the speed. In harmony, the addition of a half tone to a major interval, forming an augmented interval.

B. The tone a whole step higher than A; its octaves, and the scales and keys associated with it.

Ballad. A simple narrative song, each stanza sung to the same melody, and having a chorus or refrain. Originally a dance-tune, from the Italian *ballare*, to dance.

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Ballet. A dance spectacle with music.

Balletomane. A ballet enthusiast.

Bar. The line separating one measure from another, also applied to the measure itself.

Barbershop harmony. Close harmony used in improvised part singing.

Baritone. The male voice between tenor and bass, and instruments of the corresponding range.

Base. The lowest note of a chord.

Bass (basso). The lowest male voice. The part at the bottom of the harmony. Instruments of the corresponding range.

Basso continuo. The figured bass in oldtime music.

Bassoon. A woodwind, the bass of the oboe family.

Baton. The stick with which a conductor directs his group.

Beat. One of the units in a measure. The motion made in beating time.

Bel canto. Literally beautiful singing, in a style associated with seventeenth and eighteenth century Italian music.

Berceuse. Cradle song.

Bergerette. Shepherd song.

Bourrée. A lively French dance.

Bow. A flexible stick strung with horsehair which, when drawn across the strings of an instrument, produces the tone.

Branle or *brawl.* A lively French round dance also popular in sixteenth century England.

Bravura. Dash and brilliance in performance.

Bridge. A piece of wood that holds up the strings from the body of a stringed instrument, and at the same time transmits their vibrations to that body.

Brio. Brilliancy, fire. *Con brio*, with fire.

Buffa, buffo. Grotesque or comic.

Burden. A reiterated refrain or chorus.

C. The name of a tone of 256 vibrations, one half step above B in the scale; its octaves, and the scales and keys associated with it.

276 *Word Meanings You Will Want to Know*

Cadence. The close of a phrase or line.

Cadenza. A solo unaccompanied passage in a concerto or aria for the special display of virtuosity. Occasionally extemporaneous, or interpolated by someone other than the composer.

Calando. Calming down.

Caloroso. Warm, animated.

Camera. Italian for room. *Musica di camera* is music for a room, or chamber music.

Canon. A form in which the melody, given by one voice, is exactly imitated by two or three others in the same or harmonizing keys.

Cantabile. In the manner of a song.

Cantata. A vocal work with instrumental accompaniment, like an oratorio but shorter, usually written for a special occasion.

Cantilena. A melodious song, piece, or passage.

Cantus or *canto.* A song. A melody used as a subject or theme.

Cantus firmus. The chief melody in contrapuntal music.

Capo. Beginning. *Da capo*, from the beginning.

Capriccioso. Capriciously, fancifully.

Catch. A three or four part round in which the singers catch up their lines.

Celesta. A keyboard instrument like a piano, which produces a tinkling sound.

Cello. Abbreviation for violoncello, the tenor of the violin family, a four-stringed bowed instrument held between the knees.

Chaconne. A dance in slow triple rhythm, in a kind of variation form, its theme a harmonized melody, any part of which may be used in the variations.

Chamber music. Music for a room.

Chanson. Song or ballad.

Choir. Either a group of singers in a church, or a group of instruments in an orchestra.

Chorale. A hymn or psalm tune.

Word Meanings You Will Want to Know 277

Chord. The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones of different pitch.

Chorus. A group of singers. A piece of music composed for them. A burden or refrain in a song.

Chromatic. Tones a half tone apart from the tones of the diatonic scale in which they appear, i.e., sharps, flats, double flats etc. not in the key.

Chromatic scale. A scale composed entirely of half tones.

Clarinet. A single-reed woodwind with a range of more than two octaves. Soprano clarinet is in C or B flat, bass clarinet an octave lower, contrabass in double B flat.

Clavichord. An ancestor of the piano, in which the strings were struck, not plucked.

Clef. A sign indicating the general pitch; e.g., Treble (G) and Bass (F).

Coda. A concluding section, literally a tail.

Color. Tone quality or timbre; variety of tone.

Coloratura. Florid, decorative. A high soprano voice able to sing florid music.

Compass. Range.

Con. With.

Concertmaster. The leader of the first violins in an orchestra, who plays solo parts and drills both first and second violins.

Concerto. A composition for solo instrument or instruments with orchestra.

Concerto grosso. A composition for several soloists with full orchestra. The soloists were called the *concertino*, the accompanying instruments the *ripieno*, or fillers-in.

Concord. A combination of sounds which is gratifying to the ear.

Conductor. The director of a chorus or orchestra.

Console. The case containing the keyboards of a pipe organ and their mechanism.

Consonance. An agreeable combination of sounds.

Contrabass. Double-bass or bass viol.

Contralto. Lowest woman's voice, also called alto.

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Contrapuntal. Relating to counterpoint.

Cor Anglais. An English horn or alto oboe.

Count. A beat.

Counterpoint. The fitting of two melodies together in such fashion that they have beauty both individually and in harmony. Literally note against note.

Courante. Running, hence a running dance.

Crescendo (*cresc.*). Growing louder. <

Cymbals. Metal discs struck together in the orchestra for clashing effects.

D. The name of the note a whole tone above C; its octaves, and the keys and scales associated with it.

Damper. A felt block which stops the vibration of strings in the piano by resting upon them.

Damper pedal. The pedal which raises the dampers from the strings in the piano, increasing their own vibrations and the sympathetic vibrations of other strings. Also inaccurately called the *loud pedal*.

Decrescendo (*decresc.*). Growing softer. >

Development. The working out of thematic material. The name given to the second section of the sonata form.

Diapason. The compass or total range of a tone series; an octave; the foundation tone of the organ.

Diatonic. A major or minor scale in any key.

Diminished. Applied to intervals a half tone smaller than minor or perfect and to chords containing such intervals.

Diminuendo (*dim.*). Diminishing in volume, getting softer.

Diminution. The opposite of augmentation. The repetition or imitation of a theme using the same but shorter notes, thus increasing the speed.

Discant or *descant*. The writing of counterpoint. The highest voice in a part-song.

Dissonance. A disagreeable combination of sounds.

Divertimento or *divertissement*. A light amusing piece. An episode in a fugue.

Word Meanings You Will Want to Know 279

Divisi. Divided.

Do. The name of the first note of the scale.

Dolce. Sweetly.

Dolente. Mournfully.

Dominant. The fifth tone of the diatonic scale.

Doppio. Double. *Doppio movimento*, twice as fast.

Double. To double a tone is to play it with its octave above or below.

Double bass. Bass-viol, contrabass. Largest and lowest pitched of the violin family.

Double bassoon, contrabassoon. The woodwind pitched an octave lower than the bassoon.

Double fugue. A fugue with two subjects.

Double-stop. The stopping of two strings at once on a stringed instrument to sound two tones simultaneously.

Doucement. Sweetly.

Down-beat. The first beat in a measure.

Drone-bass. A persistent accompaniment consisting of one or two tones repeated.

Drum. An instrument of percussion consisting of a wood or metal cylinder over whose two ends are stretched skin heads, played by striking with sticks.

Bass. A large drum struck with a ball-end stick.

Kettle. A metal, usually copper half-sphere over whose edge is stretched a skin held by a hoop. One is called a tympanon, two tympani, and they are usually played two or three together.

Snare. A small drum beneath whose head are stretched cords or snares. Also called a side drum.

Tenor. A military or field drum deeper than the snare drum and without snares.

Trap. A bass drum with cymbals attached and a foot-pedal for playing both drum and cymbals. Used in swing and dance bands.

Duet (duo). A composition for two performers.

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Duple time. Two beats to the measure, or four beats counted as two.

Durch-komponiert. Applied to the art-song, in which the music follows the words without repetition of verse and chorus, as opposed to ballad or folk song.

Dynamics. Changes in volume, quality and emphasis.

E. The name of the tone a whole tone above D, its octaves, and the scales and keys associated with it.

Ear, musical. An ear that is sensitive to minute distinctions of pitch, quality, and intensity of tones, and enables its possessor to recall and reproduce them.

Ear-training. Educating the ear to become musical.

Embellishment. Tones added to the melody for ornament or decoration.

Embouchure. The mouthpiece of a wind instrument, or the adjustment of the player's lips to the mouthpiece.

Energico. Energetically.

English horn. Alto oboe.

Ensemble. A combination of voices or instruments, as opposed to solo, generally applied to chamber-music groups; the effect of a composition as a whole.

Entrechat. A ballet term. A jump during which the dancer's feet are rapidly crossed several times while in the air.

Episode. A digression or incidental portion of a composition, particularly used in fugues.

Espressivo (espr.). Expressively.

Étude. A study.

Execution. The technique of performance.

Exposition. The first section of sonata form or fugue, in which the chief themes are introduced.

F. The name of the tone a half tone above E, and of the scales and keys associated with it.

Fa. The fourth note in the scale.

Fagotto. Another name for the bassoon.

Word Meanings You Will Want to Know 281

Fall. The closing strain of a melody.

Falsetto. The smallest and highest register of the male voice.

Fantasia or *Fantasiae.* A composition in free form.

Faux-bourdon. A type of counterpoint.

Fermata. This symbol \frown which indicates that the note under it is to be held.

Fife. A high flute like the piccolo.

Fifth. The interval between the first and fifth tones of the scale. The fifth tone of the scale, called the dominant.

Figuration. The decoration of a melody with ornate and complicated passages.

Figure. The smallest element into which a phrase or its accompaniment can be divided.

Finale. The last movement in a sonata, symphony, or concerto; the last part of a composition.

Fine. The end.

Fingerboard. In the lute and violin family of instruments, a flat piece of wood over which the strings are stretched and against which they are "stopped" with the fingers to change the pitch.

First. Unison. The soprano part in a vocal or instrumental ensemble.

Flageolet. A small flute. The tone produced by light pressure of the finger on a string, also called a harmonic.

Flat. The symbol \flat which lowers by a half tone the note before which it is placed. A note lowered from the natural by a half tone.

Florid. Having many embellishments and ornaments.

Flute. A woodwind which is blown from the side instead of the end.

Folk-music. Music that springs spontaneously from the people.

Form. The organization of the details of a composition with regard to clearness, order, balance, coherence, and general effect; the architecture as distinct from the inspiration.

Forte (*f.*). Loud.

Fortepiano (*fp.*). A quick transition from loud to soft.

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Fortissimo (ff.). Very loud. Loudest possible is marked *fff.* or *ffff.*

Fourth. The interval between the first and fourth of the major and minor scales; also the tone at that interval from any starting point. The tone immediately below the fifth, or dominant, called the subdominant.

Free. The opposite of strict; i.e., not strictly according to the established rules for the specific form of composition.

French horn. The brass horn of the orchestra, descended from the hunting horn, recognizable by the long tubing curled in a circle.

Fret. A ridge across the fingerboard of certain stringed instruments to indicate the tones of the scale.

Fugato. A passage in fugue style.

Fughetta. A small fugue.

Fugue. A form of polyphonic writing in which one theme or subject is imitated by others, in the manner of a flight (*fuga*) and pursuit.

Fundamental. The root of a triad or chord, which gives the chord its name. The basic tone which generates overtones.

Fuoco. Fire, passion.

G. The tone a whole step higher than F, its octaves and the keys and scales associated with it.

Gaillard. An old French dance in triple rhythm.

Gamut. The scale; the compass or range of tones.

Gavotte. An old French dance.

Gigue. The jig, a very fast dance of English origin in triple time.

Giocoso. Merrily.

Giusto. Exact.

Glee. A secular part-song, not necessarily cheerful, for three or more unaccompanied voices.

Glissando. Sliding. A scale passage played very fast, if on the piano, with the fingernail. In modern dance music, the slide from one tone to another.

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Grace-note. A very small note or notes written before others, to be played as ornaments or embellishments.

Grave. Heavy. Indicates that a piece should be played slowly and heavily.

Grazia. Grace or elegance.

Gregorian chants. The chants of the Roman Catholic Church, which were adopted under Pope Gregory.

Grosso. Great, grand, full.

Hammer. The device which strikes the strings and produces the tone in a piano.

Harmonic. Concerned with harmony, as opposed to melody or counterpoint. The flageolet tone of a stringed instrument. An overtone.

Harmonic series. The overtones of a fundamental in the order in which they are heard.

Harmony. The simultaneous sounding of two or more tones in pleasing combination.

Harp. A large, many-stringed instrument, sounded by plucking the strings with the fingers.

Harpsichord. A precursor of the piano, its tone produced by quills plucking the strings.

Hautbois or *hautboy.* The oboe.

Head-voice. A term used in singing to describe tones which emanate from the head.

Homophony. A composition which presents a melody with accompaniment, as opposed to *polyphony*, which presents many melodies.

Horn. A general term for metal wind instruments.

Humoresque. A humorous piece.

Idea. A structural unit in music, also called figure, motif, strain, phrase, subject, or theme.

Imitation. The repetition of a theme or subject by another voice, either note for note, as in a canon, or with changes (augmentation, diminution, etc.).

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Improvisation. An extemporaneous performance. A composition that is informal in style, as though extemporized.

Inner voices. In harmony, the voice parts excepting the highest and lowest.

Interval. The distance between two tones, including them both.

Intonation. Pitch, as related to an exact standard.

Introduction. A prelude or overture to a piece.

Invention. A contrapuntal study with one theme.

Inversion. The changing of an interval, chord, or subject by changing the position of one or more of its tones.

Istesso. The same.

Kettledrums. The tympani in an orchestra.

Key. The starting point of a scale, i.e., the tonic. The foundation of a harmony. The mechanical device on percussion or wind instruments which determines the pitch of the tone produced.

Keyboard. The set of keys on a piano or organ.

Kyrie Eleison. The first number after the Introit in the Catholic Mass.

La. The name of the sixth step in the scale.

Lamentoso. Mournfully.

Largamente. Broadly.

Larghetto. A little less slow than Largo.

Largo. Broader and slower than Lento or Adagio.

Lead. The leading part taken by voice or instrument.

Leading chord. A chord that leads toward the tonic.

Leading motive. Leitmotif. A musical idea characterizing a person or episode which recurs whenever that person or episode is recalled.

Leading tone. The seventh tone in the scale, leading by a half step to the tonic.

Legato. Tied or bound, played smoothly and without break.

Leggeramente, leggiero. Lightly.

Legno. Wood. *Col legno*, played with the wood of the bow.

Lento. Very slow.

Libretto. The literary text of music.

Lied. The German word for song, used to designate German art-song.

Line. The continuity of a piece; its pattern of movement.

Loure. An old French dance.

Lyric. Songlike or melodious.

Ma. But.

Madrigal. A secular song for two or more voices, unaccompanied.

Maestoso. Majestically.

Maestro. A master or director.

Major, maggiore. Greater; used to describe tones, intervals, scales, chords, and tonalities, as opposed to minor.

Manual. The keyboard of an organ.

Marcato. Accented.

March (marcia, Marsch, marche). A composition in the rhythm of two, to accompany marching.

Mask or masque. Pantomime or pageant with music.

Mass. Part of the Roman Catholic service, consisting of the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei.

Mazurka. A Polish dance in slow triple time.

Me or mi. The name of the third step in the scale, the mediant.

Measure. A group of beats set off from its fellows by bar-lines which define its contents.

Mediant. The third note of the scale.

Medley. A mixture of tunes, a potpourri.

Melodic. Having to do with melody as opposed to harmony.

Melody. An agreeable series of tones which possess shape, pattern and coherence, and are logically organized as to pitch. The leading part.

Meno. Less.

Meno mosso. Less fast.

Menuet, Menuetto. An old French dance in stately triple rhythm.

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Meter, metre. Dealing with the arrangement of the measures, or rhythmic units, and the accents within them.

Metronome. A mechanical device for marking even units of time, used to fix the tempo and to keep the rhythm uniform.

Mezzo. Half.

Mezzo-soprano. Medium soprano.

Mezzo-voce. Half voice.

Mezzo-forte or piano (mf. or mp.). Medium loud or soft.

Middle C. The C of 256 vibrations, nearest the middle of the piano keyboard.

Minor. Smaller or shorter. Used to describe tones, intervals, scales, chords, and tonalities, as opposed to major.

Minuet. The same as *Menuet*.

Missa. The same as Mass.

Missa Solemnis. Solemn Mass.

Misterioso. Mysteriously.

Mode, Mood. Scale, as used by the Greeks. The nature of a piece, major or minor.

Moderato. Moderately slow tempo.

Modulation. A change of tonality or key in the course of a piece.

Molto. Much or very.

Molto Adagio. Very slow.

Monody, Monophony. A piece with one voice predominating; a melody with accompaniment.

Monotone. A single tone, repeated without variation in pitch.

Mordent or mordant. A double grace note or trill.

Morendo. Dying away.

Mosso. Rapid. *Piu mosso*, more quickly.

Motet. A sacred madrigal.

Motive, motiv, motif. A short melodic phrase or pattern.

Moto. Motion. *Con moto*, with motion or quickly.

Moto Perpetuo. Perpetual motion, applied to a piece played very quickly and without stopping.

Movement. One of the principal divisions of a large composition, complete in itself. Rate of speed.

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Musette. A bagpipe or a small oboe. A short pastoral dance tune.

Music-drama. The Wagnerian form of opera.

Mute. A device for muffling tone.

Natural. The white keys on a piano. The sign \natural which cancels a sharp or a flat.

Neo-classicism. New classicism, a revival of the spirit of the eighteenth century.

Nocturne or *Notturmo.* A lyric instrumental piece in dreamy, sentimental mood, much favored by Chopin.

Nuance. The expressive variation of tempo, intensity or tone-color.

Obbligato. Obligatory, not to be omitted, generally applied to a solo passage in the accompaniment of a concerted work.

Oboe. A double-reed woodwind, the same as *hautboy* or *haut-bois*.

Octave. The interval between the first and eighth tones of the diatonic scale. The eighth tone itself.

Octet, Octuor. A piece written for eight instruments; the eight musicians who play it.

Open. Not stopped (of a string), not closed at the top (of a pipe), with tones spread out (of a chord in harmony).

Opera. A drama set to music.

Opéra comique. Opera containing spoken words.

Opéra grande, or *grand opera.* Opera containing no spoken words.

Operetta. A light opera, with more or less spoken words.

Opus (Op.). Work.

Oratorio. A large choral work, sacred or heroic in character.

Orchestra. A large ensemble of different instrumentalists under a director. A symphony orchestra is one prepared to play symphonic music; a chamber orchestra is smaller, equipped to play orchestral music on a smaller scale.

Organ. A large keyboard wind instrument.

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Organ-stop. A set of pipes in a pipe-organ, all of which have the same tone quality. The stop-knobs.

Organum. The earliest polyphonic music.

Ossia. "Or else," marking a passage, usually easier, that may be substituted for the original passage.

Ostinato. Obstinate, continuous. *Basso ostinato*, a continuous bass.

Overblowing. Blowing a wind instrument so hard that it sounds one of the upper partials of the fundamental tone blown.

Overtone. A partial tone vibrating along with the fundamental tone and with it creating a musical note.

Overture. Introduction to an opera or oratorio. An independent work comparable to it.

Parallel motion. Two moving voices remaining the same distance apart.

Paraphrase. A free arrangement or transcription.

Parlando. In the manner of one who is speaking.

Partial tone. An overtone or harmonic.

Part-song. A song for three or more voices.

Partita. A dance suite. A set of variations.

Partitur. A full score.

Passacaglia. A Spanish dance-form in slow triple rhythm, with a ground-bass.

Passage. Any short division of a piece.

Passepied. An old French dance, in lively triple time.

Passing-tone. A connecting note between essential tones in the chords which precede and follow it.

Passion. A musical setting of the last days and death of Christ.

Pausa or *pause.* A rest.

Pavane. A stately old Italian dance in the rhythm of two.

Pedal. A mechanical device for controlling tone with the foot.

Pedal-point, or *pedal-note.* A sustained tone around which the other parts move independently.

Pentatonic. Having five tones, e.g., the *pentatonic* scale of the Kelts and Chinese.

Percussion. Producing sound by a blow or a stroke.

Perdendosi. Dying away.

Perfect cadence. A closing that proceeds from the dominant to the tonic; i.e., from the fifth to the first or from *sol* to *do*.

Perfect interval. A fourth, a fifth, or an octave.

Period. A division consisting of two or more phrases with a cadence.

Phrase. A small division of a melody performed without a break, as if on one breath.

Phrasing. The art of indicating phrases by nuance, by separating, and by connecting of tones.

Piacere. Pleasure. *A piacere*, at pleasure.

Piacevole. Pleasantly.

Piangendo. Plaintively.

Pianissimo (pp.). Very soft.

Piano (p.). Soft.

Piano subito. Suddenly soft.

Pianoforte. The keyboard instrument known as the piano.

Piccolo. A small flute that plays in the higher register.

Pick. A plectrum, used for plucking the strings.

Pirouette. A ballet term signifying a complete turn of the body, taken on one leg.

Pitch. The height or depth of a tone in relation to a fixed tone.

Più. More.

Pizzicato (pizz.). Plucked, instead of played with a bow.

Plagal cadence. An ending that proceeds from the fourth to the first or from *fa* to *do*.

Plain-chant, plain-song. Unaccompanied Gregorian church music.

Poco. Little. *Un poco*, a little.

Poco a poco. Little by little.

Polka. A gay, lively, Bohemian round dance.

Polonaise or Polacca. A Polish dance in slow triple rhythm.

Polyphony. Counterpoint, or the harmonious combination of two or more voices, retaining their melodic individuality and independence.

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Polytonality. The simultaneous use of two or more tonalities, or key-centers.

Ponticello. Bridge.

Portamento. A gliding effect, produced by sliding with the finger on a stringed instrument, or by running together the tones of the voice.

Prelude, Preludio, Praeludium. An introduction, something played before something else.

Première. A first performance. World première, a first performance anywhere.

Preparation. In harmony, getting ready for a discord by previously introducing the dissonant note.

Prestissimo. Even faster than presto.

Presto. Very fast, agitated, excited.

Primo, prima. First. *Tempo primo*, the first tempo; *Prima donna*, the first lady-singer; *a prima vista*, at first sight, applied to sight reading.

Program music. Music with a descriptive title, motto, or foreword supplied by the composer.

Progression. Melodic or harmonic motion, called voice-leading if melodic, chord succession if harmonic.

Quadrille. A French square dance.

Quality. The same as timbre or tone-color.

Quarter note. A note one-fourth of a whole note in duration.

Quarter-tone. An interval of half a half tone.

Quartet, Quatuor. Four performers in an ensemble. The music written for that combination.

Quasi. As if.

Quintet. Five performers in an ensemble. The music written for that combination.

Rag-time. Popular syncopated music, an ancestor of jazz.

Rallentando. Gradually slowing the tempo.

Re. The second syllable in the scale.

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Recapitulation. The final section in sonata or fugue form. The repetition of a passage.

Recital. A performance by one performer, or consisting of the works of one composer.

Recitativo secco. Declamatory singing with only a few chords of accompaniment.

Recitativo stromentato. Declamatory singing with instrumental accompaniment.

Reed. A thin strip of wood, cane, or metal used in some wind instruments, which produces tone when set in vibration by a current of air.

Reel. A Scotch-Irish lively dance.

Refrain. A chorus.

Register. Compass or range. A set of pipes, or their controlling stop on an organ.

Related, Relative. Used to describe a tone, chord, or key with marked kinship or affinity for another, to which it is then said to be related. *Relative* minor of a major scale is one based upon a tone two degrees below its tonic, i.e., C major, A minor; G major, E minor, etc.

Relative pitch. The ability to name a note from its relation to another fixed in the memory.

Repeat. The sign indicating that a passage or section is to be played again.

Requiem. The Mass for the dead.

Resolution. The act of passing from a dissonance to a consonance.

Resonance. The sympathetic vibrations of solids and of limited bodies of air in response to tone-producing vibrations in their neighborhood.

Rest. A rhythmic pause.

Reverie, Revery. A dreamy or contemplative instrumental work.

Rhapsody, Rhapsodie. An instrumental fantasia generally employing folk or national themes.

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Rhythm. An approximately regular recurrence of pulses, patterns, or similar figures.

Rinforzando. Accented.

Ripieno. The part that fills in in a concerted composition, as opposed to the *solo*.

Risoluto. Boldly.

Ritardando (*rit.*, *ritard.*). Becoming gradually slower.

Ritenuto (*riten.*). Becoming suddenly slower.

Romance, Romanza. A romantic song, ballad, or instrumental composition.

Romantic. Usually used to describe the composers of the early nineteenth century and their music, which was subjective and emotional as opposed to objective and classical.

Rondo, Rondeau. Originally a round dance, with recurrent refrain. A form of music with a recurrent principal theme.

Root. The tone on which a triad or chord is built.

Round. A canon for voices, in which the singers come in on set musical intervals, returning to the first section after the melody has been sung through, and going on ad infinitum.

Rubato. Literally robbed; dwelling on one note or group of notes at the expense of others.

Run. A rapid succession of consecutive tones.

Saltando. Dancing or bouncing.

Sarabande, Saraband. An old Spanish dance in triple rhythm, with accented second beat.

Saxophone. A single-reed brass instrument like the clarinet, used mostly in military and dance bands.

Scale. A ladder of tones between a tone and its octave, arranged in logical succession, as chromatic, diatonic, etc.

Scherzando. Playfully.

Scherzo. A rapid playful piece.

Score. A complete draft of a work showing all its parts at once, as they are to be played.

Secco. Dry. Applied to recitative with slight accompaniment.

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Second. The interval between two degrees of the major scale.

The note above the tonic, called the supertonic. The alto part of a song.

Segno. A sign.

Semplice. Simply, purely.

Sempre. Always.

Senza. Without.

Septet. Seven performers in an ensemble. The music written for them.

Sequence. The repetition of a motive up or down the scale, starting either on successive steps or thirds.

Serenade (Ständchen). An evening song.

Serio, Seria. Serious.

Seventh. The interval between the first and seventh degrees of the major scale or a similar interval. A tone at that interval called in the scale the leading tone or sub-tonic.

Sextet, Sextuor. Six performers in an ensemble. The music written for them.

Sforzato (sf.). Sudden emphasis on a note or chord.

Sharp. The sign #, which indicates that the tone before which it appears is to be raised a half step. Too high in pitch.

Si or Ti. The seventh syllable in the scale.

Siciliana, Sicilienne. A slow Sicilian peasant dance in triple rhythm.

Signature. The sharps or flats that indicate the key of a composition, written at the beginning of each line of music. Also a sign placed after the Clef and the key signature to indicate the meter.

Sixteenth. One-half of an eighth note.

Sixth. The interval between the first and sixth degrees of the major scale or one like it. The tone at that interval called in the scale the submediant.

Slur. Two or more single tones run together as one.

Smorzando (smorz.). Dying away.

Sol. The fifth syllable in the scale.

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Solfa. A system giving *do, re, mi, fa*, etc., as names for the tones of the scale.

Solfeggio. The use of syllables in vocal study.

Solo. Alone.

Sonata. Originally anything that was sounded, not sung. The name of the form in which the first movements of symphonies, concertos, and sonatas are cast. A three-movement piece for one or more instruments using the sonata form.

Sonatina. A short, simple sonata.

Song. A vocal composition, or a lyrical piece for an instrument.

Soprano. The highest female or boy's voice.

Sordine, Sordino, Sourdine. A mute, the mechanical device for muffling tone.

Sostenuto. Sustained.

Sotto voce. In an undertone.

Sound-board, Sounding-board. A resonant piece of wood whose sympathetic vibrations increase the volume and enrich the tone of strings stretched across it.

Spiccato. Detached notes, played with a jumping bow.

Spinet. A harpsichord.

Staccato. Detached, short, crisp notes, the opposite of *legato*.

Staff, Stave. The five parallel horizontal lines on which the notes are written.

Step. One degree of the scale.

Stop. The pipes or sets of pipes in an organ, and the knob that controls them. The pressure of the finger on a stringed instrument to control the pitch, or other devices for "stopping" tone and thus changing its pitch. A stopped tone is the opposite of an open tone.

Stretto. Compressed. That section of the fugue where the subjects are so compressed as to overlap.

Stringendo (string.). Speeding up.

Subdominant. The fourth tone of the diatonic scale.

Subito. Sudden.

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Subject. A figure or phrase taken as theme, particularly in fugue or sonata form.

Suite. A series of short instrumental pieces with some connection, forerunner of the symphony.

Suspension. A temporary dissonance occurring in a chord.

Swell. A gradual increase of sound; the mechanism of the organ which makes it possible.

Symphonic poem. A large orchestral work in one continuous movement, usually with a program.

Symphonie concertante. A symphony with solo passages for one or more instruments.

Symphony, Symphonie, Sinfonie. A sonata for orchestra.

Syncopation. The shifting of the accent to the normally weak or unaccented part of the measure.

Tambour. A drum.

Tambourine. A small drum with a single head, and with bells in the rim, played by striking or shaking with the hand.

Tarantella, Tarantelle. A fast Italian dance, supposedly caused by the bite of a tarantula.

Technic, Technique. Method or style of performance or execution.

Temperament. Tuning by a compromise system designed to secure a practical scale.

Tempo. The pace at which a piece or passage is performed.

Tenerezza. Tenderness.

Tenor, Tenore. The highest male voice or voice part.

Tenuto. Held or sustained.

Tessitura. The average pitch or range of a melody.

Tetrachord. Tetra means four. The interval of the fourth, or the tone-series within that interval.

Tetralogy. A series of four dramas on related themes.

Text. The words sung in vocal music.

Theme, Thema, Tema. A subject, or important melody.

Theory. The science of composition.

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Third. The interval between the first and third degrees of the scale, or any similar interval. The tone or note at that interval from the starting-point, called in the scale the mediant (*mi.*).

Thorough-bass. A bass-part for a piece with numerals to indicate the harmonies. Also called *basso continuo* or *figured bass*.

Timbre. Tone quality or tone-color.

Time. A system of measurement to determine the various lengths and speeds of tone-movement.

Toccata. Touched, hence a touch-piece written for keyboard instruments, rapid, showy and effective.

Tonality. The character a composition has by virtue of the relationship of all its tones and chords to a keynote. The key in which a piece is written.

Tone. A given sound of a certain pitch. The particular quality of the sound of a voice or instrument. The interval of a whole step between two degrees of the scale.

Tone-deaf. Unable to distinguish differences in pitch.

Tone-poem. A symphonic poem.

Tonic. The note on which a scale begins and ends.

Tonic chord. The chord built on the *do* of the scale.

Tranquillo. Calmly.

Transcription. An arrangement or development of material already written.

Transposition. Changing the pitch of a passage or composition, thus changing its key or tonality also.

Treble. The highest voice or part.

Tremolo. A wavering, oscillating tone. The rapid repetition of a note.

Triad. A chord of three tones, consisting of the root or fundamental, its third, and its fifth.

Trill. The rapid alternation of two adjacent tones.

Trio. Three performers in an ensemble. The music written for that combination.

Triste. Sadly.

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
Trombone. A large brass trumpet with valves or a slide for lengthening or shortening the tube.

Troppo. Too much. *Allegro ma non troppo.* Fast, but not too much so.

Trumpet. A brass wind instrument.

Tuba. A large brass wind instrument, the bass of the brass choir.

Tune. A melody. Correct pitch, e.g., to sing in tune.

Turn. A decoration consisting of four notes, indicated by the sign .

Tutti. All. A section or passage played by all the players, as opposed to solo.

Tympani. Kettledrums. Plural of *tympanon*.

Unison. Sounding together.

Up-beat. The upward motion of a conductor's hand to mark the last beat of a measure. The last beat itself.

Up-bow. The motion of the bow from point to nut on a violin.

Value. The relative duration of a note to other notes in the same piece.

Variation, Variazione. A form in which a melody is stated, then repeated with changes and amplifications.

Veloce. Swiftly.

Vibration. The oscillation of a body which produces sound-waves.

Vibrato. Intentional trembling on a note, vocal or instrumental, to enhance the effect.

Viol. The family name of stringed instruments played with a bow.

Viola. The tenor or alto violin.

Viola da braccia. An early stringed instrument held with the arm.

Viola da gamba. An early stringed instrument held between the legs.

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Viola d' amore. An early stringed instrument larger than the viola, having seven gut strings and seven sympathetically vibrating wire strings.

Violin. The soprano voice in the string choir.

Violoncello. The baritone of the string choir and bass of the string quartet; the cello.

Virginal. A small spinet, played on the lap.

Virtuoso. A performer with masterly command of his instrument.

Vivace. Lively.

Vocalize, Vocalise. A vocal study sung to vowels instead of words.

Voce. The voice.

Volkslied. Folk song.

Volume. Loudness, or richness in overtones.

Vorspiel. A prelude or introduction.

Waltz. The most popular dance in triple time.

Well-tempered. Tuned in equal temperament according to the accepted scale.

Woodwind. Wind instruments made of wood, the flute, oboe, bassoon and clarinet.

Xylophone. A percussion instrument in which tones are produced by striking graduated wooden strips with hammers or mallets.

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The New Music, by George Dyson. Oxford University Press, 1924.

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RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

DUE to limitations of space, from the thousands of fine recordings available I have chosen only a few. I have confined the choice to the simpler and more pleasing of the works mentioned in the text, and to those which illustrate the different forms of music I have treated. For further recordings consult the catalogs issued by Victor, Columbia, Decca, etc., and the Darrell *Cyclopedia of the World's Best Recorded Music*.

VOCAL

Simple Songs

Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes and *Believe Me if All Those Endearing Young Charms*. Lawrence Tibbett. Victor 1238

Three Blind Mice. In Noah's Ark Collection of Zoological Tunes, arranged by Hall. Columbia 7437M

Liturgical Songs

Bach: *Mass in B Minor*. Philharmonic Choir, London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Coates. Victor M104 (9955-9971) AM104 (9972-9988)

Gregorian Chant. Pius IX Choir, College of the Sacred Heart. Victor 69 (7180-7181)

Palestrina: *Missa Brevis*. Madrigal Singers conducted by Engel. Columbia M299 (68963D-68965D) AM299 (68966D-68968D)

Madrigals and Motets

English Madrigals and One English Folk Song. Madrigal Singers conducted by Engel. Columbia M306 (4165M-4167M)

Monteverde (Claudio): Madrigals and Other Selected Works including *Lasciatemi Morir*. Victor M496 (12300-12304) AM496 (12305-12309)

Sumer is Icumen In. St. George's Singers, unaccompanied, conducted by Fellowes. Columbia 5715

Art Songs

- Brahms: *Vergebliches Ständchen* and *Wiegenlied*. Elisabeth Schumann. Victor 1756
- Cadman: *From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water* and *Little Grey Home in the West*. Mary Lewis. Victor 1140
- Franz: *Gute Nacht* and *Für Musik*. Lotte Lehmann. Victor 1861
- Grieg: *Ich Liebe Dich* and *Ein Traum*. Kirsten Flagstad. Victor 1804
- MacDowell: *Thy Beaming Eyes*, and *Sylvia* (Scollard-Speaks). Nelson Eddy. Victor 4368
- Moussorgsky: *Song of the Flea*, and *La Calunnia* (from Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia*). Feodor Chaliapin. Victor 6783
- Schubert: *Erlkönig* and *Gretchen am Spinnrad*. Maria Jeritza. Victor 6704; *Serenade* and *Who is Sylvia*. Jussi Bjoerling. Victor 12725; *Die Forelle* and *Tod und das Mädchen*. Marion Anderson. Victor 1862; *Hark, Hark, the Lark* and *The Secret*. Elisabeth Schumann. Victor 1933
- Schumann: *Two Grenadiers*, and *Evening Star* (from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*). Reinald Werrenrath. Victor 6563; *Du Bist Wie Eine Blume* and *Frühlingsnacht*. Lotte Lehmann. Victor 1859
- Strauss: *Allerseelen*, and *Ho-yo-to-ho* (from Wagner's *Walküre*). Kirsten Flagstad. Victor 1726; *Morgen* and *Traum Durch die Dämmerung*. Enid Szanthe. Victor 1795
- Tchaikowsky: *None But the Lonely Heart*, and *Myself When Young* (Liza Lehmann). Lawrence Tibbett. Victor 1706

Operatic Arias

- Beethoven: *Fidelio*. *Abscheulicher, Wo Eilst Du Hin?* Kirsten Flagstad, Philadelphia Orchestra. Victor 14972
- Bizet: *Carmen*. *Habañera* and *Seguidilla*. Gladys Swarthout. Victor 14419; *Toreador Song*. Lawrence Tibbett and Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra. Victor 8124
- Gluck: *Orfeo*. *Che Farò Senza Euridice?* Sigrid Onegin. Victor 6803
- Gounod: *Faust*. *Air des Bijoux* and *Il Était un Roi de Thule*. Elisabeth Rethberg. Victor 7179
- Mozart: *Don Giovanni*. *Fin ch'an dal vino* and *Deh vieni alla finestra*. Ezio Pinza. Victor 1467
- Saint-Saens: *Samson et Dalila*. *Mon Coeur S'Ouvre à ta Voix*. Louise Homer. Victor

Verdi: *Aïda. Celeste Aïda*. Jussi Bjoerling. Victor 12039; *Traviata. Di Provenza il Mar*. John Charles Thomas. Victor 7605

Operatic Ensembles

Beethoven: *Fidelio*. Prisoners' Chorus. Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra. Victor 11249

Donizetti: *Lucia Di Lammermoor*. Sextet. Galli-Curci, Homer, Gigli, De Luca, Pinza, Bada. Victor 10012

Operas

Entire operas are listed by name and composer in catalog

Cantatas

Bach: *Jesu, Der Du Meine Seele*. Rheinhart Chorus of Zurich. Columbia 68228D

Bach: *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*. Bach Cantata Club of London. Columbia DB507

Bach: *Passion of Our Lord According to Saint Matthew*. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Harvard Glee Club, Radcliffe Choral Society; conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M411, 412, 413, AM411, 412, 413

Oratorios

Handel: *Israel in Egypt. Arioso*. Lashanska, Elman, Feuermann, Serkin. Victor 15365

Handel: *Messiah*. Soloists, B.B.C. Chorus, London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Beecham. Columbia M271 (68600D-68617D), AM271 (69505D-69522D)

Handel: *Messiah. Hallelujah Chorus*. Trinity Choir. Victor 35768

Haydn: *The Creation. The Heavens are Telling and Achieved is the Glorious Work*. Royal Choral Society and London Philharmonic Orchestra. Victor 11960

Mendelssohn: *Elijah. Oh, Rest in the Lord*, and Handel: *Messiah. He Shall Feed His Flocks*. Margarethe Matzenauer. Victor 6555

INSTRUMENTAL

Solos

Piano

Chopin: *Mazurka in B Minor*. Ignatz Friedman. Columbia 7141M

Chopin: Waltz in A Flat Major and Waltz in C Sharp Minor. Sergei Rachmaninoff. Victor 1245

Debussy: *Cathédrale Engloutie*. Walter Gieseking. Columbia 17077D

Liszt: *Liebestraum*. Rudolph Ganz. Victor 7220

Paderewski: Minuet. Ignace Paderewski. Victor 6690

Schumann: *Arabeske*. Vladimir Horowitz. Victor 1713.

Schumann: *Des Abends* (*Fantasiesstück*), and Weber: *Invitation to the Waltz*. Alfred Cortot. Victor 15464.

Sonatas

Harpsichord

Scarlatti: Sonata in A Major and Sonata in C Minor. Yella Pessl. Victor 1942

Piano

Beethoven: Sonata in F Minor. "Appassionata." Rudolph Serkin. Victor M583 (15536-15538) AM583 (15539-15541)

Violin and Piano

Beethoven: Sonata in F Major, "Spring." Adolph Busch and Rudolph Serkin. Victor M228 (8351-8353) AM228 (8354-8356)

Mozart: Sonata in A Major (K.526). Hepzibah and Yehudi Menuhin. Victor 8442-8443

Tartini: The Devil's Trill. Albert Spalding and André Benoist. Victor 14139, 1787.

Concertos

Beethoven: Concerto No. 4 in G Major for piano and orchestra. Artur Schnabel, London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sargent. Victor M156 (7661-7664) AM156 (7665-7668)

Brahms: Concerto in D Major for violin and orchestra. Jascha Heifetz, Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M581 (15526-15530) AM581 (15531-15535)

Haydn: Concerto in D for cello and orchestra. Emanuel Feuermann, and orchestra conducted by Sargent. Columbia M262 (68576D-68579D) AM262 (68580D-68583D)

Mendelssohn: Concerto in E Minor for violin and orchestra. Josef Szigeti, London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Beecham. Columbia M190 (68159D-68162D) AM190 (69501D-69504D)

Chamber Music

Beethoven: Quartet in F Major, Opus 18, No. 1. Coolidge Quartet. Victor M550 (12420-12422) AM550 (12423-12425)

Brahms: Piano Quintet in F Minor. Rudolph Serkin, Busch Quartet. Victor M607

Haydn: Quartet in C Major, "Emperor." Pro Arte Quartet. Victor M526 (15262-15268) AM526 (15269-15275)

Mozart: Quartet in C Major (K.465). Budapest Quartet. Victor M285 (8836-8838) AM285 (8839-8841)

Mozart: Quintet for Clarinet and Strings (K.581). Budapest Quartet and Benny Goodman. Victor M452 (1884-1886) AM452 (1887-1889)

Schubert: Quintet in C Major, with two cellos. Anthony Pini and Pro Arte Quartet. Victor M299 (8948-8952) AM299 (8953-8957)

Chamber Orchestra

Bloch: Concerto Grosso. Philadelphia Chamber String Sinfonietta conducted by Sevitzyky. Victor M66 (9596-9598) AM66 (9599-9601)

Mozart: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (K.525). Orchestra conducted by Walter. Columbia X19 (68016D-68017D)

Fugues

Bach: Toccata and Fugue in D Minor. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski. Victor 8697

Mozart: Adagio and Fugue in C Minor (K.546). The Adolf Busch Chamber Music Players. Victor 12324

Scarlatti: The Cat's Fugue. Flora Stad (harpsichord) and Purcell Suite. American Society of Ancient Instruments. Victor 1664

Variations

Haydn: Theme and Variations in F Minor for Piano. Ignace Paderewski. Victor 14727

Instruments of the Orchestra

Brass and Percussion. Victor 20523

Strings and Woodwinds. Victor 20522

Overtures

Beethoven: *Leonore No. 3*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Walter. Victor M359 (11958-11959)

Recommended Recordings

315

Brahms: *Academic Festival*. Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Gabrilowitsch. Victor 6833

Mendelssohn: *Fingal's Cave*. B.B.C. Orchestra conducted by Boult. Victor 11886

Mozart: *The Magic Flute*. Conducted by Walter. Columbia 67660D

Rossini: *William Tell*. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Beecham. Columbia X60 (68474D-68475D)

Tchaikowsky: *Romeo and Juliet*. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski. Victor M46 (6895-6897) AM46 (6900-6902)

Weber: *Oberon*. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Beecham. Columbia. 69410D

Suites and Ballet Music

Carpenter: *Adventures in a Perambulator*. Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ormandy. Victor M238 (8455-8458) AM238 (8459-8462)

Debussy: *Children's Corner* (with *Golliwog's Cakewalk*). Walter Gieseking. Columbia 17088D, 68962D

De Falla: *Three-Cornered Hat*. Boston Pops Orchestra conducted by Fiedler. Victor M505 (4406-4407)

Moussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M102 (7372-7375) AM102 (7376-7379)

Rameau: Suite in E Minor. (Harpsichord solo) Wanda Landowska. Victor M593 (15562-15564) AM593 (15565-15567)

Rimsky-Korsakoff: *Scheherazade*. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski. Victor M269 (8698-8703) AM269 (8704-8709)

Stravinsky: *Petroushka*. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M49 (6998-7000) AM49 (6882-6884D)

Tchaikowsky: *Nutcracker Suite*. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski. Victor M265 (8662-8664) AM265 (8665-8667)

Symphonic and Tone Poems

Debussy: *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski. Victor 6696

Dukas: *L'Apprenti Sorcier*. Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra conducted by Toscanini. Victor 7021

Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue*. George Gershwin (piano), Paul Whiteman Orchestra. Victor 35822

Griffes: *Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan*. Minneapolis Orchestra conducted by Ormandy. Victor 7957

Liszt: *Les Préludes*. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Ormandy. Victor M453 (14924-14925)

Sibelius: *Finlandia*. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski. Columbia 7412

Strauss: *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*. Orchestra of Brussels Royal Conservatory conducted by Defauw. Columbia 67478D 67479D

Symphonies

Beethoven: No. 3 in E Flat Major, "Eroica." London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M263 (8668-8673) AM263 (8674-8679)

Beethoven: No. 5 in C Minor, "Fate." London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M245 (8508-12) AM245 (8513-17)

Beethoven: No. 6 in F Major, "Pastoral." B.B.C. Orchestra conducted by Toscanini. Victor M417 (14707-11) AM417 (14712-16)

Berlioz: No. 1 in C Major, *Fantastique*. Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rodzinski. Columbia M488

Brahms: No. 2 in D Major. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowski. Victor M82 (7277-7282) AM82 (7283-7288)

Haydn: No. 4 in D Major, "The Clock." Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Toscanini. Victor M57 (7077-7080) AM57 (7081-7084)

Mozart: No. 40 in G Minor, (K.550). London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M293 (8883-8885) AM293 (8886-8888)

Schubert: No. 8 in B Minor, "Unfinished." Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M319 (14117-9) AM319 (14120-22)

Tchaikowsky: No. 6 in B Minor, "Pathétique." Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Koussevitzky. Victor M85 (7294-7298) AM85 (7299-7303)

Hot Music

Boogaboo, featuring Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton. Bluebird B7725

Give Me a Pig-Foot, featuring Bessie Smith. United Hot Club of America.

I Don't Believe It, featuring Jess Stacey. Commodore Music Shop.

Minor Jive, featuring Pete Brown. Bluebird 10186

Riverboat Shuffle, featuring Leon "Bix" Beiderbecke. United Hot Club of America.

St. Louis Blues, featuring Louis Armstrong. Bluebird B5280

Serenade to a Shylock, featuring Pee-Wee Russell. Commodore Music Shop.

The Minor Drag, featuring Thomas "Fats" Waller. Bluebird 16185

What You Want Me to Do, featuring King Oliver. Bluebird 7242

When the Sun Sets Down South, featuring Sidney Bechet. Decca 2129

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