

ABOUT · MUSIC · AND  
WHAT · IT · IS · MADE · OF  
OLIVERIA · PRESCOTT

Gift  
of  
George Sidney  
1994











ABOUT MUSIC, AND WHAT IT IS  
MADE OF



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ABOUT MUSIC, AND  
WHAT IT IS MADE OF  
  
A BOOK FOR AMATEURS

BY

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///  
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TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY MASTER  
GEORGE ALEXANDER MACFARREN  
BORN 1813; DIED 1887

*"I was eyes to the blind."*—JOB xxix. 15.





## PREFACE

THERE was an old pianoforte teacher, who said one day to his pupil, "You have brought me the notes of your piece to-day; next time you must bring me the music of it."

Children may learn the A, B, C—the notes of it. Girls and boys may learn the harmony and the tunes—or the grammar. It is for the grown musician, the real lover or *amateur* of music, to know the whole beauty—the beauty of the whole, in fact, the music.

The best amateur should love that which is best in the thing that he loves, and the best is the highest. Not the artifice, not the science, but something much greater—the art of it. And the art of anything is the completion, or true balance of all the parts which make the whole.

That is the music of it.

OLIVERIA PRESCOTT



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# ABOUT MUSIC AND WHAT IT IS MADE OF

## CHAPTER I

### HOME MUSIC IN ENGLAND

*I saw her daunce so comlyly,  
Carole and singe so swetly,  
Laughe and pleye so womanly,  
And loke so debonairly.*

—CHAUCER, *Book of the Duchess.*

THERE was an old proverb of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which gave the palm for joyousness to the English, in its estimate of the music of different nations. It said: "The French pipe, the Germans howl, the Spaniards wail, the Italians caper, the English carol." Now, without dwelling unduly upon the severity of the judgment on some foreign nations, we may think of that upon ourselves with great comfort, in our natural love for our own country. For *carol* was one of the words used for singing in connection with dancing; and it speaks of a joyousness or clear sweetness which is pleasant to think of. It is a characteristic which it will

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not be hard to trace in English music as we come down the scale of time. Even the restricted meaning of *carol* nowadays as a Christmas song is full of joy of the sweetest kind.

*In Chaucer's* When the narrator in the *Romaunt time.* *of the Rose* went "down by a litel path, of mintes full and fennell greene" he found *Sir Mirth*, and around him were some folk "so faire and fresh that they were like to angels feathered bright." These folk "upon a karole wenten tho." A lady "karoled" to them. She was *Dame Gladnesse*, "blissful and light, that singeth so well with glad courage"—a lady whose grey and glad eyes had made a covenant of laughter with her mouth. "Well could she sing and lustely, none halfe so well and seemely, and couthe make in songe such refraining, it sate her wonder well to sing." Her voice "full clere was and full swete." She "was not rude ne unmete, but couthe enough for such doing, as longeth unto karolling." "For she was wont in every place, to singen first, folke to solace. For singing most she gave her to, no craft had she so lefe to do." Then again "mightest thou karolles seene and folke daunce and merry beene." Presently another person came forward, named *Courtesie*, saying to the narrator, "Come, and if it like you to dancen, daunceth with us now."

“And I, without tarrying, went into the karolling” “amid the karol for to daunce.”

So *carol* was singing, and *carol* was dancing, and *carol* was singing and dancing together ; for *Dame Gladnesse* carolled with her voice, and the *faire folke* carolled with their motions. Joy and sweetness, mirth, gladness and courtesy mingled with it all.

This is a pretty picture of gentlefolks' music in the fourteenth century ; but a prettier still is to be found in *The Flower and the Leaf*, which some say was written by Chaucer, and some that it was the work of a lady in the fifteenth century.

A lady is the narrator in this poem. She has wandered in early morning into an arbour, and sees through the leafage a rich field covered with corn and grass. Around her is the eglantine (sweetbriar) with its “sweet air,” and the “fairest medle tree, as full of blossoms as it might be”—and we know how every blossom of the medlar is a bouquet in itself with its wreath of green leaves. Therein “a goldfinch leaping prettily from bough to bough” and singing “so passing sweetly.” The nightingale, “with so merry a note, answered him that all the wood rong” from “where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree that gave so passing a delicious smell.” Presently the lady heard voices suddenly, “the most sweetest and most delicious

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that ever any wight, I trow truly, heard in their life, for the armony and sweet accord was in so good musicke that the voice to angels most was like," and, "out of a grove even by . . . there came singing lustily a world of ladies." Then the poet tells of their great beauty and of their array. "Surcotes white of velvet well sitting"—the "semes garnished with emeralds one by one" and many a rich stone set in the "purples," "sleves," and "traines round about"—great pearls round and orient, diamonds fine and rubies red. These ladies had chaplets of green on their heads; some of laurel, some "full pleasantly" of woodbine, and "sadly some" of "agnus castus." And thus they came "dauncing and singing into the midst of the mede." The queen of the party, whose "heavenly figured face so pleasaunt was, and her wele shape person, that of beauty she past them every one, began a roundell lustily, that *sus le foyle, de vert moy* men call, . . . and the company answered all, with voice sweet entuned and so small, that me thought it the swetest melody that ever I heard in my life soothly." Later in the poem "by a tuft that was ouerspread with flowers" there began "a lady for to sing right womanly, a bargaret in praising the daisie. For as me thought among her notes swete she said *si doucet et la margarete*. Than



they answered her in fere (together) so passingly well and so pleasauntly that it was a blissful noise to hear."

In these two poems the models have evidently been taken from nature; while the lines at the head of our chapter are part of an actual description of the Duchess Blanche of Lancaster. The artist's skill may rightly have been exercised in selecting the best models for these descriptions and in clothing them with perfection, but there is quite enough to show what was the ideal of home music of that time. The gorgeous and "well-sitting" array of the singers, as well as the titles given to some of them, shows that they were typical of the rich and high born; and into the midst of all the charm of blossom and bird, sweet scents and greenery, they bring music which blends with nature's beauty by its "swete accord" and its "armony." It was a "blissful noise to hear." As we should nowadays express it, they had good, sweet and clear voices, and knew how to use them; how to sing in tune and in time, to sing *piano* as well as *forte*, to sing so that the words could be understood and the expression felt by the bystanders—that the songs they sang were melodious, in good harmony, and with rhythm clear enough to help the motions of the dancers. Truly this is a high ideal, and one that would serve for present

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use for many a choral society. *Dame Gladnesse*, too, was skilled in the art of solo-singing, for she could do all that belonged to it. She loved it, and loved, too, to make others glad with it—would liefer sing to solace folk than do anything else. Can we want a nobler ideal than this for an amateur singer? We must not run away with the idea that as Chaucer lived in dark ages long ago he might have described bad singing as good because he knew no better. For he could be terribly severe sometimes, as when in the *Canterbury Pilgrims* he talks about the elderly nun who sang through her nose, and the fat sompnour, who sang a drone bass or burden to the Pardoner's little tenor pipe, "was never trompe of halfe so grete a soun." Though the theories of students and scholars in those days were different to ours, and, as we think, much more crude, their musical ears were just as good as ours, and perhaps better cultivated.

*In Shake-* To take a leap onwards in time, we  
*speare's days.* cannot read Shakespeare without finding how much the home life of his day was imbued with music; it is almost as if the characters were living in an atmosphere of music. Most of it too is joyous. Read *As you Like it*. The banished duke must have a song from one of his courtiers while dinner is going on, even though

they be in the wilds of the Forest of Arden. Again, when Celia is telling Rosalind about the unhappy youth who lay under the oak like a dropped acorn, Rosalind breaks in with her exclamations and questions, till Celia cries, "I would sing my song without a burden, thou bringest me out of tune." Then Jaques is so exceptionally melancholy that, when his friends think him growing merry with listening to a song, he excuses himself that can even "suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs."

Read the *Merchant of Venice*. Portia, the rich lady, has her established band of musicians which greets her on her return home.

Then in *Much Ado about Nothing*, when Hero is sad over her wedding preparations and Beatrice is no better, the waiting-woman, Margaret, tries to cheer them with singing. "Clap us into *Light o Love*; that goes without burden. Do you sing it and I'll dance it." Just the very same thing that *Dame Gladnesse* and her party were doing when they carolled.

Look at the *Taming of the Shrew*. Bianca the rich man's daughter is to be amused while she is shut away from society, to let her elder and disagreeable sister have an opportunity of marrying. One tutor is to teach her Greek, Latin and all the languages of the world. Another is to teach her

music and mathematics—subjects that have gone together, in the scholar's estimation, since the days of Euclid. Moreover, this musician is only an ordinary gentleman in disguise; yet he knows enough music to teach that difficult thing, the gamut. There is a good deal of music sown broadcast in the lesson scene. First, there is the wrangling between the rival teachers (and rival lovers). "Fiddler, forbear," says the master of languages—the reply of the music teacher is that his pupil is the patroness of heavenly harmony, and therefore he should have first lesson. Then comes the philosopher's retort that music was ordained to refresh the mind of man *after* his studies, and therefore the musician must be content with second turn. The musician being banished to a corner to tune his instrument while the preferred lover teaches his peculiar Latin, endless excuses send him away whenever he returns with his lute in tune. "Let's hear, o fye, the treble jars." Back again, "Madam, 'tis now in tune," "All but the base"; and now the musician begins to see through the philosopher a little clearer, and mutters, "the base is right, 'tis the base knave that jars." Presently he is allowed his turn, and bids the philosopher "You may go walk,—my lessons make not music in three-parts," a dignified and musical version of the old saying about two being company and three trumpery.

Now he is most correct in his teaching. "Madam, before you touch the instrument, to learn the order of my fingering, I must begin with rudiments of art." He will teach gamut in a shorter and more pleasant way than usual ('tis always so with a new teacher). But Bianca is indignant. "Why, I am past my gamut long ago!" So she knows the difficult thing too. Still she reads from Hortensio's paper—

"Gamut<sup>1</sup> I am, the ground of all accord,  
 A *re*, to plead Hortensio's passion,  
 B *mi*, Bianca, take him for thy lord,  
 C *fa, ut*, that loves with all affection,  
 D *sol, re*, one cliff, two notes have I,  
 E *la, mi*, show pity, or I die."

Read this downwards and we find Gamma, or G, A, B, C, D, E, which are the series of notes on a keyboard. Then the next row downwards is the six notes of the scale or key of G (scholars did not reckon the seventh or leading note in the key), *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la*—*ut* taking the place of the modern *do* or *tonic*. Farther down, we begin a third key from C, *ut re, mi*, etc. But, stay, this is not a technical manual, and readers must look in the introductory chapter of Macfarren's "Counterpoint" if they wish to understand the whole three

<sup>1</sup> Gamma *ut* was the lowest note of all, from which the rest were counted.

octaves of which Hortensio's gamut was only the beginning. And yet he was only an amateur.

It is pretty to see the rough-and-ready soldier Henry V. in his love-making in the play of that name. It is blunt, certainly, but he is very much of a gentleman, and he shows both his good manners and his knowledge of music by the comparison of the French lady's bad English to some of the music of the time. Her English is rather worse than his own French. He calls it *broken music*; for, as he says, her voice is music to him to hear, while her English is broken. Now *broken music* seems to have been music played upon an incomplete band. Bands were usually in sets of five or six of the same kind of instrument in different sizes, from bass to treble. A band of a smaller number than five or six, or of a mixed kind with wind and string, or instruments and voices, was considered incomplete, therefore broken. The French princess's English was incomplete and mingled with French words and phrases, therefore *broken*, a meaning which we still use in *broken English*.

In *Twelfth Night* there are the two disreputable old knights, the great lady's uncle and his boon companion, who are willing and apt to sing catches the moment the musical clown has finished his song, which they enjoy thoroughly. These three roll out their punning on the catchwords and

song titles with a fluency which shows they have a considerable acquaintance with the ballad literature of the day. Here we have come down the social scale a little—the music is the “cobbler’s catch” and the “tinker’s round”; for the whole of society was impregnated with music.

See next in *Winter’s Tale*. The peasant describes the sheep-shearers of his father, twenty-four in all; they are “three man song-men, all of them, and very good ones too.” Twenty-four good chorus-singers among the farm-servants! Even though there was the usual modern deficiency of tenors; for, as the peasant goes on, “they are most of them means (the man’s alto voice) and bases.” There is another little touch of the music of the time in the same sentence, “there is but one Puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes.” This is in allusion to the well-meant efforts of some people to counteract the nastiness of the ballad words. Autolycus, in the same play, trolls out his “Jog on, jog on,” a song that is to be found in the old books, music and words both, as a well-known one of the time. When he appears as a pedlar, too, he hawks ballads, which are bought up and listened to with almost more attention than is given to the ribands and gloves. “Come on, lay it by; and let’s first see more ballads; we’ll buy the other things anon,” says the

clown. One ballad is turned out of Autolycus' pack which "there's scarce a maid westwards but she sings it." The two girls can sing it; "We had the tune on't a month ago; if thou'lt bear a part, thou shalt hear it; 'tis in three parts." And Autolycus joins them in the three-part song. Only a month ago, and yet they can sing it with the correct parts!

Much of the pathos of Ophelia's madness comes from her singing of ballads—music which in her brighter days she used to sing mirthfully, but now her craze has turned all the joy awry, as thunder will curdle the sweetest milk. She begins *Bonny Sweet Robin*,<sup>1</sup> *How should I your True Love know? Saint Valentine*, all tunes that we know now; but her memory breaks off before they are completed. Like the violets she speaks of, "they withered all, when my father died."

Though most of the old English music is cheerful, there is some that is not so. "My mother had a maid called Barbara, whose lover went mad; and she died singing '*O willow, willow shall be my garland.*'" And so Desdemona in her sadness and deep misgiving will sing this tune to pour out some of her own grief in sympathy.

It is evident that Shakespeare, like Chaucer, took his models from the life that was going on around

<sup>1</sup>See next chapter.



him, in things as well as in characters. When a Venetian argosy is to be wrecked just outside the port, it is on the "sands called the Goodwin." When the mad Hamlet is to be sent away from his country, it is to England, because men are all so mad there that he will go among the crowd. We cannot, therefore, be wide of the mark when we judge that when Shakespeare made his ladies and gentlemen sing, dance and have a good knowledge of music, his knights and tinkers sing rounds and catches, his servant-maids and shearing-men sing ballads in three-parts, it was because they all did so in the life and country in which Shakespeare himself lived.

It is a natural step from the Elizabethan dramatist to the music-teacher *Morley, the teacher.* of the same period. Morley wrote, in 1597, a *Plaine and easie introduction to Practicall Music.* His apology for the book is a little fable of a gentleman who was at a supper party. Now people used to sing part-music as they sat round the table after supper, and many books were printed with the different voice parts separate and facing in four ways; by this means the book could lie flat on the table and be read from by different singers, *well* and *at first sight* too. This supposed gentleman says: "The music-books being brought, according to custom, to the

table after supper, the mistress of the house presented me with a part, earnestly requesting me to sing. But when, after many excuses, I protested unfeignedly that I could not, every one began to wonder; yea, and some whispered to others, demanding how I was brought up." This is plain English as to the way in which gentlefolks were accustomed to look upon the unmusical. It is curious that Bede, writing nine hundred years before, tells an anecdote similar in point, with this difference, that it is a harp that is passed round from one guest to another, to be played upon and sung to.

*What was the music?* We could best begin our poetical examples with Chaucer, as plain readable English begins about his period. Readable music, however, begins earlier; and though there is not a great quantity known as far back as that, there is enough to give a clue as to what popular or home music actually was. Of music written in later years there is far more in existence still.

*Carolling, or dancing round.* First as to the carolling, or karoling of Chaucer's example. It is only of late years that this word has been taken to mean Christmas carols; indeed, the very addition of the word *Christmas* shows that all carols were not solely for this season. In Reformation times, Latin hymns were abolished from the Church

services, so that the whole of the service might be in the people's own language. Carols, or cheerful "ditties," as dance tunes used to be called, were sung instead, with sacred words put to them. Then began the restriction of the use to Christmas and other Church seasons. But in the times near to Chaucer, the word "carol" had been used by some writers to describe *swift movements in a circular manner*; it is likely, therefore, that the dance intended in Chaucer's example was a round dance. There were many different ones in old days. Many of us have heard of "dancing the hey" (or hay), from our grandmothers. There were several ways of dancing this, one being the figure known as the "ladies' chain" in the modern quadrille, and therefore a round dance. There was another round adopted in the quadrille (for the quadrille was but a French adaptation of old English country dances) in which all held hands in a circle, moving forwards and backwards, then separating and moving about in pairs, and joining again. The *Cushion Dance*, or *Joan Sanderson*, which has been adapted into the modern cotillon, was an old round, wherein the whole party are included one by one into the ring. *Sellenger's* (*St Leger's*) *Round* was a round "for as many as will," as the old book, *The Dancing Master*, puts it. Many, therefore, were the rounds

known and written about, for many or few dancers. We can understand now the expression just now quoted from the *Romaunt of the Rose*, how he "went into the carolling"; literally, he joined the ring of dancers who were dancing for their own pleasure.

Next we come to the roundell of the *Round, rondeau and roundell.* ladies of *The Flower and the Leaf.*

With some writers the rondeau, rondel, roundell, roundelay and round seem to be confused together; indeed, it is difficult to separate them into classes. The poems called roundels to be found in Chaucer's works and others of the time are the same as the rondeau or rondel of the old French poetry of his time. The French poem was of a fixed number of lines, in which the beginning lines were repeated in the middle, and again at the end of the poem. They were evidently to be sung and not said; and though tunes were made for them at times, at other times old tunes were taken by which to "make" the poem. For Chaucer introduces his roundel at the end of the *Parlement of Foules* with these words:—

"The note (music), I trowe, maked was in Fraunce,  
The wordes wer swich as ye may heer fynde  
The next vers as I now have in mynde,  
*Qui bien aime a tard oublie.*"

We suppose that these French words were the

title of the rondeau, whose tune, "maked was in Fraunce," and was taken by Chaucer for his poem.

Here is the roundel as Mr Skeat gives it in his edition of Chaucer :—

"Now welcom Somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,  
And driven away the longe nightes blake !

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-lofte,  
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake—  
*Now welcom Somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast this wintres weders over-shake.*

We han they cause for to gladen ofte,  
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make ;  
Ful blisful may they singen when they wake ;  
*Now welcom Somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,  
And driven away the longe nightes blake."*

Poems were always sung in the days of which we are thinking. When Chaucer wished to show the extreme melancholy into which John of Gaunt is cast by his wife's death, he told of this "knight all in blakke" that, though in his happier days he used to make songs to keep him from idleness and to sing them too, now he is so sad that he "sayde a lay, withoute note, withoute songe." Therefore to *say* a lay was evidently unusual, and, as Chaucer remarks, it was "a dedly, sorwful sounne." Poets nowadays talk about singing and claim to be singers, but their poems are all to be said, like the mourning lay of the knights in blakke," *withoute*

*note, withoute songe.* The poems reverse the song-without-words of the pianoforte player, and become words without song; nay, they are without even the music that should be in the tone and rhythm of the words, for they are oftentimes garrulous as an old wife's tongue, or cut short like a telegraphic message.

*Round, catch  
or merry  
roundelay.* Then there were the rounds or roundelays, always merry. None but a modern poet would have begun a melancholy song, "O listen to my roundelay." According to Christopher Sympson, who wrote during Commonwealth times of the music that had been used for many years, "the contrivance of them is not intricate"; (this sounds almost sarcastic) "for if you compose a short strain in three or four parts, setting them all within the ordinary compass of the voice, and then place them one part at the end of another in what order you please, so that they may aptly make one continued tune, you have finished a catch." For, as he says also, a *catch, round and canon* (in unison) *consisting of periods*, is the same thing in music. The words of catches were generally humorous, or *catchy*, as the word goes, and thus they were "more natural" to the "admirable fooling" of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew with the clown (in *Twelfth Night*). As one of them says, "I am dog at a

catch," and is answered, "Some dogs will catch well." Then, "Let our catch be *Hold thy peace, thou knave*; begin, fool, it begins, *Hold thy peace.*" Then comes the apt answer of the clown, "I shall never begin if I hold my peace." He was to begin the first phrase, *Hold thy peace, knave*; then, while he continued with the second phrase, Sir Toby might sing, *Hold thy peace, knave.* Next Sir Toby was to go on with the second phrase, while the clown sang the third and Sir Andrew sang the first *Hold thy peace.* So they would go round and round after one another with the music, like the fox and the hounds round a Toby beer-jug. Surely, when one of them said, "Shall we make the welkin dance with a catch?" he was thinking of the whirligig of our brain while we listen to the entanglement of melodies, words and voices, and vainly endeavour to follow the course of each of the three at once.

Let us go back again. Though Sympson's book was written in Commonwealth times, the thing described was done in Chaucer's time, ay, and before it, as we shall see. About half a century after Chaucer there was a song made and written down which still exists. It is called a roundell; but is of the same simple form described by Sympson. It was "made by the watermen of London" upon a certain Lord Mayor who pleased

them by having his procession to Westminster on the river instead of by road. *Row the bote, Norman*, is the name. The music is the same and sung the same way as the little round which is in every school round-book in the country, *Turn again, Whittington*.

*Round with a burden.* There is yet another kind of round to be described—an older and more elaborate kind than *Row the bote*. The old round or six-men's song, *Sumer is i-cumen in*, is in so many works on Old English music or poetry, that it would seem hardly necessary to print it here, save for the sake of clearness. The song is a proof of the kind of music sung for a long time both before and after Chaucer, for the copy is known to be as old as 1250, and is probably much older; while the character is similar to much that is known in later years.

In this composition four equal voices are told off to sing the melody in round fashion, that is, one beginning the melody and the others following one by one, each a phrase behind the other. Beginning with the first voice, and going on for the whole time of the song, is the foot or burden or under-song, which is in two parts, and sung by two basses. This foot or burden is a short phrase repeated over and over, with the words *sing cuc-cu nu, sing cuc-cu nu*. The tune of the song is a



long and beautiful strain, made of phrases of unequal length but clear rhythm. The constant reiteration of the short phrase of the undersong keeps up the feeling of the same harmony throughout, and brings a certain monotony with it; but this perhaps only enhances the graceful and pastoral character. It certainly holds the music well together; and therefore it helps us to understand the term *holdings*, which was sometimes applied to the undersong.

*1st Tenor sings melody throughout. Rather quickly.* *2nd Tenor enters here*

Su-mer is i - cu - men in. Lhu de sing cuc -

Sing cuc - cu nu, sing cuc -

*1st and 2nd Basses sing this melody throughout.*

*and sings melody throughout. &c.* *3rd Tenor begins here and sings melody throughout. &c.*

cu. Grow-eth sed, and blow-eth med, And

cu nu. Sing cuc - cu nu,

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*4th Tenor begins here and sings melody throughout.*

&c.

spring'th the wd - e nu. Sing cuc -

Sing cuc - cu nu, Sing cuc -

&c.

Aw - e ble - teth af - ter lamb, Lhouth

cu nu, Sing cuc - cu nu,

af - ter cal - ve cu, Bul - luc stert-eth,

Sing cuc - cu nu, Sing cuc -

Buck - e vert - eth mu - rie sing cuc - cu

cu nu, Sing cuc - cu nu,

cuc - cu, cuc - cu, wel sing-es thu  
 Sing cuc - cu nu, Sing cuc -  
 cuc - cu, he swik thu na - ver nu.  
 cu nu, Sing cuc - cu nu.

Now we can venture to imagine how the ladies in white "surcotes" sang, when the beautiful lady "began a roundel lustily, and the company answered all with voices sweet entuned"; it was probably in round-fashion.

There are several modern effects in the music of this example that are not found in the scholars' music of the *Modern effects in "Sumer is."* time. For one, it is in the modern scale of F. Now, one of the early Church modes or scales had exactly the same series of notes as are in the scale of F, but it was looked down upon as too sweet and luscious for scholarly use. It was the Lydian mode or scale, with B $\flat$  in it—B *soft* or B *moll*, as it was called. Another modern effect

in the song is the way in which the leading note (E) always rises, and in the cadence rises to the key-note (F). This modern quality of the note was not recognised in the scholars' music. The rhythm of the song is also modern in character, and seems to be a happy mean between the dance-like regularity of the usual popular "ditties" and the absence of rhythm of the Church music, or plain-song, as it was called.

It was this constant habit of round-singing which probably gave the English the pre-eminence in counterpoint which was acknowledged by foreign writers of old time. Even nowadays foreign musicians have no name to distinguish canons in which the imitations are those of periods or phrases, as in our round, from canons in which they follow at the distance of a bar or half-bar. That the whole of *Sumer is i-cumen in* is, as a modern teacher might say, bristling with consecutive 8ths and 5ths, proves nothing save that it was written in the early days of counterpoint, when even the most skilled of scholarly writers had not yet discovered the ugliness of such things.

*The three  
ways of  
round.*

We see, therefore, that the use of a round or circle was applied in three different ways. There was the round of space, in the dancing round of the carol, later

termed a round—there was the round of time, of the roundel or French rondeau, with its poetical idea coming round and round—and there was the round of time and tune of the merry roundelay, with its voices following or chasing each other round and round.

The burden, such as we found in *Sumer is i-cumen in*, or bourdon (drone) as it was called in France, was a common accompaniment to songs whether they were rounds or not. It was this kind of accompaniment which was intended by Chaucer when the sompneur bare a stiff burden to the Pardoner's song, and by Shakespeare when Celia objects to Rosalind's running commentary of question and remark, and again when Margaret speaks of *Light o' Love*. In some cases the burden was started before the tune, and thus gave the keynote upon which the others were to take up their song.

Sometimes the word *undersong* was given to an accompaniment of this nature, even when it was sung above instead of below the tune. *Upper-song* would seem more exact in this case; but, however, the name shows its kinship with the burden as a vocal accompaniment. It was practised by amateurs, as well as professional singers, both in England and on the Continent for many hundred

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years; for we hear suggestions of it in Saxon times, and up to Elizabethan and even Commonwealth times. It was evidently practised with all the elaboration that the art of each succeeding age could provide. It was sometimes with one, sometimes with several voices, each taking the part belonging to their own compass.

Long before Chaucer's time, descanting upon a popular song, or even upon the Church plain-song, had come to such elaboration that complaints were made of it. The singers imitated nightingales and parrots, it was said, "descending to the bottom of the scale, or mounting to the summit; now softening, now enforcing the tones, repeating passages, mixing, in such manner, the grave (low) sounds with the more grave, and the acute (high) with the more acute, that the astonished and bewildered ear is unable to distinguish one voice from another." This last phrase shows that there was a desire among the more serious musicians of the time for quite the ideal of modern part-singing—namely, that each part or voice should be *clearly distinguishable* among the whole.

In later years we find it quite as elaborate. The Elizabethan teacher Morley, spoken of before, gives a piquante account. His book supposes two pupils with their master—one of them sings

an improvised descant to a given tune. The other attempts to criticise. "You are much beholding to Sellenger's Round for that beginning of yours." But the master is down upon him at once, and in so doing gives an account of the use of old tunes as part of the descant upon the given subject. "I myselfe, being a childe, have heard him highly commended who could upon a plain-song sing hard proportions, harsh allowances, and *country daunces*; and hee who could bring in the maniest of them was counted the iolliest fellow." Then the master goes on with, as one could imagine, a smile on his face, "I would faine see you (who have those argus eies in spying faults in others) make a way of your own, for perchance there might likewise be a HOLE (as they saie) found in your owne cote!"

When descant was *written down* it became called counterpoint; *point* being an old word for melody, it meant that points or melodies were placed *counter* or against other points or melodies. Perhaps some of us nowadays who think counterpoint such dull stuff would have a great wonder at *Dame Gladnesse* with her laughing eyes and mouth when they realise that she could sing extempore counterpoint so well and with *glad* courage—who could "make in song such refraining;" that is, as I believe, she would sing the

refrain, or headline of a popular song with all variety of high notes and low notes, loud and soft, some quicker and some slower notes, *out of her own head*, as we say now, while other folk were singing the tune with the story part of the words. And this was all done so easily that the practice of it "sat" upon her wonderfully well, like a well-made dress, and, in fact, pleased other people as well as herself, as much, perhaps, as an *obbligato* to a song of Bach's played by Mme. Néruda. Perhaps we may regain some of our own self-respect when we think of the consecutive 5ths and 8ths which she did not scruple to use.

*Part-songs  
and three-  
men songs.*

Besides the rounds and the songs with burden accompaniment, there were many real part-songs, that is songs or ballads in several *parts* or voices. Though their construction was a little different, they were generally counted with the rounds as *three-men* songs; for they were songs for three men to sing together, as did the sheep-shearers in *Winter's Tale*. *John Dory* was one of peculiar make, in the earliest form of it that we know, and it was something like a roughly made madrigal. It had several divisions of the tune, each of which was treated as a sort of round before the next was touched. Other three-men songs were for the accompanying voices to sing note against note with the voice who took



the tune, after the fashion of a modern part-song or hymn. *Wee bee three poor mariners* was one of these. These were the songs that Hortensio thought of when he said his lesson made not music in three parts, and bid the pseudo-philosopher go walk.

It is curious that we had the word ballad in English many years before we gave it the real meaning of the word from which it is derived—a dancing song—from *ballare*, to dance. Yet we had dancing songs or ditties in plenty from early times, as we have seen by Chaucer's carolling, and the scene of the three ladies in *Much Ado*. The ballad, or rather *balade*, which came to us from Italy in or before Chaucer's time, was a sentimental poem of stanzas of seven or eight lines each, and not in the least suggestive of dancing. It was in Elizabethan times that a fresh importation of Italian works came to us for the home part-singing round the table. These were madrigals, villanellas, fallas; and with them came the balletts or dancing songs, which gave to us the idea of calling all our dancing songs balletts or ballads. As Mopsa said of Autolykus the pedlar, "He sings ballads so well you will never care to dance again to the tabor and pipe." For she thought the ballad sung was better style to dance to than the tune played by a

*Ballad,  
balade and  
ballett.*

pipe or a bagpipe, with the tabor thrumming as bass. This was a clumsy, countrified sort of thing, to her mind.

After this the name became so popular that everything of the nature of a story told in 4-line stanzas began to be called a ballett or ballad—even to Autolykus' cock-and-bull story about the cruel maid "who became a cold fish and appeared on the coast forty thousand fathoms above water, on Wednesday the fourteenth of April." It was just as well to be exact while he was about it, for the ballad was in print, and, as Mopsa said, she loved a ballad in print, "for then we are sure they are true."

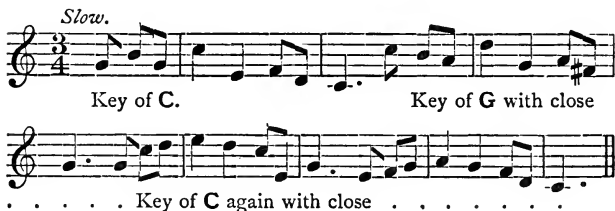
By-and-by the dancing dropped out of the ballad, and presently even the music and words were sundered. Nowadays the word *ballad* includes every kind of story in 4-lined stanzas, from the poems that the minstrels and bards sang to their harps all over England and Northern Europe in the days beginning before King Alfred, when the only histories of the time were those stored up in the memory of the singers,—through the far-fetched romances of later times, down to the weak effusions of modern days about Daddy and Mammy, and angels toiling about in the rain.

Musically, too, the ballad includes the short tune of old times which the minstrel sang over and over

for verse after verse of his historical ballad—the more elaborate part-song ballett of Morley's time—the sentimental ditty of modern times with an occasional verse with a tune different to that which is at the beginning and end—the lengthy piano-forte *ballade* (without words) of Chopin, with the repetitions of a strain divided by different strains—the elaborate *cantata* by Mendelssohn and some other German composers, wherein the verses are set to various strains more or less rhythmic and for various combinations of voices—the choral and orchestral ballads of some late English composers wherein words are set after the fashion of the Chopin wordless ballads, though more rhythmical, and finally, the purely orchestral work of the same kind, such as Mackenzie's *Belle Dame sans Merci*.

One of the most beautiful of old English tunes is said to be one of the minstrel tunes; it is called *Near Woodstock Town*, or *The Oxfordshire Tragedy*. It is printed in Chappell's *Old English Ditties* with a simple accompaniment arranged by a modern hand, and an abridgment of the long poem. If we try to sing this simple tune for verse and verse, in the way we are told it was sung by the minstrels of the best days, in courts and halls of the great people and in the camps of opposing armies,—with all the expression and variety that the singer could get by declamation, gesture and

the modifications of his voice, we shall find it full of beauty.



The rhythm of the phrases is regular, phrase answering phrase of equal length. The key is the simple diatonic key of C. There is a modulation to the nearest related key, G, with a close half-way through the tune. This close makes a regular balance in the tune between the first half ending with the dominant or note of second importance in the key, and the second half ending with the tonic or note of first importance in the key. Herein is a modernism of which we must say more by-and-by.

*Musical instruments.* Nebuchadnezzar's orchestra is a good general guide as to the instruments in use up to Tudor times. The wise translators of our English Bible judged according to the same spirit which actuated the dramatists and painters of old times. What avails it, they seemed to say, to reproduce the words and symbols of a past age in order to teach ignorant men and women who

know only the age in which they live? Therefore, instead of repeating Hebrew and Chaldaic names of musical instruments, which were unknown to their readers, both in fact and in name, they rendered the words by those of musical instruments which were known, and would therefore give some idea of the kind of thing intended by the Bible words. They would speak to the nature of the thing, if they did not describe the actual definite fact. When we hear, therefore, of the "cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music," we hear of a list of instruments which were known at the time of the translation—not indeed all that were known, for there were, besides, the viols, pipe, trumpet, shawm and timbrel, which are named elsewhere in the Bible translation. Besides those that are named in the Bible translation, there were in use in England the recorder, which was a kind of hautboy, the lute, several instruments of the guitar family, the virginals, which was one of the forerunners of the pianoforte, and the organ.

Of all these, the harp had been the instrument of the gentler classes from Saxon and Danish times, ay, and British too, both among amateurs and professional minstrels. The fiddle and the crowde, both of them old forms of the viol and violin, and played with a bow, were among the people from very early times. The pipe and the

bagpipe were the more rustic instruments, the pipe generally being accompanied by the tabor, a little drum. One old book remarks that a piper was paid 3s. 4d. for five days' work in cheering up the men who were making the roads or loading hay, because they worked better while the music was going on ; and "fiddler's money" was fourpence for a "fytte" (the division of a long ballad). Yet the fiddler's position on the village green was not a very dignified one, for the "lasses and lads" who "away to the May-pole hie" felt free to blame him rather than themselves for anything that went crooked in the dance.

"'You're out,' says Dick, 'Not I,' says Nick,  
 'Twas the fiddler played it wrong.'  
 'Tis true,' says Hugh, and so says Sue,  
 And so says every one."

They did not pay him very much for a whole day's hard work, for

"Now there did they stay the whole of the day,  
 And tired the fiddler quite,  
 And each a twopence, twopence, twopence,  
 Gave him and went away."

In Tudor times, we find ladies are playing on the virginals and on the lute. When Hortensio falls foul of the shrew, Katherine, while trying to teach her music, he has to run to her father with a pitiful tale: "I did but tell her she mistook her

frets. 'Frets, call you these,' quoth she, 'I'll fume with them'; and with that word she struck me on the head, and through the instrument my pate made way; and there I stood amazed for awhile as on a pillory, looking through the lute, while she did call me—rascal fiddler, and—twangling Jack." Now, a *jack* was that part of the mechanism of the virginals which pulled or *twanged* the wire, and so made the sound.

Besides their song-writing, words and music both, gentlemen were playing on the recorder and the flute, of which a special form was called the English flute. Every waiting-room, whether a drawing-room or a barber's shop, must have its virginals, cittern, and base-viol to amuse the visitors.

Many of the instruments were made in sets of five or six different sizes, from treble to bass, and played together, making music of five or six parts. Thus there were sets or consorts of recorders, flutes, cornets, and other instruments "going with wind," as well as of viols or violins. These sets were kept in one case, so that we often read of a "chest of viols" or a "case of recorders." Nowadays we are accustomed to a separate band of bowed instruments, comprising violin, viola, violoncello, and double-bass. This in old days would have been called a "consort of violins." We have also nowadays a band of brass instru-

ments of different sizes, but we should be surprised at the old band of flutes, some of them long enough to give out a bass sound, and others to take alto and tenor parts. These were the usual bands of Tudor times, when rich folk like Portia would have their band of musicians residing in their house, ready to play whenever the great people wanted rest and refreshment of mind. In modern times we are more complicated, and our orchestra is a combination of different sets working together or in alternation.

Very rarely, but earlier in England than abroad, we hear of large bands of mixed instruments in playhouses or at the Court. It is not so uncommon to hear of private meetings wherein the set of viols was *broken*, like Princess Katharine's broken English; that is to say, it was an incomplete set, or it was combined with organ, lute, virginals (and later, harpsichord) or other instruments.

*What was played upon them.* When gentlemen met to play for their own amusement, one would play (at sight, remember) a plain-song, while others played the descant upon this written by such men as Tye, Tallis, and Byrd, in what was then the church style.<sup>1</sup> Later, in Elizabethan times they began to play Fancies, wherein "a musician taketh a point (that is, a melody) at his pleasure,

<sup>1</sup> See next chapter.



and wresteth it and turneth it as he will." He also, at his pleasure, made *divisions* or variations on it. These were what they had to play on the virginals too; and they were written also in the church style by Byrd, later by Orlando Gibbons, and later still by Jenkins. The latter wrote many Fancies during his sojourn with country gentlemen in the Civil War times.

Architects of to-day tell us that it was not Cromwell and the unruly iconoclasts combined under him who did so much harm to church architecture, though they did knock off the heads of the statues and break the pipes of the organs. It was the next age with its false taste, which covered all that was beautiful with white-wash and hoardings of lath and plaster, making the good work underneath crumble and decay for want of air and light. In the same way it was not the Puritan opposition that did so much harm to music in England. There were many abuses in the musical world of that day, abuses which grew up again in after years; and the Puritans did but try to do what we with all our modern conceit have still a great tendency to do, namely, to reform a thing by "improving it off the face of the earth," as our cousins on the other side of the Atlantic say. The Puritans cleared away roughly and with little discrimination. It was the later age of the Res-

toration and the years after it which did more harm to music as well as to architecture and many beautiful things—the age which taught the English to despise their own natural artistic powers and to cultivate those which were exotic—the age which drove away the *Courtesie* which we found in the old poem, and gave them an honour resting at the point of a rapier while rudeness dwelt at the hilt—which lost the English their *Dame Gladnesse*, their dignified joyousness, and gave them frivolity and tippling.

*Collections of Psalms and sacred songs.* It is curious to note how much was done for the preservation of music in that Puritan age. Much of it was done in obedience to the motive which was the forerunner of the Puritan division—a good deal was done notwithstanding it, and some out of simple opposition.

Long before Queen Elizabeth there were Myles Coverdale's and Sternhold's versified Psalms, which they hoped might be sung in private houses, instead of the "ungodly songs and ballads" so much used. After them came, in Elizabeth's reign, Day's Psalter, which "may be sung to all musicall instruments." Este's a little later, and then Ravenscroft's in James I.'s time were all compiled with much the same object. From these books we get our finest hymn-tunes now. Then there were

other books by Byrd, full of sacred songs, "fit for all companies and voyces."

After this we must name the secular printed collections which have preserved our beautiful old tunes in a way which has not been the case in any other country. Numbers of these tunes were already old at the time of their collection. The first of these collections was in the early days of James I., *Roundelays and Catches*. Then another called *King Henry VIII.'s Mirth*. These were three-men songs, and more rounds and catches. Later a volume of *Musical Phansies fitting the Court, Cittie and Countrie Humours*. More notable still, as an answer to the assertion as to Puritanism having destroyed music, came the publications of the time of the Commonwealth, when one might think the Puritans were in the height of their power, or at all events that the result of what they had done in destruction would be most evident. Here are the publisher Playford's collections of works by various composers of then and before: *Catches and Rounds, Music and Mirth*; another with the punning title *Catch that Catch can*, and again *Banquet of Musick for the Lyra-viol, with Ayres and Jiggs for the Violin*, and more rounds and catches. Then again, in the same few years before the Restoration, came *Musical Ayres and Dialogues*,

*Collections of  
popular  
tunes.*

*Musick's Recreations on the Lyra-violl, Lessons for the Cithern and Gittern* (instruments of the nature of the modern mandolin), *An Introduction to the skill of Musick, with the Art of Descant*, and another work of the same kind by Christopher Sympson — some *Court Ayres with Pavines, Almains, Corantes and Sarabandes* (courtly dances which date back to Queen Elizabeth), “which,” as the preface to the book says, “found so good acceptance both in this kingdom and beyond seas” that the publisher issued another edition. Last, but not least in its value, comes the *Dancing Master*, a collection of old country dance tunes, with directions how to go through the dances that belong to them, with the names of the songs from which the dances were made. These were published avowedly because, through the opposition of Puritanism, “these tunes were in danger of being forgot”; and many new editions of this book with added tunes followed in the next few years. This long list of publications and reprints shows that, whatever the power of the Puritans to make laws against “all ballad-singers and contemptible fiddlers,” there were many in the country to keep alive the love and the practice of music. Even in Commonwealth times gentlemen and ladies, ay, and cooks and valet-boys too, played the lute and the harp, the

viol, violin, flute, cithern or the virginals *at first sight*; sang too, at first sight, and some of them composed too.

Not only did they sing and play *music* but it was *good* music. Only listen to this tune, *Heartsease*, and feel its exceeding beauty. It is in the *Dancing Master* as a dance, and is spoken of in many books as a well-known *dump* and a courtly dance such as those of Queen Elizabeth's practice—sung too, for there are words put to it in some books.

"Play me some merry dump" says one of Shakespeare's characters. "In doleful dumps" was another person in poetic fiction.



But after the Restoration there begins a change. English musicians had welcomed the Italian recitative and singing, which came into the country a few years back. When, however, Charles II. brought

*Decline of  
home music  
after the  
Restoration.*

the French light and airy instrumental music, they were in despair; for, they said, the English music, with its dignified, scholarly style, is much better. The two styles had a long struggle; and viols and concerted music remained in use for many years in meetings and societies in London as well as in the country, but gradually diminished. Writers of the time said that the graver music "was laid aside as being too dull and heavy for the light heels and brains of this nimble and wanton age." Music was too troublesome to learn, and many gentlemen "for ease sake gave themselves over to whistling on a flageolet and fiddling upon the violin, when they were speedily rivalled by their lacquies and barber's boys." So music was first too much trouble to learn, and then too trifling to take any trouble about. They went to "mug houses" and "glee-clubs," and listened to professional men and boys who did for them what was not worth while for them to do for themselves. Concerted music, along with the use of the viols, retired into the country, where it remained for many years among the yeoman class. There it has been described in some of Hardy's novels. There were a few players in certain parishes who came together in private for their own love of the thing, or to help according to their talents in the church services. Here they have been jocularly

termed "Nebuchadnezzar's orchestra," though it may be doubted whether their complete stifling by the wheezing and feeble-sounding harmonium is altogether a gain. Soon, however, may their best qualities be revived by the efforts that are being made all over the country in favour of orchestral and other combinations of players. These we hear of and rejoice at, for ladies and for gentlemen, for all may be bettered and cheered by good playing in concert, or as the old word had it, *in consort*.

However, in the dark days we have been speaking about, there were a few gentlemen who sang an occasional ballad, and some played airs with variations on the flute; but this seems to have been the utmost of the gentlemen's efforts in music all through the eighteenth and for the first half of the nineteenth century.

Yet ballads and country dances went on, old ones were revived, and new ones written till thirty years or more into the seventeen hundreds. Many were written or revived in the ballad operas. Then, too, many of the tunes, as well as the dances of undoubted English origin, went to the sister kingdoms, or abroad both to France and Italy, presently to come back in the form of "New Scottish Airs" or "Irish Jigs" by means of Burns, Moore and countless others. French *contredanses*

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were another means of our old tunes becoming fashionable.

Country dances had been fashionable for the final dances of a ball from the time of James I., or even Queen Elizabeth, when they were added to cheer up the company after their more solemn *measures*, *pavanes*, and *galliards*, like the chorus after a song. This was because the courtly dances employed but a few dancers, while the rounds, the squares and the long dances employed every one. This fashion of winding up a ball was customary even after the waltz and the polka had been introduced.

Ladies, however, played the spinet, virginals, base-viol or viol da gamba and the guitar, even after Charles II.'s time. By the time of George II., we hear of the harpsichord. "Miss Dawson's hornpipe, with variations for the harpsichord" is published, and then "a concerto for the harpsichord" with a *larghetto* movement "made on *Young Jemmy*." Better musicians were playing Handel's concertos and harpsichord lessons. Miss Fanny Burney writes that "Mr Handel" came and played on her harpsichord, and it surprised her to hear what beautiful sounds came from her poor instrument.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the pianoforte took the place of the harpsichord, and



the music of Clementi and Dussek came into vogue, with perhaps a few compositions by Haydn. Early in the nineteenth, however, the level went down again. It was Cramer and Kalkbrenner for composers, with *Declining* Logier to teach a dozen ladies at once, *again.* all playing the same piece of music on different pianofortes in one room, thus educating their fingers but not their musical sense. Much mis-directed trouble was taken in those days, when young ladies vied with each other who should rise the earliest, to spend hours with the companionship of a lace-making housemaid, in front of a high Broadwood pianoforte, the red fluted silk front with brass centre star illuminated by one solitary tallow dip candle.

Logier tried to teach the simple *Airs with* mystery of key-relationship, and Dr *variations.* Crotch wrote theoretical works on composition, but what could that avail when the usual music rose no higher than airs with variations on *We're a' noddin'* and *Avison's Beautiful Air*, or *See the Conquering Hero*, arranged for three performers on one pianoforte (pity the middle one!), or the weakly sentimental songs by Mrs Hemans' sister?

Certainly airs with variations have been made very interesting by Beethoven, Mendelssohn,

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Schumann or Hubert Parry, just as "divisions on a ground" were made interesting by Byrd, Christopher Sympson, Purcell and Handel. But all suffer from the weakness of design caused by the monotonous rhythm and the many repetitions of the full close.

*Improve-* Samuel Wesley, son of Charles Wesley  
*ment.* the hymn-writer, introduced some of Bach's works to England. Hummel's works were also about, and Sir George Smart taught Handel's songs with all the purity of tradition, and by-and-by Cipriani Potter made Beethoven's works to be known. Then came Mendelssohn and took the English world by storm, opening the gates with his oratorios and reaching the home-life by his songs, with and without words. He had able lieutenants in Moscheles, Bennett and Macfarren, who by their music as well as by their teaching and personal influence, brought up English taste to the standard it now holds. Hullah, too, with his efforts, revived the English taste for part-music, and brought about a standard of achievement in choral singing which is not to be found in other countries.

*The true* The English amateurs need fear no  
*English* comparison with the outside world if  
*taste.* they will only use more of their own taste and judgment in selecting what to like.

We have become so used to being led by the nose by outsiders that we fear to trust ourselves alone in matters of art. We must, perforce, be enthusiastic admirers of either German, French, Italian or Scandinavian, to the obliteration of other than the one chosen school.

Though music be cosmopolitan, taste is very much a matter of nationality or race. There is in our climate too much fog and murkiness to struggle against, to let us wish for fog or murkiness in our life; our *true* sentiment therefore, by whatever medium it may be expressed, is manly (or womanly) and withal joyous and frank, our bearing is dignified and vigorous. Judging from the music produced in England in past ages, the national taste in music is, in its true development, similar, it is a taste for clearness in melody, design and rhythm—for vigour and for dignity. Is there anything in such qualities to make us ashamed?

In the days from which we quoted in the beginning of this chapter our poets knew that the nightingale sang by broad daylight, and “with so merry a note that all the wood rang” with the joyous expression. It is a type of our own true musical nature. Poets of other countries found out the midnight song of Philomel, and our later poets copied them and talked about the bird

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leaning its breast against a thorn and singing out its misery. Those poets were only thinking of their own dismal characteristics which were, perhaps, the result of writing by the light of a candle, with the aid of the fragrant nicotine and other enervating or dispiriting appliances.

Something of the same kind has happened in our musical taste. We have filled our pitchers at the fountain of a sham sorrow, and the English characteristic of joy and frankness has been put away.

The sooner we get back to our true nature, the better for us and for our music. Our ignorant enemies are quick enough to see that this "midnight song of Philomel" does not fit with our nature, and therefore they deem us unmusical and inartistic. Those who are great and generous among our foreign friends see that what we really have is far better, if only we are wise enough to use it.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM MADRIGAL TO MODERN STYLE

*For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain;  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.*

—A. H. CLOUGH.

I DO not think that people realise how much of the musical life of a nation depends on its amateurs. I do not mean amateurs such as the elderly tenor who warbles a great operatic solo in a quavering, toneless voice, or the young baritone who yells a vulgar music-hall song to amuse his silly companions. I do not mean the young lady who asks for full lessons at half-price because her pocket-money is at a low ebb; nor do I mean the farmer's daughter who strums a few "pieces" on a wretched pianoforte in the best parlour, "making bad moosic instead of mind-ing the chickens," as the old farmer said—witty enough to see that the music was bad of its kind.

None of these are doing what is really fitting to their character or place in their own world, therefore we cannot deem them the real amateurs (or

lovers of music) who make the life of music ; though indeed they may do much to mar it. But the real lovers of the art—the gentleman and the gentlewoman, the young man and the young girl, be they rich or poor, who honestly try to do the best they can with their talent, according to the time they are able to give from their life-pursuit, and the opportunities that lie in their path—these are the amateurs according to the true interpretation of the word, who make, not “bad moosic,” but music as good as they can, and therefore make the life of the nation’s music.

Now, there is nothing to affront my artist brothers and sisters in this, nothing to cause undue self-esteem in the amateur as if I had raised him to a place above that of the artist. For the amateur, even the sincere one, is often a bungler ; and no bungler is a first-rate workman. The very first musician of the world was both an amateur and a bungler. Jubal was an amateur in the best sense ; and he must have been a bungler if he thought he could, as Chaucer says, make different sounds out of his brother Tubal’s anvil by striking it with hammers of different sizes—for it is impossible. If he had said he could get different sounds with the same hammer by striking anvils of different sizes, he would have been right. This, however, is acoustics and not music.

The truth is that music has its beginning in popular or home music, and its perfection in the studied or professional work. The two lines run side by side, the popular slightly in advance, from earliest years to the present. The popular is rightly a few steps in advance of the scholastic in most matters, because the popular is specially designed to interest the hearers, and therefore its exponents will be more daring and inventive ; while the scholastic branch has to guard that for which it has cared for so many years, and to try well any novelty before it comes into the protected circle.

There is no clearer example of this than the rise of the modern scale, or key-system. Everybody knows what the modern scales are, the simple rows of notes which we call the major scale, the two forms of minor, and the chromatic, and how we can reckon them from any note of the key-board, marking the proper intervals by means of sharps or flats. Then there is relationship between families of scales, among which modulation is easy ; for every key has a kinship with other keys whose principal chord is contained in the first. There are some other links, too, which form a connection between keys. It is this grouping or family relationship of notes and of keys which is called *tonality* by the learned among musicians.

People are apt to talk glibly about the old

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tonality and the new, and how musicians used to write in one and now write in the other, as if the old were a clearly defined and accurately known system, and the new an arbitrary invention totally distinct from the old. The fact seems really to be that tonality, in the older days beginning soon after the rise of European nations, was a confusion of systems, all more or less differing in their form, and more or less incomplete, which were in use in different parts of the musical world for many hundred years. Among these many scales very few were considered to be connected, and, because of this, modulation was very limited.

Out of these numerous scales the taste and intuition of the popular musicians, as the pioneers in their art, selected those which had the best effect upon the ears of their hearers, and gradually made some changes in them. Those of the popular choice were gradually adopted by scholars, and have remained to be those of the modern school. In still more modern use the chosen scales have been connected and extended into the chromatic scales; while principles have been found to exist in them which account for the intuitive preference for them over the discarded scales which are without those principles.

This change from what we may call the disordered simplicity of the many old modes or



scales, to the ordered complexity of the one modern scale, has taken many years to carry out.

In very early days in England we find the Greek form of scale, which must have come to us with the early missionaries of Greek connection, who settled in the north of England, in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. If we play the arbitrary minor scale of D coming down, we are playing the Greek Dorian,—thus—D, C, B $\flat$ , A, G, F, E, D. We use it now, almost only in coming down the scale, while they used it upwards, downwards, and in and out. It was reckoned also from other notes, as tonics or key-notes. One among the many old English tunes in this scale is *Bonny Sweet Robin*.



In this tune, as well as in most of the old popular tunes, there is the first modern characteristic that can be found in music, and this is that the tonic or key-note is the principal note of the scale, and is

*Modern things creep into the popular tunes.*

the note upon which the tune makes its final rest.

Soon we come upon another modern characteristic. The dump called *Heartsease*, quoted in the last chapter (p. 41), is in this same Greek scale, but the leading note has slipped into it. *Heartsease* was a tune popular long before Queen Elizabeth's days, while the leading note was not adopted by scholars as necessary; for it was not in the church scales which had any minor tendency, neither was it in the gamut. If we look in the gamut,—the gamut by which musicians learnt their rudiments of music from the days of Guido and Hucbald, through Shakespeare's days and his Hortensio, down to the days of the chorister boys of the beginning of the nineteenth century, we find major scales, but without leading notes. There are but six notes in each scale, and the seventh is left unrecorded. It is Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, and no more, whether the Ut stands for the key-note of C, of F or of G. Yet, whatever their teaching might be, in their compositions the scholarly musicians, even before Queen Elizabeth's days, were feeling about for this leading note, some avowing it was because of the good results obtained by the popular musicians.

Eminent musicians say that our complete major scale came through the Greek missionaries, whence

we have already traced our minor scale, and that there is the source from which we must look for such old tunes as the *Sumer is i-cumen in* and the *Oxfordshire Tragedy*, quoted in the previous chapter.

The writers who trace our modern major and minor scales to the Greeks, and through them back to the Egyptians, also assert that the church scales, which we know now best through Gregorian tones, were artificially produced from the organs of old church times. The key-boards of these, having the white notes and only one black note, B $\flat$ , among all their white, did not admit of transposing the scale or the tune exactly, as we can do now with our five black notes mingled among the white. If they would change the position of a melody so that it should be sung in a higher or a lower part of the voice, the quality or size of the distance between the notes would be changed. We can try this if we obliterate, in our mind's eye, all the black notes from our pianoforte key-board, and then play "God save the King," beginning on D. Try it. D, D, E, C (not C $\sharp$ , mind you), D, E, F (not F $\sharp$ ), F, G, F, E, D, E, D, C, D. Does it not sound like a Gregorian chant, even if we play it in the proper time, which we cannot mark in the above rude letter-notation? Try it again, beginning from

*Church  
scales.*

other notes, E, G, or A, recollecting that the solitary  $b$  on B was never used save in the scale which began on F.

Now the players on stringed instruments—lyres, harps, fiddles—had no such difficulty. They could keep the same kind of interval in their tunes and scales, to whatever height or lowness they chose to tune their instruments. Popular musicians, therefore, who were players upon stringed instruments kept the use of the more natural forms of scale which they had by tradition from the Greeks (who were also string players); while the scholars—the men who wrote music, and who wrote about music, being joined to the only school of learning then existing, the Church—wrote in the artificial scales belonging to Roman Church use. Many singers in the church, however, used accidentals, and thus modified the harshness of the scales according to fixed traditional rules which are not well known to us now.

*Popular style first comes into scholar's music.* The time of Queen Elizabeth, which is considered to be the golden age of the music of what is called the old style, is also the time when the popular style begins to take more hold of the scholar's music. It may therefore be considered the beginning of the modern style in scholarship. We often call it the madrigal age, because the greatest number and

the finest of madrigals were produced about that time. Now madrigals were the secular music written by scholars in the church style; and, though the name came to England first in Queen Elizabeth's later years, the kind of music had been written in England for a long time, and, in fact, had been gradually developing in our country during the whole time, and even before, it was developing abroad—first in the Flemish school and then in Italy.

An anthem by Tallis, who died *Anthem by Tallis.* three years before the Italian madrigals first came to England, will be a just example of the style in its more serious vein. In its scale, the anthem, *I Call and Cry to Thee*, shows the influence of the popular music at once, for it is the same that we described just now as the Greek minor. Just as in *Bonny Sweet Robin*, quoted a few pages back, there are all the notes of our descending minor melodic scale: in this case it is that of G. The thing that gives it the old-fashioned sound is the way in which the seventh note of the scale (F♯) is used. There are ways of using it in modern music, else we should not have it in our scale, but this is an old-fashioned way and one that belongs to the Greek scale.

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TREBLE 2.  
COUNTER-TENORS.  
TENOR AND BASS.

(b) I  
(a) I call and cry to Thee, O  
(b) I call and

call and cry to Thee  
Lord, I call and cry etc.  
cry, (a) I call and cry to Thee.

Soon after this example we come to another popular thing, the leading note, just as in *Hearts-ease*. By-and-by we find that this leading note ( $F\sharp$ ) is to be used when rising to the key-note, while  $F\flat$  keeps in use when the music falls to a lower note; both of these are modern rules. In one place both  $F\sharp$  and  $F\flat$  are together in one bar, with a very curious sound to our ears; for that is not a modern habit, though there are ways in which the two can be combined with good effect. After some time there is change of key; we have first the key of F and then  $B\flat$ . Both of them are modern scales and evidently the transposed versions of the popular major scales. Then the

former key, G minor, returns and remains till the close of the anthem. In this slender modulation there is a foretaste of the modern principle of key-design, which is also found in many popular tunes of old date. For, while the beginning and ending are in the main key, G minor, the middle part is in other keys related to the first, which make variety while they refresh the return of the old key for the completion of the anthem. The "tierce de Picardie" or close upon the major chord at the end of the piece is an old habit which suggests the modern principle that the minor and major scales of the same key-note are really the same key.

All the chords in this work of Tallis are what modern harmony books call diatonic. That is to say, they are common chords, first inversions of triads, and discords which are prepared, while passing notes are in the old, strict style.

That which makes most of the character of the madrigal age is the con- *Imitative Character.*  
trapuntal and imitative way of carrying on the musical ideas. The old round, *Sumer is i-cumen in*, showed this style in a crude way, but at the time of Tallis it had come to perfection. Instead of taking a part in the singing of massive chords, as is the case in much modern music, every voice had a distinct share in the melodies. If we look at the example of this anthem (p. 58), we find the

first counter tenor begins with a distinct fragment of melody. Before he has finished the phrase the tenor enters with a slightly different form of the same phrase. The treble is a few beats later, and presently the second counter-tenor comes in, followed by the bass. All these voices or parts, as was the old word for them, are carried on, as they might themselves think, independently of one another; but it is the art of the composer that so modifies each part that the whole combine to make a beautiful effect. In that art lies the superiority of Tallis over the author of *Sumer is i-cumen in*. The older writer made a beautiful rhythmic melody and set all voices to sing it "I after you," unaware that the combination made certain uglinesses that we modern harmony students have learnt to put our fingers upon.

Besides the independence of the voices there is the imitation. The different parts at the beginning of the anthem are nearly the same notes. Like, in that the length of the notes is about the same, while they go upwards and downwards at the same place in the melody; but unlike, in that the voices marked (*a*) begin on G and go to D, leaping up five notes, while those marked (*b*) begin on D and go to G, leaping only four notes. Those marked (*b*) are therefore *imitations*, but not *repetitions* of those marked (*a*).



There is an element in the madrigal *Expression* writing which shows that artists were *in madrigals*. feeling about for that expression of poetical ideas which we moderns are apt to consider our own particular invention. Morley, the Elizabethan writer we quoted before, says, "Dispose your music according to the nature of the words which you are therein to express. If you have a grave matter, apply a grave kind of musicke to it; if a merrie subject, you must make your musicke also merrie." Following this principle, not only is the general course of Tallis' anthem grave, in agreement with the gravity of the words, but each sentence of the words has a separate musical thought which is carried out in every voice before the next sentence is touched. Thus the anthem begins, "I call and cry to Thee, O Lord," with the music that we quoted. After this has been carried out as much as the composer wishes, to a close, the next sentence comes, "Bow down Thine eyes and mark my heavy plight"; this is with a new musical phrase, used in imitation by all voices and so brought to a close. Again a sentence, "For I have many ways offended," comes with new music in the same manner, and yet another, "Forget my wickedness," has a new musical phrase combined with a new version of the last preceding. These two are carried on together till the close of the

movement, which is a manifold repetition of the entreaty, "O Lord, I beseech Thee."

There is, therefore, nothing new in the idea that some people have put forward of late years as if it were new, namely, that music should be made to express the thoughts of the words which are allied to it. Here, indeed, is a point in which the scholars of Tallis' and Morley's period were in advance of the popular musicians, although in most points the reverse was the case. For, in the singing of ballads the popular musician had to rely chiefly on the declamation and the variety of his singing for the expression of the emotion belonging to the words. The scholar, on the other hand, like Tallis and Morley, had begun to feel that the music itself could express some thought,—could intensify the emotion that was suggested by the words.

It might be thought that Tallis' use of a more popular scale was the result of the English Reformation—that the church scales, being specially of Roman use, would naturally begin to lose influence in England at this time. But music in Italy shows signs of broadening out into modern scale at the same period. The *Missa Brevis* by *A mass by Palestrina*, the greatest Italian writer of the age, was written, as Mr Rockstro describes it, "in the 11th mode transposed." Now the 11th mode was the then lately invented mode

which had been called *Il modo lascivo* by scholars only a few years before, too light and frivolous for the learned and yet patronised by them on occasion because of the delight in it that the unlearned felt. It was the same scale of C as that of the old minstrel tune quoted in the former chapter, *Near Woodstock Town*, and when it was transposed for the *Missa Brevis* it became none other than the scale of F which we know very well nowadays, and the scale of our first quoted tune, *Sumer is i-cumen in*.

This great work of Palestrina is in the same style as that we have just described in Tallis' anthem, with the difference that comes from the individuality of the two men, and that which comes from the one being in a minor, the other in a major scale. There is the same counterpoint or independent course of the voices, the same simple harmonies, the same treatment of discords, the same imitation of one part over another, and the same irregularity of phrase-rhythm. There is also the same slightness of modulation ; and in following the course of so long a work, this makes an effect quite different to that of a modern work. Every one of the many movements is in the same key, with but slight changes in the middle of the movement. Although the principle of modern key-form is therefore to be found, the effect of it

compared with the modern use is pretty much that of a beautiful *bas-relief* as compared with a complete group of sculpture. For in the low relief the figures are little more than suggested out of the background, while in the sculptured group they stand out independently and wholly defined.

*New things in Purcell's time.* About the time of Purcell there was great illumination of the whole style of music. Mouton and Monteverde had many years before discovered and used the first of the unprepared discords, which we now know as the dominant seventh, but Purcell seems to have been the first to use it freely. He used too the many forms which may be derived from it as well as many chromatic chords. These chords entered gradually more and more into the music of composers whose genius was strong enough to stand on its own basis. Students, and those who depended upon rule alone and admitted no rule but the diatonic, contrapuntal rule, stood aghast at the *licenses* as they called them. It was not till nearly the middle of the nineteenth century that Macfarren with the co-operation of his friend Day, discovered a principle upon which these harmonies were founded, which he therefore called fundamental harmonies. With that principle he brought them all into line so that students of less imperial genius than Purcell and other great men who will be

named presently, could use them with confidence that there was no artistic fault in them.

Recitative, also, had been invented in the Italian school about Elizabethan times and travelled all over Europe. It took deep root in England, and many musicians practised it in the times of James I. and Charles I.

These two new things, recitative and chromatic harmonies, entered into scholars' music by the invention or discovery of scholars. There was, however, another item in the list of changes about this time which came, not from scholars but from popular music. This was rhythm. All popular music, in every country and every age, has been rhythmic—having rhythm, that is, of balanced or parallel phrases. But the music of the madrigal is without the regularity that is produced by balanced phrases; there is rhythm of bars, but not of phrases. For the scholarly musicians of the madrigal age looked down upon it as common, vulgar and suited to the popular taste only. At the same time they felt the influence of it, and both English and Italian writers of the madrigal age produced many short pieces—ballets, villanellas, fallas—all, as Morley says, “devised to be danced to voyces,” and therefore rhythmical in correspondence with the dancing which was to be helped by the music.

*Recitative  
and  
chromatic  
harmonies.*

*Rhythm  
comes now  
into scholars'  
music.*

When we come to Purcell, however, we find rhythm of phrases beginning to enter into the music of the best men, not simply "to be danced to voyces," but as part of important compositions. Perhaps Purcell was more daring in this point than some of the serious writers abroad, for the court under which he began his career loved a tune. There was nothing, therefore, in his surroundings to hinder him from letting loose the flood of tuneful melody that he had inherited from many generations of English song-writers. Popular rhythm, too, affected his part-writing as well as his single melodies and songs; for in his anthems we find whole strains of music set for the quartet of voices or the quartet of violins in note against note chords, as clear as a three-men's song of the old time—the effect being as massive as possible and perfectly different to the imitative, contrapuntal style of the madrigals.

*Violins to  
accompany.* Purcell had the royal band, too, of "four and twenty fiddlers" with their violins of all sizes from treble to bass. More apt were they for florid music than the viols of former times which were beginning to go out of fashion. These being used in the royal chapel, for which Purcell wrote, their tuning gave him more freedom, too, in the use of different keys and of

chromatic chords than the organ of ordinary church use.

With the freer use of the band came a new development. In earlier days, up to Queen Elizabeth's time, the bands generally played music that was written for voices. We in England were a vocal people, and music was written "for viols or voyces." People sang if they could, and if not they played some instrument (though sometimes they both played and sang) and all took part together. But instrumental music had so much developed by the time Purcell came forward that he was enabled to put distinct interludes for the band in his anthems, as Pepys rather colloquially expresses it, "between each verse." Some of these were fresh developments of the vocal strain, while others were different music altogether. There is too, occasionally, a special part for one particular instrument in concert with one voice as a modern *obbligato*—the two making a duet, and each with music suitable for their own qualities.

Another new practice about this time was the use of the *verse*, or quartet of solo singers, who sang either alone or in a group of two, three or four, in alternation with the full choir or chorus. This, as well as the treatment of the instruments, shows the feeling for the variety

of tone which is to be got by changing the means by which the notes are sounded, whether by different singers or by groups of singers, or by different instruments. Nowadays we speak of the effect as *colour*, and call it instrumentation or orchestration, forgetful of the fact that voices are as potent an influence in the effect as are instruments.

*Anthem by Purcell.* All these practices, differing from the madrigal, and developed after its greatest days had been accomplished, are to be found in Purcell's verse-anthem, *My Beloved spake*. It begins with an overture, or *symphony* for the band of bowed instruments alone ; it is a miniature as compared with other overtures, but is complete in its form. After the symphony the verse, or quartet of solo voices, enters with phrases of the nature of accompanied recitative going on to a strain, "Rise, my love." The phrases in this strain imitate one another slightly, but they are rhythmic and fragmentary, thus differing from madrigal imitation. A strain or *ritornello* for the band alone follows this. From hence a strain of great beauty comes for the quartet, "For lo ! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone." The voices here are almost note against note, while they are grouped so as to contrast one with another, now two, now three, or four at once.



# MADRIGAL TO MODERN STYLE 69

(a) *Slow.*

For lo! the win-ter is past

For lo! the win-ter etc.

(b) *Soft.*

The rain is o-ver and gone, is o-ver and gone

Thus at (a) two voices begin; a third enters in the second bar, and a fourth over them in the third bar. At (b) three voices begin the phrase, and a fourth is added at the end. A ritornello for the band is a reconstruction of the same thought.

A fragment of accompanied recitative is followed by a new strain for the quartet with the words "the time of the singing of birds is come." This is newly carried out by the chorus, and again as a ritornello for the band. A good way on in the anthem the words occur, "the fig tree putteth forth her green figs," which are treated almost as accompanied recitative, with the first violin as an *obbligato*. The next phrase, also violin and voice, is pure *cantabile*, and almost breathes of the sweet delicacy of the vine shoots.

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VIOLIN.

VOICE.

BASS INSTR.

The musical score is written on two staves. The top staff is for the Voice, and the bottom staff is for the Bass Instrument. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "And the vine with her tender grapes give a good smell." The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The bass instrument part is more complex, with many sixteenth notes and chords.

The phrase is sung three times, each time in a different key, so that much modulation is produced for so short a passage.

From this is a return to the verse part of the beginning, "Rise, my love," and the same ritornello. A new phrase follows for the one, two, three and four voices, with some modulation and a ritornello with some most modern forms of chord. There is more of the same kind of composition, and at the end the full chorus has a passage in full harmony, note against note, in regular rhythm, and with some modulation.

*More modulation than of old.*

Though Purcell uses a great deal of modulation in this work, yet he always brings the music back to a full cadence in the main key at the end of each musical idea. To a modern ear, the effect of so many cadences in the one key is monotonous, yet the use of many keys is a decided advance towards the modern

style, even though it be only in the course of a movement.

The treatment of the minor scale is decidedly modern, if we compare the passage, "The rain is over and gone" (p. 69, *b*), with the Tallis anthem and its treatment of the minor 7th of the scale.

Only a quarter of a century after Purcell, came Handel with his English oratorios, and for more than thirty years was the leader in English music. We have made greater use of English music up to this time in our tracery of musical style, because England has been, and is now practically the mother-country of vocal part-music. We may not claim Handel as an Englishman, though he was naturalised, and himself anglicised the spelling of his name. Born in Germany and studying in Italy, it was, however, in England that he lived and where he brought out the works in which he was greatest; these were, by their choral qualities, more akin to England than to any other country.

*Handel in  
English  
music.*

Handel, like Purcell, used many chords belonging to the modern, chromatic style; and he, too, like Purcell, had the violin class of instruments to use as accompaniments, and by their prompt and ready "attack" (as it is called), to enable the voices to accomplish the difficult unprepared discords which he was then not afraid to use.

These chords we find in slow passages in which the voices sing in masses, so that the elaborately formed chords have time to give out their full effect.

*More chromatic chords.* There is a beautiful passage of this kind in the *Dettingen Te Deum*, in the verse "We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants." It begins in G minor, with simple concords and diatonic suspensions, the voices entering one after the other almost after the fashion of the Tallis anthem, and gradually increasing the volume of sound till all five parts are singing. Then we find, in massive chords, (a) a dominant minor 9th, resolving on its root, which is a modern treatment of the chord, (b) a neapolitan 6th, followed by the very chromatic minor 9th of the supertonic (c), unprepared, and resolved on the dominant chord (D in the key of G minor).

The musical score is written in G minor (one flat) and 2/4 time. It features a piano (*mf*) dynamic. The score is divided into three sections labeled (a), (b), and (c).  
 Section (a) begins with a dominant minor 9th chord (D7b9) in the treble clef, which resolves to its root (D) in the bass clef.  
 Section (b) features a Neapolitan 6th chord (F#m6) in the treble clef, followed by a chromatic minor 9th of the supertonic (A7b9) in the bass clef.  
 Section (c) shows the chromatic minor 9th of the supertonic (A7b9) in the treble clef, which resolves to the dominant chord (D) in the bass clef.

This rich passage is beautifully relieved by the next passage, which is for trebles alone, in two parts, and still in the key of G minor.

In the single phrase which is a setting of the words, "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death," there is a wonderfully beautiful combination of the ancient and modern styles. There is a prepared 7th of B $\flat$  which by the principles of old style should be resolved on a chord traced from E; in the old-fashioned form this would be ugly in the particular position of this chord. Here, a magical infusion of the chromatic feeling turns this resolving chord into a modern form of it in which the old principle can be adhered to, while the ill effect vanishes into beauty. The poignancy of the discords is in perfect poetry with the feeling of the words.

Notwithstanding these modern chords, the general character of Handel's music is what musicians call *diatonic*. It is the same character that exists in

*Yet the  
diatonic  
character  
prevails.*

English anthem and service music up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. For English church music, which, to use the words of an eminent writer, "has been carried on in unbroken succession for three centuries," has been, all along that time, of an essentially broad and clear character, with massive harmonies and smooth melodies. Tallis began the freer use of the popular scales, while Purcell lit upon modern harmonies and many new characteristics in style; after him the

writings were less daring, but without the uncertainty of scale which belonged to the madrigal time. Even when Handel came and threw fresh light upon the music of the time, our English writers who were then working—Greene, Boyce, Nares and others, gave no servile worship to the great light which, so to speak, overshadowed them by its excessive brilliancy, but held their own in the massive style which suited the great cathedrals for which they wrote and the organ which was to be their sole accompaniment—the style, in fact, which has been described in the text-books of Goss and Macfarren, and named in the latter “the ancient, diatonic or contrapuntal style.”

*The English glee.* The development of the glee seems to mark a new point in the course of musical style. A few of the popular compositions in Playford's collections were styled glees, but they were trivial in comparison with the elaborate works which began to be written shortly after Handel's death by Webb, Cooke, Calcott and others. Of these, many that were called glees were only single movements more or less in the style of a part-song or ballet, and were perhaps in the form of a miniature sonata or a rondo. The form that was peculiar to the glee was in some sort an adaptation of two of the principles of the

Purcell anthem lately described. It was for solo voices with all possible variety of combination, and it was in a chain of distinct though connected movements. There, however, the resemblance ceased; for the chorus, which was also in the anthem, had no place in the glee. Neither was there any instrumental accompaniment to the glee of this classic time, although those early glees of Playford had accompaniment and the glees of Bishop in still later times had it also. The treatment of the scale and the harmonies was of course similar to that of other works of the date, and therein lies one of the great distinctions between the glee and the madrigal, with which it is often confused. The elaborate imitative style of the madrigal was also absent from the glee, and in the place of it was a great effort at effect, by contrast of movement and by opportunity for the solo voices to show off their powers. For these were to be sung by professional singers, who were to be listened to and admired by distinguished audiences: not as the madrigals, where the singers sang for their own interest in and love for the music. The old artistic love of the music and of work in its service was reserved for the present day to revive. We sing now, as they did in madrigal times, because we love to sing, and not only or always for the pleasure of others. But let us not be cynical ;

we can but do our best. Sometimes it may be our little best, or, as the Americans say, our "level best." What is our level: is it high or low? to speak English again. It surely rests with ourselves to make the level a high one.

*Connected movements.* There is one improvement in design and form to be found in the glee and also in the anthem of the eighteenth century. The movements do not, as in the Purcell anthem, always begin and close in the main key. There are principal sections which are complete and in the main key, while movements lying between these are either complete in another key, or beginning in a new key are brought round to an imperfect end of some kind which requires the next movement to finish it. This makes variety as well as continuity in the whole group.

Let us go back for an example of this grouping to Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, which is an anthem, though of larger dimensions than the ordinary kind. By far the larger proportion of this work is in the key of D; but at once dividing and connecting the different movements in this key, are movements in other keys. Thus, after a great deal in the main key, the verse "To Thee all angels cry aloud" begins in B minor; it modulates soon and comes to a close on the chord of A. That chord is the dominant of D and therefore



connects the movement with the next one, which is in D. Later in the poem the verse, "The glorious company of the Apostles," and several verses after it are set with the keys of G, B and A following closely one after the other. The keys of D, A, and D again, alternate in separate movements, and next is a long course of related keys, one complete movement in B $\flat$  and other movements in which the key varies between B $\flat$  and G minor. With the words "Day by day we magnify Thee," the main key, D, returns for a long movement; and after this the verse, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin," comes in the key of B minor. This is a beautiful song for a bass voice which one cannot help feeling was in Mendelssohn's dreams when he wrote the beautiful bass solo in *St Paul*, "O Lord, have mercy." The long closing chorus of the *Te Deum*, "O Lord, in Thee have I trusted," is in the main key D.

This chain of keys, with the prominence given to one key both in beginning, in ending and in a lesser degree during the course of the whole, shows the modern principle of key-form very clearly. The relationship of the less prominent keys, too, is clear. The keys of B minor, G major, and A major are of the old diatonic connection. But we have a breath of the coming modern school when we find the keys of B $\flat$  major, G minor, and B

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major, for their connection belongs to the chromatic style.

Painters have what they call *composition of light and shade*, and it is of the same nature as this musical key-form. They mass their darks, their lights, their half-tones (of light and shade), and think of the proportions or relative *values* of different colours—how some colours *come forward* in the picture and others retire back. We mass our keys,—our principal, our nearly related, and our distantly related, and think how some relations make the music to go onwards, while others tend to bring it to a close. Thus we make what we call the *form* or *design* of the general musical course within which the ideas of the music and the sentiments of the words are enclosed.

German part-  
music and  
the Church  
cantata.

Madrigals, motets and anthems were in England, in the Flemish and in the Italian schools; so also was the part-song or harmonised ballad tune. The glee was peculiar to England. The early vocal part-music of Germany, however, seems to have been the *chorale* or harmonised hymn tune, and its first development, the church cantata. The great examples of these cantatas were the compositions of Bach. Their special feature was the use of a chorale tune which was woven into the composition of the cantata. Otherwise it was

formed, like the *Dettingen Te Deum*, just now described, of separate movements, some complete and some incomplete, yet connected by the relationship of the keys, and varied by difference of manner and of arrangement of voices. Bach, like his contemporary Handel, used many modern discords with beautiful effect. He, too, like Handel, used them in massive passages; while passages in which different melodies were to be combined with much elaboration (technically known by the name of *counterpoint*) were generally built upon diatonic harmonies. The advantage of this kind of treatment is found in the clearness with which the voice-parts of these two composers can be followed and understood. A distinction between the two writers lies in the fact that while Bach used more of the elaborate combination of melodies, Handel used more of the massive effects; he even carried his love of breadth to the extent of building his florid passages upon a single long-continued chord. Possibly Handel caught this breadth from English taste, and from his many opportunities of witnessing the effect it had upon an English theatrical audience. Bach, on the other hand, wrote almost entirely for the Church, and for the near neighbourhood of his own home and study, in Germany. Some composers are fortunate in being able to

write in faith of the power that they feel within them, and in spite of having little opportunity of hearing their own works. Happier still are those who can verify their works by actual performance, and can learn from their own success how to make more success.

*The coming of Mozart.* Bach and Handel were but lately laid in their graves when Mozart, scarcely out of his cradle, was writing music that was perfect in design. He was the most wonderful example of artistic intuition that the world has known, whether in music or in any other of the arts,—who, from the baby symphonies of his childhood to the Jupiter symphony and the Requiem of his dying year, produced works that reflected his every emotion and yet agreed with the purest canons of his art. All, too, as Lord Bacon says of his ideal Painter, “by a kind of Felicity (as a musician that maketh an excellent Air in musick), and not by Rule.” The naturalness with which he followed the best principles of his art is one of the greatest proofs of the truth of those principles; for true principles are found out *after* the making of music, and not before it.

Mozart has been described as the first to “cast off the trammels of the old diatonic school”; an expression which is hardly just, considering that some of his finest work, even in his most mature

years, is carried out with all the complexity of that school, in strict accordance with their principles, and in diatonic harmonies too. It would be more true to say that Mozart was the first to complete that happy union between the popular and the scholastic styles that Purcell, Handel and Gluck did but feel after. Up to Mozart's time there was still the broad distinction between the rhythmic style of the natural artistry with its free, harmonic scale, and the careful elaboration of unrhythmic melodies with prepared discords which belonged to the contrapuntal or madrigal school. It was Mozart who felt and brought out to its full extent the variety that can be produced by the blending of the two styles in just balance. He worked this out so fully, and worked upon it so much of novelty, that it has been said "there is nothing new since Mozart." In fact, to describe all that is to be found in Mozart, is to describe the modern style in music. After him, the individuality of different composers and different nations is evident, but the modern character is already completed.

On all points we find more variety in Mozart's music than in former writers ; *More variety, more in order.* more variety, yet it is in order, not in chaos. For instance, we find more chromatic chords than in his predecessors' music, more

chromatic relationships in his modulations, and more modulations or changes of key ; yet, coupled with this greater variety, is a greater clearness in the connection between the chords which make a key (in the course of a *strain*), and between the keys which make a movement. Perhaps as a greater change than any, though it seems so little a thing, he is the first to use the modern chromatic passing note. This perhaps is the only point wherein the modern style definitely ousts the old habit, for all other modernisms go on side by side with the old, and are in addition to them. It was also Mozart's intuition or keen sense of the relation of different instruments, that set the direction of the modern practice of orchestration. Here, again, with greater variety he coupled greater order, for it was he who first began to contrast the groups of different qualities of instruments in the same band. We may go back as far as Lord Bacon to hear about the combination of wind and string or string and voice, and how some combinations sounded better than others ; but everybody of the selected combination played all through the composition. No one, till Mozart, thought of employing complete groups of wind or string or voice to answer one another in fragments of the music, and with the contrast of their quality of sound, to add variety to the course of one

continuous strain of music. He, too, first mingled one or other instrument with those of other quality for a time, and thus changed the tone of that particular phrase, in this way making use of Bacon's discovery that mingled tones were quite different to those of either instrument when used separately.

Most of these things can be pointed out in Mozart's *Requiem*. Look in the *Lacrymosa*. Some antiquarians say that he did not write more than the first eight bars, and that the rest was finished by his copyist. Happy copyist! for he must have been as great a man as Mozart to have written even the ninth bar.

In the two bars for orchestra which begin this movement (*a* in the next example) are some of the modern passing notes, which any technical book (not earlier than Macfarren) will explain. It was one of Mozart's discoveries that the G $\sharp$  in the first bar was more in keeping with the modern chords than the G $\natural$  that Handel or Bach would have used in a similar place. The C $\natural$  *appoggiatura* against the C $\sharp$  leading note in the chord at the end of the same bar is the only modern form of that which in the Tallis anthem sounded old-fashioned and rough, namely, the falling minor 7th of the old scale against the rising major 7th of the modern scale.

*Chromatic  
passing  
notes.*

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*Larghetto.*

*La - cry - mo - sa.* etc.

*Chromatic modulations.* After the first eight bars, which are in D minor, the first strain begins again as in the next example with changes which are slight but so masterly as to renew the whole effect (remember this is where the copyist is said to have taken up the work). Shortly the music is turned off into the key of E $\flat$ . Handel many times used the chord of this note, the minor 2nd of the key, and an example is in the phrase quoted from the *Dettingen Te Deum*, but Mozart used the key of it. The following is an epitome of the voice parts, wherein is the transient modulation to the key of E $\flat$ .

*p* D minor.

Key E $\flat$ . D minor again. etc.



In the *Hostias*, a later movement in the *Requiem*, there are some rapid modulations. It is a quiet movement, beginning in E $\flat$  and continuing in B $\flat$ , a near relation. Then B $\flat$  minor follows and quickly D $\flat$ ; both of these are related to E $\flat$  minor and therefore chromatic relations of the major form of the key. Following these is F minor, a near relation again. After this comes D minor, which is scarcely related either to the main key, E $\flat$ , or to the key we are just quitting; but the music has by this time been through so many keys of nearer connection that it becomes good to go to a distant one. It is like the extreme high light which occurs once in a picture with good effect, and once only. An abrupt return to the main E $\flat$  key brightens still more the effect of the distant modulation.

To go back to the *Lacrymosa*, there are some beauties in it which, for want of *Scale effects.* a better name, must be called effects, and are characteristic of the modern style. The first strain for the voices, which begins at *b* in the first example, p. 84, has two short phrases followed by a long, slow ascending scale up to a high note, and gradually increasing in volume; this has great effect. Then afterwards while there are short phrases in the upper voices (beginning with the second example), the bass binds them together with

its long ascent of semitones and octaves. Again, after a swaying to and fro upon a single chord, there is a feeling of opening out into the fresh air when we draw to a close upon a new and a major key. Another scale, this time a descending one, has great effect. The passage begins with a return to the first idea and key after modulation, and gradually drawing in new phrases in descending scales, the voices are built one upon another by degrees till they come to a close in the main key.

*Mozart's  
new phrase  
decorating  
the old.* Another practice of Mozart's may be noted here, which is an advance in the growth of the modern style out of the old. Old writers of the contrapuntal school were wont to take a fragment of one of their principal subjects and weave together manifold repetitions of it in divers positions and intervals. Thus they would make a new passage of music out of fragments that had been sounded before in the composition. Another habit of the old writers was to add new melodies to a given and repeated subject, and thus complete what was unfinished. Mozart, by an extra grace, gives a fragment of new melody here and there, to be thrown over the already completed music, by some otherwise silent instrument. It lies like a little veil of mist, to entrap us to look a little further: we need not hear it unless we choose, but there it is. This is a growth

from the old love of counterpoint, and was perhaps the result of Mozart's greater feeling for the different qualities, or colours, so to speak, of the instruments. For oftentimes this added fragment of melody would scarcely be heard if it were not for the new quality of the instrument which plays it, and by this new quality reveals it from out of the previous course of the orchestra.

In the matter of rhythm, we find more *Variety in*  
 variety in Mozart's way of carrying it *rhythm.*  
 out. If Handel or Bach begin a movement with a bar of peculiar accent, that accent remains through many succeeding bars. Such is the case in the beautiful chorus, "Surely He hath borne our griefs," in the *Messiah*, wherein the peculiar accent is only broken for a few bars in the middle of the chorus. Bach is even more persistent in his rhythm. But in the "Rex Tremendæ" in Mozart's *Requiem* a different treatment is found. There is a peculiar figure of dotted notes in the orchestral accompaniment, which ceases very soon in order to let the voices bring out their complete phrase; the peculiar figure begins anew when the voices are more broken. By this manner the accompaniment is made both a contrast and a support to the voices.

In phrase-rhythm, too, Mozart shows the happy union of popular and contrapuntal. The "Recordare" in the same *Requiem* mass is canonic.

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That is to say, the separate voices follow one another in exact scholastic imitation. But the natural artistic feeling of popular music is thrown over this scholarship by the regular rhythm into which the whole is guided, by the lapse into a harmonised tune at some points in the movement, and by the order into which the keys fall. In another part of the same quartet the rhythm follows the popular manner in another way; for while the voice parts are broken in themselves, the whole group of voices form into regular rhythm by their answering one another. The same thing happens in the *Benedictus*. Another example of the same is in the *Dies Irae*, and with it an effect of orchestration or contrast of tone.



Here it will be seen that the basses, voices and instruments, have a fragment of a phrase in unison, which is answered and completed by the three upper voices in harmony.

*Contrast of unison and harmony.* This example shows also a modern effect in the contrast between a fragment in unison and another in full harmonies; for though unison singing was common

enough in old music, as also was part-singing, yet the use of the two in alternation in the same movement to form variety, was rare. It is of great beauty both in choral and in instrumental work; and it is difficult to say which gives more effect,—the relief from full harmonies when the massive unison comes in, or the richness of the chords when they return after the coldness of unison.

It is after Mozart had completed the modern style in music, that we find the individuality of different composers and of different nationalities becomes more developed. One of the discords of the modern style is to be found in three different forms, and it has been the custom to name these three the German sixth, the French sixth and the Italian sixth. It was a whim with the present writer to impress these names on her mind by thought of how the different characters of the three schools of the Continent resembled the effect of the three chords. Here are the three as they are to be found in the key of C.

*Nations  
and  
individuals.*



The German, such was the fancy, was more abundant in its richness, but withal somewhat

ponderous and difficult of treatment, as any student will know who attempts the resolution of the discord of the German sixth. The French was more piquante and bright, while the Italian was clearer and less dissonant than the others. Such, we may say, are the three schools of Continental music. The German, with its abundant richness of harmony, its fulness of melodic combination, its elaboration of design and careful accuracy in details, is yet sometimes with an exaggeration of sentiment and of attention to those details, a tendency to lengthiness and a want of clearness in the treatment of the accent. The French school, bright and piquante, is at once delicate and showy, piercing in its discords (technically speaking), concise in design, clear in accent and neat in workmanship. The Italian, depending most on the richness in the course of the melodies and the beautiful way in which they suit the voices which are the chief means of showing those melodies, is simpler in the chords, less complicated in the combination of melodies and in the development of the designs. May we add a chord as a type of our own English school, which we have already attempted to describe? Is it not like the daylight grandeur of a pure major common chord, such as we hear resounding through the long aisles of a cathedral after the last *Amen* has been sung?

Different composers show their individuality in ways that defy analysis,—ways that certainly defy pointing out by musical means. We may be sure of one thing, namely, that the more their musical character follows the general lines of their own nation's character, the more clearly does their particular bent show itself. If, on the other hand, they tend by some artificial means to the character of another country, their own individuality becomes blurred. There is, however, a tendency to subdivision in both the German and English schools, and the characteristics of particular countries show themselves in some composers.

It would take the genius of Mrs Barrett Browning to emulate her description of poets, yet a word or two may be of some help to single out the composers of different nations since Mozart.

First, after Mozart, in the German school, must be named Haydn, as *Composers of Germany.* expressed in his later works, for, as an old man, he had energy to follow the younger man's lead, as well as generosity to acknowledge his greatness. After him there is the great quartet, who were all working at the same time, though beginning in different years,—first Beethoven, then Spohr and Weber, and a little later Schubert. The first was imperial in his treatment of the art, yet full of tenderness and

full of sympathy with every human emotion. It must have been his special habit in composition which saved him from the national defects, for he would write down all his thoughts and afterwards cut out all that he considered needless. Weber, brilliant, melodious, strong in his harmonies and wonderfully effective in his design was yet sometimes weak in his musical effects. Spohr, whose music whether for instruments or for voices is full of melody and good design, is sometimes tempted to over-sweeten the course of harmony by his use of modern discords. Schubert, in the words of Professor Macfarren, "played at composition"; he poured out songs by the hundred, all beautiful, all poetic, expressive, original in form as well as in the course of the music, and never a note too long; yet his instrumental works, full of beauty as they are, are fatiguing to the listener by reason of their length and diffuseness. In the words of a musician "Schubert never knows when to stop." Curious it is to think that the composition which is entirely without this lengthy character is one which is familiarly known by the pathetic name of the "unfinished" symphony,—namely, the symphony in B minor. Two movements only of this symphony exist, each of them perfect in design and, like all his songs, never a note too long.

Next are Mendelssohn and Schumann,—friends



and contrasts. Mendelssohn, the brightest example of inborn genius after Mozart, the composer who expresses happiness in music more than any other ever did, while some critics affect to think his music too beautiful; and Schumann, whose deep earnestness almost weighs him to morbidity, while the grace and beauty of his music is sometimes disguised by the vagueness of his rhythm and accents. Gade, the Dane, follows, and has been accused of being too like Mendelssohn, but the touch of his own nationality shows itself and gives him a character all his own, like a cool breeze from the north on a warm day. In present times this northern nationality comes out in Grieg, whose beautiful music seems as if it were dominated by elves and goblins, snow, ice and fir trees, and is picturesque rather than expressive of emotion. The natural successor of Mendelssohn and Schumann is Brahms, whose music has all the deep earnestness of the purely German school, with little of its vagueness of rhythm. Close to him comes Raff, more southern in his temperament, with rich melodies and strong accents, but an occasional touch that is common. Rubinstein's Russian nationality distinguishes him but slightly, far less so than Glinka, who came before him, purely Russian, or Tchaikoffski, who came after him. Dvorák comes later again, whose Bohemian

vivacity and picturesque manner clothes the German earnestness of his writings.

Two names may not be left out of the roll of modern writers of the German school, though they form a school of their own—Wagner and his contemporary and imitator, Liszt. We spoke elsewhere of the musical design which is drawn by the relationship of keys and by the proportion between different keys, and compared this to the painter's treatment of colours and of lights and shades. Handel was like Rembrandt in his preference for the lower tones of colours, and the reserve with which he used his higher lights, for Handel uses much of the main key of each composition and seldom modulated to distant keys. Mozart was like, shall we say, Titian or Rubens, using more modulation yet still keeping a due balance between the keys—having a sufficiency of the main key to give solidity, massing the new keys and using the most remote relationships at rare points. If Liszt were a painter, his work would be characterised as "spotty." He has no large dark shadows to hold together his lighter colours, and his high lights are put on with the palette-knife. It is said that Turner did such a thing once in a picture, and only once; Liszt does it many times, and is, as one might say, always in another key.

Wagner is, so to speak, two men. His earlier style, which he gradually and intentionally gave up, had richness of harmony, much grandeur of effect and consistence of design in its key-treatment. In later works, when he had set before himself the principle that design or proportion in the verbal ideas would be better illustrated by the want of it in the music, the interest of his music, apart from the poetic or verbal intention, is to be traced moment by moment, without musical comparison with the past or coming moments. A gorgeousness of instrumentation oftentimes represents the musical interest, while a continual use of the *appoggiatura* monotonises the expression.

Many names fill the French school in the half-century after Mozart's time, *Of France.* and, though working in another country than his, they built upon the foundation laid by him. Grétry, who outlived Mozart about a decade, Méhul, Boieldieu, Halévy, Hérold, Onslow, and latest, Auber, all born in the eighteenth century, lived on into the nineteenth. It is much to be regretted that they are little more than names to us in England, with the exception of Auber, some of whose operas came over to us and have taught us the bright neatness of the pure French style.

Paris has been said to have acted as a magnet to the foreign artist, and many of the works for

French use were the production of foreigners wholly or partly resident in Paris. Though they must not be confused with writers of the wholly French idiom, they have been more or less touched by its influence. Cherubini the Italian was one of those resident and working in France; he produced many works in the first half of the nineteenth century. He was rather of the old Italian contrapuntal school, but with a slight touch of German richness and some of the French brightness. A little later comes Chopin, the Pole, who seems on the other hand to belong to a school peculiarly his own. There is a delicacy about his work that makes us feel the French handling, but his waywardness has drawn from one of his critics the title "Master of ugliness," while his expression is so deeply plaintive as almost to give pain. Meyerbeer, the German, is a contrast to both the foregoing; his music is gorgeous almost to garishness, yet full of passion. Stephen Heller follows, with yet another nationality to be caught up by the French style. A Hungarian, his music is charming, with a roundness in the turn of his phrases that brings out in a peculiar manner the tone of the pianoforte, for which instrument most of his music has been written.

To return to Frenchmen, Berlioz, born in the year of Grétry's death (1803), and dying the same

year as the veteran Auber (1869), is of a greater individuality than any writer since Mozart. His music ranges from perfect simplicity to the greatest complication of melody, harmony and instrumentation; and may be said, without sarcasm, to range also from the greatest beauty to the greatest ugliness. Yet with all this he has not found it necessary to abandon that balance and relationship of keys which is the very backbone of classical music. The luxurious music of Gounod is known all over England; Bizet too, the very essence of piquancy, is well known among us. Less known to us, Ambroise Thomas, Massenet and Saint-Saëns all show the French characteristics of style—grace, delicacy, clearness of design and conciseness. Lefévre-Wély and Guilmant carry out the French idiom in the organ works we so often hear in our churches, while the theatre-loving public were, till Sullivan elevated the taste, familiar enough with the pretty trivialities of Offenbach, the German settled in Paris, and Lecocq, his French successor.

*Of Italy.* In Italy, after Mozart, the representative name is Rossini. The solo singer had been the master of the music in Italy for many years, and even now he is the chief means of giving forth the artist's ideas; for music in Italy, whether in the streets or under roofs, is the opera, and the

opera must be sung. It was Rossini who asserted the composer's right to be his own master of the music, by writing florid songs that had no room for the decorations which the singers habitually put upon other folks' melodies. Besides this, there is much interest in the construction of his music, and his less florid melodies are full of expression. After him come the two who have been termed "the languishing Bellini and the spirited Donizetti," and later again is Verdi, one of the strongest writers of his age. Later than he are Ponchielli, Boito and Mascagni, who more or less look round towards the Wagnerian model, yet with much regard to consistency of key, and to the melodious traditions of their country. Sgambati's instrumental works are earnest of purpose, yet fall near to triviality occasionally.

*Of England.* It was Attwood, the pupil of Mozart, who is said to have first imbued English church music with the spirit of modern style, a spirit caught up by his contemporary, Samuel Wesley, and followed in the next generation by Samuel Sebastian Wesley and Henry Smart. Yet it was still the English style, and this fact was emphasised by Goss, who somewhat reverted to the old diatonic harmonies, and thus gave strength to the style. The lighter moods of English music were given to the operatic writers—Bishop, John

Barnett, Loder, Balfe and Wallace, the Irish nationality of the latter two men giving a greater sweetness to their strains. Sterndale Bennett follows, excelling in every branch of music except the dramatic, with a freshness, or rather frankness, quite his own, although it has been mistaken for a copy of Mendelssohn.

Perhaps the peculiarities of the English style reached their highest in Macfarren and Sullivan. They say that to be great, a man must excel in all branches of his art. Certainly it would be difficult to point out any kind of music in which these two men have not excelled—oratorio, opera, light and grand, or purely instrumental, or lyrical. Macfarren's style, apart from the general English character of it, was most contradictory, and changed according to the mood of the moment. Thus his music was at times rugged and forcible, at others it was almost innocent in its simplicity and grace. At times he looked back to the old English anthems and popular ditties, at others he looked forward beyond the writers of his time. Thus he earned for himself, from minds of weaker build, the opposite epithets of *old-fashioned* and *over-radical*. Sullivan, by the deep hold his beautiful music has taken of the country, has done more than any to restore the English faith in their own musical powers, and thus has made it

possible for a younger generation to work out their own bent.

But it is hard to criticise our fathers and brothers in an art, even though our criticism be of the analytical and not of the fault-finding kind. Therefore, let us be content with naming the makers of our later style in music—Hubert Parry, Cellier and Cowen, essentially English; Mackenzie, freshened with the air of the Scotch moorlands; Stanford, toned with German severity, as Arthur Goring Thomas was with French piquancy.

In a book written by a woman we may not omit the part which women have of late played in the orchestra of our musical world. Abroad, Mdlle Holmés, Mdlle Chaminade and others, and in England Virginia Gabriel, Alice Mary Smith, Maude Valérie White, Rosalind Ellicott, E. F. Smyth—and, may we add, the present writer?—have, among others, done work which has its share of influence in the making of what is now the modern musical style.



## CHAPTER III

### THE RISE OF OPERA

“*Acting in Song*, especially in *Dialogues*, hath an extream good Grace.”

BACON, *Essay Of Masks and Triumphs*.

JUST three hundred years ago a few amateurs of music invented opera.

When writing about musical style, it was noticed that amateurs were often sad bunglers, though they might be first-rate beginners. It was genuine amateur work of the best kind that began opera, since grown to such an important part in the musical life of the world, and yet the workers did not do what they had intended.

A very little imagination will put the whole process before us. It was in Flor- *In Florence.*  
ence, in the last decade of the sixteenth century, when madrigals in Italy, as well as in England, were just attaining to the height of their beauty—when Orlando di Lasso, Palestrina and Luca Marenzio were but lately dead; when men like Byrd, Morley, Weelkes and Wilbye in England, and the brothers Nanini, Anerio, G. Gabrielli and

Croce in Italy were pouring out melodies and combined melodies that we look back to nowadays as models of the greatest lyrical beauty.

We can picture to ourselves the little company of friends coming together. One of them would complain of the "vapouring about" of the madrigal singers and the anthem singers. Perhaps another would cry that it was nonsense to sing a long phrase of music to the words *Fa, la, la, la, la*; or another, that the popular tunes which were even invading scholarship were all very well for country clowns to sing, or perhaps for the weaker sex to amuse themselves with, but for strong, learned men with artistic tastes something better was wanted. Other arts, they would say, had been reviving all round them—architecture, sculpture, as well as literature, had been reinstated according to the Greek model. Something surely must be done for poor music, to restore it to the high standard which doubtless it had attained to in the Greek classical ages. Therefore, they cast about among their learning to find out what Greek music was.

For, though it was a noble thought and had noble results, there was just that amount of the "amateur bungling" about it which was contained in these two facts: that while they were tiring of the beauties which they possessed, and spurning them on account of the faults which had crept in,

they were trying to make use of a music which they only knew by description. In other arts a Greek statue or a temple is an example which can be seen, and we can form from it our idea of the principles which guided its construction ; thus we can work again upon those principles and make something similar, even if it be not so good. They say that "one example is worth fifty precepts" ; but with the art of Greek music the Florentine amateurs had, as it were, the fifty precepts but not the one example. Therefore, when they followed the "fifty precepts" of the Greek writers, they did not realise that, after all, they were making their own music, not that of the Greeks. They grafted Greek ideas upon the native stock of Italian music. They did not reinstate Greek music, but invented, or discovered, a new thing, thereby doing a greater wonder than they had any idea of.

We are told that Greek drama grew out of the Bacchante songs which were performed by a chorus with their leader. At first they sang the story of these songs, but afterwards actors were employed to act the story, while the chorus remained to explain it to the audience and to make meditations upon it, which should be what the audience might be supposed to think. It was clear that these actors sang their words ; enough was said in the Greek writings about

*Origin of  
Greek drama.*

“resonant tones,” “measured rhythmical cadence,” and such-like to show that. The accent of the Greek poetry was known too, and also that the actors regulated their voices in accordance with the poetical accents, as well as with the emotional course of the words; they were “wailing” or “lively.” But of the actual pitch, or the intervals of the notes they sang, the Florentines had no record. They knew not whether the singers went up or down, whether they sang C, E, G, or B, C, A. The Greeks said themselves that the record of a sound is as fleeting as to write in water.

This was all the knowledge that the Florentines had to go upon in their reviving of Greek drama. They knew about the action, rhythm and elocutionary expression, but not of the musical sounds.

By using their own notes, intervals and scales exactly in agreement with the accents of the words they were to set, they formed music of the same kind that we know now as *recitative*. If we look at a good piece of recitative with its words in the original language, we shall see that emphatic syllables have notes belonging to the stronger accented parts of the bar, while weaker syllables have weaker accents; and in every possible way, by rising or falling, by long notes or shorter, by high notes or low, the accentuation or grammatic

meaning of the words and the "passing expression of the moment" is strengthened by the music. This is the simple, original meaning of *recitative*. It was to *recite* their poems or their words with musical inflexions and musical accents, but without any balanced, rhythmic phrases, or tunes as we call them, however fragmentary. They gave it the names of *recitativo*, *stilo rappresentativo*, and *musica parlante*, or speaking music.

*Dafne* was the first complete musical drama of this kind, and it was the work of two singers, Caccini and Peri.

*The first opera.*

A slender accompaniment was all that these singer-composers used ; but when Monteverde, a composer of the first rank, wrote a few years later he used a thickly harmonised accompaniment with a large orchestra of the instruments of the time. He also varied both the instruments and the figure of the accompaniment so as to heighten the effect of the situations and characters. In this, as well as in the use of an occasional rhythmical chorus or dance, Monteverde followed, as far as he could, the principle that the drama with its words is the foundation upon which the whole design of the music should be built. He, like the singers Caccini and Peri, and like the Florentine amateurs who suggested their work, felt that the drama is the

skeleton which should give strength and beauty of form to the living work. A few years later, strains of melody of the nature of tunes were put into the mouths of the characters to vary the dryness of continual recitative. Some people said this was incorrect, because they thought the Greeks used not to do it. However, the more popular taste approved, the innate love of melodious music over-riding the artificial imitation of the Greek custom. After all, they could not be quite sure of what the Greeks really did in that matter. For there is a Greek writer who says, "Such songs which do not stand between the pauses or stops of the action, but enter into the action itself (inasmuch as they determine the will of the actors) may belong to the persons of the drama, or to the chorus, or to both." So, whatever the Renaissance people thought, they might have been wrong, and that something more definitely melodious than simple recitative might have been deemed good for the characters even in Greek days.

*Scarlatti's changes.* Nearly ninety years after the little band of amateurs had met, the elder Scarlatti came forward with many developments in the form of the operas. Still keeping to the ideal of the drama as of paramount importance, he made three distinct advances on the old

course. The overture in his hands became a more important thing than in the earlier Italian works; and to this day overtures are sometimes written in the form which is known as the Scarlatti or Italian form of overture or *sinfonia*. We shall have to say more on this subject by-and-by.

The greatest improvement which Scarlatti carried out was in making more variety in the recitative. There must have been a certain dulness about the continual declamatory recitation in musical tones, with its ceaseless accompaniment, even if it were momentarily expressive of the situation. Scarlatti made a distinction between the more and the less lyrical parts of the drama—setting the less poetical, or more conversational, parts to *recitativo secco*, that is, dry or speaking recitative. To this he gave a lighter accompaniment than that of Monteverde and his followers; he thought little more was necessary than a chord or two here and there to rest and to push on the voice, and that only with a couple of stringed instruments. Then the voices could “patter” on as they thought best, free as to time though the accents of bars were retained. The more poetical parts of the dialogue he gave to what became called accompanied recitative. This kind depended also on the accent of the words, but there were phrases *in time* for the

orchestra between the *senza tempo* phrases of the voice part; and these at once separated and joined those vocal phrases, while they heightened the effect of the expression. Occasionally, too, there was a *cantabile* phrase for the voice, which, being marked *in tempo*, was to be sung in strict time, and could therefore have the band playing at the same moment.

The third improvement of Scarlatti is the *aria*. It seems undeniable that all words are not equally poetical, nor equally fit to be set to music; and that some among those fit may be suitable for short musical phrases, while others may contain ideas that a composer would wish to dwell on. Looking at it from a dramatic point, there are some words which a character may pore over,— words which may deeply and lastingly affect him. In every play life has to be lived very quickly; actions take place, and influences are brought to bear in the space of an hour or two which would take months to work out in actual life. This is the necessary concentration of art. But however quickly the life is rushed through, there must be moments of repose. Travellers have told us that the most beautiful parts of the brilliant starry heavens in the southern hemisphere are the spaces of sky *without stars*. Similarly the most beautiful part of a life of action is sometimes the quiet time



when the activity is held in check for a moment, waiting for the renewal of action. So also in the drama, the perfection of contrast and variety requires that there should be periods now and then when action is held in abeyance while thought or meditation takes possession of the ear of the audience. These moments of thought can be taken hold of by the composer, and woven into a complete song,—a song which, as we quoted just now from the Greeks, “stands between the pauses or stops of the action.” These songs were the invention of Scarlatti.

But however beautiful the idea may have been in its origin, these songs became the beginning of the decadence of opera. Not only did Scarlatti allow his beautiful airs to run to wearisome length, especially by the exact repetition of the first part, which was the absolute course of his airs, but the invention tempted other composers to go further in the direction of formality. They forgot the old principles of the Florentine amateurs,—they forgot that the drama was first in importance as the backbone of the whole opera, and they made the singing of the airs the principal thing. In place of the dulness of perpetual recitative, they went to the opposite extreme; they made a long chain of airs, of fixed shapes and styles, connected by a few phrases of recitative, and prompted

by the wishes of the particular vocalists who were bound to perform them. This school of opera continued in Italy till the middle of the eighteenth century.

*Italian opera abroad.* The Italian opera of the Florentines travelled over Europe, and met with various treatment ; in France and England it found the world ready prepared for it, while in Germany it was many years before any kind of opera took permanent hold.

*French opera.* French historians say there were musical dramas in France from very early times. There were sacred dramas performed in the churches, of which parts were declaimed in oratorical style, the music probably being of the plain-song kind. Then the minstrels and *jongleurs* used a great deal of acting with their musical songs, and some of the troubadours acted dramas with little songs in them. Later there were many *ballets*, or grand spectacles with dances and music intermingled. Fifty years after Caccini and Peri, French operas were written in imitation of the Italian works, Cambert producing the first, and soon developed a character of their own. Lulli, the Court musician of his day,—a good long day, too,—put the Court *ballets* and gorgeous spectacles into opera, where they have remained ever since ; and he made the band parts fuller than they were

in the early imitations of the Florentine style. All this was before Scarlatti had come up in Italian opera, and his division of recitative into *speaking* and *accompanied* was never adopted in France. But in opera, as well as in the classical spoken drama of France, there has always been a traditional leaning towards the oratorical declamation of the old sacred drama. This was developed even in Lulli's hands to an interesting recitative for the whole of the dialogue, which was varied by *cantabile* and metrical phrases, and accompanied throughout with the band. These characteristics remain up to this day in the French *grand opera*.

Lulli, too, introduced the overture into French opera; indeed, he was the inventor of the elaborate triple form of it, which was afterwards adopted and altered by Scarlatti for the Italian opera of his time.

Some say that Rameau, the next great writer of French opera, introduced airs into that school. His first opera came out in France when Scarlatti was lately dead, and Scarlatti's followers were in the thick of their formal airs. Some breath of this melodious influence may have come over to the neighbouring country, but the excessive formalism never seems to have been adopted in France. The Italian works themselves of that kind were not brought into France until the

middle of the eighteenth century, when Rameau had nearly finished his course, and when a new influence from another quarter was about to appear in France.

*English  
opera in the  
Italian  
manner.* In England, three years before Cam-  
bert produced in Paris his imitation of  
the Florentines, there was an opera  
produced with music throughout. It  
was a curious incident in many ways. To begin  
with, it was the composition of five different men,  
each taking different sections of the play. Next,  
it was performed in a theatre licensed for that  
purpose by the Protector, Oliver Cromwell; and  
further, one of the characters was taken by Mrs  
Colman, who was thus the first woman who ever  
performed on the English stage. These latter  
facts are a strange commentary on the usual idea  
that we have nowadays of the feelings in those  
times.

This work was in imitation of the Florentine works, but, although this was the first long work of that kind, fragmentary work had been done before in England. For some years there had been music written "in the Italian manner" as they called it,—that is, it was written in recitative, with a slight accompaniment. For many years also there had been music sung and played in the dramas. Masques too were gorgeous spectacles

with music, dancing and singing. Bacon's account of what a masque should be, quaintly expresses the great prominence that should be given to music, even showing that there was musical speech after the fashion of recitative. For he says, "Acting in song, especially in Dialogue, hath an extreme good grace, . . . and the voices of the Dialogue should be strong and manly, and the ditty high and tragical, not nice and dainty. Several quires, placed one over against another and taking the voice (or part) by Catches, *anthem-wise*, give great pleasure." So Bacon knew the value of actors singing their speech, and about the good effect of a chorus on the stage, although he lived in the height of the madrigal age in England and fifty years before the first opera was done in England.

This Commonwealth opera in the Italian style was followed, after the Restoration, by one in the same style by Locke, and one by Purcell. Purcell's opera has speaking recitative and accompanied recitative, with solos, duets and chorus. When we think that this work was contemporary with Scarlatti's *first* opera, and that Purcell, in his imitation of the best principles of Italian music, was able to put forth the originality of his own English rhythmic ideas, we cannot help feeling how greatly English opera might have

developed if it had been allowed its course. But the leading poet and dramatist of the day, Dryden, put his foot on the new growth. The same stilted feeling that, in poetry, saddened the joy of the English nightingale, produced the dictum that music is unnatural on the stage for the words of any character but lunatics, spirits and witches. Unnatural? of course it is, to a certain extent ; but not more so than acting on the boards in any form. We might just as well refuse to allow acting as an art because we cannot make the daisies grow on the stage. Nevertheless, so it was decreed in those days ; and all Purcell's after works for the stage were but episodes in the dramas to which they belonged,—beautiful and dramatic in effect though they were, individually.

Queen Anne liked Purcell's music, but when the Georges came, English music fell into the background everywhere, save in the churches and cathedrals and in the glee-clubs. The Italian opera-house flourished, with Italian singers and with the compositions of Italians in the florid, formal style that had come to be practised in Italy from Scarlatti's time. When the giant Handel came over to us, he gave strength to the character even of such formalities. Arne, the Englishman, wrote a few operas in this style and gave a grace of his own to them.

To go back in time again, the Florentine opera went experimentally to Germany soon after its institution, and before it came to France and England ; but it was the end of the seventeenth century before the real German opera began, with Theile, Keiser and, soon, Handel as a young man with his first opera. These were of different kind to the Italian, and more must be said of them presently. But with the rise of this German school there came great interchange between that country and Italy in the matter of music. Germans went to study in Italy and produced works in the Italian style, while theatres for Italian operas were kept open in Germany, where works by Italians as well as by Germans were performed by Italian singers. Handel was one of those who went to Italy, making his mark there in the formal style, which he carried with him to London.

*Italian  
opera in  
Germany.*

About the time that Handel, almost an old man, had written his last opera, and was turning towards the new line of oratorio, another German, a young man who had been working, like Handel, at Italian opera at home as well as in Italy, was beginning a new course. This was Gluck. He had begun to realise the wearisome formalism of the operas of that day, and after years of effort and writing

*Gluck and  
operatic for-  
malism.*

in the style which he had learnt to hate, he found opportunities to produce works written on better principles. These were not done in Italy, but in Vienna and afterwards in Paris. Whether or not Gluck knew of the principles of the Florentine amateurs of 150 years before, he gave expression to the same, both by his words and by his works—that the drama is of first importance, and should be the foundation of all design in the music, and that the music, allied to the drama, should, by every possible means, add to the expression of the words.

The words that Gluck has written show that the formalism he objected to, had reached a point far beyond anything that we of these later generations can ever have experienced, notwithstanding all that has been written of the faults of modern opera. He shows that, by the extreme development of the song-forms begun by Scarlatti, opera had become the opportunity for the “airs and graces” of the singers rather than for the gracious airs of the music, and that poetic intention was far from the hearts of the composers.

*Gluck and poetical meaning.* By his principles Gluck gave a new colour to the very first bars of the opera, for he gave a poetical motive even to the overture. We know that the highest effect of music upon us, higher than the mere ear-tickling, and higher even than the



mere intellectual effect of a work of art, is that it touches our emotional nature. It makes us feel the particular emotion which belongs to the music. We feel happy or sorry, with all the many degrees or varieties of feeling that humanity is subject to. Gluck applied this to the overture as well as to the body of the opera. The aim of the overture must be, he said, to put the audience into the emotion which belongs to the play, so that when the play is set before them they may be ready prepared to sympathise with the play itself, as it is carried on with its music.

In that announcement Gluck strikes the keynote of the whole of poetical meaning in music. It is not, as some have tried to prove, that music is to draw a picture in our minds, or to suggest to us a ring or a sword, a bad man or a good woman, or even an army or a moonlight night ; though sometimes, if the music has been associated with those ideas in our memory, its repetition will bring the picture before our mind's eye. Music will not tell us a fact ; but music will produce a feeling in us. When we see the action, or hear the words that have roused an emotion in the composer's mind, and his music along with it, we also feel the emotion with it. The music plays upon our human sympathy, and we feel the nobleness of the good deed, or the horror of the bad deed, far more than we

should without the music. Music intensifies and points the feeling that may be hidden in the poetry. All this is found in the great principles which the Florentines only partially revived. Gluck carried it out far more deeply, for he used resources of music that were denied to the Florentines.

*Orfeo* was the first work that Gluck finished according to these principles. Now, many of those in England who heard this of late years noticed some quality in it which, for want of a better name, they called "old-world." This comes from no want of poetry or dramatic power in the principles of Gluck's art, but from deficiency in the material out of which he had to make his work. One thing that causes the old-world or old-fashioned qualities is the smallness of the orchestra in comparison with what we are accustomed to nowadays. Another cause is that Gluck was, as many wise men have said, "no contrapuntist." The meaning of that expression is that he did not use, or know how to use, the old-fashioned part-writing of the madrigals in which the different voices "fly" one after another in various imitative ways. Neither did he know the modern way of treating parts, which is a sort of combined counterpoint and harmony, for he lived before Mozart. Therefore he was reduced to treating his chorus in the only other way known at the time, namely,

like a hymn tune, with every part moving *note against note* of the other parts. Thus he could not get the full advantage he otherwise might from the choruses, grand though they are in many ways.

Those who have heard *Orfeo* must have felt how the music enhanced the poetic and dramatic ideas ; how the short prelude to the Furies' scene seemed, with its ever-changing keys, to give the feeling that the Furies were expecting something and watching against it, and how the music of their chorus and dance gave a fierceness to the weird figures which their motions could only show in part. Then when Orpheus entered, how there was a dignified pleading in the strains which he sang, that added to the pleading of his words, and how the flowing length of phrase in his part contrasted with the curtness of the repeated *No!* of the Furies. Another contrast, musical as well as poetical and scenic, was the sudden change from this scene to that of the Elysian Fields. The minuet tune (a lineal descendant of Lulli's French court *ballets*) in its serene beauty explains the sunny peacefulness of the woodland. Sweeter still is the even and long-drawn-out melody which enhances the placid demeanour of Eurydice and her companion spirits, and points the meaning of their words :—



Far more human in its interest and more dramatic (because more interesting) is Gluck's later work, *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Therein is some of the grandest of the recitative which he developed; it has, since his time, been considered a characteristic of the French grand opera. It is distinct in style from the Italian of Scarlatti's development, but is full of action.

*Gluck and French declamatory recitative.*

Towards the climax of the opera, after Iphigenia has made her long and agonised prayer to Diana that the goddess will stifle her pity for the unknown Greek, and put some ferocity in her, that she may do her sacred duty as sacrificial priestess, the attendant priestesses follow with a prayer to Diana, that the blood they are going to shed may propitiate her. They are tearful, for they, like their head priestess, are not sure of the justice of the sacrifice. Theirs is a hymn-like strain, while Iphigenia's impassioned appeal is a long movement. Many musical phrases are in her song, but all are bound together by the connection of the

keys, just as the verbal ideas are bound together by one train of idea.

But after this comes action and much change of thought, and it is therefore in recitative for a long time. Iphigenia sinks exhausted with the violence of her feelings. *La force m'abandonne! O moment douloureux!* Now Orestes is brought forward to be sacrificed. To him it is the happy end of all his sufferings of remorse; and when she hesitates to strike, he urges her. Iphigenia blames his eagerness to die, while Orestes declares it is his duty to die, and that she will be guilty of a crime if she does not kill him. She wonders at this. All this is not much more than conversation, and Gluck has treated it in a declamatory style. If we speak words, we find our voice rising and falling with the value and accent of the words, and ceasing for a longer or shorter time at the colons, full stops and commas. The musical sounds that are allied to this conversation do but increase the accents and the risings and fallings of the voice, while the light accompaniment pushes on and gives more accent. With every change of phrase comes a change of key, and with every full stop a musical cadence of some sort. All this declamation, therefore, is scarcely music; it is one part only of music. But when Orestes begins to say that Iphigenia's regrets are a comfort to him, for no one ever sorrowed for

him before, then a new treatment comes in. The thought is one that is full of emotion, and the emotion causes music to flow. The accents of the words, though still to be regarded, are no longer of the supreme importance. Another quality rises up ; it is the emotion which is to be interpreted by the music, and therefore Orestes' feeling pours out in a stream of melody. There is an accent belonging to the music now (as well as that of the words), and the orchestra strengthens both the emotion and the musical accent by its fulness. The strain is not long, but the fact of its being chiefly in one key strengthens the value of the idea.

Another cold, hymn-like strain from the priestesses brings back the thoughts of the audience to the dread sacrifice, and Iphigenia cries out in her horror. It is but a short phrase, with a chord or two from the orchestra to support it. The priestesses reply by urging her to the deed. Their phrase is *in tempo*, for it is only in timed music that a crowd of voices can sound without making a confused noise. Now, a long, lingering phrase from the orchestra tells the feeling of her actions, while Iphigenia hesitates in silence, but moving slowly towards the altar, and at last takes up the knife. Still hesitating, she cries that her blood freezes in her, and that her arm trembles. These words are with declamatory notes, the

orchestra shuddering beneath, while a few emphatic bass-notes urge on her accents. A word comes from the chorus, *in tempo*, and while her arm is uplifted, Orestes, calm and waiting for relief at the hands of this priestess whom he knows not, speaks of his sister Iphigenia, and how she had died thus in Aulis. His few notes are quiet, and the long-sustained notes of the orchestra confirm the calmness. His words open her eyes and explain her strange unwillingness to do the duty set before her. She knows now, as she did not before, that it is her own brother whom she was about to kill, and her fellow Greek women recognise him to be their king, Orestes, the son of Agamemnon. One needs to go back to Greek feelings a little, in order to sympathise perfectly with this situation. Common humanity and tender womanliness would be enough to account for all this emotion in our own days. But in those times it needed the blood-relationship to account for the sentiment of tenderness and the desire to save life.

ORESTES. Ain-si tu pé ris en Au - li - de

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line. It consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The lower staff is a bass clef with a whole note G2, a half note A2, a half note B2, a half note C3, a half note D3, a half note E3, a half note F3, a half note G3, a half note A3, and a half note B3. The lyrics 'ORESTES. Ain-si tu pé ris en Au - li - de' are written below the staves, with the notes aligned under the corresponding syllables.

IPHIGENIE. Mon frè - re O - res - te

I - phi-ge-nie, ô ma sœur. CHORUS. O -

re - ste no-tre Roi !

Thus it goes on throughout the opera. The most emotional parts, wherein the characters dwell on their feelings for some considerable time, are in *cantabile* with every musical device and quality that is possible, to point and increase the effect of the emotion. Those parts, on the other hand, that are less emotional or are only required to tell the story, are declamatory and in recitative ; these have more or less of accompaniment, and some distinct phrases for the orchestra, especially at points where there is action without words, and where there is a fragment of emotion to be shown. These are the



main principles which have been kept up ever since in French grand opera, though some variations, for better or for worse, have been made by the differences of individual composers.

Gluck's improvements did not find their way into Italy in his days, nor for many years afterwards. But a great deal of change was carried out in Italian works by popular influence, and by the genius of different composers. In Florentine times, as among some modern imitators, it had been decreed that opera must copy Greek models, and that therefore it must have mythological subjects, and must be tragic. Whether any of these three propositions are true may be matter of doubt, nevertheless that was the opinion in the early days of opera. But historians have noticed that when opera began to be popular, and was played in public theatres instead of in the rich men's houses, the subjects began to be a little more human, for Greek mythology was not interesting to the Italian populace. Gradually homely stories were brought into opera, first as short interludes between the acts of the mythological operas and afterwards as complete operas. Instead of the troubles of Helen and Paris, or Orpheus and Eurydice, the ordinary audience delighted in stories of the everyday vexations and joys of their

*Improvements in Italian operas.*

*Comedy comes into opera.*

own time. To this feeling we owe the Italian *opera buffa*. Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*, the servant turned mistress, was one of the earliest of these works; it became popular all over Europe, and was followed by many others. Among the greatest were Mozart's *Così Fan Tutti* and *Figaro*; Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto*; Paisiello's *Barbiere*; and later, Rossini's setting of the same play. All these had a great deal of *recitativo secco* in them. Although this kind of recitative dated from the Scarlatti time, its use in comic opera must have made it lighter in style. The Naples school of *opera buffa* used actual speech in the, so to speak, prosaic parts of the dialogue, or for the most comic situations. This habit must have affected the comic opera in other Italian towns; for it used to be related by the English musician, Charles Lucas, that, when he had to accompany (on the pianoforte) the *recitativo secco* of Rossini's *Barbiere*, the Italian company, who were doing it in London, sang never a note of the written recitative. It seemed to be the custom that they sang *what they liked* in this part of the recitative provided only that they kept to the right accents; and the pianist had to play in the rests whatever he could invent to correspond in harmony with their impromptu notes. It was no more than speech, or rather chattering, in musical sounds;

and it made no great difference whether they sang their own or the composer's notes.

For the whole of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth the action or dialogue of Italian opera was chiefly in this speaking recitative, both in *opera seria* and *buffa*; while the more emotional parts of dialogue which caused the meditations, or airs, were in accompanied recitative. The latter recitative was very similar to that of the French grand opera, such as that we have described from *Iphigenia*.

Early in the eighteenth century, the airs began to be improved from the form in which Scarlatti left them. Jomelli cut the constant repetition of the first part, and, in place of being entirely meditative, they began gradually to enter into the action. It was in the making of *finales* that this first came about.

*Airs with  
action, and  
connected  
together.*

*Finales* distinctly began in the *opera buffa* and afterwards came into the *opera seria*. It took nearly the whole of the century to develop the form, from its beginning by Logroscino in Naples through its development by Piccini in Paris, its introduction into serious opera by Paisiello in Italy, to its perfection by Mozart. Mozart was one of those Germans who, like Handel and Gluck,

studied with Italian works, and carried out their own ideas for all countries.

The ordinary listener will go to an opera, will hear and be interested in the play, or the music, or both, while the art with which the work has been constructed will be hidden from him. It is in the opera *finale* that the distinction between the art that is in the drama with music and that of the drama without, is most evident; because it is in the drama with music that is found the great opportunity for gradual increase of effect by gradually increasing the volume or importance of sound. However much the writer of spoken drama may increase the interest up to different points in the play, and crowd his personages on to the stage to help in the course of excitement towards the end of an act, he cannot make more than one person speak at the same time, for fear of confusion—save only in a shout from a crowd. But two people can combine in singing and cause no confusion. Three, four, nay a whole crowd, can equally well join in music, if only their separate parts are so formed as to be capable of combining in harmony. We can, therefore, realise the immense power of accumulating up to a climax that is in the hands of a musical composer, if his story should be constructed so as to admit of it.

About the middle of Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*, when the interest of the play has been increased by trios, duets, solos of various kinds and pages of *recitativo secco* interspersed between them, at once linking them and making variety, there begins one of these chains of movements. There is both action and feeling in the words throughout the chain. It begins when the Count, as jealous as he is careless, is giving vent to his anger and trying to break open the door of his wife's room, where he believes Cherubino to be hidden; while the Countess, conscious of her own innocence, yet fearing his anger, is pleading with him. There has been *recitativo secco* before, but these ideas bring in a movement in form. The phrases are long and rhythmic, though broken in one place by a fragment of recitative. There is little change of key in the opening movement. Twice a new key enters, with a change of verbal idea, but with a return of the Count's jealous thought the main key returns. The door opens, Susanna appears within, but alone. Her entry brings a new idea and opportunity for a new movement in a related key. She ridicules the Count's drawn sword: the Countess is puzzled, the Count baffled at the situation; thus, being partly alike in their feelings, the music which interprets them can be combined,

*Finale in  
Nozze di  
Figaro.*

and it is a short trio in rhythmic form. The Count going into the room, and seeing that the page boy is not there, has a sort of revulsion of feeling, which wakens the latent affection he has for his wife, and he entreats her pardon. This new idea and the way it is received by the Countess and Susanna is the poetical subject of another movement. There are many sub-divisions in the main verbal idea, which are partly action and partly thought, and all bring out different little musical ideas, while they are welded together by the connection of key. Thus, while the Count is looking about the room, there are declamatory phrases from the two ladies; while the orchestra carries on two busy phrases, (a) and (b) in the next example. These phrases are constantly recurring, with all manner of changes of their course and of key, throughout the movement, and give a sense of motion to the whole scene.

*Allegro.*

*p*

(a)

(b)

etc.

The image shows two musical staves, (a) and (b), in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Staff (a) begins with a dynamic marking of *p* and is marked *Allegro.* It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with chords. Staff (b) features a similar melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with chords. Both staves end with the word "etc." indicating that the phrases continue.

When the Count comes back out of the room, and has given vent to his astonishment at not finding Cherubino, he breaks out with a pleading for forgiveness. Here, then, is a new key, and a clear musical phrase in the voice as well as in the band.



The bantering reply of the two ladies that he deserves no pity is the rhythmic answer to his musical phrase. The orchestra goes on with one of its phrases, while question and answer are in the voices. Then the Countess returns with the music of the Count's entreaty, but her words are a reminder of the ugly epithets he had applied to her a few minutes before. He entreats again with the same phrase but in a new key, and is answered with a new musical idea, in which voice and band take part, and a new turn is given to the bantering words.



The Count entreats again with the same phrase in a new key, and has the same answer returned to him in his own key. But Susanna now joins his entreaties, and their fragmentary words are linked together by the undercurrent of the orchestra's phrase (p. 130 *b*). Now the Countess complains how he has neglected her, and this emotion comes forth in a long musical phrase, somewhat like that of the Count, and, like his, accompanied with the orchestral phrase (p. 130 *b*). It is in a different key from that of the two who sang last, and presently they two join with her in music which grows out of her phrase and the orchestral phrase. The close of this forms a kind of half-way rest for the movement. Then a recurrence of the Count's doubts makes a slight break in the constant flow of the rhythm. He questions again on the subject of the page-boy, and about that ever-recurring source of stage woes, a letter which he has found, and, as is usual on the stage, cannot quite decipher, for they are such bad readers on the stage. The ladies, according to a time-honoured practice in comedies, prevaricate, and so lay the seeds of future complications. "Figaro wrote the letter, of course," and they return to their old expression, "You merit no forgiveness if you will not forgive," and so on. Very naturally, therefore, some of the old musical phrases come again, though in a new



key. The Count, too, will be satisfied if only his wife will love him again ; and one of her musical phrases therefore comes also naturally into his mouth. Still with the busy undercurrent of the band and with the Countess's expression of pleasure at this turn, we get back to the main key of the movement. When in this key, Susanna has another mocking word, with one of her old phrases ; the Count makes more ado, while the Countess still feels suspicion of his truth ; but they are fain to join in a sort of doubtful joy at the apparent settlement of affairs. Here, then, is the full close of the movement in its main key, with an ampler use of the same music which brought in the half-way rest.

Figaro's entry, with talk of his wedding, changes the movement ; new ideas come in and with them a new connected key. A change of manner, though with the same *tempo*, is brought in with the Count's resolve to question him. The production of the letter is the beginning of the Count's questioning and changes the movement again with a new related key. It is a busy little movement, Figaro refusing to own the inconvenient letter, while the ladies try to torment him into doing so. Immediately enters Antonio the gardener with a fresh complication involving another change of movement and key. Antonio has a damaged pot of

flowers to show and a long story to tell, how he saw a man jump out of the window and run off. Here is plenty of animation ; the gardener prosing on, interrupted with questions from the Count and interjections from the others,—the two ladies appealing to Figaro's ingenuity to make excuses, which he does freely. With the changes of idea there is much change of key, but the beginning and ending are in the same. It is rapid declamation with a good deal of pattering effect in the accompaniment. There is a pretty phrase brought in occasionally at the covert allusions to Cherubino, and there is much interesting contrast of the voices as they sometimes answer one another singly, and sometimes join, two, three or more.

Yet another complication brings change of movement and key. The gardener having gone away, the Count acknowledges himself still puzzled, and the others are vexed though not hopeless. All this is more of a sentiment than the foregoing, therefore it brings more flowing music. But the entry of Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo with more evil tales and fault-finding, brings in another movement and key, which with gradually increasing time brings the act to its end. The contrast between the two sets, Susanna, the Countess and Figaro on the one hand, and the three new-comers with the Count on the other, is kept up to the end.

The musical phrases of each set are different and answer one another at closer and yet closer intervals till they all sing together at the climax. Even when going on at the same moment there is distinction between the phrases belonging to each set. There is very little modulation in the whole of this final movement of the chain; and the long lasting of the one key adds to the sensation that it is a closing movement. Continually there are fresh ideas brought in with the different aspects of the complications. The rapid succession of these fresh ideas, the many accessions of time, and the ever-increasing apposition of the phrases make a constant building-up of the excitement in the music which fits with and adds to the ever-increasing excitement in the verbal ideas up to the end of the act,—the dramatic climax of the first half of the story. This is the end of the first *finale*.

A comedy is not always comic, though there are generally some comic parts in it, and a happy ending.

*Opera  
comedy in  
France.*

Similarly, an *opera buffa* is not always comic; it is, in fact, a comedy, with all the characteristics that a comedy should have, and all possible assistance from music.

One characteristic of the Italian *opera buffa*, or musical comedy, has similar developments in the opera of other countries, namely, the light, speech-

like dialogue. In other countries than Italy, it is even lighter than *recitativo secco*, for it is actual speech. For instance, in the French *opéra comique*, which began long before Gluck and developed greatly after his time, the most prosaic or conversational parts of the dialogue are spoken, while more emotional parts, whether action or meditation, are set in accompanied recitative with airs and concerted pieces ; the *finale* having music throughout, which works up through conversation, story and utterances of feeling towards the climax.

*In England.* In England this kind had its initial beginning with Bishop, who improved the usual ballad-opera of his time by setting some of his dialogue as concerted pieces, thus giving musical character to what had hitherto been entirely spoken. The form was much developed afterwards, and was carried to its perfection in the fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth century by John Barnett, Wallace, Balfe and Macfarren. Many of the operas of these composers had, like those of the French *opéra comique*, some spoken dialogue, while the most interesting parts were set with music, in accompanied recitative, airs, concerted pieces and *finales*.

*And in Germany.* In Germany much beautiful work of this kind has been done. Beginning

with the days of Theile, Keiser and Handel's youth, a long line of German opera or *Singspiel*, as they called it, gradually developed into the same form as the French *opéra comique*. Spoken words were in the least interesting parts; and where emotion was present, there came accompanied recitative, *cantabile* airs, duets, trios, etc., and choruses—singly or in chains like the Mozart *finale* just now described.

It is hard to say whether Beethoven's *Fidelio* or Weber's *Der Freyschütz* be the finer example of this kind. In England we have generally heard these two works with a light recitative for those parts which the German composers intended to be spoken. This was from the Italian habit for the same kind of passage, and was the result of their being performed by an Italian company at an Italian opera-house.

In both these works the music agrees with the situation in a marvellous way. In *Fidelio*, for instance, the simplicity of the music belonging to the chatter of the two young folk over their work, the ballad of the girl and the early quartet in canon, agrees with the simple emotions that are in the hearts of the four characters. As the plot gathers in intensity, the musical material gathers force also, while the words allied with the music are less and less concerned with meditation, more

and more part of the action of the story. There is the duet between the governor and the jailer, full of argument, persuasion and objection, wherein the music is full of change of key and of idea, just hung together in form by the beginning and ending in the same key. There is the soliloquy following when Leonora, her heart wrung with anxiety and fear for the terrible threats she has just heard against her husband's life, pours out her feelings in accompanied recitative of declamatory and *cantabile* phrases, varying with every shade of the emotion which is running through her, and then yields to prayer and hopefulness—two emotions which bear her onward, the music interpreting her feelings as the words leave her lips. The *finale* of this act, too, piles on musical effects and interest with the growing eagerness and anxiety of Leonora in her search for Florestan. All of these songs are truly of the kind allowed by the old Greek writer quoted before, "songs which do not stand between the pauses or stops of the action, but enter into the action itself."

The beginning of the second act is a sort of rest in the excitement, for the story begins anew from another point of view—the gloom of the prison and the misery of the prisoner. The music then is simpler in form, though strongly emotional. Accompanied recitative, with all the intensity of

feeling that can be given to it by expressive phrases and declamation in the voice part, and by strong or delicate orchestral effects and expressive passages of all kinds in the accompaniment both with and beside the vocal phrases—this all gives vent to the changeful ideas of the words that Florestan utters in his loneliness. He, too, has a long air in his soliloquy, natural enough under the circumstances, for he has nothing to cheer him but memory, and it is natural he should dream of his loved wife, and almost believe he sees her there, releasing him. An indwelling emotion it is, that pours out in long phrases, with a long, lasting key. Nothing in music gives such a sensation of fixedness, of dwelling or remaining thoughts as a long course in one key. Many would put this aside as a mere technicality; yet, in a place like this, it has its emotional effect very strongly, even upon those who may be ignorant of its existence. It *sounds*, whether we realise it or not.

The quartet in the prison is at once the most emotional and full of action of all the movements of the opera, and it is the one in which Beethoven has most shown the power of key-form in seconding the emotional meaning of the words. The movement is a most perfect sonata. Every verbal idea and every little action, with its own musical idea and key, takes a place in the musical form

relative to its own value as an idea, and thus has its emotional meaning enhanced by its place relative to other ideas. It is not merely by an excited *manner* of music that excitement of expression can be kept up. Motion or change of key is a fertile source of excitement. In this movement, the primary verbal idea of the attempted murder holds the whole scene together as a group of ideas, and not a heterogeneous heap. Therefore, too, the keys are made to succeed one another, to last, and to be related in such a way as to connect them in one as a group of connected keys. Interest is worked up by this means, along with the growing excitement of the scene, till it culminates with the sound of the royal emissary's trumpet outside. This is a signal for cessation of anxiety and of wrong-doing, a signal for peace, and for rest and quietness in the music. Therefore, there is no more modulation; the music returns home to its main key, and remains there for the whole of the long coda of the movement.<sup>1</sup>

*Weber's  
opera over-  
ture.*

Weber applied to the overture this perfection of key-form in expressing the emotions belonging to verbal ideas. The plan of his overture to *Der Freyschiütz*, for instance, was a development of that of Gluck's

<sup>1</sup> A fuller analysis of the movements in *Fidelio* will be found in the present author's *Form or Design in Vocal Music*.



overture. To prepare the audience and set them in the right emotional key, so to speak, that they might the readier enter into the feelings that the composer wished them to have when the drama was put before them—this was his motive. Therefore he set before them subjects from the opera in their due relative position, that they might suggest corresponding emotions, also in due relative proportion. Weber, too, made more variety of movement in the soliloquies that he had in his dramas. Expressive as the arias of the best composers were, and far more elastic in nature than the fixed forms of Scarlatti and his successors, their form was still not adapted for every poem. Weber broke the usual succession of movements in his arias, and made an alternation of movement and recitative that varied according to the form of the succession of ideas in each individual soliloquy. In this way he brought them to be very like the cantatas of Purcell.

It was Rossini who first, in Italy, revived Monteverde's habit of accompanying with the full band all through the opera. He gave up the use of the harpsichord or pianoforte which had been before with the *recitativo secco* for a distinct part of the dialogue. This was in his opera *Otello* in the early part of the nineteenth century. The form of opera, therefore, became in Italy nearly the same as the

*French grand opera went to Italy.*

grand opera in France, though without the ballet, which has always belonged to the French grand opera.

*And to Germany and England.*

Soon after Rossini's *Otello*, the continuous music, with band accompaniment, went into German opera with Spohr's *Jessonda*, and a few years later into English opera, with John Barnett's *Fair Rosamond*.

*Opera follows two types.*

Two types of operas, therefore, have gone about into all parts of the musical world. There was the French grand opera style (but without the ballet when written out of France), a development of the ideal left by Gluck, with every addition of musical material that the genius or invention of successive composers could put into it; and there was the Italian *opera buffa*, lightened in some countries and made more dignified in others, but, in all, keeping the conversational character of a great part of the dialogue. It is in the hands of the composer and of the librettist to make these opera forms dramatic or the reverse, interesting or uninteresting. Some operas will interest some hearers, while others will interest other hearers, according to their tastes; but if an opera interest no one, we may call it uninteresting and therefore undramatic.

Many operas of various kinds have been pro-

duced in all countries since the days of Rossini's *Otello* which have all the necessary parts to make them interesting on the stage: Pacini's *Saffo*, for instance, and Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, in the pure Italian school, Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* in the French, *Der Freyschiütz* for the German; and for the English, among others, Macfarren's *She stoops to Conquer*, Sullivan's *Ivanhoe*, and the delicate works of Goring Thomas. But many have also been produced in all the nineteenth century, especially in the Italian and German schools, which have little to interest an audience in the story which is presented before them. A certain beauty in the music no doubt there was,—but music will not make a story, much as it will do to enhance and show up the beauty of one. Musicians cannot but be grateful to Wagner for his many writings in reminder of the great operatic principle that the story is the chief part or foundation of a drama, whether with music or without.

Given a good story,—that is, a story which can be presented clearly by stage means,—and it is the musician's business to strengthen the impression upon the audience by every method that is in his power. Now the stage means of presenting a story are actions and words,—words spoken or sung. The musician, as we have seen, helps in two ways,—by

*Object of  
music in an  
opera.*

arranging the declamation or effective delivery of the words whereby they can be made far more impressive than by simple speech, however skilful the elocution may be, and by interpreting the emotion of the characters. The history of opera is, after all, a continual struggle for mastery between these two ways. Caccini and Peri made the opera all declamation, believing that it was the only kind of music possible for a singer while acting; and Monteverde put some expression of emotion into the accompaniment. After that, the expression of emotion found excessive vent in formal and redundant airs, as formal and redundant as were the emotions of early novels. Then came Gluck, Mozart and the best of the writers after them, and struck the balance between the two ways by finding that it was possible for an actor to sing *cantabile* without standing stock-still,—that acting did not mean ceasing to sing, nor did singing mean ceasing to act,—that dialogue might be full of emotion, and music of a perfect kind full of action.

After a time the emotional parts again overpowered the declamatory effects in the hands of weak writers, and singers began to stand still again on the stage; though this weakness never equalled the intense formalism of the days of Hasse, before Gluck and Mozart came up. It was

rather after the kind of some of the modern novels wherein there is more philosophy and analysis of character than of story. It was then that Wagner cut the Gordian knot in his later works by giving declamatory work only to the voices throughout the play, and relegating the expression of emotion, throughout the play, to the accompaniment solely, —using therefore the principle of the Florentine writers with additional means of orchestration.

The one great objection to this lateral division of music is that it uses only a part of the resources of music; it uses, as it were, the outer surface of the art, and not the innate principle of it. In the days when it was supposed that women ought not to know much about the anatomy of their bodies it was averred that "beauty is but skin-deep." Nowadays we all know that the fairest lady in the land would be without beauty if she were without a perfect skeleton and well-knit muscles. So it is with music. Its beauty is far more than "skin-deep." There is the principle underlying music which the constant use of declamatory music prevents in its necessarily changing keys; and that is the principle of resting and recurring keys. It is a principle that has grown very gradually into music, side by side with the growth of the expression of emotion in music. Only dimly shadowed in madrigals and in popular music of

the same day, it was entirely absent from the early declamatory dramas. It was evident in the Purcell and Handel examples that we have looked at in a previous chapter, and more elaborately developed in the Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven examples. Wherever *cantabile* music and rhythmic form appear, there will be key-form to help; and these three qualities unite in music which is to express feeling. It is in the use of this kind of music, in conjunction with the declamatory (declamatory, be it remembered, in its three manners, *unaccompanied*, *with band*, and *in time*), that the greatest amount of variety and contrast can be got; and all this, grouped in proportionate masses of either kind, is the material of the music of a good opera.

*A modern opera.* Look at Verdi's *Otello*; what a story it is for showing on the stage! How the story is emphasised by the music! Here is variety enough, and massing of the different kinds of music, with relief and contrast. There is the wonderful piece of declamation by which the opera makes Iago confess his real character to the audience. This is a conciser mode than the course of actions and conversations with other persons by which he is gradually shown in Shakespeare; for an opera libretto requires the ideas to be more concise and massed together in their

kinds than a spoken drama, so that it may yield better to the expression by music. This Mephistophelian *Credo*, as it is called, with its ever-changing ideas, with force rather than with feeling, is of the most emphatic kind of declamation. It is oratorical, rather than mere speech. The music corresponds with this by its ever-changing course of keys, its absence of phrase-rhythm, and an alternation of orchestral phrases with or between the vocal phrases. It has been introduced by mere conversational words between Iago and Cassio, where there is some actual *recitativo parlante* of the old kind, as well as recitative of the accompanied kind. After the so-called *Credo*, Iago's first temptation of Othello begins almost as conversation, and the phrases are light and fragmentary, answered in the same kind in the orchestra; but gradually, as the words become more full of emotion, the phrases of music lengthen. For instance, when the first germ of jealousy comes into Othello's mind and he cries, "By heaven, he echoes me, as if there were some monster in his thought, too hideous to be shown," it is with a long complete phrase. The same is the case when Iago gives his fearsome hint to Othello to "beware of jealousy." All this is with rapidly changing keys. A contrast follows in the ballad strains of the chorus of women and children and sailors who are about Desdemona

with their flowers and gifts—the music simple in form, smooth in rhythm and lasting in key.

In the third act, wherein Othello accuses Desdemona of unfaithfulness, the dialogue is strongly emotional yet with some question and answer. These rapid questions and answers are, in short, fragmentary declamation, while the previous greeting between the two, with Desdemona's affectionate yearning and Othello's cutting sarcasms, is in rhythmic phrases of connected key. Desdemona's declaration of her innocence is also rhythmic and sustained in key. Towards the end of the same act many of the performers are combined, with a culmination of excitement, in a long succession of movements (after the fashion of the Mozart *finale* already described), in which keys remain for some time. The utter loneliness of Othello after all the people have left him but Iago, finds vent in a few short phrases; he is beyond even the expression of emotion. It is convulsion and then silence. Silence—with the terrible contrast of the swooning body of Othello stretched at the feet of his tempter, while the outside world are shouting in ecstasy at his political triumphs.

The next act is another contrast. It begins with Desdemona and Emilia alone. Sorrowful and fearful, Desdemona is quiet, for she knows her innocence. There is therefore time for emotion



to have full play in her mind; and while a few conversational words are in speaking recitative, the deep emotions pour forth in song. Her music is *cantabile* of the most expressive kind, simple in key-form and in clearest rhythm. Here is the beginning of her ballad of the willow.

*Andante mosso.*

*ppp* Pian - gea . . . can - tan - do nel - l'er - ma

lau - da, Pian - gea la me . . . sta etc.

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In all this long course of variety, contrast and relief, the orchestra does not play an independent part, but is woven into the music of the characters, now preceding, now answering, now supporting the strains of the voices and in some cases interpreting the sentiment while the voices recite words on a repeated note. There is even the extreme variety of a passage in pantomime—not the *joke* which we are accustomed to think of in England as pantomime, but a solemn kind in which Othello shows his intense feelings, without a word, by his actions in the darkened chamber of Desdemona, while the orchestra inter-

*The part played by the orchestra.*

prets and adds to the impression given by his actions. Here, too, is the beauty of association ; for, at the moment when he kisses his sleeping wife before murdering her (executing, as he deems it), a short phrase is quoted from the long strain of the love-duet which comes early in the opera. The whole strain comes later when Othello kills himself, while kissing Desdemona's dead face, crying, " I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee. No way but this."

*The story is the chief.* Again and again, it must be said, the interest of an opera depends upon the interest of the story, and whether it will show well upon the stage. This does not mean that there is to be *no* interest found in the music, nor in the acting, the scenery, the dresses, the singing and the orchestra.

It means that the story is the suggestion, or origin of all the interest that is to be found in every one of the other parts which make the whole ; and each part, in its own way, intensifies, increases, clears or explains the interest of the story.

If the scenery be good, it points the locality and surroundings of the story ; and therefore the scene painter and the carpenter use every art and device in their power to make suggestive pictures and fittings among which the characters of the story are to move about. Even the dresses and the

marshalling of the characters help in the general effect, as well as to make us distinguish between the king and the peasant, or between an army and a crowd; therefore that part is carried out as well as possible.

If the enunciation of the words and the declamation of the sentences be good, it makes the audience hear and understand the words, and with them the chief course of the story. There are a few people who think that acting means nothing but running about the stage and screaming; yet there is much to be done in a quiet way. For a look may be worth much, and a gesture, a tone of voice, even a quiver in the voice may speak volumes.

If the music be good, in harmony, melody and orchestration, in rhythm of all its varieties and in design—good, that is to say, in all its parts—it strengthens the sentiments that belong to the situations and words, as well as strengthens the accents of the words, and thus it adds to the whole spiritual effect of the story. If the singing and playing be good, it enables the audience to hear what the music is intended to show.

The better all these parts of a musical drama, the better will be the effect of the story upon the audience. They must all be of the best, and be all of the best that is appropriate. The scene-

painter must not be forbidden to paint a beautiful picture in perfect form or design of light and shade, colour or drawing, nor be restricted to the conventional decorative style; neither must the actor-singer be forbidden to use an expressive tone of voice or gesture, nor to sing an expressive *cantabile* phrase or two; the stage manager must not be forbidden to bring a mass of people on the stage shouting at the tops of their voices.

None of these sharers in the work being forbidden to use the best of their capabilities, neither must the composer be restricted to the conventionalities of what Rubinstein called the decorative style of music—an unending fantasia in time.

*And every-  
thing else of  
the best.*

Gluck said, not so much by his words as by his works, "I must use music to the ultimate extent of its powers in all that I can. I must make it express everything that it is capable of expressing. I will make my characters pour out expressive music along with their words. I will make my chorus express the most vehement and characteristic emotions that belong to their actions and their opinions. I will put a long-standing emotion in long-lasting phrases and forms; while I will put a rapidly changing argument in short phrases that vary in key and manner with every momentary change of thought. I will make the orchestra

strengthen these expressions of emotion in every way they can, by phrases with or before or after the voices, or by the greatest variety of colour in the instruments that my band is capable of giving, so far as I know." We may go further, and almost fancy Gluck saying, "If there is any other musical device with expression in it, I wish I knew it, that I might apply it." Gluck's works utter this language as plainly as a man's work can speak his thought.

So did others; and in carrying out this high ideal they invested the dialogue of an opera with the character of poetry as well as of the drama, and made it the suggestion of the highest forms of music.

There are those who say that musical design in all its variety is undramatic, and hinders the action of a drama; it is unnatural, they say. If we allow this, we must go further, and allow that all poetry and poetic feeling is undramatic and hindering to the action of a drama. Yet no story is without poetic feeling of some kind; the very action of the human mind (and what higher product of nature can we have than the human mind?)—the very action of the human mind upon a story is to produce and show forth emotion or sympathetic feeling. If Beethoven can make an air expressive of the utmost anxiety, or can make the course of

keys of an exact sonata-form add to the excitement of a struggle for life between four characters; or if Mozart can make a chain of movements so various in their different motions and keys as to increase the effect of the busy activity and the worries of eight or nine scheming comedy characters; or if Verdi, following Shakespeare's lead, can put such a ballad into the centre of an exciting drama that it wrings the hearts of the audience with sympathy for the sufferings of Desdemona, ay, and for the pangs of the man who loves her and is yet fool enough to give way to jealousy—if all this is possible, there is no need to say that good music, that is to say, music in good form, is out of character with drama.

Only let there be variety and order. A little chaos is a pleasing relief; and, in its place, is a great artistic beauty. But it must be balanced and steadied by constancy and repose; for even chaos may become a dreary waste.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE COURSE OF ORATORIO

“And Miriam the prophetess took a timbrel in her hand ; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously.”—EXODUS xv. 20, 21.

IT was at the church of San Filippo Neri at Rome that the oratorio earned its name. The oratory, God’s house of prayer and praise, was the place where the most complete work of music and poetry was first performed, the highest form in which the two arts are combined, and combined for the highest work, that of praise and prayer to our Creator. For there is surely no nobler work in God’s creation than the mind, soul and body which is united in the person of the creative artist, who possesses some little fragment of his Maker’s creative power, and by it *makes*, or creates, a living artistic work. And there is, without doubt, no nobler work for that creative artist’s hands than that of leading the minds of others of God’s human creatures to acknowledge the greatness of their Maker. This was the purpose of the first oratorio.

Oratorios partake of three natures ; they are dramatic, narrative, or what *Three kinds.*

is called didactic (literally, *teaching*). Though in their beginnings they are distinct, the three kinds very early began to blend.

*Dramatic.* The course of the dramatic oratorio, which is specially Italian, is bound up with that of opera. It is, in fact, an opera founded upon a sacred story, instead of upon a secular. The sacred dramas, mysteries and miracle-plays of mediæval times, were quite as much the forerunners of this kind of oratorio as they were of the opera; while the principles of the new recitative drama of Caccini and Peri were applied to the sacred musical dramas of the time by Cavalieri, and his works acted in churches. Later, in the days of Scarlatti and onwards, the sacred musical dramas or oratorios were performed in Italy, in theatres, at particular Church seasons, instead of the secular operas; and the type of both was the same. This was the intention of Rossini's *Moses in Egypt*; and the chorus in it we know so well, *Dal tuo stellato soglio*, is sung on the stage by performers in the character of Israelites by the banks of the Red Sea.

*Narrative.* The narrative type was not called oratorio in its early days, but had its beginning in the recitation of the Passion of our Saviour according to the different gospel narratives; this was customary at Passion-tide from very old times. In them, the words of the persons were



sung by different singers, while the story was by one only. The Roman performance of the Passion was, from earliest times up to latest, constructed of the Bible words, and plain-song music. The Lutheran churches, on the contrary, very soon began to use original music, and also reflective passages interspersed among the divisions of the Bible narrative; in some examples, complete original poems were set, in place of the Bible words.

The service in the oratory of San Filippo Neri, the true origin of the *Didactic*. name, was the beginning of the didactic type. Very much akin to the "service of song" which is used in some churches and chapels of our own time, it was an oration, or sermon (whence the epithet *didactic*) with hymns sung by the congregated members of the oratory. As the music grew in importance the work became more and more like the oratorios that we know of later years. The hymns increased in number and became elaborate anthems, while the oration became declamation in song; narrative came to be used and characters were personified, till the peculiarities of all the three types were welded together in one composition.

Long before the days of Bach, the recitation of the Passion had attained great popularity in Germany; and all the art of which the different

composers were capable had been applied to their settings of the Passion.

*Bach's Passion-music according to S. Matthew.*

Bach's setting is full of variety and shares the natures of each of the three kinds of oratorio, though it is not called an oratorio. There is the plain gospel narrative, of which the part concerned with the action is all given to one voice. Then the words of the persons speaking are given to other solo singers, while the words of the chief priests, the people and the disciples are given to the chorus. This brings the dramatic character into the work, even though it is without action; for in some places an almost representative effect is made by the question and answer of the persons. Besides this, there are the reflections. Some of these are soliloquies for one or other of the singers in an impersonal manner; some are choruses as if for the general body of the church, while some are hymns or *chorals*, actually to be sung by the congregation in the sacred building wherein the work is performed. To crown all, there was in the Bach work, the Lutheran practice of the sermon preached between the parts. These all bring in the devotional character—that action of praise, prayer and teaching which belonged to the didactic oratorio of the church of San Filippo Neri.

The eminent critic and composer, G. A. Mac-

farren, has drawn a beautiful mental picture of the scene of the first performance of Bach's greatest Passion-music. "A spacious church, invested with all the solemn associations peculiar to the sacred building, wherein the edification of hearts and souls must have been involved in the artist's design for the erection of columns and windows; at either end (for there were two choirs, two bands, and two organs) the capacious orchestra filled with singers and instrumentalists, whose labour is rendered holy by the occasion, by the great human thought that has been brought to bear on the explication of this, and by the sanctuary wherein it is celebrated; towering above each orchestra the lofty organ, whose time-honoured employment in church service has rendered its acceptance general as a symbol of worship; and in the great area between these galleries of solemn song, a vast public surrounding the pulpit, wherein the presence of the preacher gives sanction and significance to the whole, everyone imbued with the religious truths that are commemorated; and all—the little children who are learning to love the right, the women who are lovingly teaching them, and the men who are defending mother and child in the fond task of mutual duty—all taking part in the choral hymns, lifting their common voice in the heartfelt testimony. Let us imagine this scene—which is no

fabrication of fancy, but a feeble, very feeble picture of a once-living fact—and we may, perhaps, be able to conceive with what impressions the congregation withdrew from St Thomas's Church in Leipzig, at the close of evensong, on Good Friday, 1729.”<sup>1</sup>

*How the  
words are  
treated.*

Let us take examples of the character and treatment of the words out of the course of the oratorio. There is, far on in the story, the narrative, “Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.” This, for the principal tenor singer, is recitative, free as to time, and with a light harpsichord or pianoforte accompaniment. The words of Pilate follow, in the same kind of music, but for a bass voice. Then narrative again for the tenor is followed by the words of Pilate's wife, allotted to a treble. Narrative again is followed by Pilate's words, from the bass voice, “Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?” The two words of narrative, “They said,” are followed by the single word, “Barabbas,” from the full chorus, personifying the people with dramatic vividness. The narrating tenor has “Pilate saith unto them,” and is followed by Pilate's replying question, “What shall I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ?” The

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to Novello's edition of Bach's “St Matthew Passion,” 1870.

narrator has "They all said," and immediately upon that, the cry of the people, "Let Him be crucified," follows with the dramatic effect of imitation in the fugal manner, the cry being thus repeated by the voices one after another, and carried on as it might be in a yelling crowd.

*Allegro.*

BASS begins.

TENOR enters.

etc.

The altos enter immediately after the last note of the example, while tenors and basses go on and trebles come later in similar fashion, beginning on another note. This chorus, so short that the sentence is not uttered more than twice in each of the voices, is followed by a choral, or hymn, for the congregation, "Mysterious act of God's Almighty mercy, Condemned to death, behold the Lord of Glory." This belongs to the didactic, or teaching part of the oratorio; it is a meditation on this point of the story, and an application of it to the use of the Church. The word *behold*, in this expression, "behold the Lord of Glory," seems to show that the Lutheran pastor, Deyling, who compiled the book,

had in his mind an impression from the old habit of sacred dramas ; in these, of course, the representative of the sacred Person would be there exhibited before the gaze of the congregation. Many others of the meditative passages show this feeling. It is a feeling that must still be very strong in the minds of the German people, as shown by the sacred plays and half-sacred operas which are so often performed among them.

A few words now from the narrator, and Pilate's question (from the same bass who had his words before), "Why, what evil hath He done?" are followed by a comment on the question, from a solo voice, "To us He hath done all things well : the blind man sight from Him received, the lame man leap'd and walk'd. He told us of His Father's word ; He sent the devils forth, the mourners He hath comforted, and sinners, too, He hath received. Besides this, Jesus nought hath done!" It is an accompanied recitative, described, by the eminent critic named before, as of the style of Caccini and Peri rather than of the more modern accompanied recitative ; this is the case, because it is in strict time throughout and without rhythm of phrases. "Its merit is wholly in the force with which it renders the words, and in this merit the specimens by Bach are pre-eminent." Another comment or meditation follows, on the Saviour's love and suffer-

ings for us, and is a more rhythmic composition for the same voice as the recitative. In both of these movements the solo voice personifies the Christian Church of later days than those of the events which are mentally exhibited before the audience. They are didactic, or teaching; that is, they point out the lesson to be drawn from the story.

The narrator follows, with the few words, "But they cried out the more and said." Now follows a very dramatic, or representative effect in the repetition of the chorus which was sung just before, "Let Him be crucified" (see page 161). A striking part of the effect comes from its being a note higher, a fact which gives more urgency to the cry. After more narrative and more words from Pilate, the cry of the people, "His blood be on us and on our children," comes vividly before us. First uttered in all voices together, the words are next repeated among the different parts, at different accents and on different notes; thus the chorus portrays the clamouring of a multitude, excited and urged on by fanatics.

In similar ways is the whole story carried on, and illustrated or commented upon. In some places the meditation takes the form of adoration—the adoration of the Church of the composer's time; thus, after the mocking "Hail! King of the Jews,"

from the soldiers (represented by the chorus), the congregation fall in with the hymn, "O Thou whose head was wounded . . . Whom once in light enthroned, The angels did adore . . . My joy, my one endeavour . . . To serve Thee, gracious Saviour, And magnify Thy Name."

A beautiful effect is in the meditation after the account of the Crucifixion; it is treated as if divided between the teacher and the hearers. The solo voice is pointing to the scene enacted before our mind's eye, as if in a drama, and telling the principle to be learnt from it. "See, . . . see the Saviour's outstretch'd arm, Sinners to redeem from harm. Come. Come." The chorus, as if in the person of ignorant learners, ask, "Come where? Come where?" while the teaching solo answers, "Come to Jesu's bosom, seek salvation freely offer'd." This poetic effect is repeated twice in the course of the movement, with other apt words.

At another point in the narration, at the rending of the Temple veil, there is an example of vivid description in the accompaniment. Though Bach's reserve of force keeps it still for the harpsichord alone, the effect is clear.

*Handel's  
dramatic  
oratorios.*

Bach's great contemporary, Handel, had written Passion-tide music in his early days; but it was to an original poem built upon the Gospel story. After he had



been in England many years, writing operas in his own vigorous style on the Italian model of the time, he turned to oratorio and found his full strength in that. Many a time has the story been told how his money losses as an opera manager brought us the gain of the greatest of art works,—how his failure in one line brought him success in another. But, though without knowing it, he had worked hard and well for this end all the time of his operatic life, and the later success was the natural result of this peculiar work. With two grand exceptions his oratorios were of the same form as the operas he had written before. Like many of the Italian oratorios of the same time, they were in the dramatic form and capable of being acted. The story was told by the persons speaking, with meditation or soliloquies in the mouth of the characters, the music being carried on by recitative both dry and accompanied, with solos, concerted pieces and choruses. This was the same plan as the operas of Scarlatti and his followers.

The performance of oratorios, however, notwithstanding their operatic plan, was in England invariably, and in Italy often, without action, scenery, or character costumes. This is the meaning of the expression applied to the later performances of *Acis and Galatea*, that it was

done "after the manner of an oratorio." It was a secular work, and had first been performed with action. *Esther*, too, a sacred work, was advertised as to be performed "without clothes," an expression at which we are inclined to smile; but it is a question whether our modern expression, "without costume," would be less open to amiable quizzing.

In the course of Handel's oratorios, therefore, the beautiful pieces that we are so familiar with take their places as parts of an actable drama. *Deeper and deeper still*, is the accompanied recitative of Jephtha, when his daughter meets him on his return from victory, and he is struck with grief at realising the consequences of his vow. *Angels ever bright and fair*, is the soliloquy of Theodora as she is led to her martyr's doom. *What tho' I trace each herb and flower*, is the humble meditation of Solomon, giving glory to Jehovah for the gift of wisdom. Then in *Saul* the chorus, *Along the monster atheist strode*, is expressive of the Israelites' terror at the appearance of the giant Goliath, when he "defies the armies of the living God." The chorus, *The youth inspired by Thee*, expresses their joy at the sight of the death of the giant by the hand of the lad David, and the next chorus shows their recovery from the panic into which they had fallen, *Our fainting courage soon restored*, so that they were able to destroy their enemies.

Following this is the meditation after the battle, when they ascribe glory to their Maker, *How excellent Thy Name, O Lord*. All these examples might be possible on the stage. But in some of these oratorios we begin to feel a slight tendency towards either the didactic or the narrative character. This is a natural development of their purpose for the concert room instead of the stage. Where action is not made use of, it is soon of no use to arrange for it, and a composer begins to find other and better means for arousing interest in the story. So, to go back to Italy, we find the narrator, who originated in the Passion-tide performances, made use of in concert oratorios, in place of the continued dramatic form of telling the story by means of the characters; this form having in such a place become nothing but a form, and not a necessity. After Handel's many oratorios on the dramatic model, with these leanings towards other ways, he soared far higher, and produced two works of new forms, which developed the narrative and the didactic in conjunction with the dramatic, the didactic parts rising to anthem music of the largest description.

Thus *Israel in Egypt* follows two grand divisions. The first half is narrative, *Narrative and anthem.* the second didactic; or, more correctly in this case, it is a development of the San Filippo Neri

service of song into a great anthem. Some hearers, whose love for the stage is strong, throw a feeling of dramatic representation even over these divisions. They feel that the scenes described in the first part are actually passing before them, while the second part brings before them the sight of Moses and the people of Israel assembled on the banks of the Red Sea, "in joyous transport at their deliverance, with devout thankfulness and a deep, solemn, and always calm impression of the tremendous scenes which they have so lately witnessed ; the broad expanse of cloudless heaven, the boundless landscape and glowing, genial climate all assuring them of freedom and peace."<sup>1</sup>

It was the invention of Handel's genius and great sense of fitness which made him take away the narration from the solo, to which it had been given in other composers' works, and give it in *Israel* almost entirely to the chorus. For many years after the first performance of *Israel in Egypt*, it has been said, this novel treatment was not appreciated by hearers. They were accustomed to the imitation, so to speak, of a dramatic representation, and, in some countries, they were used to the narration by a solo ; but the narration by a chorus was left for us in modern times to enter fully into. We have learnt that the grandeur of

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Macfarren, notes upon *Israel in Egypt*.

the events related was best interpreted by the power of the large body of singers. The same feeling of fitness made Handel put the second part also of this oratorio chiefly into the mouth of the chorus, who might better represent the thankfulness of the great crowd of Israelites.

Though the first part is narrative throughout, there are distinct varieties of narrative. The extraordinarily simple introduction to the story—"Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph," who set taskmasters over Israel to afflict them with burdens—is put into the mouth of the narrator of old style, a solo tenor. It is a cold statement of a fact, wherein everything pathetic is left to the imagination. There is no overture to work up our minds to the proper key, no grand effects in the accompaniment to suggest deep feelings, no sentimental phrases in the solo to give a pathetic impulse to our thoughts. It is only the old-fashioned declamatory recitative, with a few accents given to it by the light accompaniment, leaving the words free to make their own impression. And what an impression it is! We know this by what follows. The next few words are still Bible narrative, but so full of emotion that Handel has given it to a long course of music for the chorus; and, by the movement of the parts now with, now against, one another, by some

modulation and many expressive harmonies he has woven the two main phrases into a web of pathos. "The children of Israel sigh'd . . . by reason of the bondage . . . and their cry came up to God."

The tenor recitative of the sending of Moses and Aaron is simple, till the last words relate the beginning of the signs of God's power. "He turn'd their waters into *blood*." The breathless effect of the tenor's low note upon this word sets the key of feeling for the following chorus, which expresses the narrative, "they loathed to drink of the river."

Other narratives for the chorus touch the emotion belonging to each wonder with such force that they kindle our imagination. We imagine that we hear the innumerable insects—that we are witnessing the grandest hail and thunderstorm that ever was on earth—that we are feeling our way in Egyptian darkness. We even sympathise with the horrified joy of the Egyptians, when they were "glad when they departed" who seemed to have been the cause of all these terrors. "But as for His people, He led them forth like sheep;" and here is the tenderness of the act brought out by the chorus with its smooth, pastoral and almost childlike expression. These chorus-narratives are all in continuous music.

Yet another kind of narrative is in the phrase,

“He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up.” This is a declamatory recitative for the chorus; it is necessarily *in time*, in order to keep the many voices together, but it is with all the effect of declamation—immensely powerful by means of the mass of voices of the eight-part choir, and rendered more impressive by the contrast between the two divisions of the phrase. The first of these divisions has the voices with instruments, loud and strident; the second, voices alone, hushed, and almost more solemn.

The second, or anthem part of *Israel in Egypt* is the song of Moses and the people, “Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously.” Parts of it tend towards narrative, when the Israelites recount the wonderful works of the Lord in delivering them out of the fury of their enemies. Such are the chorus “The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea”; again, “The depths have covered them,” and “In the greatness of Thine Excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee”; and the duet, “Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people.” Yet further they utter prophetic narrative, “The inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away, they shall be as still as a stone, till Thy people pass over.” “Thou shalt bring them in to their inheritance.”

There are a few words of recitative narration:

“Miriam . . . took a timbrel . . . and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances.” Miriam’s song closes the oratorio with praise, anthem-like, repeating the music, as the original story repeats the words, of the beginning of Moses’ song, “Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously.”

*Chiefly* With the exception of a few points,  
*anthem.* the whole of the *Messiah* is a series of anthems, or didactic meditations. Like the meditative passages in Bach’s *Passion*, they are suggested by scenes that are supposed to be passing before the mind’s eye of the audience, as if in an acted drama. So well known, so deeply familiar to us is the sacred story that it needs not to tell it over again ; we need only to be reminded of it, to remember it scene by scene. Thus, being built upon the spiritual aspect of the story of a life, it becomes more than a narrative or biography ; it is rather a celebration of a life,—the grandest life that ever was in the world.

Here indeed there is an overture, as Handel’s works generally had. It is said that Handel first wrote the overture in the classical form of the age, with the usual three movements, and those of the usual type (*adagio*, *allegro* and *minuetto*), but so imbued was he with the subject of his oratorio, that he was enabled to see the unfitness of the



form, and the lighter *finale* was cut out. This left the overture, as we now feel it to be, a solemn introduction which fulfils the duty afterwards prescribed by Gluck; that is to say, it prepares our minds for the impressions which are to come upon us by-and-by.

First, after the overture, are a series of meditations on the prophesied coming of the Life that is celebrated in the oratorio. "Comfort ye," "Every valley shall be exalted, and the rough places smooth," "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed," "O thou that tellest good tidings," "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light," "Unto us a child is born, the mighty God . . . the Prince of Peace." All these are illuminated by music that every one knows and every one loves.

Next after this comes what some have compared with the pictures of the Nativity, in which the greatest masters have delighted to exercise their powers. The pastoral symphony forms a miniature overture to the scene, and calls the feeling of peace into our minds. We are now ripe for the narrating recitative that follows, how "there were shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night." How quickly now does our imagination work! It shows us the moonlight and the hillsides, the sheep within the

stony walls of their fold, the shepherds in their rough garments: we can almost smell the tender vines, and the oleanders that are growing near at hand. Then more reciting narrative tells us what we can almost see, the coming of the angel with his "glad tidings of great joy." Dramatic effect comes forward when the words of the great company of angels are given to the chorus, "Glory to God in the Highest!"

Several of the recitatives after this are so far narrative that they suggest the points of the Life that are to be thought of at the moment. The words "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened . . ." draw our thoughts towards the miracles of healing worked by Him who went about doing good, and lead us to the comment, "He shall feed His flock." Again, "All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn" is the recitative which suggests the chorus, "He trusted in God that He would deliver Him," words which are at once commenting and dramatic, for while recitative and chorus are the prophetic words of the Psalmist, those of the chorus are the mocking quotation from the Psalms which is made by the chief priests, scribes and elders at the Crucifixion.

The two recitatives, "Thy rebuke hath broken His heart," and "He was cut off," share the same narrative character with the songs that immedi-

ately follow them, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow," and "Thou didst not leave His soul in hell."

From this point the oratorio is entirely of the didactic or anthem character following the course of events; the meditations are on the subjects of the Resurrection and Ascension of the Saviour, the sending of the apostles, and the ineffectual rage of the heathen against Christianity, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of the Lord!" Then follows the beautiful third part of the oratorio, dealing with the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. "If God be for us who can be against us?" "Blessing and honour, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever. Amen."

Though Mendelssohn was a devoted student of Bach's works, he was also a good classical scholar. *St Paul*, the earlier of his two oratorios, therefore, shows a good deal of resemblance to the Bach settings of the Passion, while the later one, *Elijah*, is an almost perfect example of the ideal of the Greek play. Although it is without action, it yet follows the course of a drama, with the same treatment of the chorus as in Greek plays. Thus the story is told from the mouth of the characters,—Elijah, Obadiah, Ahab, the angel, the widow, the youth-

*Greek play  
as an ideal  
of oratorio.*

ful servant and the people. It is told chiefly in accompanied recitative, in which are some phrases *in time*, and there is much help from the orchestra. The recitatives are either for solos or for chorus; there are also some few longer choruses of narrative. Some meditations on different points of the story are given to the solo characters; others belong to solos or to chorus in the same impersonal way that is sometimes adopted by the chorus and their leader in Greek play. In this work these impersonal utterances stand as the meditation which is put into the mind of the audience,—in fact, they are didactic.

The introduction, like that of *Israel in Egypt*, is a few words of simple recitative, which are allowed to sink into the hearts of the hearers without ornament; but instead of being uttered by the impersonal narrator, as in *Israel*, they come as the words of one of the characters of the story, Elijah. "As God the Lord of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain. . . ." After this recitative there is an overture (which had no place in *Israel in Egypt*) to depict the emotional effect of such a prophecy, and thus prepare our minds for the coming sorrows. From this point the chorus, in the person of the people, describe the fainting state of the land. "Help, Lord . . . the deeps afford no water, the children

cry for bread, and none giveth. . . . Lord, bow Thine ear . . . ” This is all dramatic, that is, spoken by the characters. So also, amongst many other points, in the scene of the sacrifice the story is carried on by the words of Elijah, Ahab and the people. There is the agreement, “The God that answereth by fire, He is the Lord”—the people’s cry, “Baal, hear us,” and Elijah’s mocking, “Call him louder, peradventure he is on a journey, or he sleepeth.” The Bible words, “There was none that answered,” are shown dramatically, yet without being spoken, by the few bars of silence which make so great an effect after the hurried excitement of the chorus. . . . “Hear and answer,” . . . a moment’s silence . . . “Hear and answer”: silence again, is all the reply.

Then comes Elijah’s turn, and his recitative and aria are his prayer for the fire to be sent upon his sacrifice. To strengthen the effect upon us, the composer here points it by an impersonal utterance of the thoughts he deems it right for the audience to have in mind. What should Elijah do at this point? The audience, in their thoughts, bid him “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will let none be ashamed that wait upon Him.” This is of the nature of Greek chorus. Elijah then takes up the tale with more prayer; and the chorus, in the person of the people, describe what happened.

“The fire descends from heaven,” and presently describe its effect upon themselves by avowing “The Lord, He is God.”

Later in the oratorio, there are events which were unseen by mortal eye, yet they must be described. Therefore the chorus take a character more completely impersonal than in any other work we have previously spoken of. They use the words of the inspired narrative—“Behold, God the Lord passed by. And a mighty wind rent the mountains around . . . and the sea was upheaved . . . and after the earthquake a fire . . . and after the fire, a still, small voice . . .”

*Solo narrator.* Among the early Italian writers, an oratorio that was to be for concert use, and therefore without acting, was made complete by a performer who was called *historicus*. He was the historian or story-teller who told the complete story of the play. This was adopted from the Passion-tide narrative oratorios, and applied to other sacred stories. Neither Handel nor Mendelssohn made use of this practice, but later English composers have done so. In Macfarren's oratorios especially, the part of the narrator is developed much beyond what it was in the *historicus* of old time. It contains the many varieties of expression that are made possible by the different kinds of recitative—free, and in time,

with accompaniments and phrases of interludes. In his *St John the Baptist* the narrator is of great importance, while it is in conjunction with many highly dramatic scenes, and much anthem or didactic music. His *Resurrection* is more strictly of a narrative kind than has been since the days of Bach. Like the Passion-tide works, it is a narration by one solo voice of a portion of the Gospel, which tells the story of an event, while meditations in the different points of the story are given by solos or chorus as if in the person of the congregation, or the church at large.

In *King David*, while most of the story is told by the words of the characters, yet some of the most interesting and touching music belongs to the recitative of the narrator. The overture to *King David* is retrospective, and shows the feelings called up by events that happened before the opening of the story. The first events of the story are shown in dramatic form by the words of David and the people, the anointing of David as King of Israel, and the bringing home of the Ark. There is one meditative passage like the comments of the Greek chorus as part of the audience. The words of Nathan follow, with his prophecy of the great Descendant of David. David expresses his humility, and the people re-echo Nathan's prophecy.

Another section of the story comes now from the narrator. A very few words tell the terrible account of the fall of a good man into sins of the deepest kind. The conciseness and the reserve with which it is told only add to the intenseness of the impression made upon us. The beautiful strain for the orchestra introducing the recitative breathes of the under-current of tender affection, which survived all the dastardly acts, and which afterwards won forgiveness for David and blessings for Solomon.

*Andante sostenuto.*  
CLARINET.

The musical score is for a Clarinet part, marked *Andante sostenuto*. It consists of two staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 12/8. The first staff starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The second staff provides a bass line with dotted half notes and quarter notes, concluding with an *&c.* symbol.

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The long strain which grows out of this beginning is used again, broken into fragments, between the sentences of the recitative. The narrator tells how "David walked upon the roof of the king's house, and saw a woman that was very beautiful to look upon." Phrases of a more and more excited character are mingled as the rest of the story is told—the message sent, "Set



ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him that he may die"; and how when he was dead, his wife became the king's wife. Then at the end, the solemn phrase, "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord," is put to a fragment of an old church tone, adding great dignity to the narration. Though these words are part of the ancient Bible narrative, yet there is meditation contained in them which is as true to the life of this present age as it was of the age of which the story tells. Therefore, the impression of present-day religion is cast over the narrative with perfect truth by this comparatively modern church tone.

The next meditation is even more to the same effect. The sins of which David was guilty are just as great temptation to the human nature of to-day. We, who are taking part in the oratorio as listeners, may have been tempted, or may yet be tempted in kindred ways. Just as the congregation took part in the service of Bach's Passion-tide oratorio, and, by heart and sometimes by voice joined in the chorus, the solo and the choral, so we who listen are to take part in this oratorio, though it is but in our hearts, and not with our actual voices. Thus, after the narrative from the life in Judea of olden time, comes, most naturally as well as poetically, the prayer that we

may not err like David ; and this is in words taken from the Liturgy of to-day, even with a fragment of the music that we are accustomed to associate with those words. It is an unaccompanied chorus, "Remember not, Lord, our offences . . . neither take Thou vengeance of our sins. . . . Spare us, good Lord. . . . From all blindness of heart and deadly sins . . . good Lord, deliver us."

*Ballad in oratorio.* Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb has a form which had not been used before in the course of oratorio. It is a story within a story. Nathan relates the parable to David as one of the old minstrels might have sung his ballad of heroic or terrible deeds, with all the fire of expression that might come from declamation. It is a ballad of the highest kind. So is the music a ballad. Not indeed a ballad in the simple repetition of one strain of music, but a ballad in the reciting of distinct strains of words, each strain having a distinct and different musical idea.

*Dialogue.* Yet another novelty in the course of oratorio is found in *King David*, and in others by the same composer—the dialogue. When Handel had written numberless operas, he turned to oratorio, and used in the sacred works the skill as well as the dramatic power that he had formerly applied to works for the stage. Macfarren did the same, in his way. After writing and bring-

ing out on the stage many operas, he began to write oratorio. What wonder, then, that he found delight in applying dramatic effects to his oratorios? Here, then, in *King David* is a strongly dramatic succession of movements, which the term *dialogue*, applied to the first one, stamps at once as written with a feeling for representation. David, an old man now, is seated at the gates, while women are around him, and others on the city wall are straining their eyes for messengers to come across the plains. The battle is afar off, between the rebellious Absalom and the king's army. The women pray for protection from the rebels, while the king's thoughts are upon his son. "There come men running." "If they come running, there be tidings in their mouth." "Behold, here come other men running." "They also bring tidings." "Speak, what of the battle?" and all ask, one after another, "What of the battle, what of the battle?" The swiftest runner, first to arrive, can only utter breathlessly, "All is well," but he knows no more. David has no thought but for his erring son. "Is the young man Absalom safe?" So when other runners come with their tidings of victory, there is the same eager question, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" And when the messengers cry in exultation, "The enemies of our lord the king and all that rise against thee to

do thee hurt, be as that young man is!" David is overcome. He is but a broken old man, worn out with all the warfare among his children, which was the punishment laid upon him to purify him from his great sin; and he cries aloud, "O Absalom, my son, my son; would God I had died for thee, my son." Dramatic indeed is the short song that pours out these words, for it is one long sob.

After the story has been brought to its end, the final chorus is in the person of the audience (or congregation, as in Bach's work), and is an actual anthem, ending with the *Gloria Patri*.

*Old and New Testament ideals.* It was the intention of the composer to work the first part of this oratorio up to the old Jewish ideal of stern justice; while the second and closing part should similarly be brought on to the Christian ideal of mercy and forgiveness,—nay, more, even to the yearning joy of the Almighty over the repenting sinner. It is for this reason the first part ends with the awe-striking words, "Vengeance belongeth unto the Lord," for the punishment of the wicked doers is not in ours but in God's mighty hands. Then comes the terrified expression, "Oh, how suddenly do they consume and come to a fearful end!" For this reason, too, the second part is drawn up through the repentance of David and the return to his duty as a king to the expression

of the meditative anthem, "Joy is in heaven, and among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth . . . for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." And therefore we of the audience or congregation say, by the voices of the chorus, may "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Who are One in this mercy."

A ballad of a more usual kind than Macfarren's parable of Nathan is found in Sir Hubert Parry's *Judith*. More usual, in that there are repetitions of the same music, and that a rhythmic tune, with the new stanzas of words. Though it is a novelty to find this kind of music in an oratorio, it is singularly appropriate in its place in *Judith*. Like Nathan's parable, it is a story within a story; but, unlike that, it is a story told by a mother to her children, and therefore seems to ask for the extreme simplicity of form.

*Another  
ballad in  
oratorio.*

A work of a kind different to any of those already described is Sir Arthur Sullivan's *Golden Legend*. Though in the judgment of the composer it is not an oratorio (for in the introduction he describes it as a cantata), it yet has so much of the character of oratorio in its seriousness and in the sacred nature of its subject that it seems right to include it in the series of

*Romance  
in oratorio.*

development. It is not an oratorio, in the sense that the custom of many years has built such works upon Bible stories, whereas the *Golden Legend* is built on a mediæval legend. Custom, too, has kept away the element of romance from the oratorio, but the *Golden Legend* finds its climax in the love of Prince Henry and Elsie. Yet among the sacred dramas that were acted in mediæval times in churches for the edification of the worshippers, those that were styled *mysteries* were of an allegorical character. It is to these that we must look for the origin of a work of the nature of the *Golden Legend*. It is a story of human devising, yet with a sacred motive, and full of the mysticism of the age from whence the legend came. There is anthem or meditation in it, but, with one exception, it is in the person of the characters and not of the audience. The story is told dramatically, that is, by the words of the characters. The dialogue is, however, supplemented in some places by stage directions; and as these can only be known by reading the book, their necessity prevents the work from fulfilling a completely dramatic course. It is, as the introduction describes it, a series of scenes which illustrate the story.

The prologue, deep in its mysticism, illustrates the fruitless efforts of Lucifer and his attendant evil spirits, Storm and Night, to destroy the

cathedral,—the solid structure built upon the foundation of faith and defended with the blessing of God. Here the events are told by the words of Lucifer and of the other spirits,—of the bells which are deemed to be ringing out the sacred mottoes inscribed upon them,—and of the choir who are singing within the cathedral.

The next section supposes Prince Henry in his chamber, visited by Lucifer; and it tells by the words of these two and the comments of watching angels, how the Prince is tempted to sin by Lucifer. Following this we are to imagine a village scene. There is an evening hymn by villagers, and by the words of Elsie and her mother we learn that she will sacrifice her life to save Prince Henry from sore disease. All this is told as if for stage presentation.

The next scene, however, has a new course; it is mingled narrative and dramatic, yet without any hint of the stage. The words of the characters relate how they are journeying along the highway towards the place where Elsie is to give her life-blood for the health of the prince; and in our minds we are led with them from point to point. We hear how by the side of dusty hedge-rows they are borne by toiling horses, how the air is sweet with blossom and leaf, and the view stretches before them; we

*Narrative  
with move-  
ment.*

hear how pilgrims are travelling by the same highway while chanting their hymns, with Lucifer among them, as a false pilgrim, on the watch to tempt and lead astray those who are ready for him; we hear how the travellers come within sight of the sea, and ships are sailing in the distance. All this would be impossible in any other kind of work, and is new even in this.

After the remainder of the scenes are told in simple dramatic form, the epilogue follows, which is the only meditation given in the person of the audience. It, however, is not anthem, but a poetical comparison drawn between the unselfish devotion of Elsie and the power of the gentle rain to refresh and nourish the thirsty land.

*How the purpose distinguishes oratorio from opera.* When we compare oratorio and opera, we find the differences have all grown from the diversity of the objects for which they primarily have been written. For while opera is for amusement, oratorio is for edification, and, more especially, religious edification.

Oratorio and opera are alike in many points. Both work by means of artistic effect. Both must be built upon a story; and the more interesting the story is, the more interesting the musical work will be. Both consist largely of recitative and have artistic alternation of *cantabile* and declama-



tion, of lasting keys and changing keys. Both have their variety of means of showing the music and of intensifying the colour, so to speak, by solo and concerted music, by chorus, instrumental accompaniment and interlude. The difference between the two lies in the object.

Some people claim edification for opera and the spoken drama, just as some claim it for the novel and other works of fiction. Doubtless there is great possibility of it; but in all these cases it must be indirect. If it is direct it is evident, and then it becomes a fault in composition. Yet in oratorio, the sacred musical drama, it is the very essence of the work.

The early mysteries and miracle-plays were to teach holy thoughts—doctrines as well as Bible stories—to those, so numerous at the time, who were rudely illiterate, who could not read for themselves and could scarcely even understand the language of the learned writers. These works needed therefore to be acted in order to be understood, and though the teaching was directly intended by the authors it was only indirectly understood by the hearers. The narratives of the Passion, only partly dramatic, implied more culture in the hearers, for their edification was by the story alone, without representation. The San Filippo Neri performances gave more direct instruction, by

means of the sermons, which were also included in the Lutheran Passion narratives. The hymns of San Filippo Neri and the chorals of the Lutheran churches were direct instruction in the sense of guiding the thoughts of the audience to adoration and prayer. In later works, too, this is the source of all development in the form. Handel shows this in his individual self, for he began with the more indirect instruction of the purely dramatic oratorio, carried out on the lines of the opera; and he developed, as he became greater in the art of oratorio, into *Israel* and the *Messiah*, wherein the teaching is evident and direct. In the more modern German and English works, just now described, this teaching element is also clear. Therefore of the three natures at first pointed out in oratorio, didactic, narrative and dramatic, the didactic overshadows the other two and renders the whole work characteristic.

But besides this direct edification of the hearers, there is in oratorio the same indirect and artistic effect for good which may be, and ought to be, in the secular works of highest calibre. It arises from the purely musical effect upon our emotions and minds. By it the composer can strengthen the effect of good emotions and impressions. He may point out this or that thought for our preference, and may make it more emphatic by

the power of expression in the music which intensifies every fragment of emotional meaning in the words and sentiments. It is this indirect teaching belonging to the *Golden Legend*, which helps to make it the modern descendant of the mystery plays of old time.

May we now consider the point established with which we started this description of the course of oratorio, when we claimed that an oratorio is the highest type of work in which music and poetry are united?

## CHAPTER V

### THE MAKING OF SYMPHONIES

Music is like Architecture, and a great symphony like a great cathedral. Both must be built up, stone by stone and note by note in the maker's mind, and be complete before the plan of it can be laid before the builders and the performers who are to show it to the world. Then, though myriads come under the influence of this great fane, and praise God with the emotions that are produced by the grandeur of it, they know not that every stone and every note has been graven out of the quarry of the maker's brain. But the Maker of all things knows; for He has given a breath of His own Creative Power.

**I**T is curious to note, when we read writings upon art, how truly the diplomatist spoke when he said that words were to hide our thoughts, not to show them. There was a quotation from Goethe which I read many times in its place at the head of an esteemed musical journal now long dead and regretted, the *Musical World*, and every time I read it I wondered the more what it meant: "Music is wholly form and power." Even now that I have learnt to put a meaning to it, the first impression of the words, when I look at them again, is of something apart from Goethe's intention. For words have a first meaning to us apart from that which may be put upon them by deep

study and explanation. The first thought we have when we hear the word "form" is, no doubt, associated with the human form divine, as when we read in the Bible account of the Three Children in the fiery furnace, that "the form of the fourth was like the Son of God"; while power may bring before our minds the cruel power of a tyrant, or the irresistible force of an Atlantic wave as it rushes up our shore. It is long, very long, before we can bring our English minds to associate the word "power," as well as the polyglot "dynamic nuances" of a late critic, with the alternations and gradations of loud and soft,—the *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, the *piano* and *forte* of our music pages. Equally long is it before we can associate the English word *form* with the musical plan, design or construction to which it has become fixed by translation from the German.

In the different musical works analysed hitherto in this book, it must have been felt that there is a principle which runs through them, and which is plainly audible to the musical ear, as well as visible to the musical eye. A connection could always be found binding together the keys that were in the same piece of music. The same principle that makes the different notes of a key hang round the one note that gives its name to the key, makes differ-

*What is  
form, design  
or plan in  
music?*

ent keys hang round the chosen principal key, and makes different portions of music hang around that portion which is written in the chosen or principal key. There is more of one key and less of others; one key makes the starting-point as well as the return home, while others make the variety and diversions. And there is nothing very difficult in all this; it is but the name and the words used which make it seem difficult.

For example, every one knows the scale of C on the pianoforte key-board, with its seven white notes, and every one knows the scale of G with six white and one black, F $\sharp$ . It does not require much analytical skill to look at the tune in Chap. I. called *Near Woodstock Town*, and to realise that the first phrase of this uses a set of notes which belong only to the scale of C,—viz., C, D, E, F, G and B—while the second uses a set of notes which belong only to the scale of G,—G, A, B, C, D and F $\sharp$ . Then the third and fourth phrases use the whole of the scale of C and no more,—C, D, E, F, G, A and B. Now if we realise that the scale of any particular note is only the *key* of that note with all its related notes arranged in a row, we have taken our first lesson in the musical key-design, or plan, or form, of modern classical music. We can now see that, on the principle set down a few words back, the tune makes its start in the

chosen key, C, and its home-coming in the same ; while the middle part makes variety by the use of another key which is nearly related to the first.

It is this principle of relationship between the keys which are used in a composition, and of balance and proportion between the quantity of music in them, and of their position, which makes the chief difference in modern music between music that is classical and music that is not. Now, though this is one principle, there are many ways of applying it. Design does not mean uniformity ; proportion does not mean similarity. For we may speak of a well-proportioned man or of a well-proportioned horse, but their forms are different, and no one expects a man to have a head like that of a horse. So in musical key-design, there is one principle, but many ways of carrying it out.

There are two other factors in musical design which are of less importance in modern classical music than key-design ; but they help much when made to follow the same plan as the other. These are the arrangement of the rhythm and of the musical ideas.

To find out how these things work in a symphony, or in any of those instrumental compositions which hang together in groups of movements, we must follow two ways. For one, we must find the connection of key and the contrast of idea and

rhythm which binds together the different movements, making them a whole, united composition ; and for the other, we must find the connection of key and the course of idea and rhythm which makes the design of each movement in the group.

When writing of home music in England (*Grouping of movements in a symphony.* Chap. I.) we spoke of the *In nomines* and Fancies that were written for viols and other instruments about Elizabethan times. *In nomines* were the earlier kind and were in the same style of writing as the madrigals of the time, and in one movement. Fancies were later, but still in much the same style. Some of Orlando Gibbons' Fancies, however, in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, were in three movements, short though the works were as a whole ; thus they were the beginning of groups of movements in England. On the Continent it was Lulli, in the latter half of the same century, who began grouping movements together. This was in the overtures to his operas.

Now it was no new thing of the time (*Early overtures.* to have an opening strain that should serve as introduction to the play that was to follow. For the plays in England, before Shakespeare, were introduced by old songs sung or tunes played, and again more after each act of the play. In one notable example each act of the play was introduced



by pantomime accompanied by a large band of instruments of the time. Later than this, the early operas of Italian invention had short instrumental preludes, but so slight were they that one of Peri's, in 1600, had but eight bars; and even Monteverde, with his large band, did not have much more.

When we come to Lulli and his improvement of French opera in the latter half of the century, the *ouverture* is one of his great points. He made his overtures of sometimes two, sometimes three, movements. Whether Scarlatti imitated Lulli or invented for himself matters not; but a few years later Scarlatti also, in his improvement of opera in Italy, made use of operatic introductions in three movements.

Very soon we find these groups in instrumental music apart from the opera, when they appear to be a natural development of the Fancies. These are *sonate da camera*, *sonate da chiesa*, violin sonatas and concertos—the latter being sonatas for the full band. These all were in groups somewhat similar in their alternation of quick and slow movement. The number of movements varied, three, four or even five. But the overtures generally remained as three, until Gluck improved the opera and with it the connection between overture and opera; then he compressed the overture into a single but completely conceived movement.

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In these early works in groups of movements, beginning from Gibbons, *Connection by key.* there was that amount of key connection which is produced by all the movements being in the same key; though, very soon, variety began by the use of a new key for the middle movement. With this an increase of definiteness must be felt in the design. There is less design in a simple string of pearls, however beautifully they may match, than when a string is looped and graduated in accordance with the curve of the throat round which it is to hang. So there is less design in the series of movements in one key that belongs to the Lulli form of Handel's overture to *Solomon*, and to the suite of selected dance pieces that was so much used, than in the sonatas of Bach and of Handel for violin, for these latter had a slow movement of different key. Handel's overture to *Esther* and his *Occasional Overture*, too, are of more perfect design, because they have a middle movement in a different key to the rest. This improvement in the design is because there is variety, as well as connection in the key—there is more stuff, so to speak, out of which to make the design.

*Greater variety in the keys.* When we come to Haydn, we find that whether there are three movements, as in most of his pianoforte sonatas, or four, as in his symphonies and quartets,

his habit is to put the slow inner movement in a new key. But there is great increase of variety in the relationship of the keys. Sometimes the new key is the dominant of the main key, sometimes the sub-dominant; or, if he begins in E $\flat$  he has the *andante* in C minor the sub-mediante, or in G minor, the mediant. Another work begins in E $\flat$  and, by using a very chromatic relationship, the neapolitan sixth, he has the slow movement in F $\flat$ —translated into E $\sharp$ . This is the same relationship, by the way, as the little modulation in Mozart's beautiful *Lacrymosa* described in Chap. II.

Beethoven went further in the variety of key which gives connection to the group of movements. In several of his works he put the lighter of the middle movements in a new key, instead of the slow; while in some of his later quartets and trios, he put both inner movements in other keys than the principal, thereby giving the additional variety of design that comes from the use of two keys related to the main. Spohr did the same, in symphonies and quartets; and this practice has been followed, in most cases, by all classical writers since, with many modifications according to the taste or fancy of the moment. In this plan, the main key remains the backbone of the design, while the middle movements branch out to other related keys, thereby making variety at the same

time that they keep the connection in a group. To enumerate examples of this would be to make dry bones out of the beautiful body of music. Let us find out the truth of it when we look for something else.

*Connection by contrast of movement.* Our idea as to the style appropriate to symphonic music has its expression in very early times. We may read in a writer of the twelfth century how great crowds of singers in the North and West of England would pour out their voices "in a kind of symphonic harmony"; in some parts of the country this would be "multifariously and with many modes and tunes," and in others, some "murmuring the bass," while other voices were "in a soft and pleasing manner warbling the upper." The effect was, as he meant to describe it, grand and rich, without harsh noise. In later times, we hear of the first attempts at a single sonata movement, or *suonata* as it was called, as being "great swelling masses of sound," and that this music, which was one of the novelties of the early opera days, was intended to be an exhibition of sound, instead of what the new composers deemed the old-fashioned involvements of melody and part-writing of the madrigal age. This grand, harmonic effect has been kept all along as the basis of the symphony or sonata type.

Many works in the early days of instrumental music were but vocal music played by instruments ; and these were more or less fugual, or madrigalish, if we may be allowed the word, in their course. Thus they had imitations, more or less close, of the different unrhythmical melodies introduced ; and each idea was carried out to the full before the next one was touched. Their main design, therefore, was on the old-fashioned principle, namely, that of the treatment of the musical idea. When the plan was begun of grouping movements together, the treatment of the idea was still the main source of the design, though rhythm was called in to help in the elaboration of the design. The connection which formed the movements into a group (besides the unity of the key) was made by the contrast between one movement in a grand style and dignified rhythm, with another in a fugual style without phrase rhythm, and again with a third in a dance style and dance rhythm. This was Lulli's form of overture, and probably the dance came from the use of the ballet in French opera.

Even in two of Orlando Gibbons' Fancies in three movements, sixty years before Lulli, there was contrast between the style of the movements. The first was in common time, and also the last, while the middle was in triple time, and thus a

predecessor of the modern minuet movement. In the first of each set the parts imitated one another closely in madrigal style; while the latter two, moving all parts together as a complete idea, were of a style in advance of the madrigal.

The early sonatas long retained a fugual movement in many examples; but the Italian overture, though its early examples had the same series that had been used by Lulli, soon began to change. Whether this change was done by Scarlatti, or not till later, is doubted by some writers; at all events, tradition has given the name of the "Scarlatti form" to the old Italian overture in three movements that varied from the Lulli form of three movements. In their alterations they brought back the grandly harmonious effect of the older *suonata* even with the *allegro* movement, and did away with the fugue. Thus the Italian overture, or *sinfonia* as it was called even when joined to an opera, directly foreshadowed the modern symphony by its manner as well as by its title. In the usual form this *sinfonia* had a dignified *allegro*, then a slow movement followed by another *allegro* different to the first. Sometimes a short *largo* preceded the whole. Here, then, was connection by contrast of style.

*Haydn set  
the style  
anew.*

Outside of the operatic overture a good deal of variety was used in the series. Composers were experimenting, and

feeling about for the best course to pursue in their sonatas for one or more instruments, and their concertos for full band. When Haydn came, he fixed more clearly the style of each one of the many movements. Instead of the variable alternations between a fugal movement and a *largo*, a rhapsodical piece of recitative and a dance measure. Haydn, by writing so many works of the kind, made it an established custom that a symphony should have its most important movement at the beginning, which should be in that design which we now call the sonata-form, or first movement form—that it should have a slow movement in some sort of singing manner expressive of deep sentiment—a minuet with its second, or alternative minuet—and a *finale* of a more brilliant *allegro* than the first. Custom, I say, not rule—for, so long as the dignity of the type and the variety and connection of key are maintained, there is no more compulsion in the matter.

Haydn dignified the quartet with four movements, thus giving it the importance of a symphony; while his pianoforte sonatas he kept to the old overture number of three, and sometimes only two.

Beethoven, in many cases, gave the symphonic dignity of four movements to pianoforte solos, while he left the three-movement group to the solo concerto, which it has kept to the present day.

In many of Beethoven's works the dance movement of the old group is much changed, and thereby more dignity is brought to the whole. Instead of the minuet and its alternative which Haydn derived from the old sonatas, and from the Lulli overture, Beethoven used a *scherzo*. This is often a continuous movement of some length, and, instead of the regular, even phrases of the old dance measure, a good deal of variety is made use of, and the rhythm is sometimes broken by slackening the time. Yet liveliness remains the special character of the movement,—liveliness which often amounts to humour.

*Variety in modern series.* We said just now that there was no compulsion in the special order of movements. If any one wants novelty he has only to invent it, if his genius is great enough to show him how to do it well. Let us follow out some exceptions to the custom that has been described; we shall find that many of them are returns to the old experiments of the days before Haydn.

One of Beethoven's most elaborate quartets, the posthumous one in C $\sharp$  minor, has a fugue for its first movement, instead of the now usual form which we call sonata-form, or first-movement form. This is a return to the old habit of times near to the madrigal age, when fugual writing was the



natural course for scholastic music to follow. It is not unusual now to have fugues for other movements in the series. Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony has a fugue for the last movement; so has Beethoven's beautiful sonata in A $\flat$ , the last but one in the long list of pianoforte sonatas. Mendelssohn, too, to come later in history, put a fugue in the *finale* of one of his quartets. All these give the composition a look-back to old times.

The air with variations, whether used for a first movement, as in Beethoven's earlier sonata in A $\flat$ ,—for slow movement, as the movement in C, in his sonata in G, op. 14, No. 2—or for *finale*, as in the same composer's symphony in E $\flat$ , the *Eroica*—is a look-back to old-fashioned forms.

Another look-back is the use of recitative in these groups of movements. We know that the invention of recitative was due to an effort to bring declamatory expression into music, and it was the result of the greater feeling for poetic expression in music. The "song without words" of Mendelssohn's habit was not so new in general meaning as it was in title and in execution; for, as was remarked just now, instrumental music was for many years but vocal music without voices. Musical declamation, then, was made use of in the sonata groups of old time, and the solo instrumentalist had to give all the force of expression

he could to the notes and intervals of his music just as if he were a singer, only without the words to explain the cause of his poetic emotion. A most beautiful example of this, in a modern use, is in Beethoven's sonata in A $\flat$ , the one just now mentioned as having a fugue for the last movement. It is also one of those which have four movements. The recitative, with the *arioso* which follows it, together resemble the vocal *scena* and *aria*, and take the place of the usual slow movement of Haydn's group.

After a few introductory chords the first phrase is as it might be for a voice, at the same time that its scope is adapted for an instrument.

*Recit. Più adagio.*

*Ped.* 5 6 *Andante.*

\*

Interludes and vocal phrases alternate till the *arioso* follows with this beginning:—

*Arioso.*

*dim.*

*Dolenti.* *Sua bassa.*



A sort of parallel between the instrumental recitative and air, with the real vocal music from which it is derived, may be found in the Choral Symphony. In this Beethoven uses declamatory phrases for the violoncellos and double basses, in alternation with *cantabile* phrases for the rest of the band, just as if the mass of bass strings were a solo voice with the band accompanying and answering, as in the old Italian *recitativo accompagnato* of Scarlatti's invention. Immediately after this passage, the entry of the voices with the same kind of work, confirms this interpretation of the origin of the style.

All this declamatory music in the Choral Symphony is, in a way, introductory to the final movement. Many other composers besides Beethoven have made use of a short movement which, like this, leaves off in an unfinished way, and therefore has the effect of leading into the next and more important movement. Sometimes it is but a short phrase or two that is used as a link between movements,—and

*Links  
between  
movements.*

this, whether by Beethoven, by his successors, or even by his predecessor, Emmanuel Bach, who seems to have done everything that was adopted later as a novelty. In Beethoven's *Waldstein* sonata this little phrase is much lengthened, but still remains shorter and less complete than an ordinary movement; it therefore serves as a link between the other two movements, while it does not assert its own individuality. In later writers this little movement between others is given the name of *intermezzo*, which sometimes appears to be a reason for shortening the whole, as in Schumann's pianoforte concerto, and sometimes a device for adding variety without lengthiness to the usual number of four movements. With the latter reason we find it in Sterndale Bennett's symphony in G minor. Here is the usual *allegro* which is in G minor, and the minuet in B $\flat$ , with its trio in E $\flat$ ; here is the *Romanza*, the slow singing movement, in D, and the *Rondo Finale* in the principal key, G minor. All these are complete movements, each of their own kind and in their own key. But in addition there is a little introduction to the minuet; there is a phrase or two to modulate from the end of the minuet to the beginning of the Romance, and there is a little *intermezzo* in minuet time between the Romance and the *finale*.

One other device for giving completeness to the design of the group must be named, one that is a modern treatment of the older habit of design by means of the musical ideas. In the anthem of the madrigal age that we looked at in Chap. II. we found that the ideas (or melodies, as all the ideas were in those days) were collected into masses; that one idea was made use of to its utmost,—that it was repeated in imitation among all the voices, the different imitations combined in various ways, augmented, diminished, inverted, and subjected to all manner of treatment before another was introduced; and thus that the music became a series of masses, each composed of one melody as its principal material. In modern music, however, the design of the musical ideas has an added completeness given to it by the repetition of first thoughts in a later part; and fragments or whole divisions of early ideas are introduced into the construction of the later parts. Of the repetitions of whole sections in a single movement we shall have much to say when we come to the special movements. But this repetition when applied to groups of movements is not so common. A rare example in Beethoven's works is the declamation for the basses in the choral symphony just now spoken of; for their phrases are quotations from

*Early ideas  
repeated in a  
later move-  
ment.*

the earlier movements in the same symphony. The sonata in A $\flat$  noticed before as having a fugue for the *finale* and a short *scena* and *arioso* for the slow movement (pp. 205-6), has a great deal of the recitative and *arioso* repeated in the middle of the fugue. Though a repetition, it sounds anew because of the new and remote key into which it is put (G minor). In other cases, part of the scherzo is repeated in the middle of the *finale*.

Two of Mendelssohn's early quartets, the work of his wonderful youth, make use of the music of the early movements, welding the phrases in among the music of the later movements.

*Design of the separate movements.* It was said, in the early part of this chapter, that we were to follow two lines in tracing the design of symphonic works. We have sketched out "the connection of key, and the contrast of idea and rhythm which bind together the different movements into a whole, united composition," we have now to find "the connection of key, and the course of idea and rhythm which make the design of each movement in the group."

*The dance movement of the symphony.* To begin with the simplest — the minuet. Many of these were of no greater length than the old popular tune of *Near Woodstock Town* (p. 31),

and their design as simple. Save in this respect, that instead of the one tune being repeated over and over again, like the ballad-tune, for as many verses as were to be sung, or as many rounds to be danced, there was a second tune to be used in alternation. But the minuet in one of Haydn's symphonies in E $\flat$  makes a little change from this original simplicity, for it is stretched out in some places, while contracted in others. It begins as follows:—



And though its first part does not modulate, as *Near Woodstock Town*, yet it does what has the same effect of coming to a semicolon in writing; namely, it ends on the dominant chord with what is called a half-close, or half-cadence. Here comes the first stretching-out of the plan; for the last bar of the phrase, having an accent like the last bar of the example, is repeated twice. This repeated bar makes a little codetta to the first part of the tune.

The second part of the tune modulates into new keys. The ideas, too, are fragmentary. A few notes resemble the same last bar of the example

in accent, though the intervals are different and they are drawn on into something quite fresh. The whole of the example is also imitated on different notes, and carried into different music. This makes an end of modulation, and gradually it falls back into a repetition of the first strain. Now it is as it was before, and in its old key. Not quite to its old end though, for, just as we feel we are coming to the former half-close, the music changes, and makes as though it would come to a rest upon the tonic. This expected rest is again averted, and new music grows out into a coda, which brings us after all to the full close (equivalent to a full-stop in writing). All these stretchings-out of the rhythm put the tune out of the simple dance-form, and make it more symphonic in character.

The alternative tune, or trio as it is called, is a little different, though also extended from ordinary ballad, or dance outline. There is a strain in  $E_b$ , which ends with a full close. This strain is quite complete, then there comes a middle part wherein are new keys and fragments of the first idea growing into something fresh. Then a repetition of the first strain of the trio follows, exactly as it was before, and with the same close to end it. After this the first minuet (p. 211) is to be played again.



Beethoven sometimes used the quiet, graceful manner of the minuet; but he oftener used, in its place in the group, a quicker measure which has generally had the name of scherzo. In fulfilment of the jocular title, the scherzo in Beethoven's C minor symphony begins as in the next example. There is a degree of apparent solemnity about the first few notes, as they come from the heavy bass instruments, that makes one wonder where the joke is going to be; but as the higher, softer sounds come out with the end of the phrase, we feel it as a smile drawn from an unwilling face.

*Allegro.*

*pp*

*poco rit.*

*8va bassa.*

etc.

Here, then, is a *ritardando*, with a pause, that deprive the movement of any ordinary dance character, unless we can think of it in connection with the curtsey in the *Lancers*. After this, some curious horn-notes, loud and repeated, accompanied with *staccato* notes from the strings, carry the music into other keys. A repetition of the opening

is in another key, and carried on differently, bringing back the repeated notes newly continued. Soon the first phrase and main key return again somewhat altered, decorated, and brought to a full close. This is the first full close of the movement. Two or three bars of the repeated notes form a codetta. All this represents the first minuet of Haydn's example, but much longer, and, being without the stops in the rhythm, much more continuous. After this the basses bustle off with a new idea for the trio (answering to the alternative minuet). It is C major now. They are almost incoherent in their garrulity, and are imitated in turn by the tenors, the second violins and the first violins; in fact it is carried out as a tiny fugue. Here is old fashion again. Towards the end the bustle dies away, and the soft wind instruments bring peace and quiet into the atmosphere. There is no full close at the end of the trio, but it drops into a return of the scherzo. This return gives us the whole of the beginning and of the ending, which were in the main key; but in place of the long middle part with many keys, we have but a few bars, and those in yet another key. At the former end of the scherzo there was a full close, but this time the close is avoided in a curious manner. For, though the indefinite sound of the drum gives

the tonic note, C, hovering on throughout the coda, even into the last chord, the more definite sounds of the bass strings have  $A^b$ , and they presently move about, and rest upon G. By this they do away with any sensation of resting that might belong to the drum note, and the close becomes one with a double meaning.

Finally, the scherzo bursts into the last movement as full of joy as it might be. Here, then, is the connection between two movements that was spoken of before—a connection made by the fact that the last chord of the scherzo requires the first note of the *finale* in order to complete the cadence. There is a connection of idea, too, between the two movements, made by the repetition of a phrase out of the scherzo in the middle of the *finale*; for there the time changes back to that of the scherzo for a few bars, and the repeated horn-notes come in a different guise.

Beethoven sometimes repeated the *Two trios.*  
trio after the second time of the scherzo, and in such a case the scherzo came again for a third time, when it might be either shortened or extended. Schumann made two distinct trios instead of simply repeating the same. This made a more complete composition for the whole extent. Thus in Schumann's C symphony the scherzo is of

rapid, animated manner, in C, and the first trio, a *legato* strain in another time and key. The scherzo repeated, another trio follows in contrapuntal manner and in a third key; while the scherzo comes again for a third time, and a coda growing from it, completes the movement.

All these changes in the course of this lighter movement in the group tend to give it a more continuous design than the alternative dance tunes of the old way, while they allow liveliness to be kept as the characteristic, thus contrasting the movement with the other three, which are generally more serious.

*No longer triple time.* Mendelssohn cast away the last resemblance to the old minuet when he turned the scherzo into a  $\frac{2}{4}$  or a  $\frac{6}{8}$  movement. If we think of the dance at all, in his scherzos, it is the dance of fairies and elves, among whom his music tripped as merrily as any. Some one has said that he and Shakespeare went hand in hand among such small folk, as befitted great minds to be small on the right occasion. For brilliance and charm we need never go further than Mendelssohn in his scherzos; and all the time the natural exuberance is guided into the most accurate of designs. Sometimes they are one long connected movement of the same shape as the usual first movement; such is the scherzo of the Scotch

symphony. At other times they are a kind of *capriccio*, yet with the main principle of key-form running through them.

As we found before, the customary symphony, as left by Haydn, had "a *The song movement.* slow movement in some sort of singing manner expressive of deep sentiment" (p. 203). This is one of the legacies left us by the days of early instrumental music when "it was but vocal music played by instruments" (p. 201). See how that legacy has been treasured up by the long line of composers, ever since those days! See how many different ways this movement, essentially a song, has been made lovely and attractive to all kinds of hearers!

Here, too, we may begin with the ballad-tune. There is a tune, little more than the ballad-tune of *Near Woodstock Town*, in its squareness of rhythm, in the slow movement of Beethoven's sonata in D, sometimes called *Pastorale*. It has a second strain of alternative, after which the first returns and is wound up by a little coda. Yet there is room for the utmost expression in this little movement.

There is another little tune in the slow movement of the *Sonate Pathétique*, where the ballad-like repetitions of the tune are separated and yet connected by melodies of a more fragmentary nature.

There is another, which is a reminder of the old days of English round-singing (pp. 16-20), in the slow movement of Beethoven's symphony in A, wherein the different parts in turn take up the melody phrase by phrase, each part continuing while the new ones enter—a burden going on the while in the bass part.

More elaborate, we must next put the *recitativo* and *arioso* of Beethoven's sonata in A $\flat$  already described (p. 206). It is essentially a song, but a song of less square rhythm than the ballad-like strains just mentioned.

Other works are none the less songs that they are such as no human voice could compass; but they are, rather, developments out of the vocal kind made suitable for the instrument which has to sing them. The middle movement of Mendelssohn's violin concerto is one of these; it is a perfect vocal work. Here is a long train of thought for the solo violin, with its companion band to interlude and support it, just as they would a solo singer. The music passes through several kindred ideas and is complete in its own key, though there is slight modulation in its course. This train of thought done and closed, there is another one, long, elaborate and in another key. This leaves off in an unfinished way, falling into a shortened version of the first train of thought and key. The two

thoughts are closely connected by their keys, the first in C and the second in A minor, while the musical ideas of the two are contrasted. Both deeply emotional, the first is as calm as the second is agitated. The end of this movement is connected, by a little *intermezzo*, with the *finale* of the concerto.

Though it would seem quite fair that a solo concerto, such as the fore-  
*Concerted  
song for the  
orchestra.*  
 going, should have a solo song for its slow movement, an orchestral work has larger possibilities. True the beautiful *Romanza* in Sterndale Bennett's G minor symphony has been called a song without words for the violas, because the body of violas are treated as a kind of solo, and have the chief part of the singing to do; but in many orchestral song movements the singing is divided between different instruments, as the interesting phrases should be divided between the voices in a concerted piece of vocal music. Let us look at one in which not only this takes place but the outline of the whole movement is more elaborate.

The *andante cantabile* in Mozart's symphony in C, the *Jupiter*, begins with a few declamatory phrases for the violins, who are the singers at first, while other instruments support them with chords. This begins as follows:—

*Andante cantabile* FULL BAND.

VIOLINS.

VIOLAS & BASSES.

The singing of the violins goes on in more flowing fashion. Now a hautboy comes in to colour the violins and presently a flute takes his place an octave higher, while the violoncellos double it an octave lower. Then the higher instruments wait, while violoncellos and violas have a singing phrase like the violins' opening, which is answered by the violins. All this has been in the key of F. Presently a new idea, an agitated one, is divided between the upper and lower instruments answering one another, while middle ones accompany. This is in C minor and serves to introduce a new thought in C major, beginning as follows:—

A new voicing comes with this new thought and key, for there is a quartet of song, while the horns hold a long note as a sort of atmosphere of sound, and the second violins play a harp-like accompaniment. All this winds through new



phrases till a little decoration given to the violins is imitated by the flute in tiny melodies and they go on to and fro while others are playing arpeggios, smooth melodies or even light bass notes. A close in the key of C makes the end of the first part. After this close there is a short time when everything is more broken and fragmentary, whether key, idea or rhythm; larger things are cut, while lesser things are extended. Fragments of the agitated thought that was before in C minor are here in rapidly-changing keys. The little turn that formed the close of the first part is repeated and echoed from second violin to first, and from flute to hautboy, and thus makes a gradual descent through a chain of beautiful discords into a repetition of the first thought and key.

Many movements would make this repetition of the first thought just what it was before. This one, however, is repetition with variety. It begins alike, but speedily there is decoration—quicker notes come in one voice, then answered in another. Part comes in a new key, the nearly related subdominant. More decorations come and these at last turn into a course of their own, distinct from the old strain, and we have what some call an *episodical* idea,—that is, one which we have not had before in the movement, an event which was not in the old story. Presently this drops back

into an old thought, the quartet song on p. 220. This really was the idea of second importance in the early part. It was then in C, but now, as we have had enough of variety and are due to come home again from our wanderings, we want the main key of the piece to help to draw the movement to an end. For this reason, therefore, this old idea is changed by being put into F. It is quite fresh in sound compared with what it was before in the other key, and yet it has more of home-coming about it, because of its being the main key. Now we have all the music that was before in this idea, only a few changes that might be suggested by the transposition having made the music higher or lower, and therefore more suitable for different instruments. Some phraselets that were high in the violins are now low in the bassoons, some that were in the bassoons are now in the horns, while some that were low down in the horns are now high up in the violins. Instead of stopping at the cadence, an extra grant of beauty comes. Just as if we were going to repeat the whole first part, the first example (p. 220) comes again ; but the answering phrase is repeated, broken and lengthened. It is only a little coda, after all, that serves to make the end seem more final.

*Finale*                    It is one of our musical misfortunes  
*movement.*            that we make the same words do duty

for many meanings. We have a *finale* to an opera, and a *finäle* to symphonic works, but different courses are followed in their construction. An opera *finale* is a chain of movements, while a symphony *finäle* is but one. Generally lighter than a first movement in artistic development, it is lighter than the slow in emotional tendency, while it is more elaborate than the minuet, or whatever other manner of movement may take the place of the old dance.

Custom has given more variety of design to the final movement than to either the first or the minuet. Many *finales* are written as rondos. How far old poetry has been the suggestion of this form, one cannot say; perhaps it is the natural process which carries on everything from one stage to another in waves—from simple to division, and from division again to compression and so to division again. At least, we may take the old poem as a comparison to help us to understand the less easily defined musical form. Look back to Chaucer's roundel in Chap. I. Here are three lines which contain the principal thought or subject of the poem, the welcome to summer—

*Compare  
Rondo with  
Roundel.*

“Now welcom Somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast this wintre's weders over-shake,  
And driven away the long nightes blake !”

At one time we thought this might have been sung as an accompaniment to the rest, like the burden. Well, there are often two ways of doing a thing, even besides the old rule of the *right way and the wrong way*; and when we do not know which is the right, we may as well consider two ways as possible.

Next after this first or principal subject of the poem comes a branch idea or episode, wherein the poet talks of something else which is related to the original idea; it is a contrast and yet connected.

“ Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-lofte ;  
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake.”

These lines are connected, not merely by the general sense that St Valentine has to do with birds, but by the grammatical sense of the words *Thus singen*, which make necessary the repetition of *Now welcom Somer*, in order to finish the sentence. That is to say, that “smale foules” are to sing “now welcom.” It is an old saying that birds begin to sing on St Valentine’s Day.

The return of the original thought has just so much of the words as will serve to tell us what the poet is thinking about.

Now a new thought comes which we may call a second episode—

“ Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,  
 Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make,  
 Ful blisful may they singen whan they wake.”

Like the first episode, this is kindred with, yet diverse from the principal subject; and like it, too, it falls into the same, “ Ful blisful may they singen. . . . Now welcom Somer.”

This final coming round of the principal thought makes the complete *roundel*.

Every minuet and trio follows this rondo principle up to a certain point. That is to say, there is a first complete strain, as complete as the “ Now welcom Somer ” with its two lines following. This is the first minuet. Then there is a second strain, to match the two lines about “ Seynt Valentyn ”; this is the trio or alternative minuet. Then comes again the first minuet, like the return of “ Now welcom Somer,” except that it is complete as the final return of that. But the ordinary minuet and trio stops there. When we get to some of the scherzos of Beethoven which have the trio repeated and the initial tune played thrice, we are a step nearer the poem roundel of two episodes. And when we get to Schumann’s two distinct trios we are nearer still to the poem.

Most trios keep one difference from the episodes of the roundel, in that they are complete in themselves. Some of the final movements of Haydn’s

sonatas have this effect in the episodes. One can hardly feel a similar effect in any of the verbal rondos or roundels. In the northern song, "We're a' noddin', nid, nid, noddin' at our house at home" is the principal thought—it is for joy that "Jamie he's come home," and the episodes are connected together as a story, while they all fall into the repetitions of the principal thought. "When he knocket at the door, I thocht I kent the rap. And little Katie cried aloud, My daddie he's come back ! . . . Noo we're a' noddin' with joy."

Even in the whimsical "Butter and eggs, and a pound of cheese," of Calverley—while the principal subject, with the poetic license of the caricaturist, has no sort of connection with the episodes, these themselves have an incompleteness which binds them together as a sort of story. With the musical rondo with complete episodes, however, the real connection is of the same kind as that between groups of movements—it is the relation of the keys and the contrast of the style. Look in the little slow movement of Beethoven's that was named first in our list of *cantabile* movements (p. 217). There is the opening strain in D minor, which is *legato* in style ; this contrasts and is connected with the alternative which is in D major and is of a livelier mood.

But in well-developed rondos it is more often the

case that the episodes are unfinished, so that they require the repetition of the other part to complete them. They end with a chord belonging to the key of the returning strain; and this is just in the same way as in the Chaucer roundel, the birds are to "sing, Now welcom Somer." The slow movement of Mendelssohn's violin concerto (p. 218) does this, with one episode; while an example with several episodes is the pretty movement which ends Beethoven's pianoforte sonata in E, op. 14. Here the first episode is in B and is repeated in A in the place of the third episode, while the middle one is in G, a more distant relation. Every one of them work round to their end upon the dominant chord of the key of the main subject, and so lead naturally into the return of the first thought.

*A real  
rondo  
finale.*

The longer the work, the more do these episodes become extended, and the rhythm more broken. The design thus becomes of more interest in comparison with the simple alternations of the old minuet and trio. There is a verbal likeness to this in some old poems and ballads, in which parts of the story were told in prose between rhythmic verses of the poem. The old French romance *Aucassin et Nicolette* is a beautiful example of this, in a refined style of work.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edited and translated into English by F. W. Bourdillon.

Rougher examples of the same kind of thing are not unknown in the story-telling days of old ballads, Scotch and others.

Something of this prose effect is in the middle episode of the movement last mentioned ; but still more is in the *finale* of Beethoven's pianoforte concerto in Eb, known as the *Emperor*. The principal subject begins thus :—



It is a finished idea, that is, it ends with a full close or cadence in its own key. From this close the music begins again, but soon turns off from the key, with long phrases of less regular rhythmic manner, and so goes into the first episode. This, beginning as follows, is a distinct strain in a new key.



Without making a full close, this episode turns back to the original thought as above. Like the



first repetition of "Now welcom Somer," the music is not the whole of what came at first, but "just enough to tell us what the poet is thinking about." Here it makes a full close. After this all sorts of play is made with fragments of the old ideas—the first example and little bits taken out of later parts. They are put into new keys, broken up, extended, and put into the mouths of other instruments than they were before. This, the middle episode, goes on for a long time, like the prose relation we spoke of, till a long unrhythmic passage of arpeggios brings back the dominant of the old key; and while the solo instrument is making a long shake upon this note, waiting, as it were, for the cadence to make a stop, the band steals in almost imperceptibly with the first thought again. From hence we have the music from the beginning (as if the "Now welcom, Somer," of the roundel) with its full close. Then comes again the music that introduced the first episode (p. 228). It is in the main key this time, for we have had new keys enough, and we want the home-coming effect now. Still, a fragment is in a new key, which was before in the main; so that we have not quite put away novelty. From this last little novelty the main idea returns in full, as if "Now welcom Somer," had returned again after a third episode. Now, however, any change that is made in it is by the avoidance of

anything that might suggest going onwards. It is all suggestive of winding-up or ending ; there is much iteration of dominant and tonic chords, and insistence on full closes again and again. The music is, in fact, playing the part of coda as well as that of the last time of the subject.

Many movements of this elaborate kind of rondo are hard to distinguish from the design generally belonging to first movements. The difference must be looked for in the comparative importance of the principal subject over the episodes, and the decided nature of its close compared with those of the episodes. It is a matter of instinctive feeling, in some cases, to find out where the prominent points are placed and what is their relative proportion. It is so with the final rondos of Brahms' orchestral serenades in D and in A.

The rondo is perhaps the modern form which is most affected by the position of its ideas ; especially is this in the elaborate kinds where so much of the main key is used at the end that the sub-division can only be found by the groups of ideas. On the other hand, there are rondos where the form is only indicated by the key ; this is in vocal music chiefly. In them the principal subject is represented by the main key, which comes round and round with either old or new ideas ; while the episodes are ever new ideas

with different keys more or less related to the principal.

Other *finales* are written, definitely, in the same design that more specially belongs to the first movement of the usual group. Perhaps those intended as *finales* may be more brilliant and gay than a first movement usually is, but they are none the less interesting and full of art. The *finale* of Mozart's symphony in C, known as the *Jupiter*, follows the usual course of a first movement, and is at the same time a fugue with all the devices of *point counter point*, of imitation, inversion and all that can make a fugue into the most elaborate work. Yet for brilliance and beauty of general effect it is unequalled.

Like a "bonne bouche" we keep the best for the end of the chapter. It is in the first movement of a symphony that the greatest efforts of the composer are put forth ; and we must not think it strange if a proportionate difficulty be felt by the listening artist, who would understand all that has been intended in it.

Much that we have said as to lesser movements will help to explain the course of this larger one. For instance, the old tune of *Near Woodstock Town* (p. 32) is a miniature of the usual design of a first movement. As we pointed out in the

*Finales in form of first movement.*

*First movement or sonata-form.*

early part of this chapter, the tune agrees with the general principle of key-form, because it begins with enough music in C to decide it to be the main key of the piece, and because the tune modulates in the middle and then ends with a large proportion in that main key. This makes a proportion or balance in the keys. Now let us further realise that, besides agreeing with this general principle, the tune agrees with a special design because, about half-way through, it makes a decided stop

*Half-way rest.* on the chord of G, which is the dominant of the main key of C. It is this half-close, or rest upon the dominant at the end of about half of the movement, which is the distinguishing feature of the design called the sonata form, or first-movement form. We can trace it through all movements, however large, that belong to that kind of design. It is in the Haydn minuet (p. 211) where there is a half-close at the double-bar. If this stop had been a full close, as in the alternative trio of the same minuet, the special design would have been some kind of rondo, instead of being the little sonata that it is.

The slow movement of Mozart described before (p. 219, etc.) is a longer example of the sonata design. Being in F, it comes to its half-way rest upon the dominant when it closes in the key of C at the end of the first part (p. 221).

All these movements, however short or long, make a final end by a full close on the tonic of their own key, and this makes a balance with the half-close in the middle of the movement.

Now note another item in the design *Sonata first of the tune Near Woodstock Town.* *part.* Half of the first part of the tune is in C, while the second half of that part is in G. Look at the example on page 32. Technically, we call that the division of the first part into *subjects*; one being the tonic subject, the other the dominant subject. Let us now look to a larger specimen of the same. Not the Haydn minuet, though many minuets have it, but the Mozart slow movement. Here is the long stretch of music in F beginning with the first example (p. 220), which seems to lose itself in an unfinished way into the portion in C minor. Then comes a clearly defined strain in C major, which continues from the second example to the bar before the double bar. So the whole of that first part is divided, like that of the *Woodstock* tune, into the portion in F, or tonic subject, and the portion in C major, or dominant subject. The fragment in C minor is only an appendage, or dwindling away of the first subject.

After the half-way rest, the course of *Second half of the design.* the design is to bring back the main key, and so to travel home again to the full

close in order to make the balance. In the *Woodstock* tune, being so short an example of the design, all the second part therefore is in the main key of C. The Haydn minuet is more developed, for musical idea comes into play to help the design of the key. Here the former idea (p. 211) is brought back along with the former key (p. 212), and is carried on to a full close.

More development still is in the plan of the Mozart movement, for here there are two distinct subjects in the earlier half. These then are both "recapitulated" (as the technical word is), where the F strain comes back rather more than half-way through the movement (see p. 221). But in order to make this a return of key as well as idea all through this part, the second or dominant subject is transposed into the main key (p. 222), and so carried on to the close.

*Free fantasia and coda.*

Two more points are to be noticed in the second half of the design. These are not in the *Woodstock* tune, for they are means of lengthening and of making works of more importance. In the Haydn minuet, after the half-way rest, or close on the dominant, there was music that was fragmentary in idea and changing in key. Some of it was like fragments of the first part, and some was new. This is a way of stretching out the second part, which sometimes has the

name of *fantasia* or *free fantasia*. It is a name which, tracing from the old days of Fancies or Phantasies, points to the fragmentary or changeful nature of the rhythm, ideas and keys. The same sort of thing, more largely carried out, is in the Mozart slow movement, after the close in C, "when everything is more broken," before the return to the first subject in F (p. 221).

The coda, on the other hand, is a lengthening out at the end of the movement. In the Haydn minuet it grows out of the averted cadence. When we had come to the end of the repetition of the first part (p. 212) and we thought of a close, it came not, but new music came instead of it. This was the coda or tail-piece. In the Mozart, too, we were at the end of repeating in F what was before in C. Here the expected full close or cadence came (p. 222), but not the expected stop upon it; fresh music out of old grew on till we were satisfied. This was the coda. So the fantasia stretches the second part at its entry, while the coda does the same duty at its end.

Now to a real first movement. Very generally, the real first movement is much longer than any other movement in the same sort of ground-plan; and one way of getting this length is by having many distinct ideas in the different groups or divisions of

*Several  
ideas in a  
first move-  
ment.*

## 236 MUSIC AND WHAT IT IS MADE OF

key. Thus in Mozart's  $E\flat$  symphony, the first movement (after the introduction) begins with the thought (*a*) in the next example. This is carried on for some time, and immediately on its close, another comes, beginning as (*b*), and is carried on to a close. At this close a third (*c*) begins immediately.

(a) *Allegro.*  
 VIOLINS. etc.  
 p  
 HORNS.

Detailed description: This musical example is in 3/4 time and the key of E-flat major. The Violins part (top staff) begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Horns part (bottom staff) begins with a half note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, and C4. The music concludes with a half note G4 in the Violins and a half note G3 in the Horns, with the word 'etc.' at the end.

(b) ALL.  
 f etc.

Detailed description: This musical example is in 3/4 time and the key of E-flat major. It consists of a single staff starting with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The music concludes with a half note G4, with the word 'etc.' at the end.

VIOLINS.  
 (c) etc.  
 BASSES and WIND.

Detailed description: This musical example is in 3/4 time and the key of E-flat major. The Violins part (top staff) begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Basses and Wind part (bottom staff) begins with a half note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, and C4. The music concludes with a half note G4 in the Violins and a half note G3 in the Basses and Wind, with the word 'etc.' at the end.

It is during the course of this third idea that the music becomes made of the notes of the key of F, and this is as a preparation for the dominant subject which is near at hand. After the end of this long third idea the dominant subject begins in the key of  $B\flat$ .



VIOLINS.

*p*

BASSES. *p*  
*Sua bassa*

$B\flat$  quavers throughout in bass.

After a repetition of this, a new thought grows out of it, then three or four others, all short, but carried out to different lengths, and all answering and continuing one another. So that in the tonic subject, or division in  $E\flat$ , we have had several ideas, and also in the dominant, or division in  $B\flat$ . Now comes a full close in the key in which was all this second subject. This close is the half-way rest of the movement.

It is not invariably that there are several ideas in a first or a second subject. Sometimes there may be several in either, but not in both subjects. In Mozart's G minor symphony, for instance, there is but one in the first subject, beginning thus:—

*Allegro molto.* VIOLINS in 8vas.

*p*

VIOLAS & BASSES.



But it is given twice, each time with a different course after the first beginning. The first time it goes on in G minor up to a half-close; the second time it soon turns off into B $\flat$  and F with a different course of idea, and so to the half-close just before the second subject enters. The second subject, on the other hand, has several ideas, as well as several ways of carrying them on. First comes (a) in the next example; it is carried to a close, and at once begins again, is then turned off from the close into new music and lengthened. At the close of this in its turn, another idea begins, (b) in the next example.

From the close of this a little play is made with a fragment of the opening thought of the move-

ment (p. 237) in conjunction with a new one in other instruments. These are repeated with the higher melodies lowered and the lower ones raised, while the whole is carried on to a new end, which is the close of the first part.

The rhythm of first movements is more various than that of other movements. This gives more continuousness to the effect of the music. For instance, the opening idea of this G minor symphony (p. 237) begins with two phrases of the ordinary 4-bar rhythm, but its continuation is of short phrases united into one long one, while the second time of the same idea begins with the ordinary phrase, and continues into longer ones of various length.

*Varying  
rhythm of  
first move-  
ments.*

After the first part of the ordinary first movement, with its two subjects, there follows the part which is called the *fantasia* or *free fantasia*. This is in the same order as in the Haydn minuet and the Mozart slow movement already described. In this free fantasia are mostly the former ideas, but they are broken up and placed in new company, while the rhythm is cut and changed in all ways. Above all, the keys are quickly changed, and the main tonic and its dominant are generally avoided. Generally, we say, because in some cases the main tonic begins this part as a sort of introduction; or

*Fantasia  
of ideas and  
keys.*

a fragment may come in the course. But it is so blended with others and with new keys, that we have no time to recognise it save as a passing acquaintance of the many new keys through which we are moving. So in the G minor movement, just after the close of the first part (the half-way rest of the whole movement) we have the beginning idea (p. 237); but it is in F $\sharp$  minor instead of G minor, and only the first eight bars. Then the last bars of this fragment are repeated, but in E minor. From here we go into G major, and four bars only of the tune part are put in the bass, while a new top is written. Now the music goes to D minor, and the same four bars are in the upper part, while the new top descends to the bass. All this time a few stray notes in the wind instruments serve to thicken the atmosphere of music. Now we are in C, the four bars of tune go into the bass, and the new top again into the violin part, to be reversed again in B $\flat$  and extended, and again in D minor. Presently only the first bar of the thought is used, but tossed backwards and forwards from violins to flutes and hautboys, with a holding note of the bassoon to keep them together. Next the play is between all the strings together on the one hand, and all the wood-wind on the other, while the key changes every three or four bars—B $\flat$  minor, C minor, G minor. Then a yet shorter

fragment is used, no more than three notes, from one to another, in changing harmonies. Finally, on a held D, first in the bassoons and after in the horns, the flutes and hautboys die down to the close in G. Upon the last notes of their closing phrase the violins steal in with the opening idea (p. 237) again in the old key, and from thence go on with the recapitulation of the whole first and second subjects.

This fantasia section of the G minor symphony is all made of the initial and most important idea of the first part. The corresponding fantasia of the E $\flat$  symphony, on the other hand, is made principally of a fragment that occurred in the very last bars of both the first and the second subjects; an insignificant trifle in itself, which becomes interesting by the changes of key and the involvements of the different parts that have the fragment.

The keys of this section are sometimes closely connected with the main one; so it is in this E $\flat$  symphony. In the G minor one there is another way, for the division starts with a key which is not at all related, and gradually comes round to nearer ones for the home-coming. Other symphonies are treated by a contrary process, for the division begins with keys that are near relations, and falls into a distant one for the last item of

variety before the home-coming. This was the course noticed in Chap. II. with reference to the *Hostias* in Mozart's *Requiem* (p. 85).

*Return of first part.* For after all, this fantasia brings us back again to the old key; its object is to renew or refresh the effect of the old key, the old ideas and rhythm. Then comes one of the chief beauties of the design, namely, the return of the first part; when the balance of the whole begins to be felt,—when all seems familiar and yet “refreshed,” to use an expression of Professor Macfarren's, because of the variety we have had just before. In the  $E\flat$  symphony, after the fantasia just spoken of, the whole of the first subject which was in  $E\flat$  comes again; and where it before began to move towards  $B\flat$ , a change takes place. The music which was in  $B\flat$  is now in  $E\flat$ , and therefore it sounds quite new though the actual course is the same as before; and with a short coda growing out of this the movement closes.

*Changes made in the course of the design.* So far this is a complete development of the design of a first movement. But many variations have been made in the filling up of this usual course.

To begin at the beginning, or rather before the beginning, some movements have an introduction. In some cases this introduction is made of con-

tinual changes of key, like a free fantasia, while others have definite strains with a good deal of the main key. Sometimes the introduction is repeated at the end of the movement, as in Mendelssohn's Scotch symphony, where the actual movement is compacted between the introduction and its repetition.

A very interesting way of putting the introduction into closer connection with the following part is when phrases from the slow introduction are used in the course of the quicker movement. This is done in Mendelssohn's *Ruy Blas* overture (for overtures in one movement closely resemble the form of a first movement). In other works the fragment of introduction is not only repeated in its old time, but also changed into that of the quick, and so composed into the rest of the quick music. This is done in the coda of Haydn's E $\flat$  symphony (of which the minuet has already been quoted), and also in the whole first movement of Beethoven's *Sonate Pathétique*.

The second subject is often spoken of as the dominant subject,—a true name in more than one sense, for it dominates very largely over the rest of the movement. But it gained its name from being so often in the key of the dominant of the main key. Yet here is one of the first changes made in the usual

*The secondary key not always the dominant.*

course of the plan. Some other key is chosen to take this importance, as the key more used than any except the main one. Still we shall find as we go on that there is often some connection between this new key and the dominant whose place it takes. The mediant major key is the earliest variety. We can trace the beginning of its use as a near relative in old tunes in a minor key; there it shares a place with the key of the minor seventh, which has not survived into modern use. Such tunes are the *dump*, quoted in Chap. I., and also *Stingo, Cold and Raw, The Oak and the Ash, The Three Ravens* and *Near Taunton Dean*, which may be found in Chappell's "Popular Music of the Olden Time," and the latter five in the present writer's "Form or Design in Music." The G minor symphony of Mozart, which we have just now been looking at, shows the use of the relative major for the second subject. (See p. 238.)

*Second subject transposed.* The part which brings back the old ideas in their old form, turns this relative major division into the main key; and so, what was before in major is now in minor. Very beautiful, too, is the effect of this change, as we can hear for ourselves if we look onwards in the G minor movement; for this is the way Mozart has treated it here. After the repetition of the opening idea, of which we heard at p. 241,



there is new music inserted, and then we come upon a new version of the two fragments next quoted (p. 238). It is the complete second subject, changed from *Bb major* to *G minor*, and the change gives it quite a new colour of expression—



In many later works the composers are so in love with the effect of the major key, in its contrast with the minor which they have chosen for their principal, that they use another major key in the transposed part. Often this is the major form of the main key. So it is in Mendelssohn's *Ruy Blas* overture. It is a choice of beauties whether the effect of the change from major to minor is better than the preservation of the contrast between the group in minor with the group in major.

*Sometimes preserving the major form.*

Yet other keys are used for the second subject, and they seem to be chosen with a reference to the usual dominant as their origin. The key chosen for the transposed version interprets this reference, for it will actually bear the same relation to the main tonic as the first key bore to the

*Other secondary keys may be deputies of dominant and tonic.*

dominant. So in Beethoven's sonata in C, op. 53, dedicated to Count Waldstein, the secondary key is E, which is related to the usual dominant (G) by being its major 6th; while in the recapitulation of this subject this key is replaced by A. Now A is the major 6th of C, so that the two keys take their place by virtue of their relationship to the two which would more usually be in those places. E is in the place of G, and A in the place of C.

Of course it now becomes necessary for something to be done to bring about the home-coming after this modulating return of the second subject, else we shall never end the movement. In the Waldstein sonata, therefore, this key of A lasts but a short time, as if only to assert its right to be there and to make freshness; the music then turns off into the usual key for the remainder. In other works the home-coming effect is brought about by a coda. This is the way in Brahms' symphony in F. Here, too, is the more remote connection acting as deputy for the dominant, and it is the same relation as in the Waldstein sonata. The second subject, which is in a different time to the first, is in A. When we come to the later part of the movement, all the music that was in A is transposed to D, a key which bears the same relationship to the main key, F, that A does to the key

of C, its dominant, and after all this is done there begins a coda in the main key. This coda makes as though it would be a repetition of the whole part, for it begins the old first idea again, just as did the slow movement of Mozart's that we looked through earlier in this chapter. It threatens to be something like a rondo, but it is not so really; and as in the Mozart movement, it turns off into a new course of music like, but unlike, that which went before—in fact, a coda. It is all in the main key, and so brings all home to a close in the movement's own key.

It would be an endless work, though a labour of love, to note all the lesser changes and varieties that have been made, all founded on this design as the main outline. But we may give some idea of the elasticity with which music can be treated.

*Lesser varieties are to be found.*

There are the fragments of modulation to near or to remote keys that can be used transiently in the course of each of the divisions of settled key. Such is the fragment in the major key of the minor second (neapolitan sixth) just after the opening of the principal key in Beethoven's *Sonata Appassionata* in F minor. In the very long second subject of Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony there are several modulations, but so transient and so nearly related that we scarcely notice them as changes.

Hence they do not take away from the influence of the key which belongs to that few minutes of time, while they decorate it with variety. The Brahms movement mentioned just now has a different variety of key in its second subject; for, while the first musette-like idea is in the major form of the key, the minor form of the same key comes in later, after some modulation with a new idea, and so brings the half-way close of the movement. The treatment in Beethoven's sonata in A, op. 2, is the reverse of this. Here the subject begins with a definite melody in E minor, turns off into other keys, modulating by steps till it begins another definite idea in the major form of the same, and so up to the close of the subject. Both these movements make the music of this division hang upon the key chosen to be second in importance in the work; while both use modulations into keys which are related to it, and are, as it were, nursed between the ideas in the major and minor forms of the secondary key. This makes the whole division into a little group of its own.

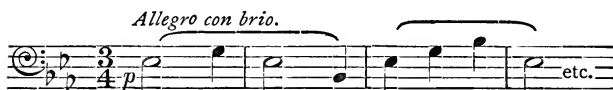
Then again, in the coda — which principally belongs to the main key, because its business is to confirm and close that key — in the coda of Beethoven's *Eroica* first movement in E $\flat$ , there is a beginning with a change of key into C followed by another into F minor. These two keys divide the

E♭ which went before from that which is coming after, and in no way destroy the force of the long remainder in E♭. They make the design clear by making a distinct point between the repetition of the whole first part wherein all has been running its full course, and the coda wherein old ideas are cut short while tonic and dominant chords are often repeated, with many stops and closes.

Though one of the great features of the sonata design is the repetition of the music of the first part in the course of the second part, we must remember that this is not a servile, but a reasonable imitation. It is as a wise man will imitate a good man's example. For this reason we find that the best composers often exercise their prerogative by rendering the same with a difference. The principle is shown even in the tiny example which stands at the very beginning of the existence of the form, namely, the ballad-tune of *Near Woodstock Town*, for herein the second part has a return of the main key, but not the former melody. With the same principle, yet how differently carried out, we find a large amount of change in the recapitulation in the *Eroica* movement. Some things are as usual, for the main key is brought back, and the second subject is in that main key, with all its transitory modulations, its rhythm and

*How the  
recapitulation  
may be  
changed.*

ideas in their former course. But other things are new. All that part which was built upon the main key in the earlier half of the movement is changed. There is the same initial idea—



but instead of its three successive beginnings in the same key, with the three ways of carrying out, the first time ends in the new key of F, and so *Recomposed.* begins the melody again in this new key with yet another course for it. Quickly too it plunges upon yet another new key, D $\flat$ , and so begins the melody again. Next, a fragment of the same melody is in the old key, E $\flat$ , but it is constructed upon another part of the scale. Again it begins, as if for the old second way of treating it, but there is a tonic pedal under, which was not there before, and it is continued differently. It is also for full band *forte* instead of a "broken" band (to use the old word) playing softly. Finally the old third time begins and is carried on, but with some new chords which serve to bring the second subject into E $\flat$  instead of the former B $\flat$ .

All this has been called a *recomposition* of the former music; and so it is truly, for, though the

same idea is there, the whole process of putting together the music is different to what it was in the earlier part of the movement.

There are simpler means of renewing the effect of the recapitulation; one is by *Cut shorter.* taking out what may seem redundant at a second hearing. The E $\flat$  symphony of Haydn, the minuet of which has been quoted, has a long passage which comes after the important ideas of the first subject have been shown. Its object is to introduce the second subject, and beautifully it fulfils its purpose. However, Haydn must have felt that this was not needed when the ideas were given again at a later part of the movement; so the passage was not used again and the music in the recapitulation goes straight from the end of the principal ideas of the first subject to the beginning of the second.

For the beauty of adding, look again *Or lengthened.* to Mozart's G minor symphony, where is a great piece put in the recapitulation which was not in the first part. If we remember, after the twice beginning of the first idea (p. 237) there was a sudden dash into B $\flat$  with a new idea. This we knew for part of the first group of key (tonic subject) because it *was* a sudden dash, and not prepared for by long waiting. It really was the beginning of the preparation for the new key and

new set of ideas (dominant subject), and there is therefore no close all along this preparation till in the bar just before the real second subject begins (p. 238*a*). Now, in the second part of the movement, after all that long time of coming back described at pp. 240-1, and the stealing in of the first key and ideas with the violins, we have the same twice beginning of the first thought and the same sudden dash into the new idea and key, but this time it is  $E^b$ , not  $B^b$ , that we dash into. Now, too, instead of going a little way off in order to bring in the new subject, Mozart repeats this  $E^b$  thought in yet another key, and with the bass and top parts inverted; then he stretches it out with repetitions of fragments on different chords, in new keys. It is tossed to and fro between upper and lower parts, till the music gradually comes round to the last few chords of the former passage, and thus to the former half-close in the key of the second subject. Thence the remainder follows naturally.

*New ideas  
put in the  
fantasia and  
the coda.*

It is generally thought that the fantasia and the coda are to be built up of ideas that have been heard in the first and second subjects, while the choice is free as to which are to be so used. Occasionally, however, a fresh one is brought in as well. So, in the fantasia of the *Eroica* first



movement, when all seems to have been done that is possible with the fragments of old ideas, Beethoven throws in another, and in a remote key.



Presently it is brought into closer connection with the rest by being given in a nearer key, and this is carried on and joined to more fragments of the earlier ideas, and soon the music drops into the return of the first part. By - and - by when the coda comes, this episodical idea is brought in again, first as the F minor modulation that we spoke of a few paragraphs back, and then in E $\flat$  minor bringing the main key again for the close of the movement.

Drawing near to the end of my task, *The object of*  
—and a pleasant task it has been,— *this book.*  
it may be well to look back and to see whether the aim set before me has been followed. For when the suggester of this book, the late Mr W. H. Davenport Adams, set me thinking about it,

his words were, "not a technical manual, but a readable book,—on the forms of music, the different schools; on amateur music, drawing-room music, the character of different styles as set before us by the great masters, with analysis of representative compositions." He added, "Many skilful executants are nothing more than executants, and play bad music with as much willingness as good, because they know no better."

Because they know no better? Alas, how many of us there are who "know no better." Not because the thing is difficult to learn, but because we have no thought of it nor of the way to learn. It is not difficult; for these things in music have all grown, and everything is easy to learn if we take it in the natural way of growth. "Line upon line, here a little, there a little." A twig or a leaf here, and a branch there, and so the tree becomes great, and all done with ease and grace. This is the way music has grown, and our knowledge of it should grow in like fashion—as easily and as gracefully.

When music was little, it sang little popular tunes, with rhythmic phrases and well-marked cadences,—dancing and playing its simple instruments in time with the song. It sang, too, with simple oratory, the plain-song of the Church. By degrees these grew together, and through round

and canon, descant and the involvements of counterpoint, music grew into long winding courses. Then came poetry and declamation into the art, and a natural kind of sentiment or emotion fell into music. Music grew with a new life. There was a place found in it for every beauty of sound. Here was a place for the long continuity of counterpoint, a place for the richness of harmony and strains of melody, a place for the contrast of power and quality in orchestral and vocal effects. The rhythm grew greater and formed itself into a greater receptacle for all these beauties.

There is rhythm in the vibrations of the air which makes musical sounds, or they would not differ from noise. There is rhythm of notes, to make bars, and rhythm or balance of groups of notes to make phrases, and of cadences to make tunes. Now that music is grown to be great, the rhythm of "great swelling masses of sound" (see p. 200), or of key, balanced and contrasted against one another, makes music into great works or compositions. And this greater rhythm of *masses of keys* makes the greater design—the receptacle—which contains all the lesser beauties of the work.

There is yet another pedigree for musical key-form besides this tracery from rhythm to the "higher unity" of the work, as some call the larger design when they speak of literary works.

In early days, before counterpoint had come into existence, people felt that a melody might be doubled by other voices than the leading one. They doubled it therefore in the 5th or the 4th. Here was a glimmering of the truth that the dominant is a note second in importance to the tonic, a first instinct of musical construction by keys. Later, in place of the consecutive 5ths or 4ths of one melody against the same at a different pitch, when the one was a reflection or shadow of the other—in place of this, the second tune was delayed a few notes or bars. So, when the sun is in front of us, our shadow is thrown behind us, following us as we move. This made a canon. Later again the reflected melody was made in its own key, and was therefore a transposition of the other, more or less exact. Then it was styled an *answer*, while the first melody was a *subject*. In this kind of work the two were used over and over again, in alternation—subject, answer, subject, answer, with various accompaniments and changes. This made a fugue. Here then was the principle of key-form with its primary and secondary keys. There were the lesser related keys too; for the fugue, after making as much use as was necessary of the tonic and dominant, made way into other keys, carrying the same melody with it, and by-and-by returned to the main key for its wind-up.

Later, these many little portions of music in tonic and dominant keys became, as it were, *sorted* into bunches or divisions, and thus developed into the tonic and dominant subjects of a sonata first movement; and in this form the key of the tonic was amply developed, then that of the dominant, and from thence there came the division with divers keys and the return back to main key for the finish.

In all the main varieties of design that are in classical music (and we have gone through a good many in this little book), there must be found the principle of massing the keys. The longer the work, the more variety in the key is possible; so that, while in a symphony there is some prominence given to one key and all others are grouped about it, in an opera or oratorio this is not so. The key-design in these largest of works is often extended into an enchainment of masses more or less related—an alternation of masses in one key with masses in oft-changing keys. In these alternations we find the construction of the lesser things of music helps out the spirit of the alternation. A mass, or long course in one key, has a long-settled rhythm of phrases and a long-flowing idea—perhaps several in succession; it has too, very often, a long *crescendo* or *diminuendo*, or *forte* or *piano*. When the alternating mass or course of changing key comes, then

also come broken phrases, fragmentary ideas, whether former or new; very often, too, it has abrupt changes of loud and soft.

These are the materials out of which musical design is made, but there is no hard and fast rule as to how much of this, or how much of that is to be used. *There* is the need for the composer's instinct; no one can teach him that, though he may learn much for himself, and learn it he will by many a failure.

There are some, both writers and hearers, who like their masses of one key in homœopathic doses; who will be satisfied with a couple of chords in one key and then on to the next, and the next, and so *ad infinitum*—who unite this to an ever irregular rhythm, an almost ceaseless accompaniment and a repetition of former ideas always in the same shape, in a sort of mixed monotony. This they are apt to call musical form, and defend it as "artistic freedom." Artistic freedom, when the greatest musical beauties are left out! There are some kinds of freedom which are not worth having—the freedom, for instance, of the solitary man left in a desert, scorched by a tropical sun, without food, without water, without a beast to carry him—free to die!

*Poetic idea* One more thought. We spoke just  
*with design.* now of the design of a literary work.

There is in a literary work a higher design or plan for the whole work, which makes the difference between one which is a complete whole and one which is only a collection of ideas, like a dictionary. This higher design contains all the lesser parts and ideas. When music is allied to poetry, if the unity of design in the literary art is joined with chaotic freedom (or starvation?) in the musical art, the whole work is spoilt. For there is a mathematical truth, that "if equals are added to unequals, the wholes are unequal." So it is with a work of art. If, on the other hand, there be the greater design in the music which is made to coincide (to use another mathematical expression) with that of the poetry, and all the lesser parts of the music with the lesser parts of the poetic design, then each one strengthens the other; and the design of the work as a whole, and with it the grandeur of it, is increased manifold.

The character of one art is not changed by being joined with another art, though each one may help to interpret and thus add to the effect of the other. Each must be perfect of its own kind, and the result will be perfect. "If equals are added to equals, the wholes are equal," says the mathematician, again.

When Milton wrote about the union of poetry and music as "the sister and the brother," music was

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just opening out into the fulness of its many powers of expressing poetical meaning. With every form and sentiment in poetry there is a kindred one in music; and so long as they are agreed, the "sister and the brother" may go hand in hand, helping the rhythm of the universe.



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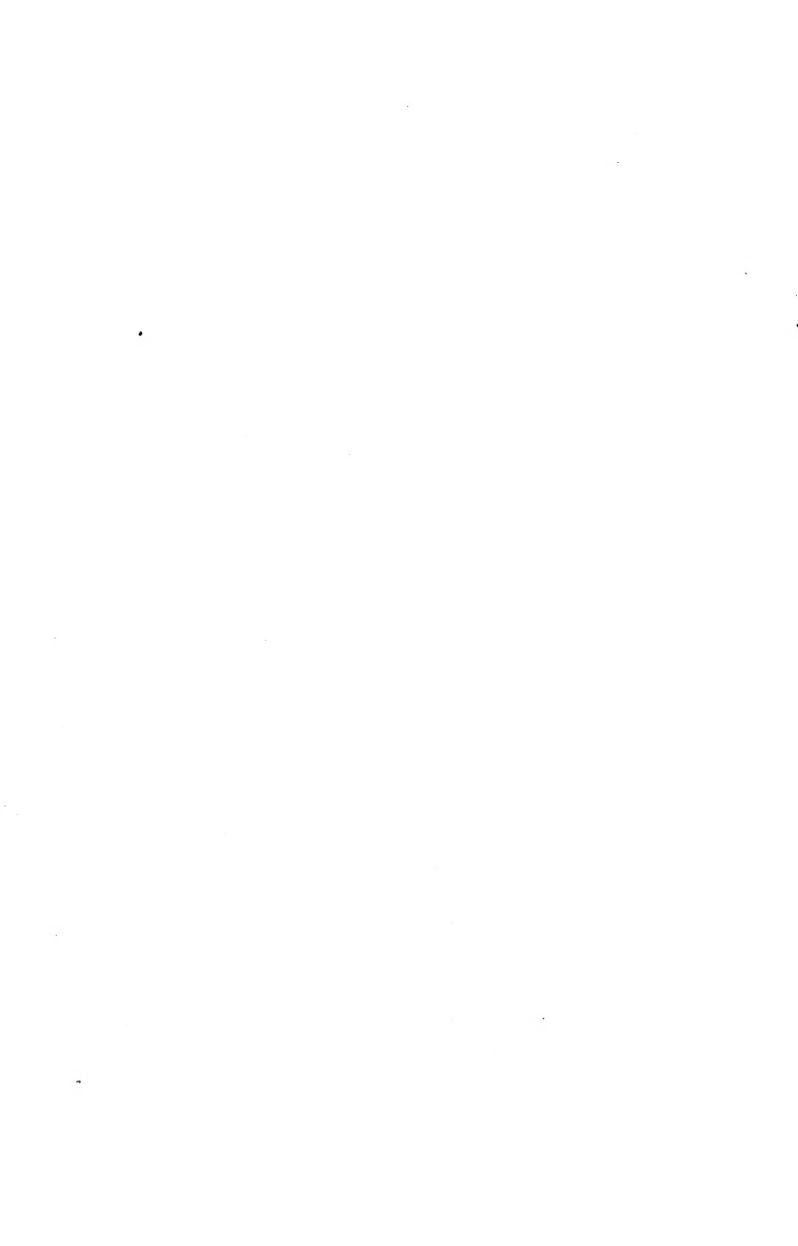
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