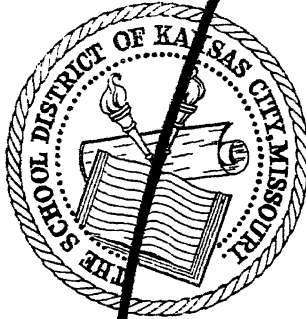


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THE VICTOR BOOK OF THE  
SYMPHONY  
REVISED EDITION



By CHARLES O'CONNELL



SIMON AND SCHUSTER · NEW YORK



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ROCKEFELLER CENTER, 1230 SIXTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

REVISED EDITION

**Reference**

785.1  
018a2

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AMERICAN BOOK-STRATFORD PRESS, INC., NEW YORK





## FOREWORD

*The rapid growth of interest in orchestral and operatic music all over the United States and in all the other countries of the world where the European system of music is the musical language makes the new book of Charles O'Connell of ever-increasing value.*

*For those who like to listen to music in the concert hall, and equally for those who by necessity or preference hear symphonic and operatic music by radio and by records, this book can be a friendly and intimate guide.*

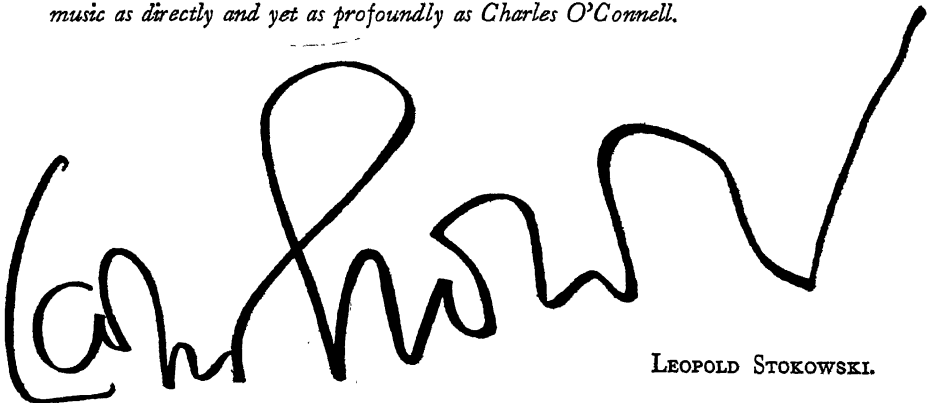
*In simple language it gives the technical background of symphonic music so that even an inexperienced music lover can understand and enjoy it. In reading it his mind and emotions will be stimulated so that his pleasure in listening to the music afterwards will be greater.*

*The parts of this book which tell of the imaginative and poetic side of music are in themselves a kind of music expressed through words.*

*One has the impression that the author feels that music is chiefly a thing of sensuous pleasure and that no matter how great or small may be the technical knowledge of the hearer music should be enjoyed through the senses and the imagination.*

*Except in purely program music the book does not paint pictures or tell stories about music but aims to suggest images and lines of thought that will give the music lover a point of departure for his own imaginative flight.*

*This book is equally interesting and illuminating to the professional musician as to the music lover who has not yet had the opportunity of studying the nature of music technically but whose pleasure in listening to music will be increased if his imagination and emotions are prepared and stimulated by someone who approaches music as directly and yet as profoundly as Charles O'Connell.*

A large, bold, handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'L. Stokowski', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned at the bottom of the page, below the foreword text.

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI.



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## PREFACE

THE PRIMARY purpose of this book is to make good orchestral music more intelligible, and therefore more stimulating and enjoyable, to people who are willing to listen to such music and who would like to know and love it better. A subordinate purpose is to enlarge the visible, the radio, and the phonograph audiences by the addition of others of intelligence and sensitiveness, who have been mystified, bored, repelled, or unimpressed by such music as they have heard. To accomplish these ends, the author has discussed the major portion of the symphonic repertoire in language that is almost entirely nontechnical and which seeks, in most cases, to present ideas and suggestions that will stimulate the reader's own emotional and imaginative responses to music. The introduction of anything illegitimately related to the music, which has been the deplorable practice in so many books on "music appreciation," has been avoided; the author has found, and hopes that the reader will also find, in the music itself, whatever imaginative stimuli are necessary to full enjoyment.

There are many people listening to music today who a few years ago had seldom, and perhaps never, heard a symphony orchestra. There are literally millions today who, though they hear symphonic music rather frequently, have never actually seen a symphony orchestra, and who have not been satisfied or particularly enlightened by the suave dicta of the radio announcer or by the usually historical and didactic pronouncements of some music commentators. This book aims to provide the minimum of necessary historical and technical information and the maximum of such material as will render the music more enjoyable.

Music is a synthesis of all the arts. The elements of painting and sculpture and architecture, of drama and rhetoric and oratory, are all involved in it. Its appeal is most universal, because it speaks a language understood by all men, and supplies a need of which all men are to some degree conscious. It is the most intimate of the arts, because it acts directly and instantly and powerfully upon the physical, as well as on the spiritual, organism. Any music, like any object of art, can give intellectual pleasure out of the very grace and perfection of its form and structure, but its basic appeal is to the senses, to the imagination, and to the emotions.

*The Book of the Symphony*, therefore, approaches music from this point of view. Relatively few people have the time or the inclination to study music profoundly, but there are few who do not respond to its emotional significance and its delightful effect on the senses if their emotions and senses have been prepared and sharpened. The book attempts to develop that state of preparedness, and to awaken the emotions so that when the music is actually heard in the concert hall,



or by radio or phonograph, the mind may be free of puzzled questionings and the music enjoyed to the full.

The matter of this book has not been chosen out of caprice or the author's personal preferences; rather a standard derived from the known popularity of each work, as demonstrated by the frequency of its appearance on the programs of four major American symphony orchestras during the past three years, has been applied. The book, therefore, includes not what the orchestras *should* play, or what, as a concession to a relatively small element in their audiences, they play on rare occasions, but rather the music which outstanding conductors choose to present to their audiences season after season. Obviously, the modernists cannot be fully represented in such a collection, because of the relative infrequency of their appearance on concert programs. There have been exceptions, of course, to this rule; for, regardless of their infrequent performances, certain modern and standard works, because of their musical importance, could not reasonably be omitted. It is probable, however, that anyone who refers from a concert or radio program of symphonic music to the contents of this book will find most, if not all, items of the program included here. The growing numbers of those who have discovered the miracle of modern recorded music will have the added convenience of a list of records covering a very large proportion of the music discussed in these pages. Biographies of composers have been treated very sketchily, because they are available elsewhere in full and detailed form; furthermore, they are of secondary importance to the purpose of this volume.

The author accepts complete and sole responsibility for opinions expressed about various musical works and their composers. The use of the word "Victor" in the title does not imply any responsibility on the part of the RCA Manufacturing Company, Inc., of Camden, New Jersey, for the publication of this book or for any statement made in it. On the other hand, the author must express his appreciation of the generosity of the company, in giving him access to its enormous libraries of music and records, which were invaluable in the preparation of *The Book of the Symphony*. He hopes also to borrow for his book, by its association with Victor, some of the luster that surrounds *The Victor Book of the Opera*, certainly the definitive work of its kind. The author is indebted to Victor for encouragement and help in the preparation of the book, and for permission to reprint certain portions originally published by the company; to Mr. Arthur Judson, who kindly permitted extensive research into the records of the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York and of the Philadelphia Orchestra; Mr. George E. Judd, manager of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, for permission to examine the archives of that great organization; and to the members of the Philadelphia Orchestra who posed for photographs illustrating the orchestral instruments.

*Philadelphia, October, 1940.*

CHARLES O'CONNELL

THE VICTOR BOOK  
OF THE SYMPHONY



## A NOTE ON THE MODERN ORCHESTRĀ AND ITS INSTRUMENTAL COMPONENTS

IN THE ancient Greek theater, the *choros* (dancers and vocalists) occupied an allotted space between the players and audience. This space was called the *orchestra*, and would correspond to the orchestra pit in the modern theater, except that it was not depressed below the level occupied by the audience. Early in the nineteenth century it became customary to refer, in theatrical parlance, to the group of musicians who occupied this space, rather than to the space itself, as "the orchestra."

The first instrumental groups known as orchestras included, usually, instruments of the lute type (from which our mandolin and guitar are descended); the family of viols; harpsichords or similar percussion-string instruments, and sometimes small organs. Orchestras were first used almost exclusively as support for vocal music; in fact, the development of the violin can be directly traced to the need for a high-pitched viol to accompany the higher voices in musical-dramatic productions.

Growing use of the orchestra emphasized the shortcomings of orchestral instruments, and brought about their improvement; consequently a tendency to give the orchestra more prominence is noticeable in compositions of the period (1650–1700), and finally composers of importance began writing music for instruments alone. Bach and Haydn were among the most important early composers of purely instrumental music—the former with suites and concertos, the latter with his symphonies. The orchestra which includes in its repertoire Haydn's symphonies today may have as many as one hundred and twenty members (though not all would be used in a Haydn symphony); Haydn's orchestra would have about eighteen men. It would include players of the violin, viola, cello, and contrabass, or bass viol; two each of flute, oboe and bassoon, horn and trumpet; and perhaps the orchestra would boast also a pair of kettledrums.

Mozart introduced clarinets and trombones as regular voices of the orchestra, and Beethoven established almost all the present-day orchestral instruments as members in good standing. In the C minor Symphony (the Fifth) he created a sensation by the sudden introduction of the trombones at the beginning of the fourth movement; and he used piccolo and contrabassoon with great effectiveness.

Almost constant improvement in the orchestral instruments gave Wagner, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky inviting opportunities for colorful orchestration, and they, with all composers of the romantic period, took advantage of such opportunities. No one has ever surpassed Wagner in the brilliance, variety, and significance of his orchestral color. Not satisfied with certain instruments, he redesigned them (the Bayreuth tuba, for example) to produce the precise tone quality he wanted. He was the first, and remains one of the few composers, to

write intelligently for the modern harp, and his use of modern valved brass instruments is unsurpassed in effectiveness. The orchestration of Brahms is of course entirely different, darker, and warmer than Wagner's, but rarely so brilliant. Tchaikovsky's is perhaps of a quality halfway between the two.

The development of certain instruments, and the acceptance of others as standard orchestral instruments, helped to increase the size of the orchestra. Theoretically, there should be no more than one instrument of each "choir" in the orchestra: one violin voice, one clarinet, one flute, and so on. But, because all instrumental voices are not of the same power and sonority, a balance must be effected by adjusting their relative numbers; and because composers often, nowadays, write orchestral parts so elaborate that each must be divided among several instruments of one type, the orchestra has grown steadily larger. Furthermore, concert halls have increased in size, necessitating more orchestral power, and we have at last arrived at an orchestra of 100-120 men, which seems large enough for most modern concert halls, yet not too large to be perfectly responsive and flexible.

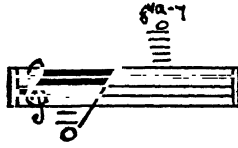
The symphony orchestra is made up of four groups, or choirs: the strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion, or *batterie*. The strings include about eighteen first and sixteen second violins; ten to fourteen violas; eight to twelve cellos; eight or ten basses; one or two harps. (Very rarely more harps are used; although Wagner requires as many as six!) The woodwind usually includes two flutes, two piccolos, three oboes, one *cor anglais* or English horn, three bassoons, one contrabassoon, three clarinets, one bass clarinet, and sometimes a contrabass clarinet. The brass choir is composed of three or four trombones, four trumpets, four to ten or even twelve horns, and tuba (sometimes bass tuba or helicon). The *batterie* comprises the drums (timpani or kettledrums, bass and military drums, tambourine, Chinese drum, and sometimes others); tam-tam or gong, celesta, glockenspiel or orchestra bell; tubular chimes, castanets, xylophone, and triangle, together with any other special percussion instruments which the composer may require. The work of the *batterie* is divided among several men, who sometimes play other orchestral instruments as well. The timpanist, however, devotes his entire attention to his own special instruments.

## STRINGS

### *Violin*

The violin is the soprano of the string choir, and in some respects the most important instrument of the orchestra. It is capable of a wide range of emotional expression, and of considerable dynamic scope; its tone is of a character that makes it blend well with any other tone in the orchestra.

## RANGE OF THE VIOLIN



In its present form the violin is the result of a long period of evolution—a period which ended in the superb instruments of the great sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian makers. The first “true” violins were made in Italy by Gasparo da Salò (1540–1609), and his instruments were used as models by succeeding makers. The city of Cremona was the seat of the most famous school of violin makers, and it was there that Andrea Amati started the line of artisans whose name in a violin makes it priceless. His grandson, Nicolo Amati (1596–1684), not only made some of the finest violins *in use today*, but was the teacher of Antonio Stradivari, greatest of all craftsmen in this difficult and subtle art. Other makers whose instruments remain priceless, often musically and always intrinsically, were those of the Guadagnini and Guarnerius families.

Any one of these names authentically appearing in a violin makes it exceedingly valuable. That is not to say that modern instruments are necessarily inferior, or that ancient ones are invariably fit for use. It is highly questionable that anyone, unless an impossible combination of musician, antiquarian, and student, could distinguish by the ear alone a Stradivarius from the finest of modern instruments. The value of a Cremona violin is often factitious, or fictitious. There is no miracle, especially and exclusively available to the viol family, which excepts them from the deterioration of age and use; and there is no reason why duplicates of them, executed by a first-class modern violin maker, should not have an equally beautiful quality of tone. This is a statement that will shock many violinists and merchants; the fact remains. The superiority of the Cremona instruments is probably due, not to the ridiculous supposition that a secretly formulated varnish gives them their tone, but to the fact that they were made with endless patience and loving care. Intelligent and persistent manipulation of the sound post of a string instrument will have more effect on the tone than any rare wood, any secret varnish in the world. Furthermore, while a Heifetz can make any violin give out beautiful sound, an amateur fiddler can make a “Strad” sound like a leopard cat in agony. It would seem, therefore, that the player has considerable influence on the tone of even a famous instrument.

The violin bow is a direct descendant of the aboriginal weapon. Its present form was determined by François Tourte (1747–1835), many of whose bows are in use today. The arc is usually of a wood called Pernambuco; the hairs are from

a horse's tail, bleached white, and rubbed with resin to increase their friction against the string.

The violin is tuned to the tones G, D, A, and E. The G string is a wire-wound string, and gives the violin its most powerful and deepest tones. The other strings are of "catgut"—actually made from the intestines of sheep. They are of varying degrees of brightness in tone, the most brilliant, of course, being the E string which sometimes is made of steel. The effective range of the violin is about three and one-half octaves, from G below middle C. Higher tones can be produced, but they are neither agreeable nor effective.

A great variety of utterance is possible. Singing passages, smooth and unbroken; sharp, crisp, detached notes, at almost any speed; ethereal harmonics and warm, full, sonorous G-string tones—all are at the command of the capable player. Octaves and, to a limited extent, chords may be played on the violin; when two notes are played at once, the device is called "double-stopping." Brilliant effects are achieved by various methods of bowing: *spiccato* by playing rapidly a number of detached notes in one stroke of the bow; *saltando* by bouncing the bow on the strings; *vibrato* by vibrating the *left* hand from the wrist as the finger presses against the string; *col legno* by playing with the wooden part of the bow; *tremolo* by rapidly repeating the same note with short up-and-down strokes of the bow; *glissando* by sliding the left hand along the string while bowing with the right. Trills, mordents, and other musical decorations are all easily effected on the violin.

Harmonics are very high-pitched sounds, components of the normal tone of the instrument but normally almost inaudible. They are made conspicuous by stopping off the fundamental tone, and causing the string to vibrate in segments. This the violinist accomplishes in one of two ways. He may lightly press upon the strings at their "nodal" points (the points between the segments in which all vibrating strings move) thus interfering with the vibration of the string as a whole and bringing the segmentary vibrations into prominence. The sounds thus produced are called "natural" harmonics. The player may, instead, press strongly on the point of the string which will give the required pitch, and with the fourth finger touch lightly on the new nodal point of the "shortened" section of the string. He thus produces "artificial" harmonics, stronger but less agreeable in quality than "natural" harmonics.

### *Viola*

The viola is the contralto of the string choir. It is somewhat larger than the violin, and in size as well as musical relationship occupies the place between the deeper-toned cello and the brilliant violin. Its strings are slightly thicker than violin strings, and the two lower ones are wire-wound. Its tone is sonorous, but, solo, not always agreeable. As supplying a tonal mass of great importance to the

orchestra, the viola is highly necessary and desirable, but as a solo instrument it has little appeal, except in the rare cases wherein music intelligently written for it is played by a Primrose or a Tertis.

### RANGE OF THE VIOLA



The viola part is written in the tenor clef

The viola in modern orchestra has received much more attention than formerly. The few outstanding artists who play this rather ungrateful instrument have done much to redeem it from the curse of being the resort of unsuccessful violinists, and many modern composers assign to it such music as will bring out to the full its latent possibilities. It is capable of all the technical effects of the violin, and is tuned one-fifth lower—C, G, D, A. Its range is slightly less than that of the violin—about three octaves.

### *Cello*

The violoncello is the baritone of the orchestral string choir. It is a development of the ancient viola da gamba (knee viol), which was once the bass member of the string family, and was played with the instrument held between the knees, much as the cello is today. Violoncello is a rather cumbersome way of saying "little big viol," which is what it means; so, commonly the instrument is called cello.

### RANGE OF THE VIOLONCELLO



It is tuned an octave below the viola, and its longer, thicker strings, and the larger body of air vibrated by them, produce a darker but more sonorous and agreeable tone. It encompasses three and one-sixth octaves; it can be manipulated in practically all the tricks of the violin, but not so rapidly. Its tone is warm, vibrant, masculine; the cello is often assigned a singing role in the orchestra, for that reason. In masses of tone the cello is one of the orchestra's most effective instruments, and while its voice is not the most powerful, it can be the most conspicuous and perhaps the most expressive in the string ensemble.

The cello bow is shorter and heavier than that of the violin, and the bow and left-hand technique are entirely different.



*Double Bass. Contrabass*

This is the bass of the string choir—a giant violin more than six feet high, and, from the point of view of the physicist, as inefficient as it is big. The tone of the contrabass, though exceedingly deep and rich, is quite weak in relation to the size of the instrument and the energy required to play it; nevertheless, the ten or twelve basses in a symphony orchestra supply a wonderfully rich and deep tonal foundation, perceptible no matter how powerfully the rest of the orchestra is playing.

## RANGE OF THE DOUBLE BASS



The contrabass has certain physical peculiarities which differentiate it from the other viols, and establish its relationship with the oldest instruments of the viol type. It has sloping, rather than rounded, shoulders; a flat instead of a swelling back, and an exceedingly high bridge. The bow, also, shows traces of its origin, and more than any other bow suggests the huntsman's weapon.

The contrabass is tuned in shorter intervals than the other string instruments; otherwise the player, unless his hand were unnaturally large, could not span them. Therefore, the tuning is in fourths—E, A, D, and G. It sounds an octave lower than its notes are written. Occasionally a five-string bass is used, a C string being added to give lower bass notes. Despite the size of the instrument, most violinistic effects can be performed, but of course not nearly at the speed of the violinist. The tone is full, deep, sonorous, and resonant, and only to a very limited degree can it be used solo. Occasionally, however, for weird or comic effects, conspicuous and even solo passages are given to this instrument. The most famous of all is the strange utterance of the basses in the scherzo of the Beethoven Fifth Symphony that suggested to Hector Berlioz the gambolings of elephants. Serge Koussevitzky, the eminent conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, is a virtuoso of this Gargantuan violin, and has played solo in public as well as for phonograph records.

*Harp*

More than three thousand years ago, a court painter was commanded to decorate with murals the battlements of an ancient Egyptian city. In the procession of figures he limned on the everlasting stone, some bore musical instruments, several of which are distinctly recognizable as harps.

## RANGE OF THE HARP



The harp is one of the oldest and most romantic of musical instruments. It was known well to the Jews of Biblical times; indeed, David is remembered as a harper and singer. No doubt he wooed a lady as easily as he soothed a troubled prince, with the assistance of his plangent strings; for the harp gives wonderful background to the voice. We often associate the harp with the Irish bards and minstrels—indeed with the Irish race itself; not entirely without reason, for the harp is the only musical instrument regarded as a national symbol, and represented in a national flag. As a matter of fact, the harp has a more intimate connection with the ancient Jews, and was known and widely used in Europe long before Ireland heard it. The painted vases of the ancient Greeks reveal the harp in use, and the troubadours, the minnesingers, and the bards of Northern Europe brought it to the western shores of that continent. Soon it was adopted by the Irish, the Scotch, and the Welsh, and during the reign of Henry VIII was incorporated in the national insignia of Ireland.

The harp, until the beginning of the eighteenth century, had been little improved over its primitive ancestors. To be portable, it had to be limited in size and weight, and consequently in the number of its strings. Chromatic intervals—tones lying between the whole tones (the white keys on the piano)—could not be played, because to tune the harp chromatically would require too many strings. About 1720 a transposing pedal was invented; it would raise all the strings, simultaneously, a half tone. Ninety years later, Sebastien Érard, founder of the French piano house “Érard,” developed the double-action harp, employing pedals that would shorten the strings instantaneously, raising them either a half or whole tone, and making it possible to play in all keys.

The modern concert harp is usually tuned in the key of C flat; it has seven transposing pedals, each pedal affecting all the strings of the same name. Thus, the C pedal affects all the C strings, the D pedal all the D’s, and so on. When all the pedals are pressed down halfway, the harp is tuned in C major; if they are depressed fully, the instrument will play in C-sharp major. Naturally, the agility of the harp in passing from one tonality to another is somewhat limited by its mechanism, and the powers of the human hand likewise impose handicaps. It is, therefore, not easy to write intelligent and effective music for the harp, and at the same time stay within the possibilities of the instrument.

It is curious to note that this, one of the most ancient of instruments, would

win the approval of the most radical modernist architect or designer, for the reason that in its structure it is almost purely functional. The slender Corinthian column that is characteristic of the conventional model is a hollow pillar of great structural strength, which serves not only to take a large part of the strains generated by the taut strings, but also encloses the rods connecting the pedals with the tuning mechanism. The gracefully curved neck, lovely as it is, nevertheless is a purely structural form, determined entirely by the varying length of the strings. It, too, has a double purpose; it serves as a base for anchoring the strings, and conceals the transposing mechanism. The sound box is the third member of the triangle; through it pass the strings to their lower extremities, and it resonates and reinforces their tone.

The tone of the harp is rather weak, nor is it susceptible of much variation in color. In the orchestra it is used with beautiful effect, nevertheless; in accompanying solo passages for other instruments, in adding a certain luster to the orchestral texture, and, more rarely, as a romantic solo voice. The lower and middle strings have, in the hands of a skillful player, a warm and lovely tone, unassertive yet by no means inconspicuous in orchestral passages of moderate dynamic intensity. The upper strings have a brilliant but ephemeral tone, which because of the relative inflexibility and shortness of the string is resonated but briefly and weakly. The range of the harp is five octaves; its music is written exactly like that of the piano. The arpeggio, a chord in which the notes are played rapidly in succession rather than simultaneously, derives its name from that of the harp; it is the characteristic utterance of the instrument.

The orchestral harpist must be a musician of the first rank, possessed of an infallible sense of pitch, great digital dexterity, deftness in the use of the pedals, and poise under all circumstances.

## WOODWINDS

### *Flute*

The flute is a descendant of what is probably the oldest and simplest wind instrument—a hollow reed. Somewhat more proximately, it is related to the syrinx of ancient Greece, from which the vocal organ of the bird is named. It has always been a highly respectable instrument; a cultured Greek youth regarded flute-playing as a necessary and polite accomplishment, and one reads of yearning nineteenth-century bachelors occupying themselves with the instrument when not otherwise engaged.

The beak flutes, recorders, and flageolets of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries were the ancestors of the present instruments. They were played vertically, however, and not transversely, as is the orchestral flute of today; in their range, tone, and agility, they were not materially different from a ten-cent tin whistle.

In 1832, Theobald Boehm invented a keyed flute which greatly facilitated performance, extended the possibilities of the instrument, and gave it the use of the chromatic scale. We owe the modern flute almost entirely to Boehm's improvements.

### RANGE OF THE FLUTE



The range of the flute is approximately three octaves. Its tone in the lower register is warm, smooth, and rather dark-colored; as it proceeds up the scale the tone becomes much more brilliant, and in the highest register is keen and penetrating. Incidentally, the player does not blow *into* his instrument, but *across* a hole in its side called the embouchure. He thus agitates the column of air within the flute, and this air column is the vibrating body which produces the tone. The highest notes are produced by overblowing (blowing harder than normally), together with changes in the shape of the lips.

The flute can produce a great variety of effect. It is used in important melodic passages as well as in brilliant, decorative figures; its agility is amazing, its tone almost always discernible in the orchestral fabric. It is capable of exceedingly rapid scale passages, but not normally of a true glissando—an effect which, in the orchestra, is confined exclusively to the string instruments and trombone. It is almost always used in the accompaniment to the most ambitious efforts of coloratura sopranos, in which the intent is to compare (or is it to contrast?) the agility, tone, and intonation of the voice and flute. This is invariably unfortunate for the voice.

### *Piccolo*

In Italian, *piccolo* means “diminutive,” and the piccolo of the orchestra is essentially a little flute. It is half the size of the flute, it is played in much the same manner, and it can sound an octave or more higher than its larger brother. It ranges through about three octaves, with a tone which at any pitch is exceedingly brilliant and, in its uppermost register, piercing to the point of unpleasantness.

### RANGE OF THE PICCOLO



Composers use it for quaint and fantastic effects, as well as for applying a penetrating point and glitter to heavy masses of orchestral tone.

## Oboe

The oboe, in recognizable form, dates back to the days of ancient Greece and Rome. To the Greeks it was known as the aulos; the Romans called it tibia, a name which survives today in an organ stop of woodwind timbre. In Shakespeare's stage directions we encounter the word hautboy, a corruption of two French words meaning "high wood." The oboe might be called the lyric soprano of the woodwind choir. Its tone, especially in its upper range, is bright, penetrating, reedy, or almost of flutelike brilliance, yet always with a very vocal quality that is peculiarly poignant and moving. The lowest tones are round and reedy, with almost a contralto timbre.

### RANGE OF THE OBOE



The oboe is a sectional, conical tube of wood (cocus, rosewood, or ebony), pierced with holes and fitted with a key system not unlike that of the flute. It is equipped with a double reed, the vibrations of which generate its tones. Its range encompasses two and one-half octaves. Very little wind is necessary to make the instrument speak, and for this reason, extended phrases are quite possible. The player is more concerned with holding back the breath than with great blowing power, but he must be able to "feed" it to the instrument with absolute evenness, under absolute control.

The oboe is exceedingly agile; it is capable of brilliant decorative figures as well as fluent and sustained melody, and its versatility makes it one of the orchestra's most important voices. Its very distinctive and incisive tone, "green" and bittersweet, keeps this instrument always conspicuous in the ensemble, and makes it an interesting contrast with other instruments.

## *Cor anglais*

[English Horn]

This remarkably named instrument is neither "English" nor a horn. It is, actually, an alto oboe, with certain modifications which alter the characteristic oboe tone in both pitch and quality. It has been asserted that the *cor anglais* is a descendant of the old English hornpipe, and that the French, perceiving its value and putting it to work, called it "English" horn. This explanation accounts for the "English," but not for the "horn."

## RANGE OF THE ENGLISH HORN



Certain early reed instruments were bent in the middle, forming an obtuse angle; *anglais* might therefore refer to "an angled horn." Regardless of the origin of the name, however, the instrument is an oboe of larger size, lower pitch, and darker tone color. Its bore is conical, and the exterior lines, instead of ending in a slightly flared bell, expand into a roughly spherical bulb, open at the lower extremity. It is this hollow and open bulb which largely determines the curiously dark and almost nasal quality of the tone.

The English horn has a compass of about two and one-half octaves, some German-made instruments having one or two notes lower than the French. The key-and-fingering system is identical with that of the oboe, but the *cor anglais* is pitched five tones lower than its soprano relative.

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Nearly everyone knows the lovely *cor anglais* solo in the "Largo" of Dvořák's symphony "From the New World." Many of us, however, have had the misfortune to become acquainted with this poignant melody only as the basis of the banal and tasteless mock spiritual "Goin' Home." The persistence of this emasculate sentimentality on radio programs has not increased the effectiveness of the original melody when it appears, in its proper symphonic setting, on the air; yet, played by a really great executant on the *cor anglais*, its haunting and melancholy beauty can be a memorable thing.

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Another famous and exceedingly beautiful passage for English horn is the main theme of the second movement of the César Franck symphony. At the first performance of this work one critic dismissed it breezily for the very reason that the English horn is used in it. Franck was first to employ this instrument in a symphony, and the profound commentator, with true French logic, decided that since no symphony had used the English horn, no work which did use it could be a symphony.

Wagner used this beautiful orchestral voice, as he used every instrument, with singular effectiveness. The unaccompanied solo for *cor anglais*, occurring in the third act of *Tristan und Isolde*, is a striking example.

*Oboe d'amore*

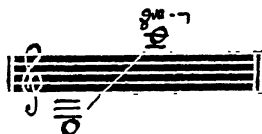
This instrument, though not frequently used in the modern orchestra, was important to the orchestra of Bach's time, and is found occasionally in modern works and in contemporary orchestrations of the music of Bach. It is tuned a minor

third below the oboe and its range is relatively of the same extent. In appearance it much resembles the English horn, having the more or less spherically shaped bell which by surrounding the final opening of the instrument imparts a veiled and mystical quality to the tone. The instrument is keyed and played like the English horn.

### *Clarinet*

The ancestors of the clarinet were the reed instruments in common use (1600-1700) and known variously as chalumeaux, shawms, and schalmeis. These names are all derived from the Latin *calamus*—a reed. The word clarinet comes to use through the Italian *clarino* and English clarion, a small and high-pitched trumpet which the clarinet, or clarionet, eventually succeeded.

### RANGE OF THE CLARINET



The clarinet is a single-reed instrument. Its bore is cylindrical rather than conical, and the tube is about two feet long, terminating in a slightly flared bell. The range and agility of the instrument were tremendously improved when, in 1843, the Boehm key system was applied to it. The modern instrument has a range of more than three octaves.

If the oboe is the lyric soprano of the woodwind choir, the clarinet is the dramatic. Its tone varies definitely and markedly in different sections of its range. The lowest section is dark, sonorous, and reedy—sometimes melancholy and weird; the middle register is notably weaker and less colorful, and the higher is remarkably clear, bright, and polished.

The saxophone, a poor but close relation of the clarinet, is not regularly a member of the orchestra, but its use in modern music is frequent and often effective. It was invented in 1840 by Adolphe Sax. Like the clarinet, it is played with a single reed in a chisel-shaped mouthpiece. Unlike the clarinet, it has a conical bore, a relatively large and upturned bell, and is made of brass. It is made in many sizes, from tiny soprano to grotesquely large and clumsy bass. Maurice Ravel uses it conspicuously in his effective orchestrations, and Debussy composed a charming *Rhapsodie for Saxophone and Orchestra*.

### *Bass Clarinet*

A clarinet long enough to produce real bass tone would be too long for convenience; consequently, the bass clarinet is doubled on itself, to bring its length

## RANGE OF THE BASS CLARINET



into reasonable limits. It resembles, somewhat, a large saxophone. Its tone is more powerful, less reedy, more sonorous and round than that of the clarinet, and extends through a range of about one and a half octaves. Its lowest tones are remarkably big and heavy, closely resembling certain pedal tones in a great organ.

*Bassoon*

The bassoon is the lowest-voiced member of the woodwind group. It is a collateral descendant of the same ancient instruments from which springs the clarinet, though there is little resemblance between them. Low-pitched notes are a function of the length of the vibrating body. To achieve the low notes of the bassoon, length is necessary, and primitive forms of the instrument were from six to nine feet long. For convenience in playing, the pipe was doubled upon itself and joined together in a block of solid wood. The imaginative Italians saw some resemblance, then, to a bundle of sticks, and gave the instrument the name *fagotto*—fagot.

## RANGE OF THE BASSOON



True intonation is difficult for the bassoon, and great skill is required to make it deliver its possible effects. It is, nevertheless, capable of considerable agility and rapidity in its various expressions, and because of this, plus a certain weird, dry quality of tone in certain registers, it is often assigned comical parts, and has won a reputation as the clown of the orchestra. This is a little unjust, for the bassoon is also capable of warm and sentimental expression, of utterances passionate and sad. It is an exceedingly versatile instrument, and has been employed regularly in the orchestra since the time of Handel and Bach. Its tone blends so well with that of certain other instruments that it is frequently used to fortify other groups, notably the cellos. Its range is usually somewhat more than three octaves.

*Contrabassoon*

The subbass of the woodwind choir is essentially of the same type as bassoon, but is much larger. It continues down the scale from the bassoon's lowest notes,



and can sound the deepest notes in the orchestral ensemble. Actually about sixteen feet long, it is folded six times, so that its coils stand about four feet from the floor. In addition to carrying the bassoon quality farther down the scale, the contra-

### RANGE OF THE CONTRABASSOON



bassoon, in its lower register, has a quality peculiar to itself—it can snore and grunt and growl quite effectively. Ravel makes use of this ability of the instrument by assigning to it, in his *Mother Goose* suite, the part of the Beast in the episode “Beauty and the Beast.”

### THE BRASS

#### *Trumpet*

The ancestry of the trumpet is most ancient. It originated in the horns of animals, or in certain sea shells, which primitive man fashioned into crude instruments capable of sounding but one note. The oldest extant form of the instrument is the *shofar*, the ram’s-horn trumpet still used in modern synagogues, and sounded as a formal summons to the congregation on the Jewish New Year.

### RANGE OF THE TRUMPET



Metal trumpets were used for military purposes by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the present form of the instrument had its beginnings even in those early days, when the trumpet was made in coils for convenience in carrying. A shrill and high-pitched trumpet, the *clarino* or clarion, was much used by Handel and Bach, but the instrument escaped from its natural limitations only when, early in the nineteenth century, valves or pistons were provided. These simplified the method of playing the instrument, and made it possible to execute upon it the full chromatic scale.

The present orchestral trumpet is a brass tube about eight feet in length, coiled in a roughly rectangular shape about eighteen inches long. The greater length of the tube is cylindrical, but about twelve inches from the final opening it begins to expand into a bell. The mouthpiece is cup-shaped, and the lips are brought against

it with considerable pressure. By manipulations of the tongue and lips, the player can sound his instrument with great rapidity and brilliance. By the use of the mute—a pear-shaped mass of metal or papier-mâché which fits into the bell—a distant and attenuated tone is produced for special, colorful effects.

The natural tone of the instrument, with its golden clarity, its penetrating brilliance, its noble, even defiant quality, is familiar to everyone. In the hands of a really expert player, its tone can be exceedingly expressive, soft and rich and moving. In the symphony orchestra the trumpet is used for a variety of purposes, but of course its principal duty is to add sonority and brilliance to the ensemble. Its range is about two and one-half octaves; the topmost note is the same high C that sopranos boast of. Some jazz trumpeters can force the instrument even higher, unfortunately.

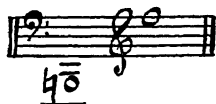
### *Cornet*

Closely related to the trumpet, the cornet is not an orchestral member in good standing. Its tone is smaller and less brilliant than that of the trumpet. It differs from its relative in that its bore is conical rather than cylindrical, and it is much easier to play. The comparative simplicity of its technique accounts for its popularity in small and amateur orchestras, and among juvenile geniuses. It is occasionally used in the symphony orchestra; in Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, and in the world's noisiest overture—Tchaikovsky's "1812."

### *French Horn*

Perhaps the most beautiful voice in the brass choir, the French horn is also the most difficult and the most unreliable. Its tone, pitch, and various effects are more dependent upon the skill of the performer, and less upon the mechanism of the instrument, than in the case of any other brass instrument.

### RANGE OF THE FRENCH HORN



Its remote ancestor is the hunting horn, often observed in old prints coiled around the body of a mounted man. It is a brass tube about sixteen feet long, with coils and crooks which reduce its linear dimensions to convenient size. The bell of the horn is relatively quite large, and into it the player frequently inserts his hand for the purpose of raising or lowering the pitch, and producing muted or "stopped" effects.

In the crude early horns the tones produced were limited by the audible har-

The name tuba, and that of an ancestor of this instrument—the “ophicleide”—survive in the modern pipe organ as designations of pedal stops.

## PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

### *Batterie*

Any instrument which is made to sound by striking, beating, or shaking is a percussion instrument. The piano, for example, though not a member of the orchestra, is a percussion instrument, while the harp, its close relative, is not. Instruments of percussion are the descendants of the most primitive sound-making apparatus. Their chief function is to produce and accent rhythm, and rhythm is the most primitive musical impulse. It was natural, therefore, that they should come first, in chronological order, of all musical instruments.

The aggregation of percussion instruments in the orchestra is usually called the *batterie*—things that are struck. Most important of these are the

### *Timpani*

Timpani, or kettledrums, achieve their importance chiefly because of the fact that they are capable of definite and intentionally variable pitch. Their Oriental ancestors consisted of a skin stretched over a hollow gourd. The modern instrument is a bowl of copper, pierced by a small hole at the bottom, and topped with a

### RANGE OF TIMPANI TUNED TO TONIC AND DOMINANT, KEY OF F



tightly stretched calf skin. Early symphonic writing calls for but two timpani, which were tuned to the tonic and dominant tones of the key in which the music was written. (*Do* and *sol*.) Hector Berlioz, whose orchestral extravagances are historic, considered a work in which eight pairs of timpani were to be used! Commonly, three to five kettledrums are required; they vary in pitch according to their size and the tension of the drumhead. When three are used, they are generally tuned to the tonic, dominant, and subdominant (*fa*); others are tuned as the exigencies of the music may require.

Notwithstanding their essential simplicity, the timpani are capable of considerable variety of effect, and require great skill and musicianship on the part of the player. A single portentous utterance, as in the concert version (at the end) of the *Tristan* prelude, can be like a clutching hand at the throat; a long crescendo roll

suggests terror, and yet the same instrument can impart a rhythmic accent of delicacy and grace.

The pitch of the kettledrums can be altered—indeed, often must be—almost instantaneously while the orchestra is playing. This requires the player to have an uncannily accurate sense of pitch and ability to concentrate, and deftness in handling the pedal and tuning screws, by which the drumhead is tightened. The kettle-drum has a range of about half an octave.

Various types of sticks are used, varying from hard to very soft, according to the quality of tone required. The head of the stick is a ball which may be of sponge, felt, rubber, or wood. Sometimes a soft and dull effect is made by covering the drumhead with a loose piece of cloth. Tremolo, staccato, and other effects are produced by skillful players of timpani.

### *Side, Snare, or Military Drum*

Essentially, the snare drum consists of a shallow cylinder of brass (or wood), closed at either plane surface by a head of parchment, under tension. Across the lower head, cords of catgut are stretched, so that when the drum is struck they vibrate against the parchment, causing the familiar sharp, crisp rattling effect.

The sticks, of wood, have small round heads, and by an expert player can be manipulated with startling rapidity.

The snare drum is of indefinite pitch but brilliant in tone. It is used as a rhythm-accenting instrument, though occasionally it is given dramatic significance, indicating suspense; or to imitate certain unmusical sounds.

### *Bass Drum*

The bass drum is nothing more than a greatly enlarged side drum. It is made of wood or metal; its pitch is indefinite but very low, and because of the great body of vibrating air enclosed in it, its tone is exceedingly resonant and quite powerful. Unless muted by a covering of some kind, it will also resonate the notes of other instruments, even while it stands untouched. It is played with a softheaded stick. Its note is audible in the loudest orchestral ensembles, and though it is cumbersome and awkward to play, it contributes very powerfully and effectively to rhythmic effects. It is used also for imitative and nonmusical sounds.

### *Tambourine*

The tambourine is a miniature drum with a single head. It consists of a hoop of wood, over which is stretched a parchment. In the rim of wood are inserted small metal discs, which vibrate when the instrument is shaken or struck. It is of

extreme antiquity; we find it pictured in Egyptian, Assyrian, and Greek mural paintings. It seems to have come to us through the Orient and Spain, and is usually associated with Spanish music. It is played by either striking with the hand, or shaking, or both in combination.

### *Chinese Drum*

A wide wooden hoop, over which is stretched pigskin—usually gaily painted. A curiously dull and nonresonant sound, of indefinite pitch, is produced when the drum is struck with a hardheaded stick. It is used only occasionally in the symphony orchestra, but has become popular in the jazz band for pseudo-Oriental effects.

### *Castanets*

Always used in pairs, the castanets (Spanish *castagna*, chestnut; the wood from which they were made) are hollow shells, clapped rhythmically together, and giving a sharp, clacking sound invariably associated with the dance music of Spain and Latin America. For use in the modern orchestra the castanets are made of boxwood or ebony, and sometimes fastened to a handle with strings. Properly shaking the handle gives the characteristic rhythmic clack. Although the Latin peoples of both Europe and America use the instrument extensively, we find its curious sound in many examples of non-Latin music of the bacchanalian type.

### *Cymbals*

Discs of brass, with a depression in the center of each. They are of indefinite pitch, but have an exceedingly brilliant and powerful tone. To produce this tone they vibrate at the rate of more than 12,000 cycles per second. The musician strikes one against the other with a rubbing motion, or uses the drumsticks on them. Sudden terrifying crashes, long crescendos, single portentous strokes—these and other effects are in the repertoire of the cymbals.

They are of great antiquity, and have come down to us at least from Biblical times in virtually unchanged form. They have greatly increased in size and power, however, and “sounding brass and *tinkling* cymbal” could not have been written of the instruments of today.

### *Triangle*

A steel rod, bent in the form of an equilateral triangle, with one angle open. It is suspended on a string, and played by being struck with a metal stick. It has a brilliant, tinkling tone, of no determinate pitch but of such brilliance that it cuts through the most powerful utterances of the orchestra.

*Tam-Tam*

In effect, a cymbal of gigantic size, from three to as much as six feet in diameter. It is made of brass, and is of Chinese origin. When it is vibrated by rubbing with a soft-headed stick, it gives forth a curious brassy roar, combining both very low tones with the brilliant overtones of the cymbal. When struck with a drumstick, it has a note of terrifying power.

This instrument is vulgarly called a gong, and tam-tam, or tom-tom, is often erroneously applied to the Chinese drum.

*Xylophone*

A series of slabs of resonant wood, laid out like the keyboard of the piano, and similarly tuned. Usually its range is three and one-half octaves. The player uses two wooden mallets to strike the wooden slabs, and tubes suspended under the latter resonate the tone. Xylophone is infrequently used in the orchestra, though Saint-Saëns made it highly suggestive in his *Danse macabre*, and other,

## RANGE OF THE XYLOPHONE



older composers have occasionally called for it. Modern writers of music like its bright grotesquerie.

*Chime*

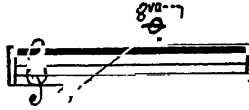
## RANGE OF THE CHIMES



A chime of bells is part of the equipment of every symphony orchestra. The bells are tubes of metal, usually brass, suspended in a wooden frame, and played by striking with a wooden mallet. The player strikes the bell a few inches below the point at which the string supporting it passes through the tube. The chime encompasses two octaves of the chromatic scale. Its brilliant yet solemn tone is familiar.

*Orchestra Bells*

## RANGE OF THE ORCHESTRA BELLS



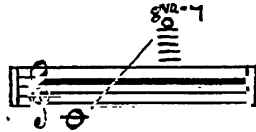
Sometimes called glockenspiel. Essentially the same as the xylophone, except that metal bars instead of wooden slabs are used as vibrating bodies. The tone is very high, bright, and crystalline. The bells are tuned to the chromatic scale, and generally encompass three octaves.

*Celesta*

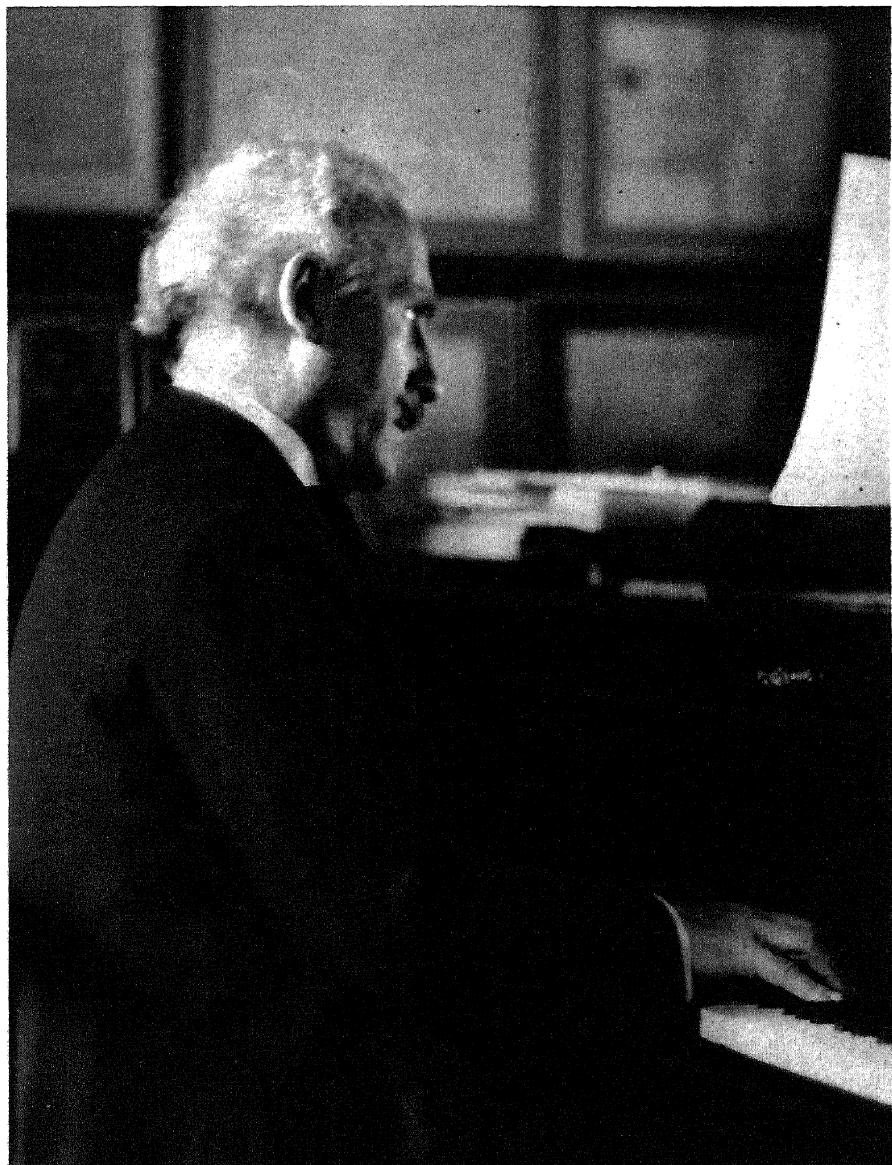
The celesta looks exactly like a miniature upright piano. It has a keyboard of four octaves, and a piano action which causes hammers to strike tuned steel plates suspended over wooden resonating boxes. It has a sustaining pedal which when depressed permits the sound to continue until it dies from the cessation of vibration. Staccato effects are produced when the pedal is not used.

The celesta was not regarded as an orchestral instrument until 1891, when

## RANGE OF THE CELESTA

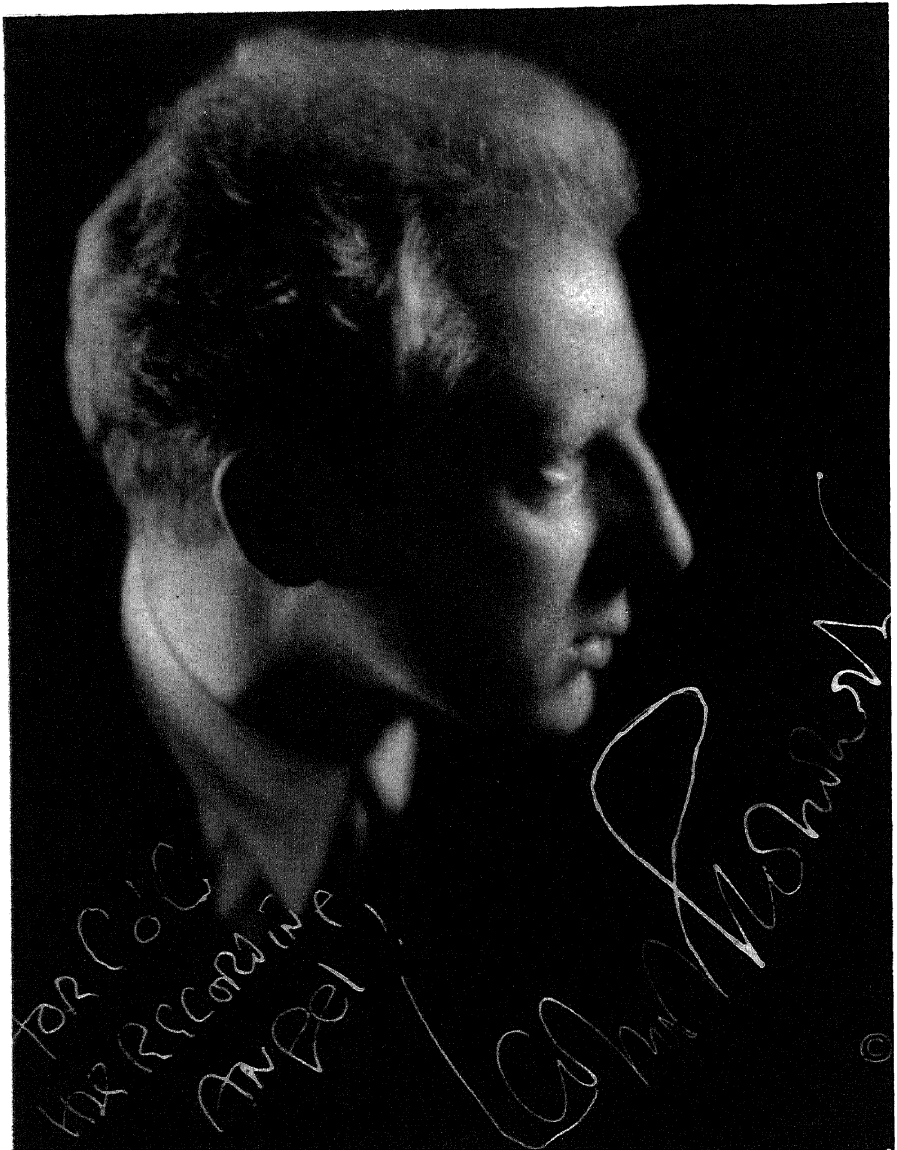


Tchaikovsky discovered it in the workshop of its inventor, Auguste Mustel, in Paris. He was thoroughly charmed by the sweet and delicate tone of the instrument, and straightway wrote a piece for it ("Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy": *Nutcracker Suite*). It is not impossible that the instrument suggested the title of the piece, for the tone is incredibly sweet, somewhat gelatinous, and can easily become cloying.



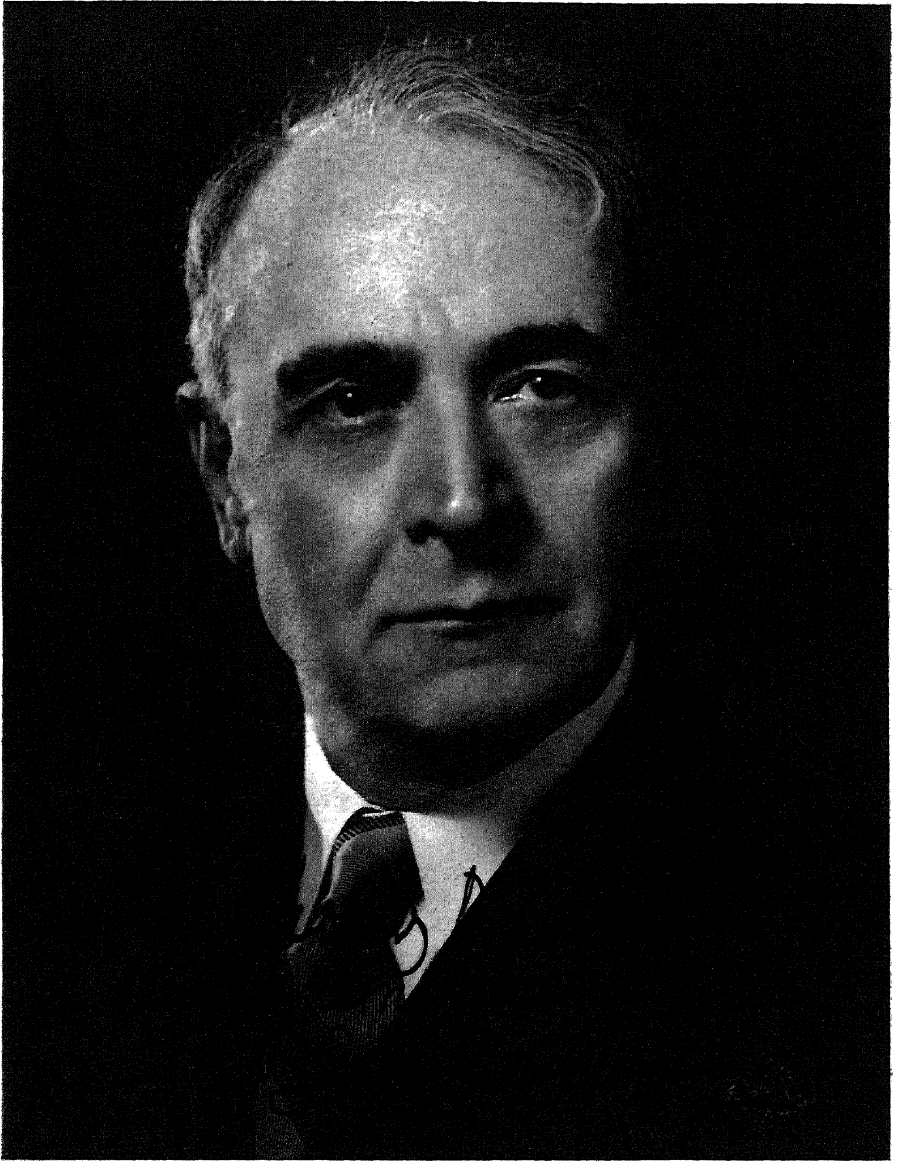
ARTURO TOSCANINI





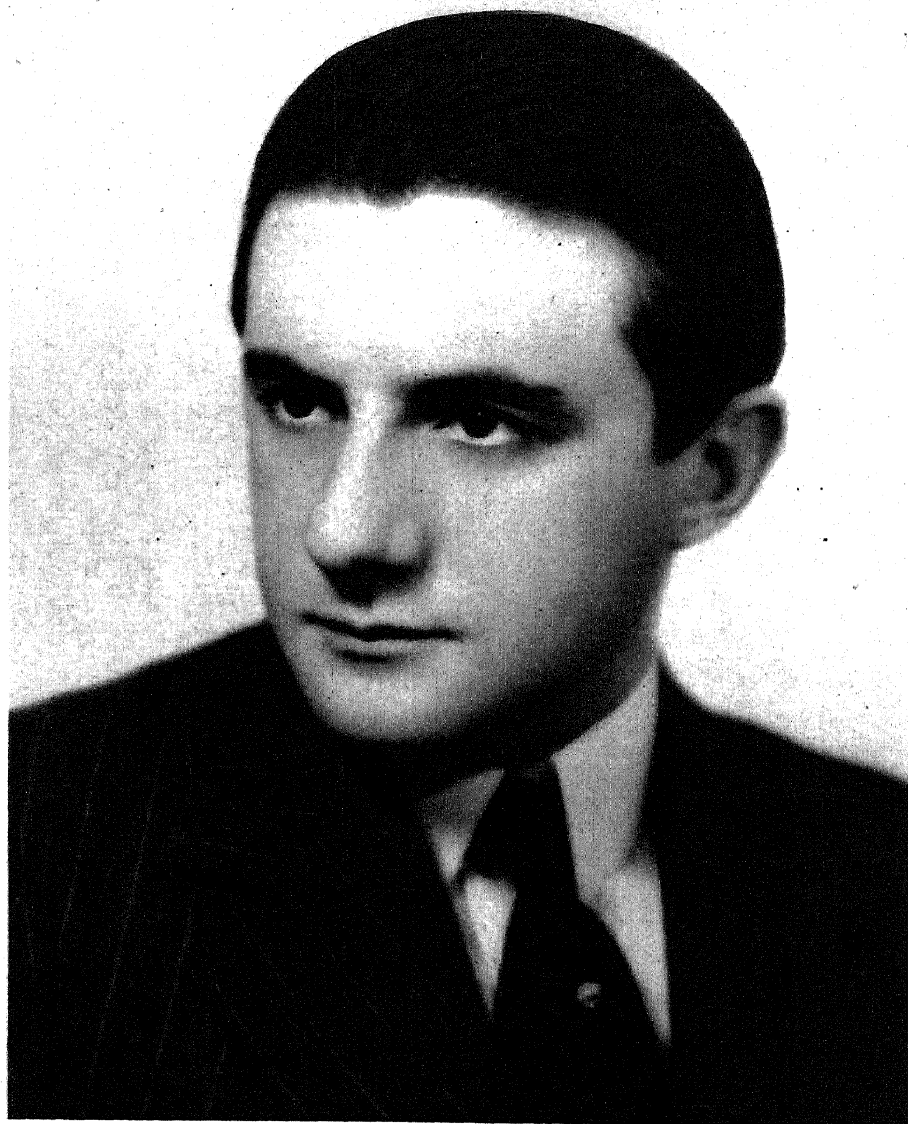
*E. Goldensky*

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI



*Roberts*

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY



*Herbert Mitchell*

JOHN BARBIROLI



DIMITRI MITROPOULOS



EUGENE ORMANDY



JOSÉ ITURBI



PIERRE MONTEUX



SIR ERNEST MACMILLAN





*Paul Boris*

EUGENE GOOSSENS



HANS KINDLER



FRANK BLACK



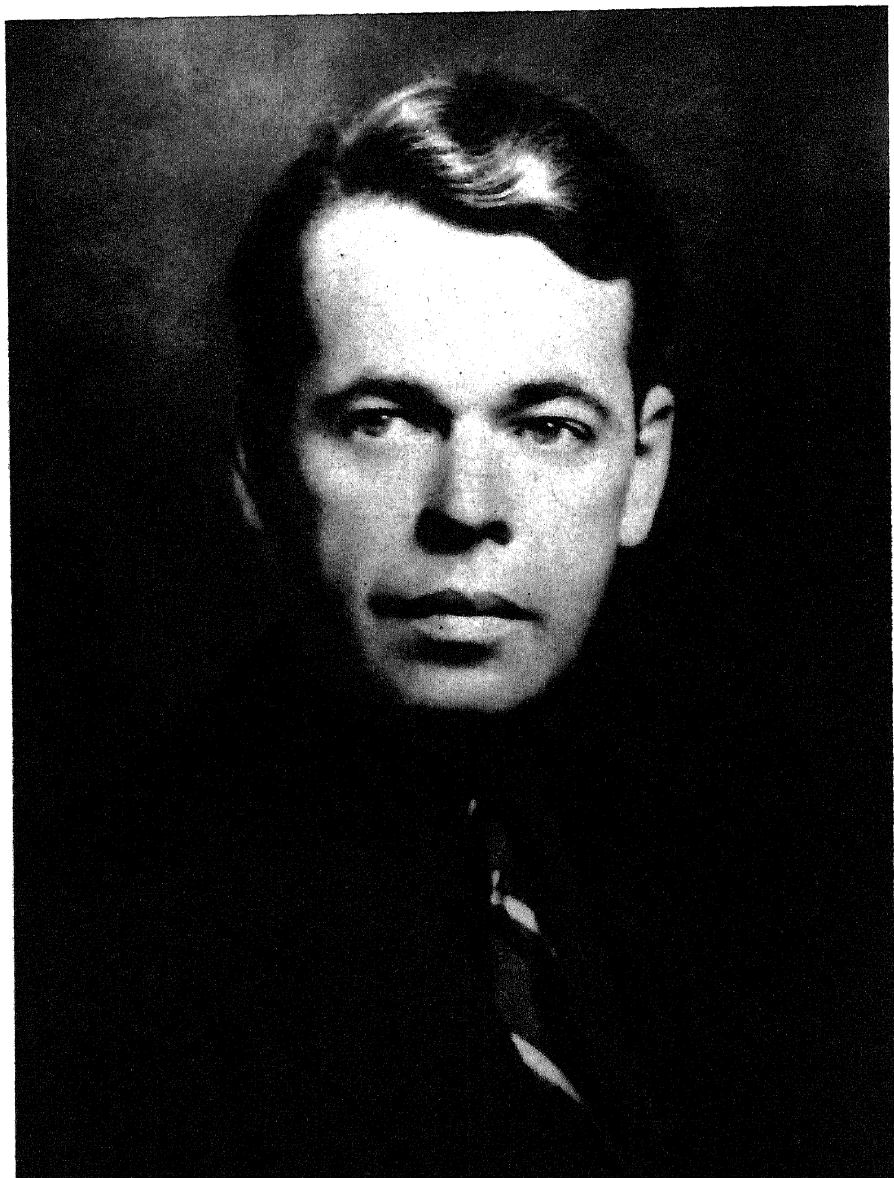
HOWARD BARLOW



ARTHUR FIEDLER



WILFRED PELLETIER



CHARLES O'CONNELL

## THE SYMPHONY

THE SYMPHONY is at once the most important and the most highly developed and elaborate of musical forms. In its finally developed form it is also the most expressive, the most emotional, and most complete type of music in the sense that it is self-contained, needing no program, no explanation, no interpretation other than that which is afforded by its own sounds and rhythms.

The origin of the symphony, as we interpret the word, is somewhat obscure. "Symphony" was once used to designate an instrumental part of a choral work, that happened to attain particular prominence because of length, position, or character. The word was applied to such passages up to the seventeenth century, and was used interchangeably with "overture," "ritornello," and similar terms designating a short instrumental passage in a work for human voices with orchestral accompaniment. By degrees the symphony grew in importance until it was able to hold an independent position in its own right.

Roughly, a symphony is a sonata for orchestra. A glance at the word "sonata" reveals that it originated in "*sonare*," to sound; opposed, therefore, to "*cantare*," to sing. A sonata, consequently, is music which is *sounded*, as opposed to music which is *sung*. But the word has a far more specific significance in modern usage. Definitely, it means a musical composition for one or more instruments, having two principal themes and perhaps several subordinate ones, together with their statement, their exposition, their development, and a conclusion. The first movement of a symphony is usually in sonata form. It has, usually, four movements, thematically independent, but with the first and last similar in style and tonality. The character of these movements is ordinarily designated by the terms *allegro* (quick and vigorous); *andante* (smooth and moving) or *adagio* (slow); *scherzo* (brisk and gay), and *finale*, which may partake of any character dictated by the composer but is usually in brilliant style.

Haydn originated the modern form of the symphony; Mozart developed it, and Beethoven brought it to perfection. It is not possible, therefore, to look upon the symphonies of these three composers from exactly the same point of view. The symphony in Haydn's earlier days would almost be considered chamber music in our time, and the modern symphony orchestra as we hear it had not then been conceived. The size, equipment, and standard of musicianship in the orchestra of today are so far removed from and improved over those of the orchestra of Mozart's or even of Beethoven's time that there is really little basis for comparison between them. Again, the attitude of the audience of today is not that of the music lovers of a hundred years ago. Today we seek in the symphony the eloquent expression of passionate emotion; a century ago the audience was satisfied with a very indifferent performance of a well-built composition; its attention was centered more upon the structure of the music and its conformity with established



standards, rather than on its emotional significance and its sympathetic performance.

Perhaps it is for that reason that the older symphonies are more sedate and formal in style, less richly scored, and more repressed emotionally than those of more recent date. They are, nevertheless, fascinating musically, not by any means as merely the embryo of the modern orchestral work with its more than a hundred perfectly trained artists, and its more than a hundred instruments, but they are interesting in themselves, purely as orchestral music. It is gratifying to remember also that we have the privilege of hearing the music of the older masters, such as Haydn and Mozart, played as they themselves never heard it; rich with beauties beyond the conception of their day. Improvements in the mechanics and technique of orchestral instruments, together with the traditions and modifications which a century of music has developed, make this possible.

The symphony orchestra is the greatest, the most expressive, and the most powerful of musical instruments. *It is one instrument*, though it is made up of the voices of nearly all the recognized musical instruments. It does not speak as an aggregation of voices, a concourse of sound; rather it speaks with one voice, and that a voice capable of an infinite variety of inflection, of color; a voice possessing a range of dynamic power extending from the faintest whisper of sound to the deafening crash of thunder; a voice able to double and triple and multiply itself many times—yet always *one* voice. Unity is the essence of the symphony orchestra; without unity it would speak with the voices of Babel; it would be confusion. It is, then, one instrument, to be played upon ever so delicately, ever so magnificently, yet always under the control of one intelligence, always one in purpose.

The development of the orchestra has usually been far more advanced than that of orchestral music. A few years ago it might have been said without fear of contradiction that the orchestra had reached the pinnacle of development, since it was and had for some time been adequate to any demand put upon it by composers of recognized merit. Such a statement could not be made today in certain musical circles without a question of its validity being raised at once. The modern composer is rarely content with the resources of the orchestra as it is generally accepted, and weird effects are frequently sought in order to make the orchestra an instrument for the delineation of realistic effects considered by most people as far removed from the domain of music.

The tendency in compositions of the present day is strongly toward program music, or music which paints a picture, tells a story, or attempts to reproduce the sounds of nature or of everyday life, as opposed to absolute music, which is simply the use of sound and rhythm to communicate an artistic thought or emotion from composer to hearer. That modern music is sufficiently important or durable to cause a change in the number or kind of instruments in the orchestra seems possible, but unlikely. It is true that the processes of evolution seem determined by the

demands placed upon the evolving matter, and therefore if music of the ultramodern type were to become sufficiently popular it is not inconceivable that important changes in the orchestra might in time be necessary. On the other hand, the giants of musical history were content with orchestral resources even less extensive than those of the present day, and their music at once seized firm hold on the minds and hearts of men, nor has it yet relaxed its grip.

## THE CONCERTO

A PAINTING, to be truly beautiful, must be executed in conformity with certain laws of perspective; a poem must be fitted to a definite measure; a monument must be engineered as well as sculptured, and a musical composition must adhere to structural laws that are quite as essential, quite as truly grounded in reason, as those which govern the form of any other work of art. Beauty is the apt and orderly disposition of the parts, and therefore, in the perfection of musical form, which is in truth achieved by the apt and orderly disposition of its parts, we can find a beauty as admirable and delightful to the intellect as sheer beauty of tone is to the senses.

The form of a musical composition is dictated by its purpose exactly as that of a painting, a poem, or a monument, and the resultant forms are as widely divergent as Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling and Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*, the *Iliad* of Homer and the *Requiem* of Stevenson, the Colossus of Rhodes and Rodin's *Le Penseur*, a Beethoven symphony and a Schubert song.

The concerto is an instrumental composition the purpose of which is to display the skill of the solo performer. It is almost invariably accompanied by the orchestra, though to this rule there have been a few notable exceptions, among them Liszt's *Concert pathétique*, and Schumann's Sonata, Op. 14, originally published as *Concert sans orchestre*. The concerto is the final test of the executant, for it asks of him not technical brilliance alone, but sound musicianship; skill in ensemble as well as solo playing, judgment of a high order, and, on occasion, even talent for composition or improvisation.

The concerto in its modern form was perfected by Mozart, and elaborated and modified by other composers, notably by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. Concertos by other composers have differed radically from the classic models, but the number of irregular compositions in the concerto form is not sufficient to establish a recognized new type, and since the time of Beethoven the concerto has become fairly stabilized as regards form. It consists of three movements, usually an allegro, or bright and lively section; a slow movement; and a rondo, or movement having one principal subject which is always resumed after the introduction of other matter. The rondo might be either gay and lively, as is usually the case, or might take on a less joyous character.

To examine thoroughly the concerto form would require an academic dissertation which, perhaps, would not be of great interest to the person who loves music for its own sake, and hence would be out of place here. It is proper, however, to mention briefly some of the more salient features of the form, in order that your enjoyment of the music may be made complete.

It has been said that the concerto is the final test of the artist. Even a casual examination of the classical concerto form will show that this is so. The first movement affords him an opportunity to display brilliancy of technique, rhythmic feel-

ing, accuracy, and power in dynamic effects; the second asks more particularly for emotional expression, quality and variety of tone, depth of feeling, and faithfulness of interpretation; the third movement is most likely to exact from the soloist all these qualities combined in their relations, together with a finish, a polish, a patina laid on by thorough scholarship.

The cadenza is a feature of the concerto, and one of considerable importance and great interest. The cadenza is a flourish, brilliant, indefinite in structure and seemingly abandoned, yet, in its most acceptable form, embodying ideas taken from the subject matter of the work of which it forms a part. It originated in vocal music, when singers seized upon the opportunity afforded by a pause just before the final note of a composition to demonstrate the range and flexibility of their voices. Applied to instrumental music, particularly to the concerto, the cadenza assumed a somewhat different character. Coming at or near the close of a movement, it made it possible for the executant to astonish and delight his hearers with a demonstration of musical pyrotechnics, and leave them with the applause-producing sense of astonishment fresh in their minds. It was customary for the composer to allow the solo player to extemporize the cadenza, interpolating ideas from the concerto itself, but virtuosos frequently abused the privilege by bringing in wholly unrelated matter merely for purposes of display. Several composers, notably Beethoven and Schumann, themselves frequently wrote out the cadenza that was to be played, in order to prevent executants introducing wholly extraneous matter.

Probably no concerto, or any other composition, adheres rigidly to the theoretically perfect form. A circle is the perfect example of the curvilinear form, but the oval and other shapes are more interesting to the eye. So it is with art forms. Probably none of the Shakespearean sonnets is absolutely regular and perfect in construction, yet one feels that the poet achieved the final, inevitable form, to which irregularities only add interest and piquancy. In the same manner the concerto form, or sonata form, or symphony form attain distinction and character when, observing the basic canons of structure, they display individual marks and differences.

Perfection of form does not, however, stop with the number, kind, or sequence of movements in the composition. It involves much more complicated factors, such as time, tonality, and relation of tonalities. It is easy to perceive, therefore, that study and skill of unusual degree is necessary to write an ordinary concerto; to write one such as Schumann or Beethoven or Brahms wrote requires genius, and to appreciate such a composition necessitates some little thought and at least an acquaintance with the rudiments of the work.

# JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

[1685-1750]

**J**OHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, the greatest musician of his time and perhaps of all time, was born at Eisenach of a family which for two centuries had been composed largely of distinguished musicians. A detailed account of his life, not to mention the lives of the many notable musicians who were closely related to him, would fill all the pages of this book. It may give some idea of the musical proclivities of the Bach family, however, if one notes that in the part of Germany in which they lived, town musicians came to be known as "the Bachs," and the name was applied to them long after any Bach could be found among them.

It is important to mention that the family possessed tribal unity of an extraordinary cohesiveness. Most of the Bachs learned from one another, and from experience; and this was especially fortunate because few of them were ever in a position to afford formal education. Music was their one diversion, their work, their study, their life. It was practiced at home, when there were children in the family (and there were usually many!) and made into a game, so that even as small children the Bachs knew much about music, both as executants and as composers. The talents built up through generations, and fostered by close and constant family contacts, were ultimately and marvelously concentrated in Johann Sebastian Bach.

He was born on March 21, 1685, and was hardly out of the cradle before his father, Ambrosius Bach, began giving him violin lessons. When Johann was ten years old, he was left an orphan, and went to live with an elder brother, who was an organist and teacher. His musical training was continued under the tutelage of the brother, who gave Johann lessons in playing the clavier and saw to it that he went to elementary school. The young Bach's musical education proceeded too rapidly for the peace of mind of his teacher, who instead of encouraging the precocious Johann often took steps to retard his progress.

When the boy was fifteen, he was admitted to the church choir of St. Michael's, in Lüneburg, and by his singing earned his schooling in an institution connected with the church. Here also he had an opportunity to study the keyboard instruments, and to visit neighboring Hamburg, where the famous organist Reinken occasionally played. He made these journeys afoot, and a pathetic story is told of how, weary and hungry, he had stopped to rest, on the way home, outside the kitchen windows of an inn; no doubt sniffing the while at the enticing odors that were wafted out to him. Suddenly the window opened, and two fish heads were thrown out. Any boy would have picked them up and inspected them—and so did Bach; and inside each he found a coin. Overjoyed, he had a meal at the inn and, his strength revived, turned about and went back to Hamburg for some more organ music.

His schooling finished, the talented Johann soon found himself a musical

situation, and it was but the first of many, always of growing importance. In 1708 he was given the position of court organist at Weimar, and it was in this town that most of his great works were written; from it, his fame as organist radiated everywhere. He had married in 1707, and his first wife, Maria Barbara (whose maiden name also was Bach) presented him with seven children. She died in 1720, and the following year Bach married Anna Magdalena Wilcken, who became the mother of thirteen more Bachs.

The admirable qualities, personal and musical, of the Bach line seemed crystallized in Johann Sebastian; and after him they withered and died. His life was beautifully serene, well ordered, and, in the best sense, utterly successful. He was respected as the great musician of his time, beloved as an ideal father, envied for the talents of which he himself was acutely conscious. He explored a distinctly new approach to music, to its very limits; and no one who followed in his path found anything new to say or do, for Bach had overlooked nothing. He worked unceasingly, and with a productiveness that is almost incredible. Only the blindness that came upon him, probably through unremitting eyestrain, put a period to his activity so far as writing down music was concerned. An operation to relieve it was unsuccessful, and not long afterward Johann Sebastian Bach was gathered unto his fathers. His obscure grave was forgotten and neglected until 1894, when it was located, and positively identified. His ashes were entombed in a crypt beneath the altar of St. John's Church at Leipzig, in 1900, on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his death.



### “Brandenburg” Concerto No. 2 in F major

WE ARE accustomed, perhaps, to think of the concerto as a display piece for a solo instrument, accompanied by orchestra; as a work the elements of which are the contrast in tonal color of the solo instrument as opposed to the orchestra's infinite variety of tone effects, and the conspicuous skill of the performer.

The concerto of Bach's day is something quite different. Its chief element is the contrast between two *groups* of instruments—in this case, of a quartet consisting of trumpet, oboe, flute, and violin against the main body of strings.

The “Brandenburg” Concertos were Bach's earliest achievements in the field of music for the larger instrumental bodies. They derive their name from the fact that they were written for the eccentric Margrave of Brandenburg, who, it has been said, collected concertos as one might collect Americana or postage stamps. Indeed, we must accept the latter example, for the value placed upon this music at the auction of the Margrave's effects was no more than a few cents. There were

six concertos in this group, each written for a different group of instruments. The second is doubtless the best-loved, and perhaps the finest of all.

One listens to this and other works of Bach, and wonders whence originated the suspicion that Bach is mathematical, not to say mechanical; that he is pedantic, lacking in humanity. For here is truly lovely music . . . now buoyant, vigorous, and swift; now tender to the point of poignancy; now architectural upon a noble, inspiring scale.

### *First Movement*

The sheer simplicity and clarity of the first movement, apart from its delightful sprightly rhythm and prolific invention and variety, would all but entitle it to the name "masterpiece." It sparkles; it trips with elastic step infallibly through twining measures, and colors rich and bright, like a moving chiaroscuro, sweep swiftly across the page. The trumpet, undeniable leader of the solo quartet, enters first on a clear and long drawn note . . . now the violin in a sprightly figure; the oboe, with its somewhat tearful voice, in a parallel phrase, and finally the flute, spurting jets of bright tone like a silver stream against the massed colors of the string choirs.

Imitation, thesis and antithesis, contrast and parallel . . . half the melodic devices known to the master are resorted to with almost bewildering brilliance . . . and through it all, a fine elastic rhythm, urging on where a scholar's delight in perfect symmetry might tempt him to linger . . . a rhythm strongly supporting the delicately balanced structure above it. Yet, at the division of the movement, the loveliest music is still to come.

Now the quartet appears in both internal and external contrast, and at each succeeding shifting of tone colors one wonders which is loveliest. A modulation to the minor effects no change in the exuberant spirit of the movement; rather, its soberer tones give stronger contrast to the joyous return to the main theme, in the buoyant F major, on which the movement closes. A broadening of tone . . . an extension of the rhythmic stride . . . a bright major tonic chord, and the movement is ended.

### *Second Movement*

The bold bright tones of the trumpet in the solo group are less in evidence as the tender sentiment of the second movement supplants the exuberant joyousness of the first. Now a lovely song is woven of strands charmed from violin and oboe, and still again from the flute, while the deeper strings of the orchestra pursue their quiet course through broken chords, ever moving and vital. Again, which voice is loveliest? Again, which confluence of voices shall most deeply enchant our ears? Which of these voices—oboe, flute, violin—which shall triumph in the gentle conflict?

Not to give support to the legend of Bach's scholasticism, but simply to explain a charming effect, let us note at the end of the movement a modulation characteristic of the composer, and one invariably successful in dissipating shadow and restoring repose in his music. We refer to the close of the movement on the chord of the *parallel*, rather than the relative, major tonic chord—the less obvious, and hence the more surprising and effective thing, the almost daring thing to do. It is effected, incidentally, by the alteration of but a single note in the chord. What can be achieved with economy of means!

### *Third Movement*

It is difficult to explain—or is it necessary?—the insight of a conductor who guides his musicians through the intricacies of the magnificent fugue involving the solo group throughout the final movement. Four voices, three of them among the weakest in the orchestra, woven in most intricate counterpoint, against the massed sonorities of the string choirs—yet each voice is crystal clear, each thread of tone shines independently in its own color, and still blends with its background. That is Bach.

The fugue, incidentally, is of the type known as a “free” fugue, in contradistinction to the strictest form of the fugue, which must contain all elements of this contrapuntal device, and these in regular sequence. One would rather think that Bach, facile as he was in the most difficult labyrinths of harmony, was a trifle impatient, out of his own exuberance, with the confines of strictest form. Be that as it may, he has created in this movement, within restrictions which would be paralyzing to a present-day composer, an expression of dashing high spirits.



### “Brandenburg” Concerto No. 5 in D major

OF THE six “Brandenburg” Concertos, the fifth seems to rank next, in popular appeal, to the second, perhaps because of the anachronism by which an elaborate solo piano part is the most conspicuous feature. This part was of course written for the clavier, or cembalo, an ancestor of the piano, but with none of the tone quality of the latter and very little of its power. Bach was a brilliant performer upon this keyboard instrument, and in this music availed himself of an opportunity to display his talents.

Violin, flute, and piano are treated as solo instruments in all three movements, although combined with extraordinarily beautiful effect in the second. The thematic material of the first movement is presented at once in the strings, and more power-



fully in the ensemble. The solo violin and flute have frequent responsive phrases, posed against the concerted voices of the whole orchestra group. (It should be mentioned that the "Brandenburg" Concertos were written as chamber music, and by no means employed the sonorous body of strings which we ordinarily hear in them today. While the original instrumentation might lend more accent to the formality of their structure, it must be admitted that the works as given by symphony orchestra are more euphonious.) There is a long, elaborate, and difficult solo for piano.

The second movement, grave and full of emotion, takes the form of a trio for the solo instruments, in which their separate voices are intricately woven in most expressive melody. The third and final section is a marked and not unwelcome contrast, with almost abandoned swift rhythms, bright tunefulness, and more sonority than has heretofore appeared in the concerto.



### Suite No. 2 in B minor for Flute and Strings

BACH wrote for orchestra four suites, or groups of short pieces based upon popular dance rhythms of the period (*circa* 1720). While not among his most important works, these suites rank with his most charming and popular compositions. Bach's writing for orchestra was relatively a small proportion of the music he has left us, for with the limited orchestral facilities at his disposal, and the character of his profession as a church organist, he naturally looked to the organ, with its great dynamic and color range, for the largest expressions of his genius.

The unhappy and self-deluded people who, without much or any investigation, choose to regard Bach as dull, mathematical, and heavy should cultivate an acquaintance with all four of the suites. Really he was a merry fellow at times—as merry as one gifted with robust health, confidence in his own powers, a happy inward life, and twenty children can well be. Music made and kept him happy—and whether the music was a great cry wrenched from a deep and sometimes brooding soul, or a jig that might have been danced by children in the streets, its effect was the same in that it gave its creator a hearty and healthy glow. Nor did he take himself too seriously; one is reminded of that wonderful little organ piece—the *Fugue à la gigue* in which Bach combines the massive resources and serious tone of his organ with the figures and rhythms of a lighthearted and quite danceable jig!

Of the four suites, the second and third are perhaps the most popular. The second is written for flute and string orchestras, and consists of an overture, rondo,

This suite contains as its second movement an "air" which is by far the best-known music from the hand of Bach. It is what many people know as the "Air for the G String"—a lovely flowing melody that has tempted too strongly many a transcriber, with the result that the "air" is better known as a little piece for violin and piano than as a part of this suite.

The music begins with the customary overture, serious and contained at the outset, but presently moving into a brighter and swifter section, with some interesting solo passages for violin. The overture concludes with a return to the grave atmosphere of the beginning.

The "air" is a familiar and lovely song, played by strings alone. The gavotte, the third movement, is in the rhythm of a dance once a favorite among the peasants of France, but later appropriated by the sophisticated. There are really two gavottes in this movement, and the first is repeated.

The *bourrée* in this instance is a rather rough-rhythmed dance plainly showing its peasant origin. It has much vigor and liveliness, and is a foretaste of the rollicking jig (*gigue*) that conventionally forms the final section of the suite.



## Bach

*Freely transcribed for orchestra by Leopold Stokowski*

MUSIC composed by Johann Sebastian Bach, and transcribed for the modern symphony orchestra by Leopold Stokowski, has become a definite part of the symphonic repertoire. There have been so many broadcast and recorded performances of Stokowski's Bach transcriptions, and they appear with such frequency, and with such a warm welcome, on the concert programs of the Philadelphia Orchestra, that this book could not logically omit them.

Bach, in many respects the greatest of all musicians, wrote relatively little for the large orchestra. Most of his music was written for the church; much of it for chamber orchestra, for the organ, and for the clavier (piano). Yet there are among his works things which, in grandeur of conception, richness of detail, beauty of form, and emotional value, transcend by far the limitations imposed by the instruments for which they were written. Mr. Stokowski, as a virtuoso of the organ, naturally has studied intimately the music of Bach for many years. He has perceived the peculiarly adaptable features of much of Bach's music, and has virtually rewritten, for orchestra, not only several of the mightiest works, such as the *Pas-sacaglia* in C minor, the great *Chaconne*, and the *Toccat*a and *Fugue* in D minor, but also many obscure and relatively unknown smaller works.

Mr. Stokowski has brought to bear upon this music a vastly greater force than the scholar's studiousness, or the pedantry of the musicologist. The conventional blind worship of Bach and his music as it was left to us has not been a factor in the conductor's transcriptions. He has been able to see that the flawless formalism of so much of Bach's music, with its endless striving for color and variety within rigidly disciplined boundaries, is not the foolish and footless pleasure of a musical mathematician of almost superhuman ingenuity, but perhaps the sublimation of much warmer and more human feelings; an infinite refinement and elaboration of very sound and healthy and human impulses. No chilly ascetic ever had twenty children, as Bach did; and no man who has written great music, or made great art in any form, has been able to divorce his own emotional nature from it. Stokowski, with extraordinary keenness of perception, has recognized in much of Bach's music his joy in the act of creation, his passion for color and ornament, his sensitiveness to pure melody; and these things are likewise recognized in the orchestrations. Yet some of them are as chaste as ice, and accomplish with astounding economy of means climaxes and effects of grandeur that would doubtless please, and certainly do credit to, Bach himself. Bach's humors (and he was a moody fellow!) are always taken into consideration, and in Stokowski's transcriptions the old master appears in as many guises as he doubtless assumed in the flesh. Sometimes, certainly, he is the pious organist; sometimes the sensitive lover of beauty; sometimes the virile figure of a manly man. But he is always Bach; Stokowski has perceived and penetrated his spirit, not perverted it.

The critics have not been unanimous in their enthusiasm for these Bach transcriptions. Indeed, some have taken the transcriber to task for having brought to brilliant and vigorous life some of the organ pieces. Yet here are works, fundamentally perhaps the most perfect and expressive in all the treasury of music, which but for Stokowski might today still languish in the fusty gloom and barrenness of the organ loft and the choir room. It was not by altering their spirit that he has made them the most thrilling and uplifting of all his orchestra's great utterances, but rather by translating that spirit in terms of modern orchestration; by investing them with all the tonal glories that today's superb orchestral instrument makes available—resources which Bach himself, with his love for variety and intimacy and magnificence and climax, would himself have been the first to employ had they been within his reach or knowledge.

Some commentators have resented the richness of the color which Stokowski applies to the convolutions of a Bach fugue, and indignantly quote (*sic*) the conductor as having said, "Bach is just a sleepy old man." That is exactly what Bach is, to many people—and no wonder. His interpreters for the most part forget, or perhaps never have realized, that music is a sensuous as well as an intellectual pleasure, and, engrossed with the mathematical and architectural perfections of Bach, they have usually allowed the tonal possibilities of his music to go by the

board. Of course, transcriptions are frowned upon, and often with justification, by the musician; what is written for one instrument is seldom played upon another without distortion of meaning and loss of effectiveness. But this is not always the case. Bach is often dull and sleepy to modern audiences because he has fallen into the hands of scholars and purists who would have his music played, not with the full grandeur which it so imperatively calls for, but with a contemporary approximation of the feeble resources with which Bach had to be content.

One of the most penetrating of Mr. Stokowski's public remarks upon music is, "Bach is more modern than the moderns." Superficially, the comment might seem somewhat reckless, and yet, reflection establishes its amazing aptness and the broad understanding that provoked it.

The modern composer professes to deal, fairly exclusively, with fundamentals—with the expression of relatively simple, basic human emotion. (We speak now of the writers of absolute music—not of the descriptive, programmatic type.) He deals with, he portrays, he attempts to illustrate, the primitive and elemental *feeling* of mankind. For example, a work which is often regarded as the most significant musical creation of today was inspired by the rites, the customs, the feelings of *primitive* man—not of the peasant, not even of the savage of today, but man in his earlier stages of physical and spiritual evolution; man who snatched his woman from her father's cavern, who tore his food dripping from the beast his crude weapons had brought down.

Yet everything in modern life tends away from the primitive, and toward sophistication. Modern life is a vast and complicated structure; modern thought and feeling are colored and affected and modified by ten thousand years of living. No sane person is today capable of the blind and elemental passion that animated the prehistoric man. No more is music that deals with the primitive, either explicitly in its program, or implicitly in its style, capable of reflecting the emotional or intellectual aspects of modern life.

And as cerebration evolved from a simple, primal urge to the infinitely complicated processes of the modern intellect, so music developed from a beating of the first kettledrum (perhaps a hollow tree!) through simple melody to the masterpiece of counterpoint. The history of melody is a history of civilization; the development of melody and its uses has marched along, *pari passu*, with the development of nations. It is interesting, incidentally, to note in this connection that racial music constructed on a limited scale, such as the pentatonic or five-tone scale, is usually encountered among the peoples regarded as backward, judged by modern standards. The development of our present scale, imperfect as it is, was a part of the intellectual and spiritual development of Europe. Sustained, varied, and interesting melody—which represents sustained development of a thought—is easily accomplished in our modern scale, and almost impossible in the primitive.

It can be seen, therefore, that the music of Bach, in so far as any music is a

reflection of contemporary life and thought, is a more accurate parallel of modern times than the creations of the so-called modernists. It represents modern existence in a variety of ways—in the intricacies of its processes, in the complexity and accuracy of its mathematical elements, in its purely scientific and mechanical aspects (what could be more modern?), and in its architecture.

Some may quarrel with the last. Isn't Bach "Gothic"? Perhaps—but the idea is based more upon sentiment and religious associations than upon actual structural characteristics. Some resemblance there is, indeed, yet the structural principles of Bach's music are more closely in harmony with those of the modern skyscraper even than with those of the medieval cathedral. The contrapuntal works especially may be cited. Note the broad and deep substructure . . . the foundation; the soaring, almost vertical lines; the vertiginous altitude; the "decoration"—functions of the main theme and purpose, intimately related to and derived from that theme and that purpose; the glorious, bold color; the swift sweep and rhythm. Are these not the most striking characteristics of modern architecture?



### Prelude in E-flat minor

THERE is a short introduction of low chords, pulsating like the beatings of pain against the heart; and then from the trembling strings arises a song of such sweet and tender melancholy as human ears have rarely heard, and human voices uttered never. The searching poignancy of this melody passes across and through surrounding harmonies of surpassing loveliness; then, almost imperceptibly, two voices join in eloquent dialogue. Now the music is not without gleams of hope, or at least of resignation; it passes momentarily into brighter, major, measures, but dies in the shadowy minor from which it came.

This prelude is, originally, the eighth in the first book of the *Wohltemperirte Clavier*. To play it on the piano, after having heard this transcription, is to realize not only the relative inarticulateness of the keyboard instrument, but also that some such development as this lay implicit in the original.



### Chaconne

A GREAT musicologist once wrote of this music, "The spirit of the master urges the instrument to incredible utterance." Nothing truer could be said of the Chaconne,

for in its exploration of the ultimate limits of violin technique, its astounding inventiveness, imagination and logic, its complete exhaustion of everything, technical and musical, that can be drawn from the instrument for which it was written, it reveals the plethoric genius of Bach in an inspired utterance which even he never again equaled; and it forces the puny violin into ways of grandeur and magnificence that are almost unbelievable.



A work conceived on so grand a scale can find its ultimately convincing expression only through the greatest of instruments—the orchestra. When we regard it in its original form, it arouses admiration as much through its *appearance* as through its sound, for, admire as we may its exigent demands upon the violinist, and perchance his ability to rise to them, we must admit also that the Chaconne transcends the possibilities of any one instrument, and that it could be even more wonderful as a plan, a basic structure, a skeleton for a work of matchless beauty and dignity and power. To many listeners, there is something pathetic in the spectacle of the violin struggling, in its feeble voice, with the prodigious and massive eloquence of the Chaconne. It is like perceiving this music through the wrong end of a telescope, that, even while it concentrates color and sharpens detail, belittles and makes remote the majesty and the wonder of the work.

The violin was the most flexible, agile, and expressive instrument that Bach knew. An orchestra of the power, sensitiveness, and infinite tonal resources we find in the symphonic organization of today might have been, *must* have been, dreamed of, but was never realized. More than one musician has been conscious of this, and has attempted to bring to the Chaconne the inexhaustible colors, the wide range of power and expressiveness, of the modern orchestra.\* It is not strange that Leopold Stokowski, whose orchestrations of the works of Bach are among the important musical achievements of the last decade, should accomplish the satisfactory, the magnificently convincing orchestration of this work.

There has been a disposition in certain quarters where musical purism is tempered according to the personality involved to damn the orchestral version of the Chaconne as “not violinistic.” That is rather obviously true, but may be regarded as an unintentional, if oblique, compliment. It is not unreasonable to be-

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\* There is a scholarly orchestration by Jenő Hubay, the eminent Hungarian musician and pedagogue.

lieve that Bach chose the violin for the expression of this work, not because it was the ultimate and only instrument capable of such an expression, but because it was, at the time, the only tool flexible enough to limn with clarity the infinitely detailed yet massive outlines of the structure. It has remained for one with deep sympathy and understanding, and comparable imagination, to give to the Chaconne the massiveness, the variety of expression, the logical and natural coloration indicated and made possible by Bach's score.

The Chaconne appears to have been written between the years 1717-1720. It is part of a partita for violin unaccompanied, in D minor. The *chaconne* as a musical form has given scholars ground for endless disputation. Not to split hairs, it may be assumed that it is not materially different from the *passacaglia*, in origin, structure or use—and the *passacaglia* is discussed elsewhere in these pages.

The obvious method, and the unimaginative, of transcribing this music for orchestra, would have been to divide the enormously difficult violin figures among the string choirs, thereby maintaining a maximum of virtuosity with a minimum of difficulty, and satisfying the entirely unnecessary requirement that the music should sound "violinistic." Since the piece in its original form almost requires a multiplicity of hands and myriad fingers, it should follow that if it be divided among sixty-five string players the effect will be magnificent. It isn't; and in his transcription Mr. Stokowski has adopted far different and more subtle methods.

It is given to some creative musical minds to know, by what seems an unerring instinct, which of the instrumental voices will most eloquently and most fittingly express a given phrase. That strange intuitiveness is powerfully brought to bear upon this transcription. Many a phrase, many a difficult one, is left to the abilities and resources of the violins; and right nobly must they acquit themselves. But again, a phrase, a fragment, fades or grows from one voice into another; antithetical voices are opposed and contrasted and combined with completely convincing finality, and seem to match in appropriateness of color and texture the inevitable logic and justice of their form and significance in Bach's musical structure. Strangely, the structure itself, with its lines so traced in living color, seems to be less complex, more comprehensible, than in the monochromatic voice of the violin. It is as if one examined a colossal replica of a tiny and exquisite crystal; and found that, though its planes and curves and facets retain their perfection and proportion, its transparency, like all white light, is compounded of all the colors we can visualize.

The Chaconne, in the transcribed version, brings into brilliant reality the imaginings of the sensitive person who hears or plays the music on the violin. Who has not thought, perhaps subconsciously, "There, in that passage, it sounds like an organ"—but it does not sound like an organ; only like a violin straining for unattainable sonority. Who has not succumbed to the illusion of a "whole band of violins playing," because of the deftness of one violinist and the miraculous for-

mulas of Bach's counterpoint? But in the orchestra there is not the illusion, but the glorious and almost tangible reality; there *is* a band of strings, of brasses and wind, expanding to full stature the magnificent figures that Bach, perforce, has set down in miniature.

The basic theme of the work is gravely pronounced by the lower strings at the beginning; and at once the marvelous flow of ideas in seemingly endless abundance rises from the solemn subject. There can be no adequate description of the wonder of this music. In a peculiar fashion it explains itself; it is always clear, articulate, rounded, rich, and perfect. There are succeeding waves of power, and waves within waves, that ultimately reach a towering crest of sonority. There are little, subsidiary *motives*; a second thematic idea in flute and other woodwinds, a third in horns and trombones, and, toward the end, a prodigious outpouring of sound that is never noisy, of tone superlatively full yet not clamorous, in a powerful ejaculation of the basic theme. The end is not yet; there appears once more in the music a divine and somehow tender complacency, that recalls again the thought that inspired the vast structure and informed its every measure.



## Choralvorspiel: Christ lag in Todesbanden

[*Christ Lay in the Bonds of Death*]

BACH, himself a warmly human man, could on occasion flood his music with the warmest and most piercing expressions of human passion. In the direct and simple faith that was the Lutheranism of Bach's day, one grieved for the Saviour crucified as for a suffering friend, and felt in the dreadful record of the death of Christ all the personal agonies of bereavement.

This music is a transcription of a prelude for organ, the melody of which is extracted from Bach's cantata of the same name, and more remotely from a Lutheran hymn. The organ prelude itself appears in the composer's *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book), a collection of similar pieces.

There is scarcely need to enlarge upon the utterance of intolerable woe that the sensitive listener can hear in this music. Here is the wordless grief that gripped the heart of a Mother who looked upon the murder of her God, her Son; the unutterable loneliness that settled upon her, and upon His friends, when they had laid Him away, bound in the white cloths of the tomb. But, at the end, there is something too of hope and confidence and returning joy, in the conviction, the very strong and Lutheran faith, that the Lord has risen and lives.



In the superbly simple transcription for orchestra, the opportunity for pointing exquisite melody and dark rich harmony with orchestral loveliness is not neglected.



## “Komm süsſer Tod”

[*Come, Sweet Death*]

WHEN the Philadelphia Orchestra first played this unearthly song, there were many in the audience who wept without shame. One could search the music of the world and never find a melody of such intolerable beauty and tenderness, such quiet, poignant passion; set against an orchestral background of indescribable loveliness. It brings the sweet unbearable pain that makes us weep for very happiness; it searches some long-untouched and secret cell of the human soul, and magically opens it.

It is a simple melody, originally written by Bach as one of a collection of *Geistliche Lieder* (Sacred Songs), and not, as many commentators and radio announcers have said, as a choral prelude. One of many obscure and half-forgotten melodies of Bach, in Stokowski's reverent orchestration it has become, to millions perhaps, the most eloquent expression of the old German organist's music.

There is a mysterious awed whisper of the basses, and in a moment the cellos breathe forth the melody, in tones as rich and transparent and aromatic as incense. The transcriber has woven against the melody a wonderful counterpoint, a thin diaphanous mist of tone, floating, almost inaudibly, high above the song in muted violins. The air is repeated, now softly in woodwind, and finally in strings, with a slowly ascending sequence softly rising from the harp.



## Fugue in C minor

A FUGUE may be a studious and formal exercise in counterpoint, or a rich and glowing concatenation of tones, related with marvelous intricacy, balanced, symmetrical, and climactic. Every student of piano is familiar with this fugue in its original form. It is taken from the first book of the *Wohltemperirte Clavier*—the set of exercises which Bach prepared for one of his children. If its technical difficulties were at first discouraging to the young student, its extraordinary humor, dancelike rhythm, and almost boisterous atmosphere must have compensated for the labor of learning to play it well.

It is a far cry from the *Well-Tempered Clavichord* of Bach to the great orchestral instrument of today, with its more than a hundred voices, its infinite

variety of tone colors, its flexibility, and its power. Bach, of all the classic composers, would have reveled in it, and exploited its possibilities as no one else could have done. This little fugue, originally a student's exercise, becomes in Stokowski's brilliant transcription a glowing and powerful episode. Not forgetting the essential humor and joviality of the fugue, the transcriber seizes upon its intrinsic dramatic possibilities also, and from the statement of the theme by the violins at the outset, he builds to a gigantic climax involving the full powers of the orchestra.

Here are rhythms within rhythms, strings and woodwind and trumpet in subject and answer, with elements of the original theme constantly reappearing and keeping in motion the complicated tissue woven by Bach and colored by the orchestrator. Now there is a simple statement of the jolly subject by an unassertive woodwind voice; now long scales are drawn across the page; minor climaxes rise and fall, until finally, the long-restrained trombones and tuba assert the main subject in the bass, and the whole orchestra joins in gigantic chords, the last of which, suddenly moving from minor to parallel major, ends the fugue in a golden blaze.



## Fugue in G minor

[The "Little" Fugue]

Two fugues by Bach are among the most popular in the organist's repertoire; this one, called the "little G minor Fugue," and the "great" one, which is part of the *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*. The "little" fugue is a wonderful study in color and climax. It begins with the pronouncement of the theme by oboe, and ultimately



every choir in the orchestra has its comment to make on this theme. Meanwhile a series of climaxes, all developing toward one final thundering forth of the theme, succeed one another.

The jaunty subject of the fugue appears in the major on the entrance of the cellos, and again when the sonorous basses have it; but the answering voice,



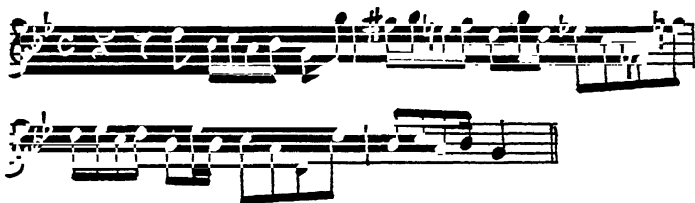
though also in the major mode, leads back to more powerful pronouncements of the main theme, again in G minor, and from this point onward there is a swift growth in intensity and power until the utmost sonority of the orchestra is called forth in the last climax.



## Fugue in G minor

[The "Great" Fugue]

THIS is a transcription of the second part of the Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, for organ. Like the "little" fugue, it is built in a series of climaxes, with various



instruments and choirs of the orchestra putting forth their versions of the theme in contrasting or related timbres. Unlike the "little" fugue, however, its progress toward the gigantic climax is not a continuous sweep; passages in pianissimo are adroitly built into its structure, that the succeeding outpourings of orchestral power may be the more effective by contrast. Sometimes the woodwinds, given the theme, commune quietly among themselves; sometimes the brass strikes a blazing slash across the fabric of the music, but at the end, all the concerted power of the orchestra is summoned in a mighty declaration. On the final chord one of Bach's frequent but always surprising modulations to the major accomplishes by means



of harmony what the straining orchestra could not add by sonority—a last incredible brilliancy, an effect of reserve powers suddenly brought into play.



## Toccatà and Fugue in D minor

BACH has been variously regarded as a cold and scholastic musical mathematician and architect; as a psalm-droning pietist; a disguised or sublimated sensualist, or a fat and jolly paterfamilias serenely and busily happy with music in the expansive bosom of his family. Before any of these characterizations be discarded, it might be well to remember that the master could have been, and probably was, each one of these persons at different times; but mostly he was a supremely gifted artist, astonishingly knowing and confident of his powers, and occasionally luxuriating in them with exuberance.

It was in such a moment that he brought into being this astounding piece of virtuosity. Virtuosity is a dangerous word, perhaps; for it so often connotes superficial and brilliant vacuity. But there is a distinct esthetic pleasure in the mere exercise of power, the sheer exploration of creative ability for its own sake; and here, we can imagine, Bach fashioned a work deliberately as an act of abstract creation; a creation which leaves us in awe, and arouses not sentiment but wonder, that the human mind could have wrought, in the intangible stuff of music, so variously and so powerfully.

The Toccata and Fugue was written for organ—for displaying on that noble instrument the powers of which Bach, alone in his time, was master. Indeed, it is marvelous to believe that Bach himself could have played this music, on the clumsy organs of his day, with one tenth of the brilliance which the work so obviously demands. Today only the most gifted and dextrous of organists, with the help of electropneumatic actions, prearranged stop combinations operating at a single delicate touch, and other complicated mechanical devices, can adequately deliver this music; and even then, in most cases, the drab shadow of a nonexistent Bach who was invariably dull and pedantic—the shadow that hovers with stupefying effect over most organ lofts—paralyzes and eviscerates the performance.

The Toccata and Fugue is one of the first of Stokowski's transcriptions of Bach. Its first public performance, by the Philadelphia Orchestra, created a sensation which is repeated even now with each succeeding performance. No one had ever heard Bach like this—and this particular work, in this orchestral form, has accomplished more toward making Bach known and loved by the masses of music lovers than any other influence since the man himself lived and played his own music.

The two sections of the work are intimately connected. The Toccata (from



*toccare*, to touch; therefore, a work designed to show manual dexterity) is utterly free in style, and blazing with brilliance in every measure. Fiercely emphatic phrases, rushing scales, infinitely varied figures are contrasted with crushing masses of tone in full orchestra; in swift succession the timbre of each orchestral choir is exploited, and we arrive at a massive but swiftly fading climax. Then, in the 32nd measure, the Fugue itself begins. Question and answer are entangled in glowing textures of tone, yet always are clear. There are recurring surges and recessions of power, yet each minor climax is greater than its predecessor, and all combine to carry the orchestra ever closer to the final titanic proclamation. Before this is reached, the strings indulge themselves in a deliriously joyful, a madly exuberant cadenza that searches the length of the gamut for brilliance and sonority; then as if exhausted, the tempo is retarded a little, and a series of gigantic chords, employing the last resources of the orchestra, bring the music to its thrilling close.



## Choralvorspiel: Wir glauben all' an einen Gott

[*We All Believe in the One God*]

THE stalwart and stern religious spirit that pervaded Bach's time and environment was the inspiration that called into being his noblest music. But religion, insofar as it was effective in Bach's own life, was never the narrow, cold, intolerant, and spirit-straitening thing which it often has been and sometimes still is. It was broad, comprehending, and comprehensive, touched with humanity, simple and affecting.

So, at least, we may reason from much of Bach's religious music. That does not imply that the music itself is simple, for often it is, technically, most intricate and elaborate. But the thought behind it seems always to be simple faith, warmed by intensely human feeling—however foreign to the essence of Bach's formal religion that feeling might be—and the whole magnificently thrilling, glorified by the exercise of the composer's ultimate degree of talent.

It was always the simplest and most fundamental of Christian beliefs that inspired Bach to the fullest outpouring of his genius. The Passion of the Saviour . . . the realization of human dependence upon a mightier power . . . the sorrows of the mother who wept at the feet of a Son crucified.

So here, Bach chooses for what has been called the "Giant Fugue," a sentence from the Creed which is the fundamental affirmation of all Christianity, and to which all mankind can subscribe: "We all believe in the one God." There, indeed, is the essence of Lutheranism . . . but there too, in a broader sense, is the corner-

stone of all religions that acknowledge the existence of a power beyond the earth. And the mighty music which Bach has constructed upon and about the plainsong utterance of this simple affirmation in the Lutheran church is equivalent in its universality to the theme itself.

The choral prelude was written originally for the organ, and the name sometimes applied to it—the “Giant Fugue”—refers to the bass passages, which include such long intervals in their striding up and down the scale. The fugue is of the type known as the “real” fugue, in which the answer to the first subject must appear as a perfect transposition either a fourth above or a fifth below the tone of the first subject.

The theme is stated at the outset by the flute, quickly answered by the oboe, and joined almost immediately by the strings. The fugue is not a form that the modern writer or the modern mind would suggest as a medium for the clearest expression, yet, strangely enough, in the hands of Bach and those of his present distinguished interpreter, this strict contrapuntal form becomes an aid to the clarity of the composer’s thought as it is expressed in his music. The theme itself is the simplest assertion of faith, but like all condensed and simple things, this assertion implies a synthesis: in this case, of the entire body of Christian faith. Therefore, in the fugue, the elaboration of the theme may be regarded as a musical analysis of the elements that contribute to and, at the same time, spring from the splendid assertion of belief. The choice of the fugue, with its characteristic components, to exemplify the idea, is therefore in itself a stroke of genius.

Further to elaborate, in words, upon what Bach has to say musically would seem unnecessary. The weaving of this magnificent tapestry of sound is in itself a process so fascinating, so absorbing, and so satisfying that to unravel it pedantically is as unpleasant as to dissect the delicate and complicated structure of some living thing. The growth and elaboration toward the mighty climax, the skill with which all motion and all growth are finally arrested upon a brilliant and utterly satisfying major chord, carry with them sufficient effect to make explanation superfluous.



## Choralvorspiel: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

[*Come, Redeemer of Our Race*]

THE original form of this music was that of an organ prelude to the chorale mentioned above—a hymn which, like many used by Bach, was adapted from the Latin version in the Roman church, to a vernacular rendering in the Lutheran. The transcription preserves the atmosphere of devotion, and of that curious blending

of melancholy and strength that so often marked the church music of Bach. There are turns of phrase in this brief music that seize and stop the heart with their terrible momentary pathos; yet the music pursues an even tenor, serene and confident and placidly, richly beautiful.

The melody emerges, in flute and bassoon, from a background of muted strings. By some thaumaturgy known only to great conductors, the strings here have not the transparent and floating quality which at times they can have when, as here, they are played *con sordino*; \* rather they reveal a dense dark richness like the light that shines through windows of many colored glass, and lingers in the dim recesses of a vaulted nave. The withdrawal of all but strings in the closing measures brings a lessening of sonority, but a more passionate, and finally, a more prayerful utterance.



### Passacaglia in C minor

A *passacaglia* is a form derived from an ancient stately dance, probably of Spanish origin, based on a dignified figure appearing invariably in the bass, of two, four or eight measures, in triple rhythm. This ground bass is the subject of the entire work; from it spring melodic derivatives in great variety. The *passacaglia* differs from the *chaconne* in that the latter has the subject in the upper and internal parts; in the strict *passacaglia* it appears only in the bass. Bach has here combined the two forms, since the theme appears in various sections of the harmonic structure—though chiefly in the bass. He further elaborates the work with a secondary subject, and fugue, combining all at the close with indescribable beauty and grandeur.

Upon the main theme of eight measures, Bach constructs a series of twenty variations, growing in brilliance, in intensity, and in complexity toward the climax. The Passacaglia is perhaps his greatest organ work, yet one wonders if, really, it is playable upon even that mighty instrument, with even a fraction of the nobility, the subtlety and delicacy of shading, the exquisitely flexible rhythm, the infinite variety of color, and the awesome climax given it by the orchestra. Perhaps that is one reason why Leopold Stokowski, himself a brilliant organist, made this masterpiece of orchestration—though he himself gives us a further reason:



\* The Philadelphia Orchestra in public performances plays this music as written, but for broadcasting and recording the mutes are not, as a rule, used.

The most free and sublime instrumental expressions of Bach are his greater organ works, and of these the greatest is the Passacaglia in C minor. Unfortunately one does not often enough have opportunity to hear it, and so, to bring it nearer to those who love Bach's music, I have made it for orchestra.

I have transcribed it simply, adding one instrument to the usual orchestra—a small tuba—which plays in octaves with the larger tuba in the final entry of the theme in the fugue, just as the 8 and 16 feet pedal stops sound in octaves on the organ.

This Passacaglia is one of those works whose content is so full and significant that its medium of expression is of relative unimportance; whether played on the organ, or on the greatest of all instruments—the orchestra—it is one of the most divinely inspired contrapuntal works ever conceived.

The theme is softly intoned by basses and cellos as the music begins. Simply, these deeper strings, as a concourse of rapt worshipers, recite in one voice their awed declaration. Then, as it is repeated, the violins, as a soprano choir, the flutes like voices pale-colored yet intensified in the upper arches of some towering nave, give their variations of the theme.

It is fascinating to observe, apart from the intense emotional exhilaration of the music, how the conductor must build simultaneously along at least three different lines. First of all is the substructure of the work, which is to culminate, after steady ascent, in the overpowering climax at the end. Second, the series of minor climaxes, each reaching to new levels, yet each integrated in expanding and ascending progression. Third, the continual brightening of color and development of sonority. To regard these elements, to assign them their proper yet ever-varying proportions, to consider them in relation to more than a hundred instruments, and to produce a closely articulated, perfectly constructed, absolutely harmonious whole—this is the task of the conductor.

To analyze a work so intricate and skillfully contrived may be a joy to the pedant and the scholar; for most of us, to hear is enough. A few indications suffice for intelligent listening; the rest lies in the appreciation and emotional response of the hearer, which no explanation can in any way influence.

The solemn theme that opens the work persists in the bass throughout the first section of the Passacaglia, while above it is reared a complicated structure of variations, all clearly springing from the melodic essence of the foundation theme, yet each more brilliant than its predecessor.

The second section of the Passacaglia reveals the variations in the lower, internal parts; then the theme in the sonorous richness and nobility of the brass, against the penetrating brilliance of the strings above. Now for the first time the theme appears in the upper voices, assigned to the woodwinds; again, it is presented by the violins, with the contrabasses ponderously giving out their particular version.



Tone colors of which no organ is capable, tones that only the living hand and the breath of life can produce, are now evoked by the conductor in this magnificent orchestration. The warm tones of the horns boldly proclaim the theme, with the incisive voices of strings and oboe sharply contrasted. A new figure, involving rhythmic and dynamic as well as melodic and tonal variation, is given to the strings. Syncopation disturbs and modifies the rhythm of the variations, and the theme itself, now in the basses, is subjected to a rhythmic mutation that adds to its compelling force.

The third section of the Passacaglia unfolds new and wonderful treatments, and reveals a sustained passionate utterance in the strings that is quite overpowering. Presently the fugue begins, its first subject (it is a double fugue) comprising the first half of the Passacaglia theme proper, and the other subject a new figure in eighth notes. The complete theme of the Passacaglia does not appear again in the music.

The fugue is the strictest and most mathematical of contrapuntal devices, yet there are occasions in music, and countless examples in Bach, where by inspired genius it is made the vehicle for the most intense emotional expression. Never in all his music did Bach employ it more felicitously than here. It begins simply enough, but in its convolutions steadily approaches a climax of soul-shaking power. Soaring . . . indeed, here if anywhere, is the magnificent leap of the Gothic arch, its members decorated with every related architectural device, its sides converging at a point almost infinitely high—not in the dim sonorous recesses of a cathedral, but where the transept is swept by the glorious light of the full day. The infallible, the ever new and ever startling Bach modulation to the parallel rather than to the relative major admits a flood of brilliant sunlight . . . the trumpets pierce like a single golden ray . . . the orchestra drives forth a gigantic mass of tone as palpable, almost, as richly grained and many-colored stone . . . reaches a peak of brilliance and sonority beyond which it seems mind cannot go and ear cannot hear—and touches one last soaring pinnacle at the end.



### Saraband from English Suite No. 3

THE saraband which Mr. Stokowski has transcribed for orchestra is extracted from the English Suite No. 3 of Bach. The suite, in Bach's time, was a grouping of movements in dance rhythms, rather less formal than "overtures" and sonatas. The saraband was very frequently chosen as one of the movements, primarily because of the intrinsic dignity and grace of its rhythm, and also because it furnished a de-

sirable rhythmic contrast with the more robust measures of other popular dance forms.

The extended rhythmic impulse of the saraband, being as it is in slow  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, does not adapt it to the contrapuntal style, and the movement consequently assumes the character of an eloquent but simple song. In the orchestral transcription the lovely melodic line is maintained in all its purity, yet its curves are accented delicately with colors drawn from a variety of instruments. The rhythmic element is preserved by subtle yet simple means—an occasional rolling arpeggio from the harp that gives a moving impulse and at the same time applies a fugitive brilliance.



### Adagio from the Organ Toccata in C minor

HALF-PENSIVE and half-gay, this vagrant melody takes its way through a succession of instrumental voices, through major and minor modes. It is leisurely, but never drags; and it has a distinct and vital rhythmic impulse quite peculiar to itself. Through the colorful, yet restrained and appropriate orchestration, we are afforded a study of the related and differing tone qualities of flute, oboe, clarinet, *cor anglais*, and bassoon, each of which repeats a section of the melody in descending progression; each of which imparts its own peculiar accent and phrasing. There is a curious and highly effective touch at the beginning of the last phrase, where by some minor miracle of orchestration and dynamics an effect of tremendous mass and power is obtained, though the orchestra speaks but softly.



### My Soul Is Athirst

[From the *Passion According to St. Matthew*]

THIS is possibly the loveliest of all the Bach chorales—the tenderest, most moving, most reverent. It appears several times in the *Passion According to St. Matthew*, in various harmonizations and with differing verbal content. It is more familiarly known, perhaps, under the title “O Sacred Head Surrounded,” and, in one or another of its many harmonizations, by Bach and others, it is sung in every Christian church in the world.

To dissect this music technically would be almost sacrilege. It cannot be

heard except at the concerts of the Philadelphia Orchestra or by means of the phonograph record made by that orchestra. Never has the Philadelphia Orchestra achieved such miraculously glowing tone—a tone which, darkly incandescent, is charged with musical utterance of the most passionate and poignant emotion. Phrases impalpably delicate, pathetic beyond words and colored beyond description, float in the air like prayers, and of them is created an atmosphere of reverent longing, of pathos, and of tenderness almost too beautiful to bear.



## Chorale from Easter Cantata

[No. 4 *Christ lag in Todesbanden*]

BACH used the fundamental melody of *Christ lag in Todesbanden* in numerous ways and several places, just as he often borrowed other melodies from himself or from his contemporaries. For example, the familiar "*Herzlich thut mich Verlangen*" is not always recognized as a version of the even more familiar "O Sacred Head Surrounded," or "My Soul Is Athirst," the loveliest of all the chorales in the *St. Matthew Passion*; and "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" is seldom identified with the chorale "Though My Feet from Thee Have Wandered," notwithstanding the fact that their melodic elements are the same. By changes of rhythm, and especially by changes in harmonization, Bach could and did so disguise some of his favorite melodies so completely that they seem entirely new and different.

Mr. Stokowski has treated this melody as an organ prelude, just as Bach himself frequently used a special harmonization of a chorale from a given work as a prelude to that work. The organistic treatment is clear from the beginning, and in the bass part, the parallel to an organ pedal part is almost perfect. But in Stokowski's treatment of Bach there is never anything so obvious as a mere transcription of notes, and remarkable as this piece is technically, it is even more significant emotionally. The variety of expression, ranging from a triumphant proclamation to pitiful tenderness, and all applied with singular eloquence to the one theme, commands the hearer's spiritual response even more imperatively than do the structural excellences of the work.



## Aria

[*"Lento" from Suite No. 3 in D major*]

THIS is the lovely and familiar melody popularly known as "Air for the G String"—as violin solo. In the present version the transcriber has brought the aria back into its original key of D major, and at the outset it is heard in the warmer, deeper voice of the cellos. Later the violins sing it with extraordinary intensity of utterance. There is no solo presentation; the choirs of the orchestra, rather, are used as groups, *solî*; as Bach himself, in his concertos, used them. This wordless song is surely one of the most beautiful ever made by anyone, and in Stokowski's superb harmonization the aria is brought to what must be its final and maximum degree of loveliness.



Mein Jesu, was für Seelenweh befällt Dich in Getsemane

[*My Jesus in Gethsemane*]

ABOVE is the complete title of this beautiful hymn which Mr. Stokowski selected from a collection of hymns collated by the Bach Gesellschaft under the general title *Geistliche Lieder und Arien mit beziffertem oder unbeziffertem Bass, aus Schemelli's Gesangbuch und dem Notenbuch der Anna Magdalena Bach* (Sacred Songs and Arias With or Without Figured Bass, from Schemelli's Book of Songs and the Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach).

The pathos, tenderness, and intimate quality which fill Bach's music when it deals with sacred things, and particularly with details of the Passion, are preserved in this transcription with full appreciation and sympathy. The string choirs are entrusted with the melody, which we hear low and brooding in the cellos, and again tense and passionately protesting in the upper strings. We encounter here the formula so often applied by Bach in the *S. Matthew Passion*, wherein the dolours of Christ are reverently contemplated; pity follows; then realization of human responsibility for His sufferings, and finally expressions of penitence and of love. With economy of orchestral resource, and within a purposely limited dynamic range, the orchestra sings this profoundly moving song with an eloquence that cannot be described.



## Saraband from First Violin Suite

THE original of the movement is found in the first of the six suites for violin unaccompanied, in the edition published by Drei Masken Verlag of Munich. Here Mr. Stokowski's work becomes more that of the composer than that of the transcriber. Given a slender single line of music, but one informed by Bach with undreamed-of possibilities, the transcriber erects upon it a musical structure of sweeping majesty; richly but not elaborately colored; so suavely handled in its dynamics that without loudness one is conscious of the tonal mass, as without exaggerated pianissimi one feels the tonal delicacy of the orchestra.

The strings and the woodwinds supply the fabric from which the lovely texture of the music is woven. Always, in the warp and weft of the music, the shining thread of melody which is Bach's own is discernible, now in a solo flute requiring consummate skill and beauty of tone; again in the upper strings, whose sweeping chords follow precisely the bowing directions implied in the original for violin unaccompanied.

# MILI BALAKIREV

[1837-1910]

THE COMPOSER was a native of Nizhnii Novgorod, and in his youth had the advantage of early study under the guidance of his mother. A considerable part of his boyhood was spent in the country home of a friend of the family, a musicologist and publisher, to whose extensive library young Balakirev had access. Balakirev became, eventually, more important as an influence than as a composer in his own right, though he has left many charming works. His chief contribution to music was his enthusiastic espousal of the nationalistic movement; a movement given its original impetus by Glinka, and furthered by the later efforts of Balakirev and his associates. His importance in influencing the direction of Russian musical development may be estimated by considering that he had as pupils Cui, Mussorgsky, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov.

Aside from the symphonic poem *Thamar*, occasionally performed by orchestras in this country, Balakirev is more noted for an orchestral transcription of one of his own piano compositions, and for his own piano transcriptions of the works of others.



## Islamey

BALAKIREV was one of the group of Russian composers styled "The Five," and including Borodin, Cui, Mussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov as well as Balakirev. They dedicated themselves to the production of a really Russian music, national in origin, idiom, and treatment, and they looked upon such composers as Tchaikovsky, whom we consider so Russian, as something of an "outsider"—as a cosmopolitan, at best.

Balakirev conceived the material from which *Islamey* is constructed during his travels in the Caucasus. It was originally written as a pianoforte composition, and, incidentally, is quite generally regarded as perhaps the most difficult piece of piano music in existence. The transcription for orchestra was made by Alfredo Casella in 1908, and dedicated to the famous pianist, Alexander Siloti. The work, as may well be surmised from its character as a pianistic tour de force, was a great favorite of Franz Liszt, and doubtless that gifted musician was able to play it as none of his contemporaries could.

The piece is in the form of a free fantasia on three important themes. The first opens the work, and is heard variously in woodwind, horns, trumpets, and strings. The tempo is lightning swift; the rhythm violent. Like a wild dance, con-

stantly growing in fury and glowing in color, the theme is brilliantly developed throughout the orchestra, the presentation ending, finally, on a bold and broad major chord.

A brief interlude follows; and there is a striking change in sentiment and treatment. A lovely cantabile theme is now assigned the *cor anglais*, and then the third theme appears in *cor anglais*, with strings; in solo cello, violin, and viola. A perceptible brightening of color, and a quickening of rhythm . . . but the singing quality of the music is preserved.

The marvelous exposition of the preceding thematic material now unfolds. New resources of orchestral power, new and more brilliant colors are found by the arranger, and the wonder of the enormous difficulties of the music is quite lost in delight in its polychromatic beauty. "Furioso" is the expressive mark the composer attaches to this section, and no better word could have been chosen to describe the music. Rising from climax to climax of color and overpowering dynamic effect, it culminates in slashing chords, in full orchestra, that effectively put a period to its dominating power.

# SAMUEL BARBER

[Born March 9, 1910]

THE FACT that Samuel Barber is a nephew of the famous contralto, Louise Homer, may reasonably have been the basis for his predilection for music. He began musical studies at six and his first compositions date from a year later. At thirteen he entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where, at thirty, he now is a member of the faculty. In his student days, Emilio de Gogorza was his teacher in singing, Isabelle Vengerova in piano, and Rosario Scalero in composition, which was his chief interest.

Graduation from Curtis in 1932 was followed by the winning of the Prix de Rome in 1935 and of the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1935 and 1936—the first case of its being conferred twice on the same musician. Mr. Barber's orchestral works have had frequent performance, both in this country and in Europe. His *Symphony in One Movement* is the only American work to have been included in the festival programs at Salzburg, where Artur Rodzinski conducted it in 1937.

His *Adagio for Strings* and *Essay for Orchestra* were first performed by Toscanini and the NBC Orchestra in 1938, and the former was the only American work played by Toscanini on his South American tour.

Compositions for orchestra by Mr. Barber include the *Essay for Orchestra*, an *Adagio for Strings*, an overture to *The School for Scandal*, *Music for a Scene from Shelley*, *Violin Concerto*, and *Symphony in One Movement*. In the field of chamber music he has written a *String Quartet in B minor*, a *Serenade for String Quartet*, *Dover Beach* for voice and string quartet, and a sonata for cello and piano. Mr. Barber has written many songs, and his choral works are *The Virgin Martyrs* and (for men's chorus and kettledrums) *A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map*.



## Essay for Orchestra

[Opus 12]

THIS composition, written in 1937, is akin to the literary essay in its form, having brevity and conciseness, of an almost epigrammatic neatness. Its two principal themes are contrasted rather than extensively developed. The lower strings present a slow-paced one which is the basis of the first section. A livelier figure introduces the second section, in which eventually the first theme reappears in augmentation.



There is a broad conclusion. The Essay was first performed by the NBC Orchestra, under Toscanini, November 5, 1938.



## Adagio for Strings

[Opus 11]

THIS music was composed in 1936 in Rome as the slow movement of a string quartet in B minor. In that form it was first played there by the Pro Arte Quartet that year. Its first performance in its present version occurred on November 5, 1938, when Toscanini played it with the NBC Symphony. It was the only American work performed by Toscanini on his recent South American tour. Mr. Barber is a nephew of the famous contralto, Louise Homer; the score bears this dedication: "To my aunt and uncle, Louise and Sidney Homer."

The work is based on a single lyric subject announced forthwith by the first violins. Then taken up by the violas in imitation, the theme appears in the other voices until a rising fortissimo is reached in the high strings. Following a pause there is a tranquil close.

# LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

[1770-1827]

**T**HERE ARE SO MANY, and such excellent, biographies of Beethoven that there is little need or use, in these pages, for an extended account of his life. He was one of the two or three most important musicians who ever lived, and a story of his life with a just approximation of its importance and influence would fill all the pages of this book.

He was born at Bonn, December 16, 1770. He sprang from lowly and insignificant people. His mother was a cook, his father a drunken musician, who had emigrated from Holland to Germany. His childhood was a succession of miseries. Lessons from a sottish teacher after being dragged, drugged with sleep, from his cot in the middle of the night. Poverty, privation, toil, a loveless life, but never discouragement. The world and the woes that man makes cannot extinguish the divine fire. Recognition came to him finally.

In middle age—in an age when republicanism was treason—he dared to be republican even while he commanded the support of courtiers and princes. When to be liberal was to be heretic, he lived a large religion of humanism—without disrespect to established orthodoxy. When perfumed aristocrats eyed askance his stodgy figure, grotesque manners, absurd garb, he snarled and flashed and played the pettiness out of them. Too great to be ignored, too poor to be respected, too eccentric to be loved, he lived, one of the strangest figures in all history. Passionate in his loves and hates, ruthless toward opposition or criticism of friend or enemy, always in love and never married, ever honorable and never chivalrous, tender in sentiment and Rabelaisian in humor, simply thinking sublime thoughts, that was Beethoven!

Tragedy followed him like a hound. He became deaf and his last years were lived in a whirling void of silence. Silence!—while from within he drew the sounds that all the world has loved to hear, and he of all the world should first have heard! Romantic, humorous, tragic man!

A decade of decades has passed since Beethoven, starting up from his sickbed, shook his fist at the frowning skies and died. His grave in the Währing cemetery, hard by the resting place of Schubert, was marked simply with his name, and with symbols of immortality. He lives today in some of the most wonderful music ever penned by mortal hand.



## Symphony No. 1 in C major

"THIS," remarked Hector Berlioz, with a kind of impatient and contemptuous toleration, "this is not Beethoven." Indeed it is not the Beethoven of the Third, Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth Symphonies. You will not find in it the giant that strides across the pages of the "*Eroica*"; you will not feel in it the naked passion, the blazing power of the deathless Fifth, nor the intoxicating rhythms, the arrogant virility of the Seventh. And the heaven-storming Ninth was separated by many years and radical spiritual change and development from the First.

This symphony will certainly not provide a dramatic thrill for the casual listener—though one would be unresponsive indeed not to enjoy it in a calmer fashion. The greatness of this work can be appraised only by considering it against the musical background existing at the time of its first performance, in April, 1800. That is not to say that its charm is exclusively for the scholar and the musicologist. There is musical delight in it for everyone; its chief greatness is, however, in its revelation of the Beethoven that was to be, in its daring, in its originality, and in its forthright vigor.

In 1800 Haydn, father of the symphony, was still alive, and regarded as the great musician of the day. Mozart had been dead but a few years. The former had developed the form of the sonata and the symphony; the latter had brought to these a grace and perfection of finish peculiarly his own. These two composers dominated music of the eighteenth century.

Now came a young man, offering to the public *his* idea of a symphony. It was but natural that he should have been under the influence of Haydn and Mozart, both of whom he admired. Yet he was original enough, and daring enough, to impress upon established and accepted form the print of his own will and thought. Though the symphony has much of the character of the innumerable Mozart and Haydn symphonies, it has more—a ruggedness, a certain vigorous humor, originality in form and in detail, and imaginativeness. In all of these qualities it surpasses anything of Haydn or Mozart—with the exception of the "Jupiter" Symphony of the latter.

Eighteenth-century audiences were much more interested in structural form than in emotional content. Their orchestras would be regarded today as adequate to a private salon, but hardly for the concert hall. Judged by our standards, their music was overdicate, highly restrained, somewhat "precious." With interest chiefly in, and emphasis upon, line and form, large orchestras and unrestrained emotional outpourings were unknown. Consequently, the power of this music, and the exigent demands it made upon both performer and listener, were shocking to the polite ears of 1800.

But Beethoven revealed himself as a man whose powerful emotions were of a kind that demanded adequate expression through music. He expanded and gave strength to the accepted forms; he regarded them with respect, if not reverence, and he made them serve his purpose. This did not please the standpatters and reactionaries of his own day, who exhibited the antipathy toward innovation that we find among the same class today.

Some of the criticisms of the first performance are interesting. One newspaper had some kind things to say, but complained that "there was too much use of the wind instruments, so that the music sounded more as if written for a military band than for an orchestra." Another critic, nettled by Beethoven's calm disregard for certain musical conventions, said that the symphony was "the confused explosions of the outrageous effrontery of a young man." Notwithstanding much unfavorable comment, the symphony soon became popular, and by the time the Third was produced, the critics, outraged as usual, were pointing back to the First as a model symphony!

### *First Movement*

One of the disturbing features of some modern music is the use of polytonality (several keys simultaneously) or atonality (no particular key). Imagine then, in 1800, a symphony opening in the key of F, and within a few measures passing through the key of A minor to G major to C major! That is what Beethoven the modernist does in the first few pages of this music. There is a kind of introduction, during which these strange modulations, and a lovely songlike melody for violins, bring us in a thoughtful mood to the main body of the movement. Here there is a marked change in pace and rhythmic feeling, and the violins, softly but with spirit, give out the principal theme.



The second and contrasting theme appears in the alternating voices of flute and oboe, shortly after a powerful crescendo has led us to the key of G major—the related tonality, in which the secondary theme of a movement in sonata form conventionally appears. The two themes are worked over in rather conventional style, but with somewhat more contrast in tone color and dynamic effect than was common at the time this work was composed.

The thematic material is now taken apart with Beethoven's almost clinical thoroughness. Every melodic possibility is exploited. Thematic contrasts and combinations, brilliant rhythmic and dynamic effects, and effective use of orchestral

The image shows a musical score for two woodwind instruments: Flute and Oboe. The Flute part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Oboe part is written on a single staff with a soprano clef and the same key signature. Both parts feature melodic lines with slurs and dynamic markings such as *p* and *fz*. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals.

color are employed in presenting the composer's musical thought in various guises. Finally, musical expression derived from the first theme of the movement is used, in conjunction with vigorous chords, as a coda to end this section of the work.

### *Second Movement*

The Beethoven of rough humors and gruff impatience, the Beethoven who dared and startled the world of his day, is more in evidence throughout the second movement of the symphony. It begins conventionally enough—with a melody, sung by the second violins alone; a melody compounded of pathos and wistful humor, a

The image shows a musical score for the 2nd Violins. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is characterized by slurs and dynamic markings such as *p* and *fz*. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals.

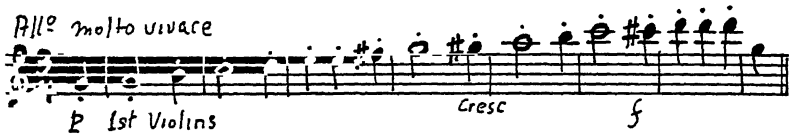
wayward and charming utterance. Growing from it, and eventually compounding a mass of sonorous and lovely tone, come successively the tones of viola and cello, first violins and woodwind. A second melody is projected; then a brighter phrase, and sustained but softly blown notes of the trumpet. Underneath moves the persistent rhythm of the timpani—the most prominent use of these instruments ever known up to Beethoven's time. Abrupt modulations, sudden and surprising contrasts of major and minor tonalities, sharply etched effects of sunshine and shadow reflect Beethoven's varying humor and his delight in shocking contrasts.

### *Third Movement*

It is probable that modern audiences find more delight in Beethoven's inimitable scherzos than in any other of his symphonic movements. In them we feel abounding vitality, *brusquerie*, mischievousness, and harsh humor that were charac-

teristic of the man. We welcome them particularly when they follow a belligerently and persistently solemn, or melancholy, or overlong slow movement, as they sometimes do.

The third movement of the present symphony is marked "minuet"; the conventional eighteenth-century symphony almost always used a dance form, and most often the minuet, as the third movement. But, though this part of the symphony is in triple time, it is something quite different from the usual third movement of the period. It is swift, it is light, it glints with sprightly humor. It has none of the studied dignity of the minuet, and little of its elegance—but it has life and vigor.



In the later symphonies Beethoven frankly abandoned the minuet as a conventional third movement, and designated it as "scherzo." The present portion of the First Symphony is the ancestor of all his scherzos.

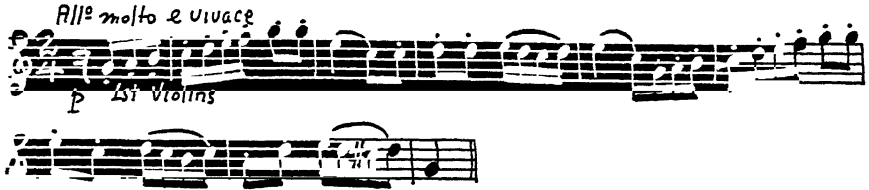
Two melodies, contrasted in form and in orchestral color, are the basis for the minuet proper. There are sudden modulations, mischievous moments of suspense, interesting contrasts of instrumental voices, and always a merry and urgent rhythm moving this charming music. The "trio," beginning with sustained chords in woodwind, is in a more restrained but still humorous mood. The minuet proper returns to end the movement with energetic gaiety.

#### *Fourth Movement*

A purely technical analysis of this or any other symphonic movement is not pertinent to the purpose of this book. The musician does not need it, the layman does not want it. Except for its vigor, and the violent contrasts, dynamic and rhythmic, which mark it as characteristically Beethoven's, the music is not essentially nor vitally different from many another preceding work. This is not disparagement. Neither Beethoven, nor any lesser man, can be original in every detail. If the music followed a pattern which had been exploited again and again, that is not to say that it offered nothing new. The structure was an established one, but the texture is Beethoven's. One can appreciate it with the ears, taking in sounds and rhythms; not with the eyes, examining a mass of words.

The chief subjects of the movement are easily identified and located. There is an introduction, adagio, the main feature of which is a series of ascending passages, first of three notes, then of four, finally of five. After some hesitation, the music moves suddenly into an allegro, and the first theme of the movement, animated and

bright, follows at once. Underneath it moves a scale passage, its marked staccato character easily identifying it.



It is interesting to note the effect of climax which Beethoven, with the economy of means forced upon him by the orchestra of his day, is able to achieve. We sense climax upon climax, each of which actually employs virtually the entire resources of the orchestra. The psychological effect wrought by the composer in the suddenly contrasted passages, played piano, is tremendous, and each peak of power seems higher than the preceding. Presently we come upon a brilliant utterance, boldly put forward by horn and woodwind. The bright scales of the opening section return, and with a succession of chords less long-winded than is common in Beethoven symphonies, the movement ends.



## Symphony No. 2 in D major

TO WRITE music at any time is a rather trying occupation. To have been a composer of Beethoven's day seems, at this distance, to have been particularly difficult. The poor musician of 1790, or thereabout, had an exciting game to play, and woe betide him if he did not play according to the rules. Formality was the thing, and the composer who could write strictly to a form, and still avoid using someone else's melodies, was pretty sure to be regarded as successful. The matter of expressing a large and noble feeling, in a large and noble way, was not the point at issue.

It will be remembered that Beethoven was one of the first composers who broke the bonds imposed upon his spirit and his inspiration by the musical conventions of his time, and in many of his pages shouted a song of himself which in a sense paralleled the "barbaric yawp" of Walt Whitman. The nine symphonies were not, however, a numerical progression toward this freedom. Curiously, the first, and from then on, all the even-numbered symphonies, conformed more closely with the classical mold than did the odd-numbered, which certainly to modern ears are the most exciting.

This symphony was written during the year 1802. It was one of Beethoven's

many years of depression, but there is little trace of his despondency in this music. He was in love, which is misery enough for anyone. His health was bad, and the measures taken to relieve it were worse than the disease. His deafness was acute, and seemed to be aggravated by his other physical disorders. Beethoven felt that death was near, and tried to resign himself to it. Some of his greatest work was still before him.

The symphony was first performed in Vienna, April 5, 1803. Surely the Viennese love music, for at this same concert, which began at six in the evening, they listened not only to this symphony, but to the First, the C minor Piano Concerto, and the oratorio, *The Mount of Olives!*

### *First Movement*

In listening to the early Beethoven symphonies, and particularly to all the even-numbered ones, we, like his own audiences, must to some extent observe the rules of the game. We must not expect the emotional content of the greater, later symphonies; we must not expect the rich orchestral color that Brahms gives us, or that we find even in the Beethoven Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth; we, too, must regard form and structure as of paramount interest.

There is an introduction, rather brief, but embodying three well-defined themes. The first is in full orchestra, with the thematic melody in the woodwind. The second is brighter and more powerful, with sweeping scales and emphatic chords at its conclusion. The third, with descending triplets in the strings, quickens and involves the whole orchestra.

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. It is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for Violas, Cellos, and Basses. The second system includes staves for Basses. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con brio'. The score shows the beginning of the movement, with a strong rhythmic pattern in the strings and woodwinds.

The main body of the movement now follows, with the principal subject proposed by cellos and basses. The movement is strictly in form, so, watching for the conventional second theme, we come upon it, in rather definitely marked rhythm, stated by clarinets, and answered by powerfully bowed strings. The two themes are



developed elaborately and characteristically, and a long coda, deriving its basic material from the first theme of the movement, brings it to a conclusion.

### *Second Movement*

If Beethoven was hedged about with conventions which sometimes restrained him in his expression of the larger passions, he could and did make of his slow movements utterances of the most pointed eloquence. The present section is no exception. It has a pure lyric beauty that remains serene and undisturbed, however distracting the musical figures that accumulate about it. The strings announce the songlike subject, and indeed are entrusted also with the second and third themes,



the last being somewhat more brisk and cheery than its predecessors. The development of all three is less interesting for its stylized character than for the fact that it never obliterates the melodic line or disturbs the mood of the themes themselves.

### *Third Movement*

The term "scherzo," which means, literally, a jest, was first applied, not without wit, to an extravagant kind of love song. The conventional third movement of a symphony was in the form of a minuet, but Beethoven injected so much vigor and swift rhythm into his third movements that, though in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, and three-part form, they could not be called minuets. He applied to them the term scherzo, as indicating their light and playful character.

A musical score for the third movement, marked 'Allegro'. The score is for the first violin, horns, and oboes. The key signature has one flat (F). The first violin part is marked '1st Violins' and 'f'. The horns part is marked 'Horns' and 'ff'. The oboe part is marked 'oboes' and 'ff'. The score shows a rhythmic and melodic line with various dynamics and articulation marks.

There is a naughty flippancy in this scherzo, and it is refreshing after the stiffness of the first and the quiet plaintiveness of the second movement. A light and animated subject, alternately played forte and piano, is presented in changing rhythms and modest orchestral colors. The trio, or middle part of the movement, gives us a bright little melody, repeated with considerable ornamentation.

*Fourth Movement*

The fourth movement, though highly developed, is saved from the weighty dignity of many final movements by its engaging rondo form. Its lightness made



Hector Berlioz, that indefatigable student of Beethoven, suggest that here was a second scherzo in the symphony. And he added his delighted comment on the distribution of the theme in fragments among the orchestral instruments, with the consequent variety of tone color. Reference to the term rondo in the Glossary of Music Terms, beginning on page 635, will make clear the structure of the movement.



## Symphony No. 3 in E flat

[*"Eroica"*]

[Opus 55]

**BEETHOVEN** the democrat, the human, the believer in and champion of human rights did no violence to his convictions when he dedicated this symphony to Napoleon. He believed sincerely that that autocrat was possessed by motives springing from a humanistic creed akin to his own. When on May 18 in 1804 Bonaparte accepted the title of Emperor, Beethoven, his democratic soul outraged by the annihilation of his conception of the man, ripped the title page from his just-completed manuscript, and with imprecations dashed it to the ground. Later, when the work was published, the title, translated, read, "Heroic symphony, for the celebration of the memory of a great man."

However great the hero who might be celebrated in this noble music, it would further illuminate him. In majesty, brilliance, and power; in breadth and depth of feeling; in sheer magnificence, it ranks among the musical masterpieces of all time. Into it Beethoven poured his own superb vitality, so that it lives and moves powerfully; his own conception of a hero, so that it speaks nobly; his own genius as a musician, so that it appeals universally.

One of the curses that has fastened itself upon music is the habit of the scholars and the sentimentalists of attaching to musical works imaginative and usually farfetched titles, in most cases never heard of by the composer, and usually ridiculously unfitting. The teachers of music appreciation have been the most serious sinners in this respect, and have begotten in the minds of the young and the musically innocent more perverted ideas than sound ones. It is a pity if people who, for one reason or another, have not had time to acquaint themselves with the delights of music must be led to it under false pretenses. Music, strictly speaking, cannot tell a story. It does not mean anything that can be expressed in words. It cannot paint a picture. Often it can fortify and make more vivid our impressions and recollections of persons and events and things; often it accompanies and increases the emotional effect of dramatic action. When so intended, the composer almost invariably lets us know in advance. In nine cases out of ten, such titles as "Moonlight" Sonata, and "Spring Song," and "Raindrop" Prelude are expressions of the cheapest kind of musical sentimentality, and no importance whatever should be attached to them.

The "*Eroica*" comes by its subtitle legitimately enough, but musical commentators have not been content with the name Beethoven himself gave it. They must find cryptic meanings and illustrations in its four unintegrated movements—in the movements which, by their varying character and unusual sequence, have so puzzled and worried academic minds for more than a hundred years. The many contradictory interpretations urged by various commentators in themselves establish their futility. Dismiss from your mind every consideration but that of pure music, of moving, living sound that transfers to you an emotional state; do not seek for hidden meanings, for musical illustrations, for tone pictures. Beethoven was eloquent in but one language—the universal language of music. In the symphony he speaks, in *his* language, of the qualities, of mind and heart, he finds in the ideal hero. Be content with this. What this music, or any music, means to another is not of first importance to *your* hearing of it; let it impress *you* as it will. You will be uplifted, and thrilled, and happier by the experience.

### *First Movement*

The two-fisted Beethoven asks attention in no uncertain way—and gets it—with the two swift, staccato, and powerful chords with which the symphony begins. Now he goes directly to his subject, and deep in the choir of cellos, we hear, somewhat tentatively but clearly, the basic theme of the movement. A few moments later, boldly and with elastic vigor, it is put forth by horns, clarinets, and flutes in octaves.



Here is a straightforward theme, not unmilitary in its simple intervals like those of a trumpet call. Yet, simple as it is, Beethoven has constructed about it a towering edifice of sound that moves; sound that surges and flows and beats against one's consciousness with terrific power. Here and there the theme, in one or another of the many voices of the orchestra, appears and dominates all the elaborate developments of itself. It is like a principle of living, which, though seldom explicitly stated, directs and can be detected in a man's every action.

After the first presentation of a contrasting theme, divided among the woodwinds (oboe, clarinet, flute) and violins, both ideas are magnificently developed.



The musical quotation above is but the merest germ of the mighty ideas which the composer now projects through the orchestra, and which culminate in a succession of vigorous and impatient thrusts of tone. Sometimes we feel that the music has departed far from the simple affirmation which was urged at the beginning as the basic thought of the movement—yet always with a sudden influx of light Beethoven shows clearly the imminence of that idea. Let it come, as it does, in the virile voices of cellos and basses; let it breathe gently in the rounded mellow tones of the horn; let it speak incisively in the penetrating accents of the woodwind; it is still the same simple utterance, and the source of all the life and power of the movement.

### *Second Movement*

One may look upon Death as the inevitable, and regard it unemotionally. One may see it as the frustration of the noble impulses and heroic designs which lying Life encourages one to feel and to undertake, and therefore resent it, bitterly and impatiently. And, finally, one may regard Death as the unreasonable, inexorable taking-off of one beloved—and weep.

Here in the second movement of the symphony—which Beethoven himself entitled “Funeral March”—is a curious combination of the latter two attitudes toward Death. The significance of the music cannot possibly be misconstrued. That agonizing slow beat can be only the terrible rhythm of the march toward the grave which figuratively the audience makes behind the body of Beethoven's hero—and makes, literally, with every passing interval of time.

Presently the music expresses more of what we might regard as the hero's own attitude toward Death. We recall, from the first movement, the power, the activity, the restlessness and ruthlessness there expressed; here, in spite of the

slow rhythm, we feel an impatience, a resentment toward Death, the one enemy, the one obstacle, that cannot be overcome. The theme that began the dreadful march, although first presented softly and sadly, sometimes is uttered with



vehemence, as if to elbow aside the mournful musical creatures that move along with it. Then, in a voice which of all orchestral sounds can be most tearful—the oboe—comes the melody, sad and lovely and resigned, to answer the sullen mutterings of the bass. Later, another very beautiful and important theme is given to the strings.

This movement is too long. Someday, a conductor daring or foolhardy enough, will make intelligent revisions that will shorten it by several minutes. The critic will be aghast, the purist will rage, the Beethoven-Worshippers will cry "sacrilege," but the music and the audience will benefit. It does not require twenty minutes and more for Beethoven to establish and sustain the mood he wishes to achieve here—unless, someone may argue, he wishes to achieve boredom, and distinct discomfort in the least dignified portions of the anatomy. The basic ideas of the movement are repeated endlessly, nor is there sufficient variety in orchestration, or in thematic treatment, to justify the prodigious and tedious length of this movement. It must be confessed that there are some few conductors who can make it seem less long than others, and for these we give thanks and leave the music as Beethoven wrote it.

### *Third Movement*

The electric vitality of this wonderful scherzo, coming as it does upon the heels of a funeral procession, has puzzled the musicologists for a hundred years and more. Why, they ask, should a movement of this obviously joyous character follow hard upon the melancholy preceding movement? Perhaps the sardonic Beethoven could give a reasonable answer; no one else has ever done so. Certainly the swift vigor that comes mysteriously into being with the opening notes of the movement is a striking contrast to, and a mighty relief from, the solemnity of the dirge. That is sufficient for musicodramatic purposes.

The thematic elements hardly require illustration. A rustling in the strings,

lightly played but full of energy and swiftness, grows to a merry tumult of colorful sound, and the wonderfully elastic rhythm urges the flying strings along their tangled way. The trio is one of the delights of Beethoven's music. A subject for the horns, very like a hunting call, and, if played strictly in tempo (which it rarely is), fiendishly difficult for those unreliable instruments, leaps upward and outward from the orchestra and is presently answered by the whole band. Wistfully the horns repeat their engaging utterance, and there is for a moment a note of pathos in the responses of the other instruments. But then the sudden fierce joy of the opening part of the movement returns and sweeps all other thoughts before it in a powerful climax.

#### *Fourth Movement*

The final movement of the symphony is a triumph. It leaps into being with a most brilliant passage for all the strings, growing in sonority as it approaches the lower ranges of the instruments, and resting, finally, on a series of mighty chords in full orchestra. Then comes the pronouncement of the theme, presented in the simplest possible way—plucked, note by note, from the strings of violin, viola, cello, and bass. On its repetition, a curious effect of echo is brought about when the woodwind (flutes, clarinets, and bassoons in unison) imitate each note of the strings, half a measure behind them.

There is, after the forceful and vivacious first utterance of the movement, something dark and ominous in this chief theme, yet its developments are of the most triumphant brilliance. Later on, we shall find it extraordinarily combined with a new and brighter musical idea. To illustrate the combination of both themes, we borrow the convenient condensation appearing in that excellent work, *The Standard Concert Guide*, by George P. Upton and Felix Borowski. Here it is:



The themes once stated in their entirety, the remainder of the movement is devoted to an exhaustive exploration of the tonal and contrapuntal possibilities that lie within the simple thematic sentences. Every instrument of the orchestra, it would seem, presents its version, against contrasting utterances from the rest of the ensemble. Always we feel a growth toward a certain climax, and a gathering of the orchestral forces for a final triumphant effort.

This climax comes very suddenly and with gigantic power in the final section of the movement. The capacity of the main theme of the present movement for

further enlargement seems to have been exhausted; there is a transitional period during which you will hear, now subtly, now boldly presented, thematic material from the preceding movements; then, involving all the orchestra's thunders, the moment toward which the composer has been moving relentlessly from the very beginning of the symphony arrives in a blaze of splendor and a magnificence too overpowering for words.



## Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major

THE history of the Fourth Symphony reveals, incidentally, some phases of the character of the composer that the more sentimental biographers and incense burners are wont to ignore. Continually pressed for money, because of his own debts and those contracted by relatives, Beethoven was sometimes harassed into certain dealings with his publishers and others that cannot be described as precisely ethical.

Count Oppersdorf, at the time a warm admirer of the composer, a lover of music and a man wealthy enough to maintain a small symphony orchestra at his castle, commissioned Beethoven to write a symphony for him. In this year, 1806, Beethoven was absorbed in the production of the Fifth Symphony, but with a commission at hand, he laid it aside and devoted himself to work on the Symphony in B-flat major, published, eventually, as the Fourth. He dedicated it to his patron, and, later, received a respectable sum of money for it. It is related, in Thayer's biography of Beethoven, that "he did not send the Count the score, as was the custom, for exclusive use during a fixed period, but turned it over to Lobkowitz for performance, being in urgent need of money; a year later, he substituted the Fifth for the Fourth and accepted from Count Oppersdorf a hundred and fifty florins in March and two hundred in June for it, without delivering it; this sum being, it may be presumed, a bonus for the larger work, the Count having asked for something employing an unusual apparatus. This symphony was also withheld in the end, for reasons which are not known, and Oppersdorf had to content himself with the mere dedication of the Symphony in B-flat originally designed for him." We can readily surmise why Count Oppersdorf and Beethoven had no further relations!

The first performance of this work was at a concert given for the benefit of the composer, March 15, 1807, with Beethoven conducting, of course.

### *First Movement*

About the time this music was written, Beethoven seems to have been in love with the Countess Therese von Brunswick; he was even given evidence that his

sentiments were returned. Because of this circumstance, there has been a disposition on the part of many commentators to assume that the gay spirits that move almost always in this music are a reflection of Beethoven's happiness in his affair with the Countess, and his delight in their engagement. To listen to the music, however, is to remain unconvinced of this theory. Joyful it is, to be sure, but it is hardly the kind of joy one would expect from the mercurial Beethoven, successful in love. When that man's deepest emotions were stirred, they were not expressed in music of this type, where the composer returns to the style and the formality of the earlier symphonies. There is something pretty, and sweet, and light in this music; there are even stylized and derivative things. The aroused Beethoven rarely resorted to such moderate and conventional devices in expressing himself.

Whatever lies back of this music, or whatever its history, we are immediately concerned with how it sounds. It sounds happy, and ingratiating, and complacent. It never approaches the sublimity of the "*Eroica*" that preceded nor the Fifth that followed it. But it is Beethoven in a happy mood, taking joy in his own craftsmanship, and consciously producing a very lovely and perfect thing.

The strings have a strange downward phrase, against an organ point in wood-



wind, at the beginning of the adagio opening section of the first movement. The contemplative suggestion of the introduction does not endure for long, and presently the movement proper, with its vivaciousness and lightfooted rhythm, its clowning bassoon and delicately bowed strings, comes into being. The thematic



material is developed in quite conventional, but utterly charming style. There is a crescendo in the second section of the movement which Berlioz finds as important and compelling as that famous one which leads from the scherzo to the finale of the Fifth Symphony. Simultaneously there are interesting suspensions and modulations, and the rollicking mood of the opening part of the movement suddenly returns.



The curious simplicity of the long scale passage in the strings, the persistent use of the timpani, and the gradual accretion of orchestral forces toward the end of the movement are features of decided interest.

### *Second Movement*

There is a wonderful tenderness and feeling of peace in the lovely melody which, after a brief introduction in strings, Beethoven assigns to the first violins as the principal theme of the movement. No less sweetly do the woodwinds intone



it. And yet, in spite of the placid atmosphere, there is a quiet intensity here that seizes very deftly and firmly upon the emotions and the imagination; and when, toward the end, the timpani take up, as a solo, the tonic and dominant that we heard in the introductory figure, the atmosphere of tenseness, of melancholy and perhaps of foreboding, envelops all, and remains a little while.

### *Third Movement*

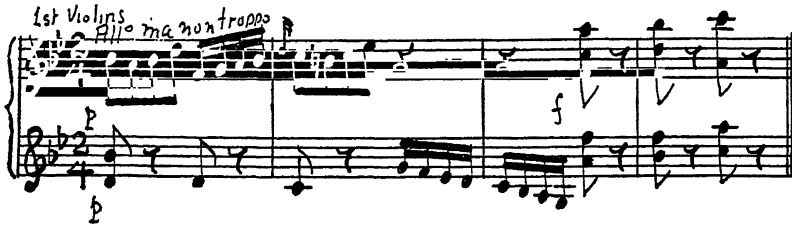
The minuet deviates somewhat, but not importantly, from the classical style.

It is somewhat more playful, and less dignified, than some classical symphonic movements in the same form. But it is beautifully clear and simple in structure, in melodic outline, and in its characteristic well-marked  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm. The middle section, or trio, moderates the tempo somewhat, and places more accent upon melody than upon rhythm.

### *Fourth Movement*

The final movement achieves even more of gaiety and sprightliness than we have yet heard in the symphony. The violins open the festivities with a gay figure

in sixteenths, which sets the pace and establishes the brisk rhythm of the move-



ment. There are occasional rowdy outbursts—the kind of *subito* interjection of seriousness, or of drama, in which Beethoven frequently and delightedly indulged. His good humor, however, persists to the end, where the concluding measures suggest a serio-comic denouement.



### Symphony No. 5 in C minor

HERE is the potent and concentrated and ultimate distillation of the genius that was Beethoven. This symphony is compounded of all that was the essential man and the essential music. Incredibly condensed and powerful, the forces that moved this strange and wonderful man are here focused upon and welded into one superb structure. The godlike, yet so human, rages that possessed him; the tenderness and warmth that sometimes radiated from him; the wry and wicked and harsh humor that flicked and stung like scorpions; the superb courage, the impatience, and finally the heroic and unreasoning defiance that breathed hotly from so many of his utterances—all are here, stripped of concealment, of ornament, and of craftsman's device. All are here, in this mighty, this comprehensible and human music.

There is in the world music of more sophistication, but there is none that so surely makes itself understood. There is music magnificently employing orchestral resources Beethoven did not know, but there is none that speaks more powerfully. There is simpler music, but none that, so naked and shameless, so clearly and with such terrible intensity, exposes the tempests and the triumphs of the human soul. Shaken by a frenzy that must have demented a lesser man, Beethoven nevertheless restrains, within a beauty and symmetry of form, the passions in whose fire this music was begotten, and perhaps it is this restraint, this iron hand that the composer lays upon himself, that most commends this music. For we are all hedged about by the tricks and trials of fate, by the disciplines and necessities of living; in uttering so superbly his very self, within self-imposed restraints, Beethoven speaks for all of us—as we should want to be.

We cannot, nor do we need to know, what passions moved the composer in

this music. The sentimentalists would have you believe that it reflects the rise and fall of his amorous fortunes. No wholly rational being could draw such a conclusion from this ruthless, blazing, cosmic music. In the broad sense, this is not an expression of one man's thought or feeling. This is the utterance of a tormented and puzzled and cynical and hopeful—and finally triumphant humanity. This is the voice of a people, of a world, pitiful and puny; yet bearing within it, as the peasant may bear the seed of a potentate, the elements of final greatness.

This music lay gestating in the mind of Beethoven for many years. His papers reveal the nascent idea as early as 1800, when he was concerned more immediately with the formal and derivative, the almost adolescent early symphonies. It seems to have been performed for the first time at a concert in the Theater an der Wien, Thursday, December 22, 1808. The conductor was Beethoven. The "Pastoral" Symphony was also performed at this concert. When we consider the relative popularity of the Beethoven symphonies today, it is difficult to understand why Beethoven himself chose the "*Eroica*," and not the Fifth, as his favorite. (The Ninth was not yet in existence.) For surely the Fifth has a more powerful, direct, and universal appeal to human nature than any other great music in existence.

Think of Beethoven as he was, and you will not approach the Fifth Symphony in awe. Perhaps that will come later, with fuller understanding. Nor will you, if you think of the man's intense humanity, turn aside from this music as a problem to be solved. Though you may be weary of today's interminable round, you will never look upon it as one more of life's enigmas. No, it is simple. There is nothing of awe in it. It is clear as morning light. There is no one so poorly versed, or so experienced, in the magic art of music, who does not come under its spell. It is the expression of a vigorous, vital, manly man, whose introspection revealed in himself, to himself, some of the meanings of life. He is able by his art to communicate his thought and feeling to you. Listen.

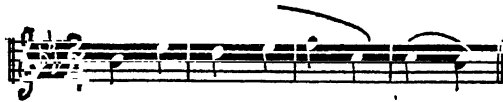
### *First Movement*

It must be admitted that, while Beethoven left no "program" for the symphony—it needs none!—he did give us a clue to the significance of that brutally powerful phrase which opens the movement, and which, explicit or implicit, can be discovered as the vitalizing thought through all four movements of the work. "*So pocht das Schicksal an die Pforte*," he said. ("Thus fate knocks at the door.") But this was some time after the symphony had been written, and may have been an afterthought, or an idea that occurred at the moment. It is not unreasonable, and has infinitely pleased the musical romanticists. If a motto be needed for the symphony, this one, the possibility of which, at least, was admitted by Beethoven himself, will do as well as any other. For this harsh and powerful utterance is as persistent as fate, and as almighty in this music. It shall be noted further.

At the opening of the movement, this subject is thrust at us by all the strings and the clarinets; on its sudden and climactic expansion, the whole orchestra puts it forth with violence. It is quoted in its simplest form:



From these four notes a towering and active and raging organism of tone is swiftly erected, and the mercilessly dynamic and dominating character of the principal theme is established. Its driving force is suspended on a powerful chord, and after the horns more gently suggest it in an altered guise, we can note a brief but lovely musical thought, spoken through the strings and woodwind in a pensive dialogue with itself.



And in this movement gentleness and grace are battered and defeated and crushed into silence by the awful force and frequency of the assaults of the first four-note phrase. Distorted and driven and exhausted, the sweet, sad protestings of the second theme finally disappear, and Beethoven turns loose, in violent chords, the orchestra's mightiest forces, that relent, it seems, only from exhaustion. The oboe, a lonely and tearful voice, raises a piteous cry, but seems only to provoke new torrents that rage swiftly through the strings. Once again the placid and comforting voice of the horn gives pause—and yet once again the impetuous strings return to sweep resistlessly through the orchestra with the ever-present and fateful utterance that is peculiarly theirs.

The bitterness and violence of this movement have no parallel in music. The sheer power that moves it, the utter logic and inevitableness and finality of this music, almost remove it from the manipulations of the conductor; given instruments and knowing hands, it plays itself. Many a conductor has found that there is but one interpretation—Beethoven's—and *that* one speaks, rudely and clamorously and sufficiently, for itself. This is an utterance of the supreme and ruthless ego, momentarily frustrated but unconquered, and it does not brook interference.

Toward the close of the movement comes that superb passage, still in the deadly rhythm of four notes, in which a perverted version of the gentle theme, once so diffidently sung by the violins and woodwind, is presented, noticeably in

the flute, and mocked with brutal imitation by the whole string section. What marvelous antithesis! What demoniac humor!

There is no gentleness or peace, or even conclusive triumph, at the end. Only the violent presence of the dominating theme, uttered with such vehemence as the orchestra, until now, has not known. And on two chords like mailed fists raised against the skies, the movement ends.

### *Second Movement*

It is not easy, at first glance, to be convinced that the lovely song which is the opening and the basis of this movement is rhythmically related to the harsh and intolerant theme of the preceding section of the work. Here cellos speak with warm sentiment; here all is gentleness—gentleness that can, to be sure, grow into intensity, but never to violence. Yet, in exhibiting the persistence of the dominant motive of the symphony, Beethoven has with uncanny insight and subtlety incorporated into the suave cantilena of the cellos certain rhythmic elements of the first movement's chief theme. Here is the theme of the cellos:



*Dolce* is Beethoven's indication of the manner in which this lovely melody is to be played. Analyze it, and conceive it as played with the natural accents somewhat exaggerated, and you will see that the accented notes fit precisely the rhythmic form of the first movement "motto."

Violas and cellos, with the latter dominating and the basses supplying a soft pizzicato accompaniment, sing their song undisturbed, even when an answering but mournful cadence descends from the woodwinds. A new and more somber thought is projected by the clarinets and bassoons, and here again the persistence of the four accented notes recalls dreadfully the knocking of fate. The orchestra seems to grow impatient with this persistence, and a swift-growing crescendo draws out a powerful and downright protest, culminating in a fiercely vigorous note almost torn from the deep-voiced basses. But even here, a rhythmic analysis shows the ubiquity of the central thought of the symphony.



The deliberate compactness and density of this music happily prevent a slow movement too long drawn out—as sometimes happens, it must be admitted, in Beethoven's works. The variations—which form this movement assumes—have

the charm of variety in color and treatment, yet with fundamental unity and coherence. The composer makes no effort to exhaust, absolutely, their remotest musical possibilities, but rather selects from those possibilities the particular versions which seem most fittingly to disclose his emotional state.

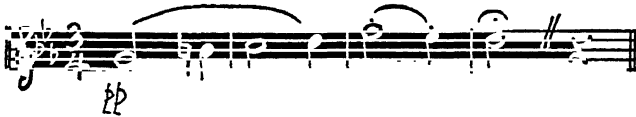
Here the emotional condition, if not absolutely one of serenity, is at least continent and stable. The restlessness, the impatience, the abandoned passion of the preceding section are quite gone, and only at the end is there an outburst to suggest that violence and ruthlessness are not dead, but only sleeping.

### *Third Movement*

Furtively from the shadowed regions of the basses' and cellos' lowest strings comes a mysterious, an ominous, and suggestive utterance. It is but a breath of tone, a premonition. Its intimations do not disturb the gentle and tentative responses of the upper strings, or of the woodwinds, and as the phrase is repeated we are still uncertain of its import:



And here is the reply:



There is a pregnant pause, and a lingering on the last note of the woodwind. Then suddenly, in the most arrogant voice of the horn, comes this suggestive warning:



Almost at once, the whole orchestra is involved in this bold assertion, with intonations of defiance and power. But note, note the rhythm: it is the rhythm of the summons of fate! That four-note phrase, almost with the same significance as in its first awesome appearance! Is fate now to be triumphant or conquered? Can that wickedly stubborn thought be overcome?

The answer is laughter. For life is grotesque and bitter, and full of contradictions and denials and unreason; and we know no escape but to laugh. And that

we may inwardly laugh, bitterly or wholesomely as we may, Beethoven invents for us and presents to us a dance; an astonishing grotesque choreography for those cumbersome and serious giants of the orchestra, the great contrabasses. So are serious men made fools.



And he makes the orchestra, willing or not, join in, until finally, when it seems convinced of the harmlessness of the recent warning of the horn, and rises to a peak of high good humor, he brings it to earth again. Insinuatingly the plucked strings, with hysterical assistance from the woodwind, timidly echo what lately was the bold proclamation of the horn, and Beethoven makes of the orchestra a single plangent instrument. Gone now are the powerful phrases of strings that rocked perilously for a moment in the upper ranges, and then plunged with ever-increasing power and confidence into the gloomy terrain of the bass. Gone the golden glints of trumpet and of horn. Now all is fearful and fervid and furtive; now suddenly there is all but silence.

But it is not silence. One can all but hear the sound of heavy breathing in the faint note of strings, held *pianissimo* against the throbbing of timpani, throbbing in that grim and awful rhythm that has never ceased since this music began. But now it changes, it falters, it comes more quickly but still mysteriously and far away. Without the slightest change in color or in power of tone, with nothing but an alteration of rhythm and, later, flickering interjections of the strings, Beethoven effects a marvelous clearing of this overcharged atmosphere. Suddenly there is a feeling of great joy to come; suddenly there is a fiercely brilliant crescendo, and finally a golden blaze of tone from the whole orchestra.

This extraordinary transitional passage is one of the most thrilling things in music. The hypnotic spell exerted by the long-sustained *pianissimo*; the low thunders of pulsing drums and curious flickerings of the strings, like summer lightning; and then, like a great shout of triumph impossible to restrain, the sudden bursting forth of the brass—all these combine in a sublime and powerfully moving effect that has no parallel in music.

#### *Fourth Movement*

Beethoven reserved for this outburst the three trombones, which take the lead in the first pronouncement of the movement:



Depth is added by calling upon the contrabassoon; brilliance by the inclusion of the piccolo. Later, in another subject, the coloring of the orchestral texture is altered, but not its exuberant spirit. The clarinet, joined by violas and cellos, has this happy phrase:



These are the chief materials out of which Beethoven weaves the glowing fabric of this wonderful music. Here is joy that seems almost delirious; here, after the humors and questionings and communings of the previous music, is exaltation beyond restraint. What if, in the midst of this frantic rejoicing, comes the recollection of the summons of fate, or of the bitter laughter that once seemed the only answer to that dreadful knocking? It serves only as a new point of departure for an exploration of the happy possibilities of the present movement, and by contrast, makes them happier and more wonderful.

Perhaps it is possible, after hearing and thinking upon this music, to reflect that fate, after all, is but the composite and the resultant of all the diverse forces of life, of all our own deliberate acts; and to come to the realization that "we ourselves are heaven and hell." When fate knocks too persistently at the door, perhaps this music, and the sublime thoughts of the great man who spoke through it, will disarm that dreadful visitor and rob him of his terrors.



## Symphony No. 6 in F major

[*"Pastoral"*]

THE "Pastoral" Symphony was first performed in 1808, and probably had been composed, for the most part, during the early months of that year. In it Beethoven departed radically from the fundamental idea of his music to that time, in that the symphony seeks to represent, to a certain extent, a story and a picture. Therefore, it would seem to come perilously close to what we know as "program music," although an intimate examination and study of it places the "Pastoral" in a quite different category.

Beethoven was probably the first to attempt quite so frank a depiction of nature, through an extended composition. Imitations of the sounds of nature were probably no great novelty—and Bach had inserted an instrumental imitation of the crowing of a cock into music descriptive of the Passion of the Saviour. The entire



"Pastoral," however, relates to a country visit and to country scenes and incidents—and involves the imitation of several varieties of bird songs.

*First Movement*

*"The awakening of serene feelings on arriving in the country"*

That Beethoven should create one great musical work under the inspiration of nature was perhaps inevitable. Though his ancestry was Dutch, nevertheless he was a German of the Germans in his passionate love of nature, of birds and brooks and growing things, and in the naïveté and ingenuousness of his response to them. To walk by himself in the woods, to sit in the crotch of a favorite tree and sketch his musical ideas, to be out of doors at every opportunity were to him the acme of happiness.

The "Pastoral" Symphony is not, actually, the story in music of a journey into the woods. It is rather an expression, in music, of the spirit of nature, and the feelings aroused in one by communication with nature. To call the symphony "program music" is to slight the music and belittle the composer. True, here and there we encounter more or less literal details—but these only in sufficient number, and with sufficient emphasis, to center our attention on the sights and sounds that engendered the feelings expressed in the main body of the work.

The sweet cool moist airs of "incense-breathing morn" envelop the opening measures of the first movement . . . like a scarcely felt zephyr, barely stirring dew-laden leaves, yet awakening drowsy birds and all but silent flutterings among the

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. It consists of two staves of music. The top staff is for the first and second violins, with the tempo marking "Allegretto ma non troppo" and the dynamic marking "p (1st & 2nd Violins)". The bottom staff is for the first and second violas, with the dynamic marking "p" and "cresc" (crescendo) leading to "f" (forte). The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex polyphonic texture with multiple melodic lines.

trees. It is significant that here, in a passage that is anything but showy, the composer should have written in double counterpoint (a musical device: the simultaneous presentation of two distinct melodies) in order to gain an effect of pastoral simplicity! Yet precisely that effect *is* achieved, because the complicated polyphonic figure springs with utter naturalness from under the Beethoven hand. It

was the tongue in which he spoke; its mechanical and technical complications were as nothing to that musical-mathematical mind. The result is, to the ear, an utterance naïve, free, natural, infallibly expressive of what it seeks to convey; to the mind, it is at the same time a wonderful and perfect synthesis of sounds.

The blithe spirit aroused by arrival in the green countryside persists throughout the movement. It teems with life and vigor—yet it is the mist-veiled vitality of springtime. There is no heaven-storming climax, no imperative summons of the orchestra's mighty sonorities, but rather an impelling growth and vigor as subtle, as mysterious, and as inevitable as the force that pushes a spearhead of grass above the fresh brown earth.

*Second Movement*

*"By the brook"*

Beethoven's brook is a placid and clear stream, gently flowing, rippled by the lightest of breezes, and mirroring an unshadowed sky. Overhead, branches, bud-burdened, sway in a smooth untroubled rhythm; they might have been willows, bending lovingly over the calm waters, and as lovingly touching the waters' shining bosom. Strings give forth the main thematic ideas, with strings, again, in the sweeping but not obtrusive rhythm that accompanies the chief subjects.

*And<sup>te</sup> molto, moto*

*p* 1st & 2nd Violins

*cresc* *fp* *cresc* *p*

Presently the woodwinds—what poetry, what significance in that name at this juncture!—sing the melody. Again, a second theme is unfolded in the string

section, but briefly; cellos below and clarinets above repeat it, while in a kind of duet, bassoon and violin deliver themselves of a kindred melody. Occasionally a sweetly dissonant trill, high in strings, or perhaps in the woodwind, ruffles the placidity, as if some swooping bird had touched in flight the polished bosom of the waters with tiny claw or plumed pinion.

Nor are the birds wholly imaginary. Here Beethoven indulges in a literal touch—explicitly indicated in the score. After a mild little climax, there is a brief hush, as of the anesthetic warmth and stillness of midday; then, quite clear, quite suggestive, come the calls of birds. The trill of the flute is the song of the nightingale; the little figure in repeated notes, for the oboe, is the thin and pensive piping of the quail . . . and the cuckoo call of the clarinet is unmistakable. But not

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The upper system consists of three staves: the top staff is for the flute, labeled 'Nachtigall' (nightingale), featuring a trill and a 'cresc' (crescendo) marking; the middle staff is for the oboe, labeled 'Wachtel' (quail), showing a repeated note figure; the bottom staff is for the clarinet, labeled 'Kuckuck' (cuckoo), also showing a repeated note figure. The lower system consists of two staves: the top staff is for the violin, labeled 'tr' (trill), and the bottom staff is for the clarinet, labeled 'clarinet', both showing repeated note figures. The notation includes various musical symbols such as trills, slurs, and dynamic markings.

even a birdcall disturbs the sweet complacency in which the movement ends.

### *Third Movement*

*"A jolly gathering of country folk"*

Now the woodland wanderer comes upon a merry group of countrymen, in a holiday revel. The music is obviously and inescapably dance music; the tune, one

The image shows a single staff of music for the violin, marked 'Allegro.' and 'pp (violins)'. The music is in 3/4 time and features a lively, dance-like melody. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

that might have been born in the misty history of Erin, for Irish it is, even to the very characteristic ending. Its first cadence is sounded in strings alone; the flute, bassoon, and oboe join in the answering phrase. It is dainty; it is light; it is appealingly simple and naïve in rhythm and in melodic line.

After this theme is somewhat developed, a new one, more song than dance although in the same gay rhythm, appears in the solo voice of the oboe—suggesting, we may remark without irreverence, a quaint little German folk tune\* that every schoolboy knows. The tune gathers to itself new color and strength when



it is given, after a space, by the mellow horn. Now a new rhythm, heavyfooted, rather slow, like peasants in a rude dance, keeps the music moving with a kind of uncouth grace. And again, the original merry tune returns, the entire first portion of the movement being repeated.

#### *Storm and Tempest*

But suddenly (third section of movement) a new voice, agitated, fearful, crying a dread warning, appears, to send the merrymakers scurrying for cover. Black clouds, pregnant with lightnings and with rain, are driven swiftly across a frowning sky. Trees groan and bend in agony under the first onslaught of whistling winds . . . a blinding bolt rends the heavens . . . the very earth quakes under the concussion of thunder. And then the rain . . . keen shining lances driven into the warm sod . . . a fierce storm, but swiftly over. Hardly have the first signs of its waning fury appeared, before we hear music expressing a religious thankfulness. The first timid bird lifts up his tiny song, a shepherd plays upon his pipes, and the sun shines once more.

In this section of the symphony some interesting presentiments of later Beethoven music are discernible—notably, during the storm scene, certain passages later employed, almost as they stand in the score, in the composer's overture to *Egmont*.

#### *Fourth Movement*

##### *"Gladsome and thankful feelings after the storm"*

The shepherd's song, and the quasi-religious sentiment expressed at the conclusion of the storm scene, form the basis for the construction of the fourth movement. The music broadens tremendously; the once almost playful rhythm

\* A doggerel about a dachshund.

takes on an impulse of deep and solemn feeling; and yet the simple and straightforward spirit of the music is never for a moment lost. An occasional brief trill recalls the tremors of the terrifying storm . . . but the solemn joy of the movement is scarcely disturbed, and it proceeds in a splendid elaboration of the basic elements of tranquillity and thankfulness.



The variations built up on the basic material are more than representations of it in ornamented style; they are truly *developments* and elaborations, springing from the intrinsic musical possibilities of the themes themselves. And still, throughout its complications, there is in the movement the same delightful clarity and candor that distinguishes the symphony as a whole.

The climax, at the end, is not effected by the commonplace burst of sonority and brilliance, but rather by a gradual subsidence of the orchestral forces, during which the most careful listening will disclose, against the scales that appear in the violins, viola, and (doubled) in the cellos and basses, a faintly blown reminiscence of the basic theme of the movement, sounded upon the muted horn. Sturdy Beethovenesque chords end the movement and the symphony.



## Symphony No. 7 in A major

[Opus 92]

THE SEVENTH of Beethoven's nine symphonies was written during one of the composer's more and more frequent periods of spiritual travail. His deafness was daily growing worse; a love affair had but recently been broken off, and the political situation, in which Beethoven was always interested, was not at all reassuring.

These circumstances perhaps helped to solidify certain traits in the character of the composer which had been developing for quite some time. The symphony reflects them. It is touched with the boisterous, often crude humor of its author; it is not without a mordant bitterness, yet a bitterness, penetrating as it is, that is never precisely pessimism, and certainly never despair.

Beethoven himself, despite his increasing deafness, conducted the first performance of the Seventh, from manuscript, on December 8, 1813, at the concert hall of the University of Vienna. It is interesting—and refreshing—to note that

notwithstanding the composer's difficulty in hearing, and his often ill-timed and sometimes absurdly exaggerated gestures, the symphony was received with acclaim.

### *First Movement*

The magnificent introduction to the movement presents the themes very clearly indeed. The first comes at the very beginning, separating itself, in the thin voice of the oboe, from the mighty opening chord. As it slowly progresses, in long



elliptical phrases, the full orchestra emphasizes its periods with powerful chords. Presently the strings intone ascending scales in crescendo, the basses alone holding aloof from these until the apex of their power is reached. Now the second theme of the introduction, again in the penetrating voice of the oboe, sounds rather sadly and wistfully, but the orchestra derives from it figures of tremendous breadth and power. In the midst of this development comes a sudden pause. A nervous flicker of string tone . . . an impatient ejaculation from the full orchestra . . . tentative, hesitating reduplicated notes in the upper woodwind . . . and suddenly the main theme of the movement proper appears in the silken tones of the flute. Now we begin to perceive



the reason for designating the Seventh as the "dance symphony," for this quaint little theme, so soon to be the foundation for a vast and infinitely varied structure of tone, is unmistakably imitative of a folk dance. In fact, it resembles rather strikingly certain cadences of "The Low-Backed Car," an Irish tune of considerable age, and almost a perfect old-fashioned jig.

The many different forms into which this theme is molded by the genius of Beethoven are really amazing in their constantly renewed variety and shifting orchestral color. Somber touches there are, indeed—as if Beethoven, instead of feeling the bitter and gruff humor which pervades the symphony generally, became suddenly and acutely conscious of his woes . . . and the revel of tone and color is on again with perhaps an almost ecclesiastical chord thrown in like a pious grimace, now and then.

Toward the end there is a new burst of revelry . . . an occasional curious hesitation, as if the composer distrusted, momentarily, his ability to remain keyed to

sardonic humor, and stood undecidedly on the brink of melancholy. But there is fierce vehemence and power at the end.

### *Second Movement*

The second movement happily falls short of being a funeral march. The suggestion is powerfully present; yet, hear it through and you decide that now Beethoven is serious rather than sad, philosophical rather than pessimistic. The first theme, ushered in by a somber chord in the horns and woodwind, is gloomy and ominous,



but the countertheme, though still in the minor mode, lends a brightening touch of hopefulness. There is always a gleam of light in Beethoven's darkness.



With rigid economy of material, the composer achieves in the second movement certain amazing contrasts. The softly stepping basses suggest an atmosphere of mystery . . . solemn portent . . . lowering clouds of woe . . . and yet almost the same figure, assigned to the brighter ranges of the string section, is bright with hope, vehement in exhortation, passionate in pleading. The rhythms of the two themes—one persistent and strongly marked, the other fluent and flexible as a stream—are oddly contradictory, yet fitted together as perfectly and as wonderfully as the angular and refractory fragments of a mosaic are brought together to form figures of gracious curve and motion.

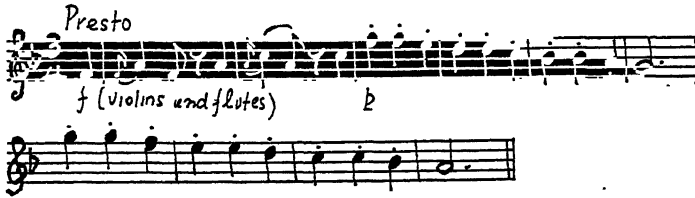
There are further contrasts—in color and tonality as well as in rhythm. Note, for example, the appearance of the third theme of this movement. It is introduced shortly after the beginning of the third section of the movement. Note, too, the fascinating fugal treatment at the close of the second section.

As the movement draws to a close there is a slowly pervading light. The original themes are glorified and sublimated in the mysterious tones of the horn and in the floating unreality of the upper woodwind ranges . . . a final daring touch of grotesquerie in the plucked notes near the end . . . and at last an unexpected alteration in accent that brings the movement to its conclusion.

### *Third Movement*

Beethoven was famous for his playing of slow passages at the piano, and his expression of himself in a similar style through the orchestra is equally distinctive.

But, hearing certain of his scherzos, such as the present movement, it is sometimes difficult to perceive why the distinction should have been made in favor of the more stately and dignified *andante* and *adagio* movements.



For here are wonderfully vigorous and elastic rhythms; rugged gaiety, sustained exuberance and expression of the most fundamental joys of life, all of which contribute to the construction of music which in its own way is quite as moving, quite as expressive and impressive, as the soberly melodious slow movements. Grant that the mood of Beethoven was more often sad than joyous; the joyous mood, when it does come, is none the less truly *Beethoven!*

The first theme opens the movement. It approaches wildness almost as closely as Beethoven could, yet underneath it is possible to see the perfectly ordered structure. Brilliant orchestral color is freely applied, especially when fragments of thematic material are repeated in different sections of the orchestra. Superb climaxes develop with the ascending scales . . . and suddenly the swift scales are reversed to give a new effect.

Perhaps the most striking contrast is effected about the middle of the movement, however, when the boisterous opening section is repeated, in tones of ethereal delicacy, yet with every original detail of accent and phrasing perfectly imitated. It is dreamlike, reminiscent—or like seeing through the mist of years some beauty once beheld in all its vivid, glowing splendor.

The contrasting theme, as will be remembered from the preliminary discussion, is much slower, and rather solemn. We hear it in a combination of clarinet,



bassoon, and horn, with the last most prominent: and against it is poised a long-sustained note of the violins. Later the theme is presented in a similar figure, but with most of the orchestra intoning it against the long quivering flame of tone put out by the trumpet.

The second division of the movement reveals development of the themes so clearly posited in the opening section. As the end is approached a prayerful spirit is



breathed gently into the music . . . only to be elbowed roughly aside by the violent chords in full orchestra that bring the movement to a close.

#### *Fourth Movement*

The powerful opening chord in the string section is answered and reduplicated even more powerfully by the remainder of the orchestra . . . again the same figure . . . and with scarcely a pause the wild dancelike first theme leaps into dynamic life . . . a bacchanal indeed!



Here the "dance symphony" reaches its apotheosis. Here the fundamental, the primal source of all music—rhythm—holds complete sway. There is an almost savage, primitive joy in these measures; a fierce exaltation of the purely physical that could be expressed only through rhythm, which more closely than any other element in music approaches and appeals to the physical. It is almost impossible for any human being to remain motionless through this movement!

One does not, now, give that rapt attention which might have been demanded by the second movement, or by any of Beethoven's more serious melodies. No: here we become, whether we will or no, a part of the rhythm created and driven along by the composer, conductor, and orchestra; something involuntary, something deep within us, leaps and moves to the headlong abandoned onrush of this music.

The second theme, which appears after less than half the first division of the movement has been played, is almost as bacchanalian and contagious as the first, and it leads to even wilder revels. But suddenly, near the end there is a mysterious change, so subtly effected that we are scarcely conscious of the means employed. The original subject reappears, now in the tender, tremulous accents of the flute . . . infinitely gentle, pensive, yet still touched by joy. It is but a bit of byplay . . . an aside . . . a highlight, a momentary distraction . . . and the wild dance goes on until the end.



### Symphony No. 8 in F major

THERE seems to have been a curious ebb and flow in the inspiration, the power, and the moods that were Beethoven's. The Eighth Symphony, charming as it is, no more represents the mature and full-statured Beethoven than does the First. The

heroic proportions and valorous spirit that distinguished the Third, the fierce and godlike rages of the Fifth, the vigor and bacchanalian abandon of the Seventh—there is little of any of these qualities to be discovered in the Eighth, nor is there much that could be regarded as evidence of the forthcoming Ninth and last of the symphonies. Perhaps these even-numbered symphonies were the result of the sheer urge to create that certainly drove Beethoven in every waking hour; and perhaps the incidence of the creative urge, and of material out of which to fashion his creature, were not simultaneous. Beethoven had, nevertheless, so mastered the form and the medium that even such habitual workings of the spirit, as exhibited in the present symphony, take on the aspect of masterpieces.

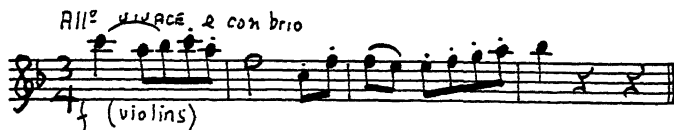
Beethoven was perhaps too concerned with troublesome and unmusical things, when this music was written, to abandon himself thoroughly to his inspiration. His deafness, already a handicap in his profession, was beginning to prey upon his mind. His brother, Johann, had involved himself in an affair with the landlord's daughter, and the hot-tempered Beethoven rushed to Linz to take the matter into his own hands: so successful was he that the result was precisely what he had wished to prevent. His brother married the girl. There is something at once droll and pathetic in Beethoven's hotheaded and tactless interference in his young brother's love affairs. Although he loved ladies of quality, he was none too discriminating in his own amours—he died of an affliction rarely contracted from respectable individuals—yet he rushed incontinently to prevent a liaison, not to mention a marriage, between his brother and a girl of the servant class.

However disturbing these circumstances were, they did not prevent Beethoven from completing, during the year 1812, the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies; a trio for piano, violin, and cello; a sonata for violin and piano, and certain less important works. The Eighth Symphony was not performed, however, until more than a year later. It was first presented at a concert in Vienna, on Sunday, February 27, 1814. A little more than thirty years later it was played by the Philharmonic Society of New York, in November, 1844. It was not favorably received at its first performance, nor has it ever become a favorite to rank with certain others of the immortal Nine. However, the overfrequent playing of the favorites has the advantage of turning attention, ultimately, to the less-known symphonies, and for this reason, perhaps, the Eighth is appearing more frequently on symphonic programs. It is worthy of frequent hearing, and certainly repays in pleasure the most careful attention.

### *First Movement*

The rugged directness, amounting to *brusquerie*, that so often marked Beethoven's "company manners" is reflected in the bold and unheralded proclamation of the chief subject at the very outset. It is played in full orchestra, and

vigorously, in downright  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm. The violins succeed with a brief delineation of a graceful swaying figure, broken by a hesitant pause, and taken up then by woodwind (bassoon). The somewhat desiccated tones of this instrument insinuate themselves into the melodic pattern of a second theme, introduced by the violins, and presently emerge in the brighter company of oboe and flute, with a restatement of the second theme.



The movement follows, in the main, the conventional pattern of the sonata form. With the exception of a few notable features, the entire work harks back to the earlier Beethoven—the derivative, exploring, but still form-bound Beethoven. For the stylized development section of the movement, Beethoven selects as basic material the swaying violin figure mentioned above, combined, at times, with the first few notes of the principal theme. A powerful restatement of this chief theme, delivered by basses and bassoons in their most assertive tones, is the most conspicuous feature of the formal recapitulation. To end the movement, Beethoven indulges in one of those long and reluctant codas that comes close, at times, to arousing impatience. It is as if the composer, having discovered a pleasing idea, was loathe to let it go. But a final version of the first theme signals the end of the movement.

### *Second Movement*

In consistency with the formal character of the symphony, the second movement appears in one of the nearest related keys—the key of the subdominant, B-flat major. Contrary to convention, however, the second movement is the scherzo, though not so marked in the score; and there is no directly contrasting slow movement.

This is the shortest symphonic movement in the Beethoven literature—and one of the most charming and graceful. In it we find an ingratiating and finished and gently humorous quality which can only be described by that outmoded and misused word “elegance”; yet it has strength and vitality and energetic action. Berlioz remarked that the movement is so complete, so logical and final, that it seemed to have “fallen from heaven into the brain of its author, and to have been written at a sitting.” But this is the art that conceals art, for an examination of Beethoven’s sketchbooks and papers has shown many sketches which ultimately found their development in this movement.

The opening theme is of interest, not only in its charming self, but because it

is identical with a little "round" which Beethoven composed extemporaneously at a dinner given for him by some friends. Among the guests was Mälzel, good friend and inventor of the tyrannical metronome. Beethoven, with rare but charming graciousness, imitated with staccato notes the ticking of the inexorable metronome in the little round, or canon, which he called "*Ta, ta, lieber Mälzel.*"

The opening theme is presented by the strings, with woodwind accompani-



ment. It is full of geniality and good humor. The theme, and the movement as a whole, are a dangerous temptation for the conductor who wants to make an "effect." There is a distinct inclination for the music to get out of hand, and, if it is taken too fast, Beethoven's effect is completely destroyed. A metronome on the conductor's stand would be an excellent idea, in some cases; though, on the other hand, there are conductors who beat time just as regularly and automatically.

The second subject, even gayer than the first, presently succeeds, and the whole movement, brief though it is, creates a delightfully happy and friendly atmosphere.

### *Third Movement*

Here is a conventional symphonic minuet, the characteristic third-movement form of Beethoven's earlier years. It is rather curious that, unless seized by some fury quite beyond the bounds of conventional expression, Beethoven could turn to the devices of the purists and the formalists, and beat them at their own game. Even here, when he wrote more or less to a pattern, the composer exhibits elements of the power and individuality and imagination that set him so far above his contemporaries. The minuet of Beethoven has vigor in its rhythm. There is nothing mincing about it. A lovely melody springs from the assertive rhythm established in the first two measures. The violins sing it, and the serious bassoons imitate



them a bit later. The trio, or middle part of the movement, is developed mostly by a pair of horns and solo cello; later, the clarinet has pleasant and melodious things to say. The third section of the movement is identical with the first.

*Fourth Movement*

There is nothing in the preceding movements to prepare us for the outburst of force that occurs in the final movement, except that, in so far as we are already acquainted with the composer's mercurial temperament and his love of violent contrasts, we might have been led to expect something serious and potent in the closing section of his work. Where all has been grace and lyric loveliness and quiet humor, we now find Beethoven drawing a sweeping and vigorous circular tonal pattern; a formal, yet free and almost boisterous gesture in which he asserts his more usual self. Roughly, the movement is in rondo form. The very simple opening theme is developed into a forceful and eloquent expression. Prompted by the violins, the full orchestra in a vigorous forte asserts the primary musical idea. A



second theme is also given to violins, then to woodwinds. The structure of the movement is so beautifully clear that to follow the thematic material through its development is, in spite of the moving pace and constant accessions of orchestral power, a fairly easy matter.

There is a concluding section of considerable length, derived for the most part from the two principal themes. The symphony ends in an atmosphere of healthy and vigorous gaiety.



### Symphony No. 9 in D minor with Choral Finale on Schiller's "Ode to Joy"

IT is not improbable that Beethoven set about the work of composing this mighty symphony with a conscious effort to surpass even himself. He had been collecting material for it during a period of years, and when finally he applied himself to the task, he seems to have been seized with a demoniac energy and power, and an influx of inspiration that expanded him to his most gigantic stature—and at the same time exhausted him. For in this music Beethoven finds the orchestral instruments, and his own superb knowledge of their powers, insufficient; he turns to the human voice for the final expression of the cosmic thought and emotion that surged within him.

The scholastic musician has argued for years about the merit and propriety of including, as climax, a chorus in the finale of this symphony; about the status of this chorus—whether, indeed, it should be regarded as an integral part of the symphony, having its real origin and justification in what has preceded it, or as merely an incident, a dramatic device. The latter opinion seems untenable, in view of the references to preceding themes made in the last movement, as well as their comparison there with the theme of the *Ode to Joy*. Furthermore, it can be suggested, at the risk of being regarded as flippant, that in the final movement Beethoven made no real departure from “absolute” music, because, in the first place, he treats the voice quite like an instrumental group in the orchestra; secondly, because the vocal parts are so written (and so badly written, from the singer’s standpoint) that the words become unintelligible, and the *Ode to Joy* has no significance except that expressed through tone, through rhythm, and through melodic line. Which is quite sufficient.

It is not to be supposed that Beethoven’s literary taste was of the most discriminating; yet it has always seemed highly questionable that the symphony, after its marvelous setting forth of the whole gamut of human joys, could settle upon so gaudy and vague and verbose an outpouring as Schiller’s *Ode* as the ultimate expression of Beethoven’s thought and feeling. It is more reasonable to believe that the vague references to human brotherhood and world embraces touched the great heart of the composer, and supplied to him an idea of greatness and of universality and humanity. For he was always the democrat, a man essentially “of the people”; he could always be excited by an idea that seemed to promote equality and brotherliness.

So, it is not a symphony on Schiller’s poem; the poem is but a vehicle for drawing in the voice, the most expressive of all musical instruments. What the voice says is, in performance, neither important nor intelligible; its rhythms and intonations, not the words of the poem it sings, drive Beethoven’s thought into our consciousness.

The symphony was first performed on May 7, 1824, in Vienna. Beethoven did not conduct, but sat in the orchestra, following with a score, and vigorously beating time for his own benefit. When the work was finished, he was still beating time, and one of the chorus, noting his actions and knowing the reason for them, touched him and turned him toward the audience that he might *see* the applause. He had been deaf for twenty years.

### *First Movement*

There is a feeling of striving, of discontent, of mysterious confusion and restlessness in the music here. Beethoven seems groping for some utterance that will

completely express him. It is a musical parallel to the mental agony of searching for one certain word that persistently evades utterance, though it is clearly in some remote and, for the moment, unresponsive brain cell. Fragments of melody are snatched hastily from the strings—and suddenly these fragments fly together, miraculously like pieces of a shattered sculpture, and the bold and joyful theme of the movement is shouted bravely forth by the full orchestra.

### Tutti



The music is full of the brusque impatience, the brutal power that has been exhibited but once before in the symphonies—in the Fifth; but here is another kind of passion. There is a lift and a manly joyousness in this music that is far removed from the stark agonies of that deathless utterance. This is the joy of living, not the tragedy of life. And, without any alteration of the character or spirit of the movement, without important mutations of the theme, that joy is explored in detail; in a succession of strong yet melodious developments. There is hardly ever a recession of the driving force that moves this music, except when, occasionally, a reflective little song in woodwind gives pause; and toward the close of the movement, where the orchestra finally wins back, after moments of soberness, through a labored but powerful progression, to a final mighty pronouncement of the principal theme of the movement. For once we are spared the lingering farewells that so often marked Beethoven's conclusions; here all is powerful and sure and downright. All has been said that can be said on this theme, and so Beethoven leaves it.

### *Second Movement*

The beauty of musical form is not always evident to those who have not been forced, by one circumstance or another, to study it; nor is it necessary, always, to listeners whose joy in music is, as it should be, primarily sensuous. The beauty of the fugued treatment of the second movement is, however, so clear and perfect that no one can escape it. Not only are its contours exquisitely symmetrical and rounded, but it is informed with a rare and irresistible rhythm, with tonal color and contrast, with a high-spirited and at times almost rowdy vigor that seize and shake the most phlegmatic.

There is a brief introduction, and then the subject is incisively projected by staccato violins:

## Strings, staccato



Various strings, horn, woodwind, bass enter upon and experiment with this lightfooted and rollicking theme, building to climax after climax, with ever-growing assertiveness. Timpani, with a powerful rhythmic figure, renew the vigor of the orchestra when it would seem to flag. For melodic contrast, there is a sweet little theme, the melodic line of which actually has an ecclesiastical turn, but, as it is played *vivace*, seems like a bucolic parody of a hymn tune:

## Oboes and clarinets: bassoons



This is the trio of the scherzo; the succeeding and final section is structurally similar to the first, but in it Beethoven derives from the orchestra new and shrewdly mixed tone colors. There are small fragments of melody, and near the end, the second theme reappears briefly; but it is elbowed roughly aside by the violent chords that close the movement.

If the first movement suggests the subjective joys of maturity and strength and vigorous manhood, we may imagine that the second presents the endless round of worldly pleasures—the cycle of superficial things with which man distracts himself, and which, ultimately, brings him back to the point from which he departed. There is an intimation of Beethoven's impatience and dissatisfaction with this kind of pleasure, in the impatient chords that terminate the movement; later we shall see that actually he was seeking a different kind of joy.

*Third Movement*

Everyone who knew Beethoven well enough to leave us some word of the master has commented with admiration, with astonishment, at his skill in improvisation, in transposition, and sight-playing; but all conclude with tributes to the poetry of his playing in slow passages. Sir George Grove, the great English



commentator, writes that it was not brilliance and technical skill in Beethoven's performance at the piano, but the "loftiness and elevation of his style, and his great power of expression in slow movements, which, when exercised in his own noble music, fixed his hearers and made them insensible to any fault of polish or mechanism." The *adagio* movement of the Ninth Symphony illustrates the composer's singular felicity in music of such a mood.

Bassoon, clarinet, oboe, and strings intone the introduction, and then in the most silken tone of the violins the moving subject of the movement is exquisitely sung:



The music suggests a curious mixture of feelings. Complacency, passionate yearnings, wistful melancholy—all have their expression here; there are even echoes from the church. We can heartily agree with Hector Berlioz, when he wrote of this movement, "If my prose could only give an approximate idea of them [the melodies of the movement] music would have found a rival in written speech such as the greatest of poets himself would never succeed in pitting against her."

The serenity of the first song of the strings is presently altered, and we come upon another theme, with a change of rhythm, of tonality, and of emotional plane. This, in violin and viola, is deeper and more intense:



What joys did Beethoven contemplate here? Those of peace, perhaps; or those of assured and sanctified love. The variations erected over these themes do not disturb their essential quality, but seem like new and sometimes less solemn aspects of the prevailing thought. Toward the end of the movement the calm atmosphere is somewhat disturbed by prolonged pealings from the brass, but the long-drawn note of the trumpet fades once more into tremulous string tones, and the woodwind, the horns return in their mellow mysterious beauty.

#### *Fourth Movement*

It is in the fourth movement of the symphony that Beethoven's music reaches that sublime altitude where with a single farther step it must of necessity become vocal if it is to say more than the wordless instrumental voices say. That additional step is, of course, taken. But first there is a period of preparation, of reflection, of consideration and anticipation.

A wild discordant cry bursts from the orchestra; a succession of descending,

then ascending chords, nervous and impatient, is driven forth in all its voices. A recitative passage for the basses foreshadows an injunction to the rest of the orchestra, which presently we shall hear in articulate form. But it is understood now, as it were, by the orchestral instruments. Their dissonant utterance comes again, but there is a pause, and, after the repeated adjuration of the basses, the orchestra briefly explores the preceding thematic material for some ultimate pronouncement, big and expressive enough for utterance of the mad exaltation that is presently to come. It is now that we hear and feel the surge of the great underlying conception of the work beating against the barriers of inarticulate music. The opening measures of the preceding movements are searched for even the germ of the final joyous expression; they are searched in vain, and the orchestra vigorously rejects them. There is a soft and distant voice in the cellos and basses, a voice that grows stronger in its uplifting and unadulterated joy; yes, this is the word, the phrase, the ultimate pronouncement that Beethoven sought. Stronger it grows, until it is put forth right valiantly. It is the hymn to joy:

## Cellos and basses



Now the other strings take up the joyous strain, and now the full orchestra. Yet once more comes the terrible dissonance of the opening measures, and the impatient chords, but now a voice of authority speaks. It is not the wordless voice of an orchestral instrument but a vigorous baritone in a kindly command: "O friends, no more these discords! Let us raise a song of sympathy, of gladness. O Joy, let us praise thee!" Here is the moment toward which the entire work has been striving, and now the voices dominate even the orchestra. To happiness is added jubilation, and a fever of exaltation in which the greathearted Beethoven reaches out to embrace the world.

## BARITONE SOLO, QUARTET, AND CHORUS\*

*Freude, schöner Götterfunken,  
Tochter aus Elysium,  
Wir betreten feuer trunken,  
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!  
Deine Zauber binden wieder,  
Was die Mode streng geteilt;  
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,  
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.*

*Praise to Joy, the God-descended  
Daughter of Elysium!  
Ray of mirth and rapture blended,  
Goddess, to thy shrine we come.  
By thy magic is united  
What stern Custom parted wide,  
All mankind are brothers plighte  
Where thy gentle wings abide.*

\* The English translation is that of Natalia Macfarren, and is generally used in American performances. It is published by Novello & Co., Ltd., London (New York: The H. W. Gray Company, Agents).

*Wem der grosse Wurf gelungen,  
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein,  
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen,  
Mische seinen Jubel ein!  
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele  
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!  
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle  
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!*

*Freude trinken alle Wesen  
An den Brüsten der Natur;  
Alle Guten, alle Bösen  
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.  
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,  
Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;  
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,  
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott.*

*Ye to whom the boon is measured,  
Friend to be of faithful friend,  
Who a wife has won and treasured,  
To our strain your voices lend!  
Yea, if any hold in keeping  
Only one heart all his own,  
Let him join us, or else weeping,  
Steal from out our midst, unknown.*

*Draughts of joy, from cup o'erflowing,  
Bounteous Nature freely gives  
Grace to just and unjust showing,  
Blessing everything that lives.  
Wine she gave to us and kisses,  
Loyal friend on life's steep road,  
E'en the worm can feel life's blisses,  
And the Seraph dwells with God.*

The alternations of quartet and chorus bring constantly new and more intense variations in the theme of joy, from the lovingly entwined melodies in the vocal cadenza of the quartet to the sturdy assertions of male voices alone. Beethoven introduces not only variations of the melody, but also of rhythm and tempo and texture of the music, using at times certain sections of the chorus, at others various combinations of chorus, quartet, and soloist; and finally, in the most exuberant vocal outburst in music, he asks of the whole ensemble the delirious, the frantic, and almost unsingable closing passages. One wonders, especially during the inferior choral performances which are so much more frequent than good ones, if in evaluating this music we have not been too much swayed by its spectacular qualities, or even by a feeling of relief and congratulation if the chorus actually does sing always "in time and in tune." If we did not know the complete sincerity of Beethoven, it would be possible to think that here he "doth protest too much"; that such frenetic, such almost insane jubilation, on so abstract a concept, cannot be real. We can only conclude that Beethoven felt in it something quite beyond the rather banal and pretentious verbiage of the poet, something even beyond the powers of his own music. And so, we can but give ourselves up to the excitement, the joyous madness of this symphony, and allow it to move us as it will.

The remaining portions of the choral parts are appended:

*Freude, schöner Götterfunken,  
Tochter aus Elysium,  
Wir betreten feuer trunken,  
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!  
Deine Zauber binden wieder,  
Was die Mode streng geteilt;  
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,  
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.*

*Praise to Joy, the God-descended  
Daughter of Elysium!  
Ray of mirth and rapture blended,  
Goddess, to thy shrine we come.  
By thy magic is united  
What stern Custom parted wide,  
All mankind are brothers plighted  
Where thy gentle wings abide.*

## CHORUS

*Seid umschlungen, Millionen!  
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!  
Brüder! über'm Sternenzelt  
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.*

*O ye millions, I embrace ye!  
With a kiss for all the world!  
Brothers, o'er yon starry sphere  
Surely dwells a loving Father.*

*Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?  
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?  
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!  
Über Sternen muss er wohnen.*

*O ye millions, kneel before Him,  
World, dost feel thy Maker near?  
Seek Him o'er yon starry sphere,  
O'er the stars enthroned, adore Him!*

## CHORUS

*Freude, schöner Götterfunken,  
Tochter aus Elysium, etc.  
[AND]*

*Praise to Joy, the God-descended  
Daughter of Elysium, etc.  
[AND]*

*Seid umschlungen, Millionen!  
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt, etc.*

*O ye millions, I embrace ye!  
With a kiss for all the world, etc.*

*Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen,  
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?  
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!  
Brüder! Brüder!  
Über'm Sternenzelt  
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.*

*O ye millions, kneel before Him,  
World, dost feel thy Maker near?  
Seek Him o'er yon starry sphere,  
Brothers! Brothers!  
O'er the stars enthroned, adore Him!*

## QUARTET AND CHORUS

*Freude, Tochter aus Elysium,  
Deine Zauber binden wieder,  
Was die Mode streng geteilt;  
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,  
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.*

*Joy, thou daughter of Elysium,  
By thy magic is united  
What stern Custom parted wide.  
All mankind are brothers plighted  
Where thy gentle wings abide.*

## CHORUS

*Seid umschlungen, Millionen! etc.*

*O ye millions, I embrace ye! etc.*



## Overture to "Leonora" (No. 3)

TO THIS day there is some confusion, even among musicians, concerning the order and identity of the several overtures which exist under the above title. Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, was produced in November, 1805, but at its first presentation bore the title *Leonora*. The overture played at this first performance, and of

course first in the order of composition, is the one now known as "Leonora" No. 2. After the first production of the opera, it was withdrawn, shortened, and staged again with a new overture—the one now identified as "Leonora" No. 3. The opera was again withdrawn, but in 1806 was to be put on the boards again with a new name—*Fidelio*—and a new overture. This was known as "Leonora" No. 1. The planned revival of the opera did not take place in 1806, but eight years later, it appeared again, in its present form, with the title *Fidelio*, and an entirely new overture also of that name. The overture considered here is that generally played in concert—Number 3.

This "Leonora" overture is in certain respects a model for all operatic preludes, since it bears within itself the germs from which the drama springs, and even, to a measurable degree, developments of them paralleling the progress of the drama itself. It is in three broadly defined sections, the first a slow movement of tremendous dramatic and orchestral power. A descending figure which follows indicates the progress of Florestan (the hero) toward his dungeon, and the succeeding woodwind melody, with accompaniment in strings, is the famous aria of Florestan in the opera—"In the Springtime of Youth." There is a transitional passage full of mystery and foreboding, flashes like lightnings from flute and violin, and fragments of other thematic material appearing briefly in the bass. A powerful utterance in full orchestra indicates the beginning of the second main division of the work.

Violins and cellos, doubled in octaves, present the important theme of this section; after it has been thoroughly explored, and its possible musical developments clearly and elaborately exposed, a second theme, first given to the horns and later to strings and woodwind, appears, and likewise is examined, analyzed, and synthesized. Now comes a climax of tremendous power and intensity, the brilliant trumpet against the mass of orchestral tone with its reiterated promise of freedom.

A flute solo gives out the chief musical thought of the third portion of the overture, and here again there is extensive development of and vigorous references to the thematic material. The coda expands the gladness of the later sections of the work into mighty outpourings of exaltation and triumph.



## Overture to "Egmont"

THIS spirited, colorful, and dramatic music was inspired by the drama of the same name, written by the German poet Goethe, and published in 1788. The play deals with the political and religious struggles of the Spanish and the Dutch for sover-

eignty in Holland, with Egmont, leader of the Protestant Dutch people, as the tragic central figure. He is a curiously ineffectual hero, yet his leadership does ultimately bring about the triumph of his cause after he himself dies for it.

The overture is in no sense "program music," but it is neither too difficult nor too fanciful to hear, in the opening bars, the cry of the oppressed, and the answering crushing power of oppression. A sustained and poignant note, in the united voices of the orchestra, is contrasted with heavy and vehement chorus. Stronger protesting voices are lifted; mightier utterances crush them down. A growing agitation, that might symbolize the mutterings of an angered people, takes form and mounts to a climax of terrific power. Not yet, however, are the people ready for triumph. Perhaps the succeeding music suggests the false promises of politicians, and the vitiating influence of ease and pleasure. Yet the uprising spirit cannot be indefinitely denied. A second and mightier climax arises; revolt holds dreadful sway, and the hero envisions from the scaffold the triumph his death shall inspire.



## Concerto No. 4 in G major for Piano and Orchestra

THE visit and triumphal tour in America during 1933 of that indefatigable apostle of Beethoven's piano music, Artur Schnabel, has revived interest in this noble work. Why interest should ever have lagged is difficult to understand—if you can hear Schnabel bring this superb music to life. The fact is, however, that pianists have devoted themselves so exclusively to the Concerto No. 5 (the "Emperor") that for some time this equally magnificent music has been neglected. Curiously enough, the past few years do not constitute the only period of neglect which this concerto has suffered. Although the first performances, public and private, were given by Beethoven himself (1807–08) and the work was highly successful, it lay neglected for many years until Mendelssohn rediscovered it. It was played by him, to the delight of Robert Schumann and other discriminating listeners, at Leipzig in 1836, and as a result, was restored for a considerable period to public favor.

### *First Movement*

It is possible that the driving inspiration out of which was born the Fifth Symphony also produced this bold and compelling music. It has moments in which the fierceness of the Fifth rages again, and certainly it was written during that wonderfully productive period when Beethoven, though buffeted by unfriendly circumstances, brought the Fifth into being.

In the very opening measures Beethoven ignores a conventionality. Instead of

the usual orchestral introduction—which in some of the piano-orchestral works was very long—he drives at once to the heart of the subject with a firm assertion of the major musical premise by the piano. The solo instrument establishes a contemplative, but not melancholy mood, and the orchestra, though rather suddenly and surprisingly effecting a modulation to the key of B major, is unable to shake off the poised and meditative feeling of the music. As if abandoning such an attempt, the ensemble returns to the original tonality, and, after some development of the central idea, presents, after a brief transitional passage, two new musical fragments which will be heard conspicuously on occasion throughout the movement.

The first of these is assigned to the first violins, and on its repetition, changes color with the incisive tones of the oboe. Between it and the second subsidiary idea lie sturdy chords in full orchestra; then comes another little subject given, like its predecessor, to the violins. Derivations of the first subject occur now and again, and are frequent in the accompaniment which the orchestra supplies during a short cadenza for the solo instrument.

The piano of Beethoven's day, though essentially the same as the present instrument, certainly was vastly inferior, in tone, in power, and in mechanical action and responsiveness. Yet in the creation of his melodic line and rhythmic pattern, Beethoven strangely seems to have written, not only for the instrument of his own time, but in anticipation of the modern pianoforte. This is particularly noticeable here in this movement, when the orchestra presents to the solo instrument a challenge in the form of a beautifully lyric melody. The piano at once takes it up, and in a period of development and ornamentation, derives from it a wealth of beautiful figures that are completely and ideally "pianistic."

With the basic material of the movement presented and partly developed, Beethoven now proceeds to demonstrate the fertility of his imagination, and at the same time to explore—without making a mere technical display of the exploration—the possibilities of the solo instrument. Fragments of thematic material are scattered with abandon between orchestra and piano; electrically swift and brilliant scales, sweeping arpeggios, sonorous chords are developed from the relatively simple melodic structure underlying the movement. For a climax, there is a cadenza that extracts the last measure of dexterity and musicianship from the solo performer; and with a short coda comes the expanding crescendo that leads to the end.

### *Second Movement*

It was such a movement as this that Beethoven himself delighted to play. No doubt he felt the technician's delight in more definitely bravura passages; no doubt he delighted to amaze his friends with his dexterity and sureness; but when he played slow movements on the piano, he utterly subdued and captivated them.

There are more sentimental passages among Beethoven's andantes, but none more highly keyed, emotionally. In several respects this movement suggests certain features of the Fifth Symphony. The contrast of the harsh vehemence of the strings, in their presentation of the main theme, with the gentle and appealing responses of the solo instrument, recalls the rough energy and delicately curving grace of the two first themes of the first movement of the Fifth. Then too, the particular rhythmic and dynamic character of this movement, establishing as it does relationship with both the allegro of the first movement and the vivace of the third, recalls that at the time this music was written Beethoven was also concerned with the Fifth and the wonderful transitional passage that lies between its third and fourth movements.

Of course, such considerations are wholly immaterial to the enjoyment of the music, though unconsciously we are affected by this brief preparatory and transitional mood. The contrast and conflict between the stern utterance of the strings in unison, and the mild responses of the solo instrument, weaken now, and as the movement progresses, the assertions of the strings become less vigorous. It is exactly as if some untamed spirit were subdued by the very persistence of gentleness.

### *Third Movement*

The rondo, into which form the unruly music of this movement is constrained, is filled with the rough humor and heavyfooted gaiety which Beethoven, in his personal life, so often exhibited. It suggests a peasant dance, with more vigor than decorum, but with an infectious rhythm that is quite inescapable. The first theme is put forward by the strings, and the piano seizes upon it, translating it, with embellishments, into its own particular language. A second idea is similarly handled, except that, on the last three notes, there is some mischievous byplay between piano and orchestra, as if the theme were being snatched back and forth, each of the rivals unwilling to let it go. A fortissimo projection of the theme in full orchestra seems to settle the matter, and the piano abandons it to rise through a brilliant chromatic passage to the lovely second theme.

The orchestra appears still interested, at intervals, in the first musical subject of the movement, and suggestively puts forward a few notes of it. The piano, absorbed in leaping arpeggios and later in a brief but brilliant cadenza, ignores all else until a strong statement of the theme in its original form occurs. Now the basic material of the movement is completely and wonderfully developed, the rondo form being observed rather loosely. Fiery passages, calling upon the most extended powers of both solo instrument and orchestra, bring us eventually to the final cadenza, a magnificent flourish at which the doughtiest pianist might quail, but in which a great artist detects and exposes Beethoven's extraordinary understanding of the instrument. There is little more to be said after this superb exhibition, and the



movement closes after a final impassioned insistence upon the opening theme, and brief concluding passages.



## Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra

BEETHOVEN was too sincere a musician, and too impatient of convention, to have written here a work designed solely to exploit the technical possibilities of the piano. Most concertos of his day, and for some time after him, were so designed; and though they delight the virtuoso, who is essentially an exhibitionist, and the average audience, which is always more impressed by technical thaumaturgy than by music, they are frequently of little fundamental music value.

In composing this work Beethoven neither ignores entirely the classical *raison d'être* of the piano concerto nor slavishly regards it. He makes music which—incidentally—*does* exact the maximum of technical ability from the solo performer. At the same time he writes great music, for orchestra and piano; music which is definitely and sincerely expressive of a series of emotional states, as all music should be; music which inevitably calls for this particular combination of instruments.

The orchestra has its just share in the music. It has sections which might have been taken from a symphony, so significant, so large in concept, and so rounded are they. The music given to the orchestra is intimately bound up with that of the piano—yet the piano, when it speaks, is always the dominating voice. If you choose, regard it as a display piece, vast in scope, shrewd and exacting in its requirements of the solo instrument, amazing in its difficult brilliancies. But it is more important and more satisfying to accept it as music of profound and satisfying emotional significance.

### *First Movement*

Something of Beethoven's characteristic directness is lacking in this first movement. There is no immediate, bold statement of themes; no frank revelation of the composer's thought; no forthright "declaration of intentions," such as we usually find in the symphonies and in other concerted works. Here Beethoven seems to prefer an atmosphere of suspense . . . and the lengthy introduction leads us to suspect that something of unusual importance is presently to be brought forth.

The orchestra has by far the larger share of the introduction. The piano is heard in brief flashes . . . promise of what is to come; but to the orchestra Beethoven devotes most of the introduction, and in it implants the germs of the thematic material upon which the first movement is to be constructed. You will

sense these thematic ideas as they appear, mostly in the woodwind, but finally in the piano also.

As the movement progresses, the orchestra holds sway for a moment, and then the first important part for the piano appears . . . a lovely rippling figure against a syncopated figure in pizzicato strings. Here is a passage wherein a pianist of taste and discretion may make use of a subtle rubato—but the soloist who overdoes it is unfortunate, for Beethoven has laid a trap for him in the following phrases. Now there is a frank acceleration that leads to chords of great vigor in full orchestra. In turn comes a somewhat gentler, lyric mood, in which melody flows back and forth like a wave between orchestra and solo instrument.

A brief little song in the silvery upper ranges of the piano . . . a flashing duel between piano and orchestra in mighty chords . . . typical Beethoven melodic and rhythmic progressions . . . and once again we hear the opening theme—once again the rippling flow from the piano against the plucked strings.

The final section of the movement represents in new guise the thematic material we have already heard . . . and also fragmentary musical ideas poised against long and glittering piano scales. But chiefly it is the orator's peroration, the summing up, the final emphatic statement, supported by all the power that emphasis and striking methods of presentation can confer. Three mighty chords end the movement.

### *Second Movement*

Enough has been said and written of Beethoven's slow movements to prepare us now for a period of exquisite and soul-searching loveliness. And in this adagio movement, the Master of Bonn does not fail us.

The orchestra plays a brief introduction, in almost religious solemnity . . . and presently against its long-drawn chords appears the melody, in the pearly tones of the piano, its shining notes in high contrast with the subdued colors of woodwind and strings as they are held suavely in restraint. After a little while, a more positive rhythm moves underneath these lovely simple harmonies; sparkles of fire leap in tone from beneath the pianist's fingers, and the music slowly and inevitably approaches its climax. Toward the end of the first section, an interesting figure for the solo instrument, very reminiscent of its flickering loveliness in the preceding movement, becomes for a moment conspicuous.

A peculiarly beautiful division of the instruments is made by Beethoven in the second section of the movement. Here the melody—and it is one of exceeding loveliness—is given to pensive woodwind voices. Beneath it the strings move in a very definite rhythm; from above the piano showers down delicately sweet and richly figured tone. There is a brief, curiously tentative interval, a hesitation, and the music proceeds in a more robust rhythm than has yet appeared in the movement. Toward the close, the quasi-religious solemnity of the opening is quite

abandoned, and there is a flurry of genuine Beethovenesque vigor . . . quickly coming, and as quickly departing as the music ends with abruptness . . . almost with flippancy.

### *Third Movement*

Not until the final movement does Beethoven unfold the full splendors of the piano. Now massive chords, rippling right-hand figures, trills in octaves, curiously irregular syncopated figures in descending chords, vie in color and magnificence with the powerful utterances evoked from the massed voices of the orchestra.

Rhythms typical of Beethoven urge the music onward toward the close. Something of that hearty if gruff good humor that so frequently marked the manners of the composer is felt in the music now—and we can recall the preceding movements of the concerto without being able to remember an instance of the acrid bitterness that could as easily impregnate his musical utterances.

Beethoven, master of the orchestra, giant of the pianoforte, combines in the grandeur and magnificence of the finale his supreme gifts in both these fields. Not often are we privileged to hear such a confluence of double genius . . . not soon can the experience be forgotten.



## Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra

[Opus 61]

THE concerto we are considering here was written by Beethoven during one of his happiest periods—although it was also a period of great political disturbance in Austria, where he was living. The work was completed during the Napoleonic invasion, when French officers were actually quartered in the same house with Beethoven. Indeed, the story is told that Beethoven, entreated, even by his host and patron, to play for the foreigners, refused in a rage, and when jestingly threatened with confinement in the house until he should decide to play, stole away in the nighttime, furious.

The concerto is universally recognized as the greatest work of its kind. Its first presentation was so unsatisfactory that the music lay neglected for a very long time. It was written for Franz Clement, a notable musician of Vienna in Beethoven's time. The work bristled with new ideas, new technical difficulties; yet it is told that it was played without rehearsal, and at sight. This was a dubious tribute to the soloist's musicianship, but its effect upon this noble music was even more unfortunate. It is not surprising that after the miserable *première* the concerto was seldom played until the great virtuoso Joachim resurrected it.

In a peculiar fashion Beethoven, in the present work, satisfies both the old and the newer concepts of the concerto as a musical form. He could never have conceived music expressly for technical display. While the concerto gives opportunity for demonstration of technical proficiency that would satisfy the most exigent modern virtuoso, it has even greater charm and beauty in its compelling expression of noble and exalted concepts.

### *First Movement*

It will be a joy to the analytically minded musician to trace in these wonderful measures the underlying structure of Beethoven's music. It will be somewhat more difficult for the average music lover to do likewise, not because the work is particularly involved or academic, but because the loveliness of the music itself is so appealing that it quite conceals structural perfections, and leaves one free, or rather compels one, simply to listen and delight in its colorful beauty.

The orchestra gives us the more important thematic material almost at once. Four strokes upon the kettledrum (sometimes said to have been suggested to the composer by a neighbor's knocking for admittance late one night) precede the announcement of the oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, which utter the first theme of the movement. The kettledrums interrupt again, and the second phrase of the theme appears, still in the woodwind. Now the rhythm is transferred from the drums to the first violins, which imitate the beating of the timpani on a surprising repeated tone—accidental D sharps. Presently the second theme is given out by woodwind and horn, and for a space these themes are developed richly.

The solo violin enters in a quickly mounting and descending figure. With this brief introduction we hear again the same theme that occurred at the beginning of the movement, but now sung with passionate intensity in the keen voice of the lone violin. With the solo instrument stating the eloquent themes explicitly, or erecting upon them a wondrously embroidered fabric of sound, the movement proceeds toward its climax. Meanwhile almost every device in the technical repertoire of the violinist is brought into play in the marvelously elaborated development of the themes. Trills of inconceivable brilliance, delicacy, and rapidity; glittering figures leaping and mounting; now a sonorous note from the G string, now a shining harmonic far in the uppermost ranges of the instrument. A cascade of glowing tone, varying, shifting in light and color almost with each succeeding note.

So the movement proceeds. Toward the end of the first movement we come upon a famous cadenza. A movement in a concerto generally ends with such a display passage for the soloist. Frequently the improvisation of the cadenza is left to the skill of the performer himself, though Beethoven, outraged by the irrelevant musical material often introduced by the solo players of his day, sometimes wrote

out very explicit instructions for it. This cadenza is a creation of the composer himself and is one of the finest in violin literature. Its marvelous elaboration will be at once apparent—but listen for the amazing thing, the use of the two themes of the movement blended in most skillful counterpoint!

A short concluding passage follows the cadenza.

### *Second Movement*

From the fiery brilliance of the first movement Beethoven now turns with powerful contrast to an almost devotional mood. Even technically, the change in style is revolutionary. Now we hear the themes almost entirely in the orchestra, with the solo violin's clear soprano soaring in graceful figure above them. The pace is stately and slow; the orchestral voices rich and sonorous, their colors a subdued background for the silvery sweetness of the violin.

The string section of the orchestra opens the movement, eloquently discoursing an almost religious theme. A few measures farther on, the horns in their loveliest range intone brief phrases, and strings, together with the soloist, later with woodwind added, proceed in a gentle mood. A strange solemnity broods over all, in spite of the slowly growing brilliance of the intricate figuration of the violin in the cadenza near the close. (A cadenza composed by Fritz Kreisler is often used toward the close of this movement.)

There is that in the voice of the violin which speaks directly to something within us, something defying definition, but existent and recognized by all. Like a thin blade of flame it penetrates to that nameless inner sense and quickens it to intense consciousness. Whether the master draws from his instrument a tenuous, isolated thread of sound, floating apart from the orchestra like a disembodied thing; whether he conjures from the frail heart of the violin the most sonorous and passionate utterance, it is a tone that should not only glow and burn with the fervor of the composer's song, but which should possess intrinsic beauty and richness capable of casting a mystic and glorifying light upon any note it sings.

### *Third Movement*

Beethoven cast the final movement into that most symmetrical (since it is "circular") form, the rondo. The rondo is the musical parallel of the verse form of the same name but different spelling—the rondeau. It has a principal theme and incidental themes. After excursions among the latter, it returns always to the chief subject, just as in the rondeau, which has a continually recurring line at definite intervals.

The movement begins without pause between it and its predecessor, the solo instrument giving out the theme and an imitative figure answering in the bass.

Presently both orchestra and violin are joined in the merry, dancelike figure, and the music grows in vigor and gaiety. In the second section a lovely contrast of tone colors appears in the combination of strings and horns, joined in a bright figure suggestive of a hunting call.

Toward the close appears another cadenza, usually the "Kreisler cadenza," embodying the chief theme and rhythm of the movement. A long trill leads to the brief conclusion.



### Overture to "Coriolanus"

RICHARD WAGNER wrote an extraordinarily penetrating appreciation of this passionately dramatic music, and in it referred to Coriolanus "the man of force untamable, unfitted for a hypocrite's humility." He might have been speaking of Beethoven himself, and indeed it is not strange that a hero who could be so described should appeal so powerfully to the imagination of Beethoven. For he too was untamable and restless and proud; he too was capable of supreme sacrifice for the sake of the dominating principle of his life.

The Coriolanus of this music is not the hero of the Shakespearean play, but of a tragedy by the German poet and dramatist, Heinrich von Collin. Coriolanus, a Roman patrician, is banished from his native city, and allies himself with its enemies. The peripeteia is brought about in the scene wherein the haughty, stubborn, proud, and yet somehow noble nature of the aristocrat is broken by the promptings of his inmost conscience, reinforced by the pleadings of his mother and his wife. Under such persuasions he returns to his original allegiance, even though his beloved Rome is in the hands of the mob; and he returns to certain death.

Beethoven, in the overture, does not attempt to outline the progress of the whole drama, but with his sure dramatic instinct seizes upon the critical moment described above, and puts it into music of raging power, of nobility, and of pathetic beauty.

The strings, in unison, speak in three powerful utterances, and three times they are answered by mighty chords in full orchestra. There are two principal themes: the first, heroic, yet troubled and restless, is a figure of Coriolanus in his spiritual distress; the second suggests the personal characteristics of the man. Both are wonderfully developed in opposition and contrast. Later, a fuguelike figure in the violins, against a figured accompaniment by viola and cello, might suggest the pleadings of the hero's dear ones, and the furious argument that rages within his own conscience. There are reappearances of the first and second themes, and with the coming of the latter the marvelous conclusion, descriptive of the death of

Coriolanus, begins. Here is music of violence and tragedy, yet the catharsis of the classical drama is present in the pathetic dying away of the music, and the pity that glows in the gentle closing measures.



## Consecration of the House—Overture

[Opus 124]

THIS overture has been seldom heard in America until recently for reasons difficult to discover, for while it certainly is not Beethoven at his Olympian best, it is Beethoven, and this composer exhibiting any degree of his musical gifts can hardly be ignored. It is of interest to recall that *Die Weihe des Hauses* was chosen as the first work ever to be played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and was the opening number on the first program ever to be played in Symphony Hall, the home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The overture was composed for the opening of the Josephstädter Theater in Vienna, which took place on October 3, 1822, preceding the performance of a play by C. Meisl. A friend and companion of Beethoven leaves us an interesting note concerning the composition of this overture:

September had arrived, and it was full time to set to work at the new composition; for Beethoven had long been aware that the overture to "The Ruins of Athens" was unsuited to the opening of the new theater. As his nephew and I were walking with him one day in the lovely Helenenthal near Baden, he asked us to go on a little, and wait for him at a spot which he pointed out. It was not long before he joined us, when he said that he had booked two subjects for the overture. He talked a good deal on the plan of treatment he should adopt, and explained that one of the themes must be carried out in a free style, the other in the strict style of Handel. He then, as far as his voice would allow, sang both themes, and asked which we preferred.

The overture is sometimes referred to as the "overture in Handel's style." One will have to strain his imagination considerably to find very definite similarities between *The Consecration of the House* and any overture of Handel, except that in a purely formal sense there is a certain structural similarity.

The music opens with a slow introduction followed by an allegro in fugal style. You will observe that the sonorous trombones, which sounded so con-

spicuously in the introduction, are thereafter abandoned. Beethoven seems to have had a special regard for these instruments, reserving them for special effects as, for example, in the finale of the Fifth Symphony.

The introductory chords here are followed by a theme given to woodwinds against an accompaniment plucked from the strings:



On this melody, together with the subject and countersubject of the fugal section, the whole overture is based, and the development which hardly needs detailed analysis is in typical Beethoven style. The subject matter of the fugal section is as follows:



Familiarity with this theme will reveal the structural beauties of most of the overture.



## Quartet in F major—Scherzo and Adagio

[Opus 135]

THE F major was the last quartet Beethoven composed, and his last work but one in any form. It was completed, as the date inscribed in Beethoven's own handwriting on the original autograph tells us, on October 26, 1826, at Gneixendorf. The following March he was dead. Arturo Toscanini has performed a signal service to the wider appreciation of Beethoven's music by transcribing for string orchestra the scherzo and adagio from the quartet. These movements were played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra, under Arturo Toscanini's direction, for the first time at a concert broadcast in the season of 1938-39 and repeated and recorded by public demand. Taken as a whole, the last quartets of Beethoven are even today the least widely known and the most misunderstood of his works. Throughout his entire life, Beethoven was always well in advance both of the taste and the understanding of his time. Even such works as the "*Eroica*" made their way



slowly at first, but these quartets are exceptional in that it was only many decades after Beethoven's death that they began to achieve a measure of popularity among small circles of discriminating students of music. Today, because of the growing popularity of chamber music, they have become known to a wider audience, perhaps, than ever before. Needless to say, Beethoven's contemporaries could make little or nothing of them. When a friend brought to him upon his sickbed the news that the Opus 132 Quartet had failed to please the critics, his only reply was that someday it would. That day has not yet finally come, for a very large percentage of those who have been profoundly stirred by the majestic sweep of the C minor Symphony have yet to discover the subtler glories of the late quartets. The listener for whom the present music constitutes a first acquaintance with the maturest product of Beethoven's genius is almost to be envied, for he is on the threshold of a new world of musical and emotional experience: a world that he must cultivate patiently and assiduously, for the mystery of its impossible sorrow lies buried deep within the recesses of a colossal peace into which Beethoven had poured the anguish and the torment of his last years.

There is nothing to explain and little to describe in this music. Mr. Toscanini's transcription requires a string section of almost impossible perfection, especially when the music is driven along by a spirit so fierce and so exigent as that of the great Italian maestro. The invincible rhythmic vitality and drive of this movement in the hands of so great a conductor are things that must be experienced, as millions of radio listeners experienced them when Mr. Toscanini conducted this music. The adagio seems like an impassioned threnody, a weeping for all the sorrows of the world by a heart great enough to contain them. Opportunities to hear this music in actuality must be few, yet since it represents one facet of Toscanini's genius, and since perhaps millions have been moved by his performance of it, the music must be noted here.

## HECTOR BERLIOZ

[1803-1869]

THE GREAT MUSICAL romanticist Hector Berlioz was born near Grenoble, December 11, 1803, the son of a country doctor. His father wished that Hector should succeed him in the medical profession, and the leanings of the lad toward music were severely frowned upon; for to the practical doctor music was a frivolous diversion, not to be considered as a career. Berlioz therefore had few opportunities to pursue the art in his boyhood. He was nineteen years old before he received any systematic musical training, and even then he gained his point only after disagreements with and financial desertion by his parents.

In 1822, Berlioz was enrolled at medical school in Paris. His lack of interest, and a horror of the dissecting room, made him decide definitely and finally in favor of a musical career. He so informed his parents who, after vainly pleading and threatening, cut off their support. He was admitted, after private study, to the Conservatoire. During seven years at this famous school, Berlioz was almost continually in conflict with his teachers; for their academic point of view and methods irked him, and like so many gifted with great facility, he left weak places in the structure of his musical development by taking what he thought were "short cuts," and by contempt for certain fundamental rules which, however dull and perhaps senselessly applied by his teachers, were nevertheless necessary for rounded and full artistic attainments.

In 1830 the composer won the Prix de Rome, but after staying eighteen months in Italy on this scholarship he returned to Paris. In the following years he became known and admired the length and breadth of Europe—except in Paris, where perhaps the fact that he wrote for the symphony orchestra rather than for the exploitation of pretty girls and not necessarily pretty singers at the Opéra had something to do with the tardiness of the French public's response.

When music failed to pay his way, Berlioz turned to journalism, and wrote with an eloquent and effective pen. To his *Memoirs* we owe many a priceless sidelight on music and musicians of his time. He was a musical megalomaniac—we still have them—and suggested orchestras of as many as four hundred and sixty-seven instruments, to be used with a chorus of three hundred and sixty voices; four chorus masters, and two assistant conductors, one for woodwind and one for percussion, who were to take their cues from the conductor-in-chief, Hector Berlioz.

He had a positive genius for orchestration, notwithstanding some fantastic ideas such as the above. He was the first composer really to exploit the full tonal resources of the symphony orchestra, and the standard instrumentation of the

orchestra of today owes much to him. He was not among the greatest of composers, but certainly is among the most entertaining.



### Selections from "The Damnation of Faust"

WAGNER and Gounod and Liszt, among others, have been concerned with the legend of Faust, who sold his soul to the Devil in a not wholly inequitable exchange for youth and love. Berlioz, he of the wild imagination and fierce passions and extraordinary, if imperfectly developed, gifts, was completely fascinated by Goethe's version, and he wrote, "For some time there has been a symphony descriptive of *Faust* fermenting in my head; when I liberate it, it will terrify the musical world." We could scarcely doubt either the potency of the ferment or the alarming effect upon the world if Berlioz had turned loose all his fully developed forces upon this project. The music took the form of "Eight Scenes" in the career of Dr. Faust, and in its presentation was one of Berlioz' most distinguished failures.

Nevertheless, the "Scenes" contained much delightful music, and the excerpts mentioned here frequently find their way into symphony programs.

#### *Invocation and Dance of the Will-o'-the-Wisps*

The Devil calls forth his dark crew to surround and hold in their powers the house of the maiden Marguerite; and the baleful will-o'-the-wisps come following quickly, glowing in the night like venomous ephemera. But the minuet of the sprightly creatures is infinitely graceful and delicate.

#### *Dance of the Sylphs*

Fantastic creatures, elves and sylphs, charm the perturbed Faust to slumber with song and eerie music, and they fill his helpless mind with sweet voluptuous dreams, and the fair vision of the desired Marguerite.



### Rakoczy March

THIS tremendously exciting and—considering the dynamic resources of the orchestra—exacting music is perhaps Berlioz' best-known music. It was originally written as a *Marche hongroise*, the theme being a characteristic Hungarian tune,

probably of great antiquity. The composer himself, in his autobiography, gives a description of the music and of its electrifying effect when first performed at Budapest. "When the day came my throat tightened, as it did in time of great perturbation. First the trumpets gave out the rhythm, then the flutes and clarinets softly outlining the theme, with a pizzicato accompaniment of the strings, the audience remaining calm and judicial. Then, as there came a long crescendo, broken by dull beats of the bass drum, like the sound of distant cannon, a strange restless movement was to be heard among the people; and as the orchestra let itself go in a cataclysm of sweeping fury and thunder, they could contain themselves no longer, their overcharged souls burst with a tremendous explosion of feeling that raised my hair with terror. I lost all hope of making the end audible, and in the encore it was no better; hardly could they contain themselves long enough to hear a portion of the coda."

Berlioz knew that the tune, *Rakoczy*, was like an expression of fierce patriotic feeling to the Hungarians; he did not, however, expect such a reception as this for his new and unconventional version of it.



### Overture Carnaval romain

THIS delightfully exciting music was written originally to serve as the introduction to the second act of Berlioz' unfortunate opera, *Benvenuto Cellini*. Indeed, it includes some of the music which, because of the stupid performance given it at the *première*, contributed to the failure of the opera: the saltarello, the wild Italian dance which occurs in the second act, and intimations of which can be discerned in the introduction to this overture.

There is an introduction, beginning with fiery and energetic rhythm, which presently relaxes for the presentation, by *cor anglais*, of the melody of Benvenuto's love song in the first act. The music grows in swiftness and in excitement, and the saltarello, of impetuous rhythm and highly elaborated figuration, is delivered with glowing brilliance. The two chief subjects are developed together, the dance figure finally becoming dominant, urging the music onward to the powerful concluding measures.



## Symphonie fantastique

[*Episode in the Life of an Artist*]

MUSICIANS, unlike novelists, are not often given to writing, consciously, autobiographies in their compositions. Richard Strauss did so deliberately in *Ein Heldenleben*; Beethoven perhaps wrote vital chapters of his life in the Fifth, and elsewhere; but no one else, except the incorrigibly romantic Hector Berlioz, has given a detailed, literal, and candid exposition of his emotional life. He was a man of fantastic imagination, of powerful passions, of undoubted genius. His one satisfying means of expression was music, and when the central fact of his life—or at least what he took to be the central fact—resulted in heartburnings and tragic disappointments, music was his refuge, his release, his “escape mechanism.”

The *Fantastic Symphony* was written as the outgrowth of Berlioz' mad passion for the celebrated Irish actress, Harriet Constance (Henrietta) Smithson. It was played for the first time, at Paris, December 5, 1830. The ambiguous suggestions of the final movement can be accounted for by Berlioz' bitter and almost insane grief when calumnious stories as to the character of Miss Smithson came to his ears. He revised this movement, but the music remains. The composer made handsome apologies for crediting evil report about his lady, and, three years after the symphony was first performed, they were married. They were not happy.

When the score was published, Berlioz inserted a preface which constitutes adequate comment on the significance of the music. Following is the translation, by Harriet Bret, which is printed with the French version by Berlioz in the edition of the symphony published in 1900 by Breitkopf & Härtel:

### *Program of the Symphony*

“A young musician of unhealthily sensitive nature and endowed with vivid imagination has poisoned himself with opium in a paroxysm of lovesick despair. The narcotic dose he had taken was too weak to cause death, but it has thrown him into a long sleep accompanied by the most extraordinary visions. In this condition his sensations, his feelings, and his memories find utterance in his sick brain in the form of musical imagery. Even the Beloved One takes the form of a melody in his mind, like a fixed idea which is ever returning and which he hears everywhere. (This recurring melody, or *idée fixe*, which typifies the Beloved One, is first heard in the allegro, in C major.)

#### *First Movement*

#### *Dreams, Passions*

“At first he thinks of the uneasy and nervous condition of his mind, of somber longings, of depression and joyous elation without any recognizable cause, which

he experienced before the Beloved One had appeared to him. Then he remembers the ardent love with which she suddenly inspired him; he thinks of his almost insane anxiety of mind, of his raging jealousy, of his reawakening love, of his religious consolation.

*Second Movement*

*A Ball*

"In a ballroom, amidst the confusion of a brilliant festival, he finds the Beloved One again.

*Third Movement*

*Scene in the Fields*

"It is a summer evening. He is in the country, musing, when he hears two shepherd lads who play, in alternation, the *ranx des vaches* (the tune used by the Swiss shepherds to call their flocks). This pastoral duet, the quiet scene, the soft whisperings of the trees stirred by the zephyr wind, some prospects of hope recently made known to him, all these sensations unite to impart a long unknown repose to his heart and to lend a smiling color to his imagination. And then She appears once more. His heart stops beating, painful forebodings fill his soul. "Should she prove false to him!" One of the shepherds resumes the melody, but the other answers him no more. . . . Sunset . . . distant rolling of thunder . . . loneliness . . . silence. . . .

*Fourth Movement*

*March to the Scaffold*

"He dreams that he has murdered his Beloved, that he has been condemned to death, and is being led to execution. A march that is alternately somber and wild, brilliant and solemn, accompanies the procession. . . . The tumultuous outbursts are followed without modulation by measured steps. At last the fixed idea returns, for a moment a last thought of love is revived—which is cut short by the deathblow.

*Fifth Movement*

*Witches' Sabbath*

"He dreams that he is present at a witches' revel, surrounded by horrible spirits, amidst sorcerers and monsters in many fearful forms, who have come together for his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, shrill laughter, distant yells, which other cries seem to answer. The Beloved Melody is heard again, but it has lost its shy and noble character; it has become a vulgar, trivial and grotesque dance tune. She it is who comes to attend the witches' meeting. Riotous howls and shouts greet her arrival.

"She joins the infernal orgy . . . bells toll for the dead . . . a burlesque parody of the *Dies Irae* . . . the witches' round dance . . . the dance and the *Dies Irae* are heard together."

The orchestration of the symphony, as usual with Berlioz, is heavy and at the same time brilliant. There are moments of poignant beauty—and of outrageous bombast; also according to the characteristic Berlioz. Under the first heading comes the lovely pastoral duet of oboe and horn, in the third movement; under the latter, the abandoned outbursts of the "Scene of the Sabat"—the fantastic Black Mass celebrated in the final movement. The gross burlesque of the *Dies Irae*, a hymn for the dead in the requiem Mass of the Roman Catholic Church, is an effective trick which Berlioz was neither the first nor the last to employ. Among the unusual directions for playing the music are these: four timpani are to be played separately by four musicians (third movement); bass drum is to be set on its side and played with kettledrum sticks by two players (last movement).



The *idée fixe* in its entirety is reproduced here as a matter of interest. This theme appears in every movement of the symphony. Its treatment is often highly symbolic, as can be noted in the fourth movement where it is cut off—even as a last thought of one's beloved—by the death stroke. In the fifth and last movement, the treatment is even more programmatic. Here the young musician pictures himself as dead . . . and attending the "Witches' Sabbath." He is "in the midst of a frightful group of ghosts, magicians, and monsters of all sorts, who have come together for his obsequies." There are groans, laughter, howling, shrieks . . . and then suddenly "the Beloved Melody is heard again, but it has lost its shy and noble character; it has become a vulgar, trivial, and grotesque dance tune." It seems to mock him as it is squeaked out by an E-flat clarinet, later assisted by a piccolo. And then at the close, the *Dies Irae* develops into a wild fantastic orgy. You can readily visualize the young musician, writhing in a cold perspiration on his bed, as his drug-distorted mind pictures this terrible scene. It is a notable bit of orchestral programmatic composition—the material that serves to link Beethoven and his pure classic subjectivity with such a titan as Wagner in whom we have the objective carried to its very zenith.



## Overture to the Opera "Benvenuto Cellini"

HECTOR BERLIOZ, famous as a critic and musical humorist as well as composer, did not hesitate to turn his wit upon his own music occasionally. Commenting on the first performance of his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, on September 10, 1838, he remarked, "The overture received exaggerated applause, but the rest was hissed with admirable energy and unanimity."

There were reasons. Despite the attractiveness and potentialities of the subject, the libretto was inept; the musicians were not impressed by the music; the singers did poorly; the conductor was in a continual bad humor. Berlioz, in his memoirs, relates all these discouraging circumstances with admirable frankness. The opera has not survived, but the rather flamboyant overture is in the repertoire of most symphony orchestras.

Like all good overtures, it embodies thematic material taken from the opera, but, unlike the best overtures, does not condense and synthesize the drama itself. It is notable for its inexhaustible vigor and fulsome elaboration, for the genuinely lovely melody (sung in the opera by the philandering Cellini to his love) for flute, oboe, and clarinet. Indications of Berlioz' yearning for orchestras of prodigious size and effect can be observed near the end, where the entire brass choir is enlisted in a theme intimated near the beginning, while three kettledrums, tuned to a major chord, are mercilessly pounded.



## GEORGES BIZET

[1838-1875]

ALEXANDRE CÉSAR LÉOPOLD BIZET was born in Paris, October 25, 1838. His godfather nicknamed him "Georges," and as Georges he is known to the world at large. Both of his parents were musical, and the child was but four years of age when his mother began giving him instruction upon the piano. Like other infant prodigies an absorbing musical interest dominated his existence, and he showed little liking for normal childish play. His greatest enjoyment was sitting crouched outside the door of his father's studio listening intently to the vocal instruction that went on inside. When he was about eight years old his father desired to begin the lad's musical education in earnest, and was astonished to learn how much the boy already knew. A retentive memory and an innate musical intelligence had mastered many difficulties for the youth. When the father took the boy to the conservatory, his extreme youth appeared a barrier, but his fund of knowledge so completely won the admiration of the members of the committee of studies that he was admitted, and in six months had taken the prize for *solfège*.

Zimmermann, teacher of counterpoint at the conservatory, was in poor health and about to retire when the talent of young Bizet came to his attention. He became so interested in the boy that he made an exception in his case, and took him as a pupil. Bizet's scholastic career both in musical science and as an executant at the piano was meteoric. He played with a brilliance of technique, and could with gentle or intense finger pressure lift a melody from its accompanying harmonic intricacies in a way that charmed his hearers. His teachers said of him that he was a "remarkable virtuoso, a fearless reader, and a model accompanist." His ability to arrange at sight for piano the most difficult orchestral score drew admiring comment from the great Berlioz himself.

When Zimmermann died, Bizet studied composition with Halévy, whose daughter he later married. Halévy welcomed him and said that he was already fit to participate in a contest for the Grand Prix. His youth, however, militated against him, and even though he waited before submitting a composition, the jury awarded him only a second prize. Another coveted prize which he won before his twentieth year entitled him to a three-year sojourn in Rome at government expense, after which Bizet returned to Paris. Here he found himself confronted with the hardships which beset so many young musicians—chiefly, to nourish the body while the soul clamors to create. Bizet was obliged to meet the cost of living by giving piano lessons, writing transcriptions, and arranging orchestrations, when he would have liked to devote his entire time to composition. Opportunity eventually came to him when a patron of the arts made a gift of 100,000 francs to the Théâtre-Lyrique. This fund provided for a commission to compose an opera to the libretto of *The Pearl Fishers*. Bizet was intensely interested in the theater, and put every effort

into the work. His opera, *The Pearl Fishers*, won the prize, and quickly was followed by the colorful *L'Arlésienne* music, incidental to Daudet's drama. The opera *Carmen*, now so popular, was unsuccessful at its first performance in 1875. The composer died three months later at Bouvival, near Paris.



## Excerpts from "L'Arlésienne"<sup>2</sup>

[*First Suite*]

BIZET wrote twenty-seven pieces as incidental music to Daudet's drama. Five of them are usually associated in this popular suite. It is not essential to the enjoyment of the music to know the story of Daudet's drama, yet a short outline may add to the interest. It is a curious story in that the heroine at no time appears on the scene. Frédéric, a young farmer, is madly in love with l'Arlésienne, a woman of the town, and wishes to marry her. His family dissuade him on account of her scarlet past, and arrange a marriage between him and Vivette, whom he has known since childhood. Vivette has always loved him, and wedding plans are made. On the eve of the celebration, Frédéric hears strains of the farandole, a dance in which l'Arlésienne was particularly alluring. The hopelessness of his passion for her overpowers him, and he casts himself from the loft of the farmhouse, crushing his skull on the pavement below. By his death his gentle, simple-minded brother, called the "Innocent," regains full reason. The tragedy of the tale is relieved by its subordinate theme—the tender love story of Balthazar and Mère Renaud, who have loved one another for years. She had become the wife of another, but he remained true to his love for her, which is rekindled when they meet at the betrothal of Frédéric and Vivette.

### *The Prelude*

The Prelude is a series of variations upon a march theme said to be an old French Christmas tune. Harmony and melodic shading are pitted one against the other from the rhythmically stirring beginning. Strings martially announce a subject which the reeds answer and gradually, with the perfect understanding of orchestration which was Bizet's, the other instruments are made to express themselves upon the same theme. A passage of surpassing beauty written originally for the saxophone, but played generally by the clarinet, indicates the "Innocent," and the stormy impassioned theme which follows represents the love madness of Frédéric.

*The Minuetto*

This charmingly quaint melody played staccato in the strings and wind instruments is said "to denote the tender and resigned affection of Balthazar and Mère Renaud." There is a middle portion played by clarinet, with string accompaniment, that sings a lovely strain. It is followed by violins, with running harp and woodwind obbligato. All the way through the minuet there is a quiet glow, a wistful yearning, suggesting the gentleness which in the placid middle years has replaced the flame of impassioned youthful love.

*The Adagietto*

The strings alone are used in this exquisite music, which was played in the drama during the dialogue between the aged lovers. It creates an atmosphere of tenderest reminiscent love—the love of which the right to expression was gained only through the death of Mère Renaud's husband. Like a bit of old lace, a faded photograph, or a cherished memento of the past, this hauntingly beautiful melody has a curious pathos that touches even the most unsentimental.

*Danse provençale*

A rollicking country dance with marked rhythm given out by strings, and a lilting melody played by the woodwinds, flute, and piccolo, depict the peasants attired in festive raiment making merry upon the village green. They are celebrating the approaching marriage of Vivette and Frédéri . . . a celebration to be tragically ended.

*Carillon*

This is the betrothal music, and the bells ring in honor of the wedding. Horns maintain a continuous chime against a gay melody in the violins. In retrospective tenderness there is a haunting song in the woodwinds said to indicate the entrance of Mère Renaud. Gradually into this plaintive theme the horns project their stentorian tones, re-establishing the effect of chimes, with which the music is brought to a close.



## Excerpts from "Carmen"

BIZET died three months after the first production of *Carmen*, saddened by what appeared to be its complete failure. Today it is perhaps the most popular of all operas of its genre, and of all such, it most deserved its popularity for the extraor-

dinary richness, variety, and beauty of the instrumental score. Much of its music is played without reference to the opera at all, and the favorite selections have been grouped in a collection known as the *Carmen* Suite.

*Prelude to Act I*

We are plunged at once into the brilliance and febrile restlessness of a Spanish holiday, just before the bullfight. Orchestral colors glow and flash, and reflect the brilliant colors of the excited scene. The sturdy and pompous yet gay-spirited rhythm of the Toreador's song comes in the middle of this brief overture.

*Soldiers Changing the Guard*

[Act I]

A brisk march tune, with fifes and trumpets, indicates the approach of the "relief." The guards in their bright uniforms come down the street, preceded by laughing urchins who mimic the proud step of the military men.

*The Dragoons of Alcala*

[Act II]

This is the introduction to the second act; music associated with a "crack regiment," one of the many groups of military that appear from time to time on the brilliant and crowded stage of *Carmen*.

*Intermezzo*

[Act III]

For the first time in the suite the music grows lyrical. This is the introduction to the third act of the opera, and is distinguished by one of Bizet's loveliest melodies, first in the flute, and later in other instruments. The harp supplies a moving and plangent background.

*March of the Smugglers*

[Act III]

Stealthy music, vividly suggesting the action of the opera, wherein, one by one, a band of smugglers scramble down over harsh and barren rocks to their primitive camp below.

*Aragonaise*

## [Act IV]

The prelude to the fourth act suggests, in a musical structure remotely related to a characteristic Spanish dance, the changing mood of the opera. It combines plaintiveness and passion and vague premonitions of evil in wonderfully colorful and suggestive music. The dance rhythm and the gypsy influence are conspicuous; and after an impetuous and brilliant climax the orchestra withdraws itself into an atmosphere full of grave portents.

## ERNEST BLOCH

[Born 1880]

VENDOR OF cuckoo clocks, lecturer on metaphysics, pedagogue, educational administrator, and composer of music—such is the variety of activity in the life story of Ernest Bloch. He was born July 24, 1880, at Geneva, Switzerland, the son of a clock merchant. None of the family had shown musical inclinations, but Ernest Bloch early evinced great talent and began the study of the violin. On reaching the age of eleven, he seriously decided to devote himself to composition, writing his resolve on a piece of paper which he burned on a pile of stones as though carrying out some ancient rite of his Hebraic ancestors. In accordance with his resolve, he took up the study of composition with Jaques-Dalcroze at Geneva during the years of 1893 to 1897. Later he left home and went to Brussels where he studied violin with Ysaye and composition with Rasse, a pupil of César Franck. Later he studied with Knorr at Frankfort and with Thuille at Munich, where he wrote his first symphony. He then went to live in Paris, and in 1904 to Geneva. Finding his family in difficult circumstances, he helped by working as clerk in his mother's shop. It was during this period that Romain Rolland, the famous author of *Jean-Christophe* and biographer of many of the great composers, visited Bloch. At Paris, Rolland had seen the score of the symphony, then in manuscript. Thrilled by the beauty and originality of the work, Rolland made the long trip to Geneva to become acquainted with this unheard-of composer. At Geneva he was directed to a souvenir store. Here he discovered the composer clambering up near the ceiling, storing away mountain climbers' blouses. Rolland expressed surprise and alarm at finding his expected genius in so unesthetic an attitude, but was relieved when Bloch explained that he did not work in the shop all the time. The visitor expressed his happiness to learn that Bloch gave his time when out of the shop to composition. Bloch corrected him, saying that when not in the store he lectured at the University of Geneva. Greatly impressed, Rolland exclaimed, "On the History of Music?" "No," Bloch again corrected, "on Metaphysics!" Such is the versatility of his genius.

During this period at Geneva, Bloch conducted orchestral concerts at Lausanne and Neuchâtel, and composed his opera, *Macbeth* (Paris, Opéra-Comique, Nov. 30, 1910). In 1915 Bloch was appointed professor at the Geneva Conservatory. The following year he moved to the United States, and in 1920 was made director of the Cleveland Institute of Music. This position he resigned in 1925 to devote himself entirely to composition. Since then Bloch has made his home in California.

In 1928 Mr. Bloch gained added distinction by winning *Musical America's* \$3000 award with his "epic rhapsody," *America*. This work was accorded the unusual honor of almost simultaneous performance by a number of the leading

orchestras in the United States. In 1934 another great work, ritualistic but unorthodox in character—his *Sacred Service*—came from his pen and was given its first performance at Carnegie Hall, New York, under the baton of the composer.

Although Bloch has shown himself to be something of a philosopher and interested in the pedagogical aspect of his art, his musical compositions reveal him to be much more than a pedant, a seeker for intellectual complexities, or a lover of the merely recondite. His music is convincingly and spontaneously expressive of his personality and of the age in which he lives. His personality—at least so Bloch himself believes—is the result of generations of Jewish ancestry, and thus quite naturally does that ancestry find a powerful voice in his compositions. The earnestness, vehement passion, fervid grief, spiritual exaltation and, contrasted with it, profound dejection, of the Old Testament, are all given utterance in Bloch's music. Yet it is a music that is by no means archaic; it is most intensely modern.



## Schelomo

### *Hebrew Rhapsody for Violoncello and Orchestra*

ERNEST BLOCH has frankly dedicated his art to the expression of racial thought and feeling: not through borrowings from the folk music of the Hebrew, but rather through an individual idiom which Bloch himself has developed as embodying his own powerful race consciousness. *Sacred Service*, a liturgy for Hebrew worship, and the most recent composition of Bloch to be performed in public, is constructed with this thought in mind, and certain other works, such as the *Trois Poèmes juifs*, the symphony *Israel*, musical settings for some of the Psalms, and *Schelomo*, are studied declarations of racial feeling and philosophy.

*Schelomo* was composed in 1916, and has had many enthusiastically received performances both in Europe and in America.

"Schelomo" is, of course, "Solomon," and the choice of the cello to represent Israel's most glorious ruler is an eminently happy one. Here this vital, virile, passionate, and sometimes meditative voice is set in solitary eminence against the full splendors of the orchestra. Surely Solomon is here surrounded by beauty and richness, and against a tonal background of royal magnificence projects himself in a many-sided portrait. The voice of the solo cello speaks warmly of love, reflectively upon the shallowness and the vanity of the world, prophetically upon the ultimate destiny of man. Brooding, and filled with an infinite wisdom, it marks the passage of time and the emptiness of desires fulfilled; despairing, it sinks at length into somberness and silence.



## Concerto grosso for String Orchestra with Pianoforte Obligato

IN COMPOSING the *Concerto grosso*, Bloch demonstrates his interest in the music of an earlier epoch; for this form of music was one of the most characteristic to be perfected during the eighteenth century. The *concerti grossi* of Handel, still frequently heard at the concerts of our leading orchestras, are ranked among his most characteristic works. He is supposed to have been inspired to write in this form after hearing Corelli's *concerti grossi* in Rome during the year 1708.

This type of composition was not written for a solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment, as the name concerto might lead one to expect, but rather, was conceived as a dialogue between a group of soloists (called the *concertino*) and a larger group of performers—the main body of the orchestra, the harpsichord being sometimes added to “fill in” and support the latter. Handel often conducted the performances of his *concerti grossi* while playing the harpsichord. Each *concerto grosso* consisted of a variety of movements, chiefly allegros, largos, and andantes, with dance movements, such as gavottes and minuets, sometimes added.

In his *Concerto grosso*, Bloch has followed the Handelian form and manner, while adapting it to modern conditions. The number of soloists is frequently varied to suit the needs of the music; the pianoforte is used instead of the harpsichord, sometimes as one of the solo instruments, sometimes to reinforce the main body of performers. He composed the work between December, 1924, and April, 1925, beginning the composition while living at Santa Fe, New Mexico, and completing it at Cleveland, Ohio. It was first performed at a concert given by the Institute of Music, Cleveland, June, 1925. The first public performance was at the Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, August 15, 1925.

### *First Movement*

#### *Prelude*

The movement opens with a series of heavily accented chords that compel immediate attention, frequent changes of meter from four-four to two-four giving the music a propulsion, a forward urge, that is irresistible. Soon there enters a contrasting, more rapidly moving passage. From this vigorous material the prelude is built. There are no striking changes of key, no marked contrasts of timbre, no sustained melodic flights, yet the prelude constantly grows in interest, constantly springs forward to the very end.

### *Second Movement*

#### *Dirge*

The vigorous motion of the Prelude is forgotten in the melancholy of the Dirge that follows. Strings playing softly in their upper register announce the



theme, which is stately, not unlike a Bach saraband, but marked by an expression of intense sorrow. This theme is then heard in a lower range while there enters beneath it, played by the string basses and piano, a brief, austere motive, inexorable as fate. This is answered by a poignant, sorrowful cry, a descending chromatic passage, sharply dissonant, played by the strings and piano. The opening theme returns, its grief made more intense through the cutting harmonies now added to it, and the reappearance in the bass of that austere motive above mentioned.

The mode changes from minor to major, but this change scarcely brings the expected consolation; the sorrow has become only less vehement in its expression. While arpeggios played softly by the piano and a solo viola furnish a background, a violin soars in a song of lamentation. And while this song continues, in the key of F-sharp major, that austere motive again enters in the bass, now in the distant tonality of B-flat major. The opening of the first theme suddenly reappears, a forceful outcry against the calmer melody of the solo violin. Again an insistent motive returns in the bass, now followed by the grief-laden, descending chromatic passage. When the very intensity of the mood seems to have exhausted it, there is a fresh outburst, the first theme returns as another and even more frenzied paroxysm of sorrowing, an outcry of deepest woe.

### *Third Movement*

#### *Pastoral and Rustic Dances*

The E sharp of the last chord of the preceding movement suddenly becomes an F natural which is sustained momentarily by a violin entirely unaccompanied; thus we move easily and without a pause into a distant tonality and a far different mood. Cellos suggest the drone bass characteristic of pastoral music, and solo violin and solo viola answer each other with brief pastoral motives. The strings take up a weaving background while a solo violin and piano continue with the pastoral melody which grows faster and more brilliant. At the moment of climax there is a sudden change of rhythm and tempo, and the entire body of strings re-enforced by the piano begin a joyous folk dance. The accents are heavily marked as by the sound of dancing peasants' feet; the melody is carefree, the very lilt and curve of it suggesting the French folk song, *En passant par la Lorraine*. Bloch says of this movement that it is reminiscent of his youth in Switzerland. The opening Pastoral may well be an expression of the rural tranquillity of the Alpine mountainsides, and this Rustic Dance a memory of country merrymaking. The folk dance continues in this mood of artless rejoicing; then, the dance comes to a halt, the music relaxes its speed, and the violins linger over three notes of the melody of the dance. And during this moment of meditation we suddenly realize that this bit of the dance melody is also the opening theme of the Dirge; a suggestion that even

in our happiest hours, sorrow is lurking near by. There is a moment of anxious tremolo and the pastoral melody returns briefly but now in a troubled, broken form. Then, while the violins continue a tremolo as a faint background, the violas proceed with another theme, a melody that is at once serious and thoughtful, dreamily meditative. There are reminiscences of the Dirge, and counterplay of thematic fragments lately introduced into the present movement. Combinations and contrasts of these are developed into a brilliant and vigorous concluding climax.

#### *Fourth Movement*

##### *Fugue*

The final movement is an elaborate Fugue, revealing Bloch the modernist as a master of classical form. The subject of the movement is a forthright and vigorous tune, almost Handelian in its candor and emphatic rhythm. It is stated in the conventional manner, that is to say, unaccompanied, by the violas; violins answer. It appears again in the bass, with contrasting replies in the higher strings, and a development of ever increasing interest and complexity begins to take shape. Rhythmical variations, and simultaneous presentations of the subject in various disguises are noticed in the involved yet ever transparent tonal web which the composer has woven here. There is a final climax of impressive sonority, with reminiscences of the first movement contrasted with the fugal theme of the last.

# ALEXANDER PORPHYRIEVICH BORODIN

[1833-1887]

ALEXANDER PORPHYRIEVICH BORODIN was the illegitimate son of a prince of Imeretia. In his boyhood he showed a decided leaning toward the two subjects which later became the absorbing interests of his life: music and science. At nine years of age he had already attempted to compose, and at thirteen had produced a concerto for flute and piano. His mother, who gave him every educational advantage, had set her heart upon a medical career for the boy; and when he was sixteen years old sent him to the St. Petersburg Academy of Medicine. Here he remained for six years, for, unlike Schumann, who studied but had no interest in law, Borodin found his medical work entirely congenial. Despite the fact that it took the major part of his time, he managed to hear and even participate in the performance of a great deal of music. His interest was more profound than a mere drawing-room devotion, and led him to study seriously to improve his deficiencies in the technique of composition.

Two years before his graduation from the medical school Borodin served in a military hospital for a period during which he became acquainted with Mussorgsky, then a young subaltern in the army. They met occasionally at the homes of superior officers and Borodin was impressed with Mussorgsky's outspoken ideas on the subject of nationalism in music, for up to that time his experience had brought him in touch with little other than the western classics.

Graduating in 1858, he spent the next few years on an extensive scientific tour which took him to Italy, Austria, Germany, and France. The result was that his musical interests were dominated by Western European ideas, which persisted until the friendship with Mussorgsky was resumed. This occurred when Borodin's appointment as assistant lecturer at the St. Petersburg Academy gave him greater leisure to devote to his art. Mussorgsky introduced him to Balakirev, who was at the time deeply immersed in projects for his Free School of Music, founded to spread the teachings of nationalism and intended to counterbalance the cosmopolitanism of the newly established conservatory headed by the great Rubinstein.

It was not long before Borodin's conversion to nationalist aims was effected. He studied composition under Balakirev, and began his first serious composition, his Symphony in E flat, which, because of interruptions for the scientific activities he pursued until his death, took him five years to complete. The second, in B minor, was written during the years 1871-77.

It is curious to note that the Soviet government, recently dedicating a monument to Borodin, honored him not for his music but for his medical services to the Russian people.



## Polovtsian Dances from "Prince Igor"

SCIENTIFIC men—the eminent Einstein an exception—are notoriously unsympathetic to music, and consequently it is surprising to find, as the product of the same closely logical mind that produced the standard work on *The Solidification of Aldehydes*, these mad and intoxicating audible rhythms which we call the "Polovtsian Dances."

The dances occur, interspersed with choral parts, in the second act of Borodin's opera *Prince Igor*—an opera that was left unfinished by the composer, though he had spent years in developing it. The music of the dances, as well as of other portions of the opera, was orchestrated by the generous and immensely talented friend of Borodin, Nicholai Rimsky-Korsakov; and was first performed under Rimsky's direction.

In concert performance the dances do not include the choral sections which in the opera are scattered through them; they are played without pause, as a single piece. The Polovtsi were nomad tribes who inhabited the steppes of far eastern Russia; if the dances are characteristic—and the researches of the composer, together with his scientific bent, would indicate that they are—these people were capable of delicacy of feeling as well as of savage vigor.

The dances vary widely in rhythm and significance. There are dances of wild men, of young girls and boys, of slave girls and of prisoners; dances in praise of the great Khan, and a wild general dance involving the most vigorous and captivating rhythms. The occasion for this celebration, in the opera, is the festival which Konchak Khan, chief of the Polovtsi, devises for the entertainment of Prince Igor, whom he has captured, and whom he mightily respects as warrior and man.



## Symphony No. 2 in B minor

THE charm of the B minor Symphony lies largely in its intense national character. It is as though medieval Russia peered through its magnificent measures. When it was performed in London in 1896, the *Telegraph* (London) published this note:

It contains scarcely a theme that can on any ground reasonably be referred to classic sources. Every important melody is of an Eastern cast, and some of the subjects were derived, one might suppose, from the Middle Asia celebrated in his symphonic poem ("Dans les Steppes de l'Asie centrale") . . .

an idea supported by frequent repetition of brief phrases in the manner long recognized as characteristic of Oriental art. But the most curious feature in the work is the presentation of such music strictly in symphonic form. The Russian composer does not use even legitimate opportunities of freedom. Having chosen his model, he respects it and, so to speak, compels the 'fiery and untamed steed' of the Ukraine to figure in the limited circle of the *haute école*. The effect is curious and interesting, especially at moments when the composer seems to have difficulty in keeping his native impulses from getting the upper hand. Thus the leading theme of the first *allegro*, a phrase of eight notes, haunts nearly the whole movement, chiefly by simple repetition. A second subject does appear at proper times, it is true, but comes in apologetically and departs speedily, hustled by the aggressive eight notes. Using a big orchestra, Borodin employs color with Eastern lavishness, and exhausts his resources in *tours de force* of various kinds, seeking, perhaps, to counteract the effect of a certain thematic monotony.

### *First Movement*

#### *Allegro*

The symphony begins with a statement of the main theme—an impassioned utterance that impresses itself indelibly upon the imagination—a kind of motto that shines through the fabric of the entire movement. Syncopation in the brass section alternating with majestic chords for woodwinds and strings suggest, by their very repetition, the ideas of great strength and barbaric power.

A second subject is lyrical in style, and of great beauty. It is introduced by the cellos, taken up by the woodwinds and upper strings, and is then welded into the texture of the movement. Here the usual development section gives way to a colorful orchestration in which the motto is repeated in turn by clarinet, bassoon, and oboe in a manner characteristically Oriental. Drums introduce a new rhythmic figure above which trombone and trumpets sound the main theme. This is later proclaimed in unison by woodwind, brass, and strings with an insistence that is forceful and vigorous.

### *Second Movement*

#### *Scherzo*

The brilliant scherzo is in the key of F major. The most striking feature of this sparkling movement is the rapid repetition of a single note in the horns, which persists at terrific speed almost throughout, and offers the horn player an opportunity for both distinction and exhaustion. Dazzling outbursts of woodwind and pizzicato strings leap like showers of sparks. A startling effect is a recurring syncopated passage, one of many curious and effective rhythmic elements in this fascinat-

ing movement. Gradually the agitation subsides, and in striking contrast is heard a haunting melody of the solo oboe. Other woodwinds and horns continue the flow of melody, which is developed in broader version by violins and cellos just before a return to the shimmering prestissimo with which the movement opened.

### *Third Movement*

#### *Andante*

A clarinet solo with harp accompaniment introduces this movement. The horn sings the chief melody, and it is one of melting tenderness. For a little space there is a distinctly Oriental color and movement in the music, and then a sudden fortissimo precedes a third subject. This is developed to a powerful climax. The movement ends with the clarinet phrase which began it, while the horn answers dreamily, and the pianissimo roll of drums accentuates the deep tranquillity of the whole.

### *Fourth Movement*

#### *Finale*

The chief motive, which is heroic in character, is announced by the upper strings. Almost at once there follows a fiery development; a tonal flame that rages madly through the orchestra, only to subside to a rich glow like a distant reflection of what has gone before. The clarinet announces a second subject which is repeated in the bright tones of piccolo and oboe, and later bursts out with the fervor of a glorious hymn. Trombones re-establish the mood of the first movement, after which the second melody of the finale is heard . . . this time in the entire string section, and then in the splendor of the full orchestra.

# JOHANNES BRAHMS

[1833-1897]

CLIO, MUSE OF HISTORY, must have smiled as she recorded in the life of Brahms no tale of poverty and woe, but rather a goodly span of years, placid and happy. Few of the great composers were untouched by misery; few, therefore, possessed the mild and equable disposition that Brahms concealed beneath a gruff exterior, and few escaped the unhappy circumstances which, when recalled, reproach us for our indifference to the great ones in our midst.

Brahms was a musician by heredity. Several generations of his ancestors had been directly concerned with music; some made their daily bread through their skill in that divine art, and Brahms in early childhood revealed a gift that his elders neither could nor would neglect. He studied willingly and earnestly as a child; with bold initiative and relentless application as he grew older in years and in his chosen avocation.

Fortune favored him. He attracted the attention of Joachim, the greatest violinist of his day, and through Joachim, the interest of Liszt, than whom no greater pianist, possibly, has ever lived. Through Joachim also was arranged a meeting which was to have a most important effect upon Brahms' career—that is, the meeting with Schumann, who as editor of an important musical journal and as a composer of eminence was in a position to forward the ambitions of the young Brahms, and did so most willingly. Had the introduction of Brahms' music to the world been engineered according to the ideas of a modern "publicity agent," they could scarcely have attracted more attention. From the first notice by Schumann, every published work of Brahms was the occasion for widespread discussion. That this was not invariably favorable did not detract from its effect in bringing the composer into prominence.

Still fortune was kind. Brahms received a commission as director of music at the court of a German prince, just when he needed the experience, the leisure, and the financial rewards that only such an appointment could give.

He lived calmly, happily, and successfully. Attending the obsequies of Clara Wieck Schumann, pianist and wife of the composer, and tireless propagandist for Brahms' own music, he contracted a cold which aggravated a chronic ailment and resulted in his death on April 3, 1897, at Vienna.



## Symphony No. 1 in C minor

BRAHMS approached the task of writing for the symphony orchestra with great seriousness, and with a consciousness of the importance of the work, the dignity of it, and the exactions which it makes of the composer. He was a musician of mature powers, of established merit and fame, before he undertook the composition of his First Symphony. He realized that even genius must attain the stature that is achieved only after years of experience, experiment, and thorough comprehension of the smaller musical forms, before asking of itself the exigent requirements of the symphonic form. He knew his own powers—though rather diffidently seeking the approval of others whose musical opinions he valued; and the result of his accurate self-estimate, his patience, his sincerity, and his magnificent talents is the C minor Symphony—the greatest “first” symphony ever written. Mature, finished, plethoric with melody and with orchestral color, as vigorous and vital as Beethoven, as songlike as Schubert, as perfectly formed as Bach—and as subtle as Brahms!—this wonderful music, though it is the first symphony from the hand of Brahms, represents the genius of the composer in its most splendid development.

The First Symphony was completed in September, 1876, and was first performed, at Karlsruhe, two months later, on the sixth of November.

*First Movement*

The introduction is like the drawing of a huge and magnificent curtain, rich with gold and ornament, sweeping slowly apart to reveal behind it the fierce swift movements of drama. Thirty-seven measures of glowing and sonorous tone, moving slowly and with ever-growing might and majesty toward its inevitable climax. Portentous beatings of timpani, measured and powerful and determined, support strings and woodwinds moving in contrary and circuitous paths toward a single vehement and final thrust as the climax of the introduction is attained. Now there are fragments of melody, poignant phrases of flute and oboe and violin, and a subsidence of the great powers of the orchestra as we approach the beginning of the first movement proper.

Now the expectancy, and the marvelously developed emotional stringency of the introduction are justified, for the movement leaps into flaming vitality and clashing dramatic contrasts from its very opening note. From this apparently simple subject the composer develops a throbbing and vital organism, full-blooded





and muscular and agile; a concourse of sound that almost seems to leap and to shout, to defy and encourage, to warn and to command. There are brief moments of reflection, almost of tenderness, yet always urgent rhythms permit no dwelling upon gentleness. Sometimes a plucked note or two, like the curious trifles that provoke conflicts, seems enough to arouse the orchestra from its breathless pauses, and to send orchestral antagonists off again to new clashes of tone.

Toward the end of the movement there is a wonderful instance of Brahms' amazing rhythmic sense, and his fondness for odd and conflicting internal impulses in his music. Strings against the whole orchestra contest with swiftly growing vehemence for possession of a fragmentary theme, and the resulting double simultaneous syncopation creates a vivid and almost visible effect of a short fierce struggle. Strings are victorious, though the bassoon joins them even when the thematic fragment has been torn from the mouths of the woodwinds; then the violins themselves abandon it, and are given instead a sad and lovely and reflective melody which presages the end of the movement. At the close a warm and enveloping wave of tone waxes great and wanes, and is swept, finally, into silence by the single note plucked from the strings.

To mention a Brahms symphony today is to provoke inevitable questions. "Why did his contemporaries think him dull? How could his music have been called an exhibition of 'sullen asceticism'? How could an American critic, in 1878, pontifically declare of this symphony that 'it will not be loved like the dear masterpieces of genius'?"

Today we know that Brahms ranks among the very first musicians of all time. His symphonies—especially the C minor—are astonishingly popular, ranking in public esteem with the best and most famous of the Beethoven nine. The explanation probably lies, first, in the reluctance of most of us to accept what is new and different, and secondly, in the charm exerted by anything which, though familiar, continually exhibits new items of interest and pleasure.

These reasons may at first glance seem contradictory; they really are not. Prior to 1926, the Brahms symphonies did indeed appear in the repertoire of every first-class orchestra, but like much else in the orchestral library, they were endured rather than enjoyed by a large section of the public. The sudden popularity of the C minor can be traced directly to its recording by the Philadelphia Orchestra. It happened that electrical recording, then in its earlier stages of development, was thoroughly successful for the first time, in this particular work. The records were used all over the world for demonstrating the possibilities of the new recording and of electrical phonographs. Their power, clarity, and fidelity, so greatly surpassing anything before known in recorded music, amazed everyone who heard them—and incidentally made the hearers pretty well acquainted with this music! The greater frequency of the Brahms First on orchestra programs from this period to the present was probably the result—and naturally the other three symphonies, though

never winning the popularity of the First, began to have more frequent hearings. The recording removed the symphony from the class of unfamiliar things, and, because it made repeated hearings possible, established the music in that little group of precious things which become dearer and richer with the years.

### *Second Movement*

The dramatic intensity, the vigor, and nervous animation of the first movement now give way to a dreamy and contemplative mood, touched with melancholy. It is a gentle, not a passionate melancholy; it is a mood that might have been born of calm observation of life, with its inevitable disappointments, griefs, and futilities. Here is an acceptance of things as they are, the bitter and the sweet, the sad and joyous, and all the mercurial conditions of existence; with sober reflection upon them.

There is no introduction, and the principal theme is the first lovely melody you hear—conspicuously in the first violins.



We have not long to wait for the entrance of the second theme, a song equally beautiful, pensive, and longing, in the singularly poignant voice of the oboe. It rises, lonely and trembling, from the closing cadence of the first full expression of the chief subject.



In the strings, once more, sounds the antithetical phrase, soaring aloft in the clearest and loveliest tones; a pulsing rhythm lies beneath, vitalizing and urging onward the dreamy melody. Strings and woodwind bear the burden of the movement. Sometimes they are used in contrasting tone colors; sometimes one supports and colors the other; always there are new and fluent and fascinating derivations from the themes, and mutations of timbre and harmony. The final expression of the thematic content of the movement is given to the solo violin, doubled with a solo horn, this lyric passage occupying almost the last fourth of the movement. To the end, above the mysterious tones of the horn and the accompanying harmony in the orchestra, we hear the eloquent violin pour forth its passionate utterance, star-like and bright even against the full sweep of the orchestra; and its more delicate tones hover, like a disembodied voice, over the very final chord.

*Third Movement*

In only the Fourth of his symphonies did Brahms exhibit a movement of such robust playfulness as to justify calling it a scherzo. In the present work the third movement is indeed lively, and graceful; it has touches of a gentle and whimsical humor. But it is by no means the wry humor of a Beethoven, nor the bitter and sardonic grin that sometimes leers from the pages of Tchaikovsky. It is rather as if Brahms, the childless lover of children, smiled upon their quaint conceits.

The movement begins with the theme, given to the sweet and unassertive voice of the clarinet; a theme much like a children's folk song, gracefully moving above a pizzicato accompaniment in the cellos, and reinforced, first by a detached phrase in the violins and violas, and then, gently and softly, by the string and woodwind choirs.

## Clarinet



Presently there is a new theme, subordinate in importance, but temporarily affecting both a rhythmic and modal change in the music. Imperceptibly, however, the first theme returns, but now almost concealed beneath decorative figures of great delicacy and beauty. Then comes the second important theme, in woodwind voices, rather lively and with a graceful, swinging rhythm that motivates most of the remainder of the movement. Here it is:



Here, perhaps, is the rotund and bearded Brahms gravely shaking a warning finger at some mischievous child, and as the little song of the first few measures once again returns, the warning gesture, by its transfer to smooth and warm utterances by the strings, becomes a caress. The final word of the movement is given to a graceful phrase of the second theme, most ingeniously worked into the lustrous musical pattern in the last subsiding measures.

*Fourth Movement*

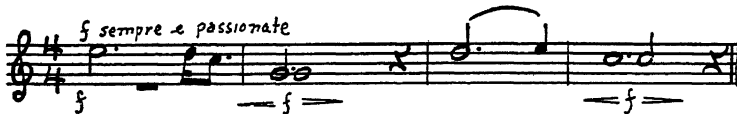
Had he written nothing else, the man who evoked this music from his mind and heart must have won proud place among music's immortals. Surely this move-

ment is one of the sublimest utterances human ears have heard. It is here that words most ingloriously fail, and reverent silence should be the only comment. The human tongue knows no speech to encompass in words this expression, this outpouring of passion and of exaltation, this magical evocation of power and beauty. Here, surely, no one needs words to help him know and feel the poignancy of that first awful cry that is torn from the orchestra; nor the tragedy, so terrible in its dramatization by the furtive and fateful progress of the plucked low strings, that ends in the violins' brief delirious confusion; nor the strange and wonderful metamorphosis by which madness becomes philosophical complacency, and complacency becomes exaltation.

The first phrases sweep through the orchestra, and then pizzicati steal secretly up from the depths of the bass; then mount, more swiftly and more boldly, until with a final feline leap they reach and entangle the whole string section. Above chromatic mutterings of the violas and cellos, other orchestral voices sadly lament. Again the fearsome progression, as of the footsteps of a menacing beast, moves through the plucked strings, and now not only the woodwind answers, but also strings in deliriously whirling figures, flying like wind-blown leaves before fierce gusts of tone from below. At the vertiginous pinnacle of this mad interlude comes a terrifying roll of the timpani, which not only climaxes the scene, but ends it. Then like a breath of sunlit spring air we hear a calm and lovely song blown softly and sweetly from the horn. And again it comes, cool and silvery now in the voice of the flute. Close upon its ending there sounds, in warm complacency, the soothing and heartening "choral" theme which later will arise to dominate the orchestra with heaven-storming power.

The theme given out, first by horn and then by flute, aroused tremendous interest when this symphony was first played in England, by the Cambridge University Musical Society. If you hum it to yourself, just as it is written, it will probably seem familiar:

### Horn



But if you make a very slight change, it will be even more familiar—for you hear it from half of the chiming clocks in the world. It is the famous "Cambridge Quarters":



At the English performance just mentioned, many hearers believed that this curious resemblance between the theme and the tune of the striking clock at Cambridge was no accident; that Brahms deliberately wished to pay a compliment to his Cambridge audience. As a matter of fact, there is no reason for believing the similarity to be other than a coincidence.

There are richly scored phrases derived from the horn call, and presently, after an instant's pause as if for breath, the orchestra plunges into that magnificently high-spirited song which is the essence of the movement—a song which, first presented in the warmest tones of the strings, sweeps vigorously along and in a few measures erases from memory the terrors and the awe of the introduction.

## Violins



It was here that the enemies of Brahms found—since they were looking for it—evidence that he had looked to Beethoven for his material; it was precisely here, also, that his friends found proof that he had surpassed Beethoven. The first and casual hearing of this passage, with its bounding vigor and joyousness, does indeed suggest certain moments in the Ninth Symphony, but it is not possible for a reasonable person to believe that the resemblance is more than mere accident.

Comparisons between this movement and the choral finale of the Ninth Symphony might, however, be undertaken for reasons other than a slight resemblance of themes. Sometimes it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Brahms accomplished here what Beethoven sought and failed to do in the Ninth. In this music Brahms, employing only those forces natural to his medium, accomplishes a magnificent proclamation of joy and exaltation which has, perhaps, no parallel, no equal in music. In doing so he works calmly, confidently, sanely, and beautifully. With the sublime complacency of a man who knows his powers, who knows that they are adequate to his concept and to his work, he builds a mighty paean of joy that seems utterly natural and convincing and unconstrained. Leaving out for the moment the question of the complete originality of the central theme, certainly Brahms' treatment of it is original, various, brilliant, logical, satisfying; and Brahms is never frenetic, never shrill.

It must be admitted that in introducing a chorus in the last movement of the Ninth, Beethoven did violence to the unity of the symphony as a work of art. It can scarcely be denied that the vocal parts themselves, for the most part, are written with complete indifference to the limitations of the human voice and breathing apparatus. Beethoven's inevitable resort to the variation form, worn threadbare by himself and others, and not particularly appropriate in this choral music, cannot

be adduced as evidence of originality. And, to many hearers, even though they love the music, the Ninth Symphony choral finale is frantic and unconvincing. Nor does the use of a definitely second-rate poem as the theme of the movement make it much more persuasive, unless we consider that Beethoven's choice of the verses was dictated not by their literary excellence but by their references to human brotherhood—an ideal always close to the heart of the composer.

There is no occasion here, of course, for an extended discussion of the relative merits of Brahms and Beethoven. The spectacular features of a performance of the Ninth, however, have so frequently distracted attention from its obvious faults as absolute music that occasionally it is helpful to withdraw a moment from its undeniable impressiveness and to consider it coldly. Informed and unbiased musical opinion would probably rank the Brahms C minor above the Ninth, and the growing popularity of this work seems to indicate that the joy expressed by the broadly intelligent, cultivated, civilized Brahms is more certainly sincere and convincing than Beethoven's wildest outbursts.

Brahms uses that wonderful, elastic, electrifying melody as the basis for a long and marvelously elaborated development; a development that explores every musical possibility of the theme, and builds slowly but certainly toward a magnificent climax. There is a constant growth in dramatic intensity, involving reminiscences of early themes of the movement, and suggesting an atmosphere of keen anticipation and suspense. At the moment when one might think that the uttermost limits of power have been explored by the orchestra, the choral theme bursts forth in glowing tones, the orchestra's brazen voices dominating all with their mightiest powers:



Once more wild rhythms leap and bright colors flash; a mighty chord is built of a bold descending figure in the brass, and the end comes on a single long-drawn conclusive chord of noble simplicity.



## Symphony No. 2 in D major

THE epic breadth and grandeur of the C minor Symphony (the First) was never again approached in the four works composed by Brahms in this form. Well might he have exhausted himself of heroic utterance in that matchless music; and so, in

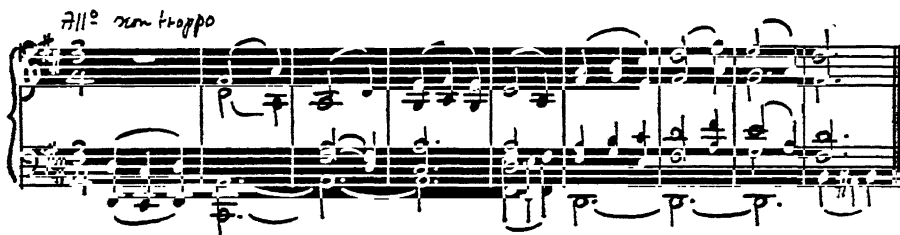
succeeding works, other moods, not less impressive or attractive, engross him. Therefore, in the four symphonies, we have more variety of intent and content than can be found in any other group of symphonies by any one composer.

The Second Symphony is perhaps the best introduction to the orchestral music of Brahms. Its content is full and rich enough for the most exigent, but its structure is very clear, its moods not too subtle or exacting. Though not without moments of somberness, it is generally lyric and sunny; occasionally even playful. Melodies in profusion sing through these measures and remain unforgettably in mind, while to satisfy those for whom music must produce a thrill by rhythmic and dynamic power, there is the brilliant fourth movement.

The symphony was performed for the first time by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, December 30, 1877, under the direction of Hans Richter. Brahms had tantalized his musical friends with obscure or misleading information about the character of the music, and with his customary modesty had even denied the work the name of "symphony" in his jesting comment on it. The very day before the performance he wrote that "the orchestra . . . play my new symphony with crepe on their sleeves" . . . and added ironically, "it is to be printed with a black border, too!" How relieved must have been his admirers to hear this glowing and happy music!

### *First Movement*

Over the shadowed figure of the basses the horn romantically dreams upon



the first theme. Presently violins suggest a swaying melody, not of profound thematic importance, but leading eventually to the yearning song of the cellos which is to be developed as the second basic idea of the movement. Woodwinds (flutes) are attracted to this flowing melody, and present their own version in answer to the strings. Upon the basis of the melody the composer develops a firm and sonorous tonal fabric, through which runs always the bright strand woven by violins, cellos, and basses, enlivened by occasionally irregular conflicting rhythmic impulses.

The structural lines of the movement, in spite of the descending transitional phrase which now appears in the flute, are tending upward; and it is possible to visualize the music as forming itself into a strongly defined, a sturdy, and sym-

metrical pyramid. The apex is reached in the development of the principal theme, which is now elaborated in a series of colorful derivations, increasing always in interest and animation, and gradually drawing upon more and more of the orchestral resources. Yet always there is a beautiful and fascinating clarity, the progress of each instrumental voice somehow seeming independent, yet vitally related to that of its fellows. Alternately powerful and gentle utterances presage a return of the underlying theme in its explicit form, and the music, guided by the wandering horn, gradually descends from the peak of its powers into a placid valley, filled with sunshine and contentment.

### *Second Movement*

It is curious to discover that Brahms, though we know him to have been a dissembler of his inmost thoughts and feelings except in music, regarded himself as "not at all a sensitive person," and "absolutely without nerves or sympathy." It requires only a single hearing of the restrained yet passionate song of the cellos and the violins, in the first few measures of this movement, to convince us otherwise. The music is grave, but warmed and intensified by a tenderness and intimacy, and by suggestions of secret pain; and it speaks with a directness and shrewd poignancy that few sensitive listeners can resist. This is the utterance, not of a confirmed and neurotic and hypochondriac sufferer, but of one who from a calm yet not remote philosophical eminence observes the woes of humanity, little and great, and grieves for them. Other slow movements in the Brahms' symphonies are tender and touching, but nowhere else does Brahms reach so surely into the vast profound of human feeling.

Detaching oneself momentarily from the emotional significance of this music, it is interesting to note the beautifully formed contours and development of the music. After the presentation of the first theme, it is given in a kind of imitation, by horn, oboe, and flute; and a second idea is brought forward by the strings, and later elaborated in woodwind with still another melody moving against it through the cellos and violas. The melodic possibilities of this material having been thoroughly



explored, the movement, remembering for a moment the theme that brought it into being, closes in serenity.

### *Third Movement*

The journeyings into the profounder depths of the human soul are too recent for Brahms to burst forth, immediately, into a classical scherzo; so he introduces, at



the beginning of the movement, rhythmic and melodic ideas occupying a happy middle ground between the pathos of the preceding movement and the playfulness that is presently to come. The oboe has a bewitching little song, half wistful and half gay, accompanied by cellos pizzicati. Other woodwinds likewise discourse upon this theme, and it establishes a mood at once questioning and hopeful.



With a sudden change of tempo the strings, in a crisp and elastic rhythm, are given the delightful presto. All questionings are at once answered, all doubts resolved; here is delicate merriment, here is frolic, here is joy. There are interludes of thoughtfulness, and of reflection, as when the woodwinds suggest a serious moment, and the oboe insinuates its pristine pensiveness. The reply is a sturdier assertion of the motive of the presto.

But there is a sudden appearance of darker orchestral colors, and the idea of the presto, which seemed about to be developed as the dominating spirit of the movement, is ultimately discarded for a return to the first plaintive theme. Violins and flutes and oboes are attracted to it, and in this mood the movement closes.

#### *Fourth Movement*

The finale of the First Symphony, after its awesome and portentous introduction, brings us into a mood which asserts a profound, a vigorous, and vital optimism.



The present movement is concerned with joy, too; but with a lighter and more brilliant, a more vivacious and unreasoning gladness. The headlong rush of the violins ushers in a period of what seems, emotionally, a period of complete abandon;



yet one can observe that Brahms achieves this freedom within the confines of strict form. Hanslick, the noted Viennese critic, concedes that this movement is "always agreeable," and suggests that "Mozartian blood flows in its veins." One would rather believe that the life fluid which courses through this music is thicker and stronger stuff than any that ever circulated in the delicate tissues of Mozart's music. In its formal finish it can be compared with the work of the older master; but scarcely otherwise.

The development of the chief themes, both of which are first projected by the strings, is highly elaborated, yet the spirit of the music is never lost in these tangles of academic form; on the contrary, it seems to grow in power and emphasis as the music moves along. The concluding section reaches new peaks of exaltation, of almost frantic high spirits; powerful chords, underlined by syncopation, bring new powers to bear; brilliant brasses lend point to the orchestra's declamations, and resounding chords establish a triumph at the end.



### Symphony No. 3 in F major

THE earliest critics of the Brahms' symphonies proved their own diminutive stature when, to them, the grandeur of the music was obscurity. The coldness with which Brahms was once received was not only the result of his daring to be different; it was not merely the traditional public reluctance to accept something new. It was, in fact, inexperience with music conceived on so mighty a scale, that called forth the solemn dicta that Brahms was "heavy," recondite, obscure, esoteric.

For no one before Brahms had built the symphony into such a gigantic structure. No one had conceived a pattern at once so broad in outline and so exquisite in detail. Nor is this a reflection upon the masters who had gone before. There can be no belittling of a Beethoven Fifth, which gains its end by a fundamental simplicity, an almost brutal straightforwardness, an emotional exhibitionism that constitute a musical portrait of the great soul in which that immortal music was born. But when such a work as, for example, the Beethoven Fifth was the *summum bonum* of symphonic music to the critics of Brahms' day, it is scarcely to be wondered at that Brahms' own Third, with its subtlety, its poise, its mellow warmth, its autumnal richness, and its sunset glory, should fall upon uncomprehending ears.

Ease of comprehension is certainly no criterion of excellence. Half the joy of

beauty is in the discovery of beauty, and though in our day we enjoy, at first hearing, a Brahms' symphony, it is because we inherit, so to speak, a degree of musical sophistication. The joy of discovering new and personal beauty in this music is nevertheless still ours; and we profit by the mistakes, and avoid the pitfalls, of our musical forbears. One of the chiefest charms of the music of Brahms is its endless revelation of new and unsuspected loveliness; of hidden perfections, adumbrated to our perceptions even after the tenth and the fiftieth hearing.

That the music, or, more accurately, the charm and beauty of the music of Brahms often defy words is no indication that they are obscure. On the contrary, if words could adequately describe the loveliness and the significance of music, there would be no need of music. Music is a language, universally comprehensible, which expresses things beyond words. It is a communication, between composer and listener, of an emotional state. Words fail. Music, intelligently conceived and executed, never fails. The child, the savant, the poor, the ignorant, the rich—all can grasp in some degree its significance; and it is only when words come between composer and hearer that music may be confused, uncertain, obscure.

### *First Movement*

The Brahms Third has been interpreted, at one time and another, as a musical picture of Hero and Leander; or of Shakespeare's Iago! or as having a *recherché* moral significance as of the eternal struggle between good and evil. None of these conceptions has any valid basis; they are but products of individual imaginations, reactions of individual human entities, thrust into history solely because of the importance of the persons who experienced them. As in the case of any "pure," subjective music, your own intellectual and emotional response to the symphony must be the ultimate norm by which you will judge and through which you will enjoy it.

The majestic opening chords have much more importance in the music than would at first appear. Major and minor, bright and somber, they indicate an emotional state disturbed by conflict. They have still a further purpose, musically, for, after a few bars you will perceive them again, not in woodwind, as at first, where they dominate the orchestra, but in the bass (strings and contrabassoon), supplying a somewhat ominous suggestion.

The main theme of the movement sweeps downward in the strings immediately following the two broad opening chords. There is a contrasting, upward-moving figure in the woodwind, and then, just before the second principal theme, occurs a phrase that might have been transplanted bodily from the groves of the Venusberg itself. Wagner lay stricken at the time this symphony was written, and it has been suggested, rather inappropriately, perhaps, that in this surprising

echo of the song of the Venusberg sirens, Brahms paid tribute to the dying Wagner. In view of all circumstances, the suggestion is incredible.



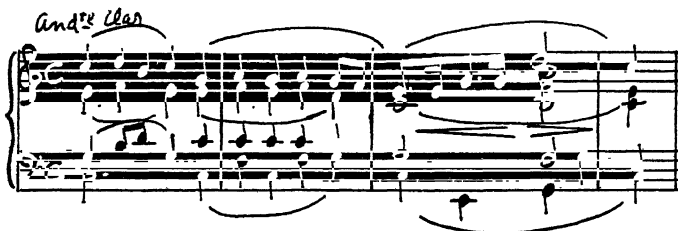
Now comes the second theme, almost like a lullaby in its gentle sway, in the voices of clarinet and bassoon. The strings urge onward a brisk rhythm; details of composition and orchestration now cluster about the broad basic lines of the movement. The gentle second theme darkens when it is given to the somber voices of the heavier strings; the first theme, similarly treated, is almost completely disguised.



Where now is the electric brilliance in which this theme once flashed, cleaving its way through great masses of orchestral tone? Scarcely have we time to wonder what darkling cloud has enshrouded the music, when the theme appears again, with all the brightness and vigor of its first coming. Now the basic material of the movement grows to the fullness of its splendor under Brahms' wonderful development. Now the firm basic structure of the movement supports the 'masses of detail that disclose it, not merely as a finely articulated skeleton, but as a vital principle actuating and determining the form and significance of the movement itself.

### *Second Movement*

If there is serenity in the second movement, there is also passion, intense though restrained; if there is ingenuousness, there is, too, a subtlety, an ingenious-



ness not to be disregarded. The main theme is, of course, the lovely song of the woodwind, like a hymn for little children, that opens the movement. It is as if a great organ played gently . . . but the answering cadence is not the white and passionless voices of children, but a deep and tremulous yearning utterance of the strings. Yet more poignant, more pleading, is the voice of the oboe that in solitary eloquence pierces the masses of tone that encircle it.

There are countless embellishments and mutations of the main melody, yet in all its wanderings, in all its guises simple or obscure, it yearns and is unsatisfied. Presently, after the lowest reaches of the strings have been explored, the woodwinds (clarinets, bassoon doubling) suggest a comforting thought. And again, the strings bring forth a still brighter figure, carried on, now, alternately by wood and strings.

Brahms is often calm, serene, placid . . . but dullness has no place. The rhythms of this movement could hardly be described as turbulent, and yet there is conflict. Is it aimed to accent the pervading calm by contrast—or by disturbance to prevent a monotone in the pattern of the movement? Who knows . . . and what matter? Here is a delicate and skillful thing, but one of a thousand details that make Brahms . . . *Brahms!* Listen attentively, and you will detect the faint rhythmic clashing of three notes in strings against two in woodwind.

And yet, there is always a wonderful unity, rhythmic and melodic. It can hardly escape you: note, for example, toward the close of the movement, the appearance of a subject in the woodwind against the figured accompaniment of the strings and the chorded brass. What is it but the candid opening theme, subjected to a slight rhythmic mutation that makes it seem to grow naturally and logically from what has preceded it?

### *Third Movement*

The third movement of a symphony is, traditionally and technically, a dance movement. With Brahms, whose love and understanding of the Hungarian and gypsy dances is one of the traditions of music, such a movement would be inevitable. But the use of a dance form in the symphony antedated Brahms, of course, by many a year. The minuet of the Mozart symphony, the scherzo of Beethoven, were handy devices which the composer bent to his purpose of expressing a humor not exactly compatible with the more serious musical forms. And thus a composer of today, if in his symphony he placed a fox-trot movement, would be perfectly justified by all canons of technique, by tradition and convention.

It is not to be inferred, however, that the dance movement necessarily is frivolous, trifling, or lacking in depth. It need not even be happy. The *passacaglia*, the saraband, and other dance forms were at least serious; the minuet, stately; the polonaise, solemn.

Do not, therefore, expect this third movement, although it exhibits certain dance-suggestive rhythms, to be of a character at odds with that of the main body of the work. True, the movement is contrasted, and deliberately so, with the others; but not to the extent of dissipating the spirit of calm and mellow joy that vitalizes the work as a whole.

The cellos sing the dance song that is the chief theme of the movement . . .



sing it without prelude as this section of the symphony opens. Then, when one would naturally expect a second and perhaps a brighter theme, the same song is transferred, with a gain of emotional content, an even more pensive suggestion, to the violins. Still later, when the appearance of a new motive seems inevitable, an even more mournful projection of the theme is effected in woodwind voices—flute and oboe, doubled. Yet there is a certain vitality, a determined forward motion, a rhythm strangely at variance, in its persistence and gentle insistence, with the emotional potency of the melody itself.

Presently a brief pause, a tentative mutation of harmony, and the second theme finally does appear. It seems to have a certain diffidence, a hesitation . . . yet its rhythm is definite, its tonal coloring (in flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon) rich and pervasive. The cello, below, proceeds in a figure of its own, and occasionally a gently blown horn adds to the luminous tone of the woodwind choir.

There is a transitional passage of singing loveliness, and now the horn, in no uncertain tone, duplicates the song of the cellos at the opening of the movement; the oboe repeats the former part of the violins. Color is applied with a generous hand; the melodic elements of the movement are reviewed in various guises, and there is, finally, a tentative and hesitating approach to the figure described in the preceding paragraph. Suddenly the mood vanishes, that motive is never re-created, and the movement quickly, but gently, ends.

#### *Fourth Movement*

The Brahms of the fourth movement is indeed that mighty Brahms of the C major (First) Symphony. Here is the opulence of orchestration, the overwhelming power, the invariable certitude, the virility and vitality of that noble music. But here there is more: there is more of poise, more of the feeling of achievement. For beyond the triumphant note one senses the warm soft flow of peace—a rich autumnal peace. The goodly harvest is gathered; the day is done; a golden western light flows over the world in splendor, and dies . . . in splendor.

Strings and bassoon, not loudly, but with the vigor and emphasis of restrained power, give us the first theme in strong and perfect octaves. Woodwind enriches



the harmony, and then, a powerful and sonorous phrase, half military, half of the cloister, is ushered in by the horn and pronounced by strings and woodwind. An almost savage pronouncement of the horn grows directly from this phrase, and there is a period of further elucidation of the first theme. The dynamic range is extended; there are exigent demands upon the orchestra's power, but another ominous utterance of the horn presently restrains the spirit of abandon. The fierceness of attack relaxes temporarily, until the violins presently whip the vast pool of sound into a new frenzy.

Strangely, this new burst of energy is devoted to the solemn, almost ecclesiastical subject we heard not long after the movement began. But one more climax, one more terrific burst of energy, one more upward surging of all the orchestra's mightiest powers, one more stentorian warning in the brass—and the twilight begins, gently and all but imperceptibly, to fall across the scene.

There are no words, there is no need of words, to describe this music in its last moments. The glow of a mighty presence pervades it. The magnificent complacency of a great spirit broods comfortingly above it, resolving all doubts and questionings in the serenity, the peace, the spiritual satisfaction of its close.



## Symphony No. 4 in E minor

BRAHMS' Symphony in E minor was first performed in 1885, published during the following year, and played for the first time in America by the Symphony Society, in New York, in December, 1886. Brahms was uncertain of the merit of the work, and in fact seems to have been generally depressed both during the months of composition and the first few performances, which he himself conducted. It is said that, just prior to beginning work on the Fourth Symphony, he had studied diligently, and had been deeply impressed by Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus*, and perhaps there is something of the grief and terror of that awesome work in certain portions of the symphony. That is not to say that it is a symphony of gloom or melancholy. It is always thoughtful, sometimes philosophical, occasionally gay; never morbid, never depressing.

*First Movement*

Always it seems strange that Brahms ever could have been considered cold and pedantic, intellectual rather than emotional, forbidding and heavy. True, after the sometimes thin and effeminate prettiness of Mozart, the mellifluous facility of Schubert, the stark simplicity and ruggedness of Beethoven, music conceived so magnificent in outline and so elaborate in detail as the music of Brahms often is must have lacked the power to evoke a spontaneous reaction from the casual listener. The music lover, the concertgoer of today, however, is perhaps more sophisticated. Each year of musical history, each composer who has come and gone, has widened and deepened musical background, sharpened musical perception, refined musical discrimination. And though Mozart and Schubert and Beethoven lose nothing through the years, the sophisticated and occasionally abstruse Brahms finds today an audience more receptive, more appreciative and sympathetic than he knew while he lived.

The very opening phrases of the first movement draw us into a moving current of music; music that seems to have begun nowhere, music of which we suddenly, not shockingly, become conscious. The theme is cast in a figure much



like a dialogue, strings questioning, woodwind answering. A pleasant rustling in the accompaniment, gradually growing more prominent, suggests the general current of life, with life's insistent questionings and half answers persistently intruding. There are wild calls on the horn, and the second important theme appears as a fragmentary melody in the cellos, with the curious dominating character invariably assumed by a melody when it is laid in the bass . . . but an upward sweep presently carries it into the higher, more penetrating, yet less commanding voices of the lighter strings.

The movement proceeds, not in the strictly academic sonata form, but as a series of episodes and climaxes, unified into a perfect whole more by their emotional significance than by any interrelation of structure. The second section of the movement, for example, opens much like the first, but with a sense of uncertainty achieved by the slight variation of the questioning phrase with which it began. The wild phrases of the horn which once before have briefly appeared return with more emphasis, and are elaborated at such length as to give them momentary dominance. The questioning phrase of the beginning is again presented, now in a solemn light, and still without definite answer.

A climax greater than the several preceding climaxes of the movement



develops in the final section of the movement . . . a spirit almost warlike grips and moves the music until its final insistent questions are put down under the emphatic chords and beatings of the great drums in the closing measures.

### *Second Movement*

Horns, then the bassoons, oboes, and flutes put forth a tentative tentacle of tone; a delicate tendril that presently fastens and fashions itself into a lovely melody woven of dreams under a summer sun.



In writing a simple melody, the composer reveals his greatness, if any he has. The little man can command the bravura effect, can evoke the orchestra's mightiest thunders, but only the great achieve the sheer simplicity which because it is simple and elementary touches our deepest and most vital sensibilities. This achievement is frequent in the music of Brahms, and is notably accomplished here.

Gone are the feverish questionings, the inadequate answering, the strife, the tumult, and the overbearing power of the first movement. Now all is bright, placid, warm, restful. If there is a hint of sadness, it is of that pleasant melancholy with which comfortable age regards the time-softened memories of restless youthful years. The melody flows over the almost imperceptible disturbances of plucked strings, but there is growing emotional stringency; presently you feel a new and more passionate impulse, the strings giving it expression above a woodwind and horn accompaniment. Still another and more powerful motive, strings echoing woodwind with emphasis. And yet the movement has reached no definite and permanent emotional plane . . . its melodies, vagrant as they are, touch lightly the wellsprings of feeling.

At the very moment when we feel that the errant spirit which animates the movement *must* alight and reveal itself fully, we come upon an agitated passage in which the strings' most moving accents are called forth, briefly but powerfully. Now we know that the former wanderings were as the strange succession of fantasies that come in illogical procession through a sleeper's subconsciousness. Now they are revealed, as it were, in the hard light of full awakening . . . lived over . . . and presently dismissed with a smile.

### *Third Movement*

A joyous outpouring of vigor and vitality, a happy command of the orchestra's full forces in a jolly tune that surely had its genesis in some wild peasant dance . . .

thus the third movement (*allegro giocoso*: lively and joyously) of the symphony springs into being. The chief theme is in the opening bars, and throughout the first few minutes you will hear it in a variety of tone colors; in its original form, and curiously inverted; in the bass and in the tenor voices of the orchestra.



Then, a little later, the same theme in a quaintly distorted form partakes of the character of a pious supplication, perhaps in mockery, perhaps in atonement for its former exuberance. But not for long . . . for a new figure, as bold and as gay as the first, elbows aside, as it were, the faintly ecclesiastical utterance. Never again through the movement can the bright spirits be restrained, and they rush on through all the orchestra's choirs to a swift and vigorous climax.

#### *Fourth Movement*

It was characteristic of Brahms' quiet daring to use, for the finale of his symphony, an ancient dance form—the *passacaglia*.\* It has been remarked that in this instance the judgment of the composer was open to question, for if anywhere in the symphony clarity is essential, it is in the finale. The *passacaglia* is not a simple form, and in the hands of a composer less lucid in his musical expression than Brahms is in this instance, it might have meant the popular failure of his work.

Even if it were necessary deliberately to abstract one's attention from the magnificence of the finale as a whole, in order to follow the structural elements of the *passacaglia* form, the effort would well be repaid. But such a mental abstraction is not necessary. A listener knowing nothing, and caring less, about form and construction will be charmed, will be gripped and moved by this magnificent

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\* A *passacaglia* is an ancient dance form, the musical beauty of which attracted the attention of composers of serious music. A *passacaglia* is musical construction consisting essentially of a ground bass and variations. A ground bass is a note or phrase—in the *passacaglia* always extending two, four or eight measures—upon which series of harmonies and variations are built. In this form the ground bass may appear either in bass or treble; it is generally rather solemn in character, and its musical treatment is extremely elaborate. The *passacaglia* is closely related to the *chaconne*, or *ciaccona*. J. S. Bach made notable use of these and other ancient dance forms in his organ compositions. Brahms first introduced the *passacaglia* into the symphony.

music. The musically initiated will be conscious, without effort, of both the technical structure and the musical beauty of the movement.

The first eight measures of the movement give us the ground bass of the *passacaglia*. It is sounded mightily in the brass and woodwind, and its first

ornamentation appears immediately when on a repetition of the theme it is contrasted with pizzicato strings. Again, it runs counter to a distinctly new and flowing melody far above it. Now the basic theme comes itself into the treble range, and through all versions, through all variations appears a definite growth, a working toward a climax—a form within a form.

And this growth is felt even when it appears in the diffident accents of the flute, wherein an increasing of emotional tenseness replaces that of dynamic effect. The same is true of the subdued choir of brass that presently intones a solemn phrase . . . a phrase replaced in a moment by the basic theme itself, put forth in powerful brazen accents by the same instruments that lately spoke so gently.

And once more as the final section of the movement begins, the brass with even augmented power blares forth defiantly against the acid commentary of the strings, the same potent utterance. Yet with each recurring emphatic statement of the theme, one feels there is a reserve, a something left unsaid, a something which is said finally, in gorgeous counterpoint and intoxicating rhythm, in the closing measures of the symphony.



### Variations on a Theme by Haydn

THOUGH Brahms acknowledges his indebtedness to Haydn for the foundation theme of this lovely music, Haydn was not so candid. There is considerable evidence that he was not the originator of the tune. It appears to have been, basically and

originally, a hymn tune; historically of the type of *Ein feste Burg*, which is variously attributed to Luther and Bach and others, but the origins of which are unknown. The theme of the *Variations* is extracted from a series of pieces for wind instruments, by Haydn; in this music it is described as the *Chorale of St. Anthony*.



By the time Brahms adopted it, this tune had been modified in such a way as to be less severely ecclesiastical. A chorus composed of oboes, bassoons, contra-bassoon, horns, and pizzicato double basses proposes the theme for development. During the variations, it may occasionally require intentness to locate all the notes of the theme, since they are frequently surrounded or buried by masses of tone. But they are there!

*Variation 1:* Developed in strings and woodwind, in fairly lively rhythm. The texture of tone woven by the strings, against and above the wind instruments, is delicate and involved.

*Variation 2:* The pattern of the theme is followed again by woodwind (clarinet, bassoon) with the strings supplying ornamental figures.

*Variation 3:* Oboe and bassoon are contrasted with brilliant octaves, played by all the strings from viola down. The violins are reserved for a later moment, wherein woodwinds join them.

*Variation 4:* A bizarre tone quality is effected by a combination of oboe and horn, the one penetrating and biting, the other round and full and sweet. These have the melody, against string accompaniment; later the tune is given to the strings.

*Variation 5:* A rather humorous and flippant treatment of Handel's quasis-pious tune. It appears in somewhat distorted form, and is contrasted with lively figures in the woodwind, with the piccolo adding its brilliance.

*Variation 6:* The theme is sharply sketched by pizzicato strings.

*Variation 7:* In rather slow but graceful movement. Flute and viola, clarinet and violin, in graceful descending figures.

*Variation 8:* An inversion of the theme. The strings, *con sordino*, begin; then a tonally brilliant but dynamically weak combination of instruments—piccolo, clarinet, and bassoon—is inserted.

*Conclusion:* A climax built upon a part of Haydn's theme, which is here given out by the strings and used as a point of departure for a highly developed climax.



## Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra

THE concerto was written when the genius of Brahms was in its full flower. The composer waited and labored long before undertaking his First Symphony, knowing that only through certain knowledge of the smaller instrumental forms could he attain to command of the larger. How logical then that this, which is practically a symphony plus a violin sonata, should have been put off until Brahms was sure of his hold upon both orchestral and violin music.

It is interesting to recall that the work was written with the gifted Joachim in the mind of the composer as the interpreter of the concerto. The famous violinist conferred with Brahms upon the work, but curiously enough, while willing to accept suggestions regarding musical structure (in which science Brahms was probably much the superior), the composer would not consider very seriously the ideas of the violinist in the matter of technique. Perhaps it was Brahms' fear and dislike of the uselessly ornamental and meretricious that accounted for this curious attitude. That his own knowledge of the violin was sufficient to enable him to explore in his music the limits of its possibilities is obvious enough in a single hearing of the concerto, and he gives the solo artist as much liberty (in the cadenza) as justice and precedent would require.

### *First Movement*

The mass and breadth of the introduction to the first movement is typically Brahms; rich, almost heavy harmonies in contrast with the lighter and more penetrating tone colors of the woodwind. Beginning gently enough, the music presently attains a bold vigor and vitality that commands, rather than invites, attention, yet it is joyous and bright, and these manifestations of the orchestra's concerted powers are but a foil for the compelling and solitary utterance of the solo instrument.

The violin enters in a richly figured passage, somewhat tentative in its present implications, and quickly fading in an incredible pianissimo shared by the whole orchestra. The first section of the movement presents, so to speak, violin tone in the abstract. The solo instrument's part is formless, vague, not of the warp and woof of the concerto itself, yet it has served the valuable purpose of stimulating the finer perceptions of the ear with tempting bits of the most exquisite tone, inviting, persuading attention to the lovely flow of melody that presently follows. The second section of the movement opens with a song of such deceptive simplicity, such limpid fluency, as to lead imperceptibly into a fascinating labyrinth of melodious complexities before we are quite conscious of it. That this melody and its elaborations are exacting from the solo artist an appreciable degree of technical skill; that they are accompanied in their every convolution by an orchestra most

subtly shadowing the violin's every intonation—these things require second thought and deliberate abstraction from the witching beauty of the melody itself.

Nor when, in the following sections of the movement, there is even more elaborate, more wonderful, and vastly more difficult development of the thematic material we have already heard is there a sense of striving or of academic perfection, or of that cold impassive beauty so often the virtuoso's sole claim to greatness. The emotional values, which after all are the chief values of any music and its sole *raison d'être*, are always foremost.

The final section of the movement is devoted to the cadenza, the customary ornate display passage given to an exhibition of the soloist's technical skill. It is worthy of note that Brahms, in conformity with ancient custom, left the cadenza to the discretion of the violinist, giving him, therefore, an opportunity to display not only instrumental gymnastics but also his talent for composition and his conception of the essential musical thought of the movement, upon which the cadenza should be founded. Beethoven, it will be remembered, frequently wrote out his cadenzas to prevent an ambitious soloist's doing violence to the composer's work.

That danger does not exist when a great musician is the soloist, or when the famous Kreisler cadenza is used. Comment upon it, upon the sprightliness never sacrificed to dignity, the dignity that never approaches pompousness, the clear and valid relationship of the cadenza to the main body of the movement—these things need no comment.

### *Second Movement*

Melody in instrumental music alone gives it intimate and personal character. Melody is the origin and basis of the primordial musical speech of humanity. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that to the greater number of lovers of music a song, be it vocal or instrumental, comes nearest to the heart. The violin, too, the most intimate and personal and unmechanical of all musical instruments, seems most expressive of the wordless voice we call melody. The present movement, then, should have a singularly potent appeal.

It has. None of the vocal songs of Brahms, lovely as they are, surpasses in its direct, its almost naïve appeal to sentiment, the beautiful melody which springs from the reedy woodwind, against the warm tones of the horns, as the second movement of the concerto begins. A pastoral simplicity is suggested; a lonely, wandering voice, discernible not by its power but by the pensiveness of its utterance, follows the graceful melodic line which the composer has laid down for it. Yet its appeal is never so shrewd, never so keen or so moving, as when the solo violin, with its voice of infinite pathos, projects almost the same song.

But presently the violin wanders farther afield; it soars, it droops, it puts out simultaneously two patterns of notes, gentle yet conclusive; it intensifies feeling, yet soothes; it sings with the wind . . . and again wanders in its own smooth

path; it is cold, it is passionate, it is remote and intimate. And presently, against dreamy harmonies beneath, it is silent.

### *Third Movement*

It is unlikely that any of those wonderful violinists who in happier days wandered from town to village in Hungary as gypsies could have played the violin part in this final movement of the concerto, yet it is certain that their music, their fiery rhythms, their daring harmonies, their mercurial emotionalism are the basis for this music. Perhaps, as has been hinted, it was a tribute to the gypsy background of Joachim, the great violinist to whom the work is musically, if not literally, dedicated. At any rate, here, in a more sophisticated form, is the life and vigor, the fire and feeling of the itinerant nameless geniuses of the bow whose music leaped and rang, wailed and sobbed and danced all over Hungary a generation ago.

A more sophisticated form—yes. But the essence of the wild gypsy music is here, and lost in its rhythm and singing melody, it is not difficult to see the glowing fire, the eerie light reflected in dark eyes and from swarthy faces; to imagine in the orchestral accompaniment the soft clangor of the cembalo, and in the nervous, passionate utterances of the solo violin the diablerie of some wild gypsy fiddler. And the violin can sparkle and flash as well as sing! Scales as crisp and clear as if played, staccato, on the piano; glittering tones from the violin's topmost register; shining trills even and lustrous as matched pearls.

New vitality moves and hastens the rhythm as the end of the movement approaches . . . the music is faster, more brilliant, more gay until, at the end, come the characteristic Hungarian three mighty chords, the violin dominating even here the full might of the orchestra.



## Hungarian Dances Nos. 1, 5, and 6

EXTENDED comment upon these exceedingly popular little concert pieces is hardly necessary; rare is the orchestra, large or small, that is not often called upon to play them, and many a pianist and fiddler has found in them "sure-fire" demonstrations of skill and expression. They were originally set down for piano, four hands; and the words "set down" are used deliberately. These tunes were not original with Brahms, and he never claimed that they were. When they first became popular Brahms was accused of plagiarism, and of getting rich at the expense of wandering gypsy fiddlers from whom he borrowed these wild melodies. But Brahms only claimed to have "set" them for piano.

Some of the dances were later orchestrated by Brahms, Dvořák and others. The popular Nos. 5 and 6 are usually played in the orchestration by Albert Parlow; the Philadelphia Orchestra has recently added to its repertoire, as an encore piece, No. 1 in the orchestration of Stokowski.



## “Tragische” Overture

[*Tragic Overture*]

THIS wonderful music exhibits Brahms in a character which was intimately his, yet which was never, in any other work, so clearly and so thoroughly exposed. This is Brahms the philosopher, considering the endless tragedy of life, but translating it into terms of music, the soul language that he knew so well. The tragedy in this music is subjective, and not of the world; yet we feel in it the superb contours of the Greek masterpieces, with the inevitable struggle of opposing forces, the soul-shaking peripeteia, the soul-soothing catharsis. There is no story, no program for this music. It is pure emotion, abstracted from material life, bent into intelligible and moving form by the power of a great mind and the warmth of a great heart. To associate it with any existing drama is to misconstrue it entirely.

There are two conspicuous themes which may be assumed to represent protagonist and antagonist. One seems filled with intense yearning and, at the same time, with terror; the other, more sanguine perhaps, might indicate the possibility of ultimate triumph. Their development leads them into tense and calamitous situations, into conflict and crisis, just as in the classical tragedy the hero's own weaknesses beguile him into circumstances from which there is no escape. And, as in the drama our own emotions are purged, our own pity awakened as the protagonist suffers condign punishment for his shortcomings, so it is with the surpassing power and suggestiveness of this mighty music.



## Concerto No. 1 in D minor for Piano and Orchestra

THIS noble work for the piano with orchestra has a curious history. It germinated in ideas which Brahms had written down for a projected, and never completed, symphony; it was developed later as a sonata for two pianos; the first two movements finally appeared in their present setting, and the third was used in Brahms'



*German Requiem.* When the concerto was first performed (by Brahms, January 27, 1859) it was by no means an unqualified success. Brahms himself was not entirely satisfied with it, though undisturbed by its cool reception; and some of the critics were both prejudiced and merciless. Others found reason for praising Brahms' ability as a pianist, his musicianship and sincerity; but few admired the work for its own sake. In part, the reason for this was the fact that the concerto does not make of the piano a mere musical firework; the solo instrument is often subordinated to the orchestra, and the orchestration itself, at times, is in truth very weighty. Even today, the concerto is not the favorite with pianists that the succeeding one is, though it is necessarily in the repertoire of every great keyboard artist.

### *First Movement*

The orchestra constructs an introduction of considerable length, and not very closely related except in characteristic instrumental color and texture, to the movement proper, until the presentation of the main theme. This subject is powerfully

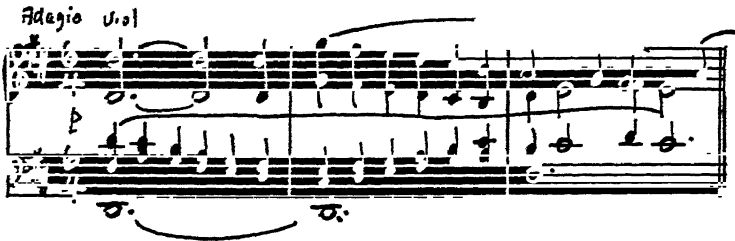


put forward by the strings, with thunderings of the timpani in support; presently the piano is merged into the orchestral picture, and deals with the thematic material in the same mood in which it has been presented. It is interesting to note that, while the piano, from this point onward, is usually the moving spirit in the introduction of new musical ideas, it is secondary to the orchestra in the development of them. The piano solo, proposes the second subject of the movement, together with episodic material derived from it, but the melody is soon surrendered to the strings, the solo instrument contenting itself with accompaniment figures. Later, after piano and orchestra combine in a long development of thematic material, there is a succession of new ideas, together with reminiscences of the first important theme. The concluding section of the music, derived from this theme, is of striking power and brilliance.

### *Second Movement*

The romantic and philosophically melancholy Brahms moves through the pages of this section. The rhythm is slow: the melody, reflective and sad. We

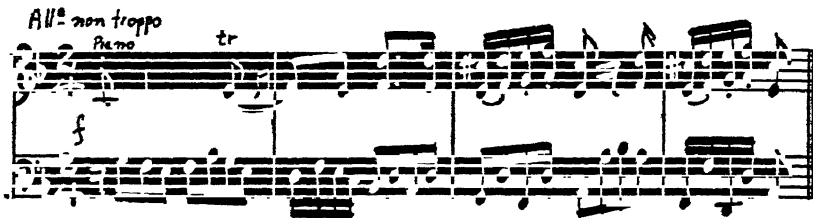
hear it first in strings and woodwind (bassoon); then in the clearer, the liquid flow of the solo instrument. In his usual manner Brahms examines the theme with a microscopic eye to its possibilities of development, most of which are beauti-



fully realized as the movement progresses. An interrupting idea is presented, for contrast, by the clarinet in the middle of the movement; but the air of philosophical detachment is restored at the end.

### *Third Movement*

The last movement is in the form of a rondo, wherein the piano achieves more prominence, and a place of greater importance in the pattern of the music.



After the first theme is presented by the piano and developed, there is a second, also for piano. In true rondo style this too is elaborated, and there is a return to the first theme, strictly according to the rules! The first-violin section proposes a new subject for development, and, before the conventional return to the opening theme is made, there is an extended fuguelike section. The technical difficulties of the piano part seem to be progressively greater, and at this point they are quite conspicuous. There is no further thematic material of importance, but previously stated ideas are presented, and there is a cadenza of considerable difficulty. The fundamental theme of the movement is used as the basis for the concluding passages.



## Academic Festival Overture

BRAHMS is sufficiently a modern to have been the recipient of honorary degrees from universities. Considering his natural shyness and frequent *brusquerie*, it would not have been unnatural if, when he was tendered the degree Ph.D. by the University of Breslau, in 1880, he had curtly refused it. It must have been offered when the composer was in an expansive mood, however, for he graciously accepted the honor, and acknowledged it with this delightful music. It was first played at the University, with Brahms conducting, on January 4, 1881.

Apart from being lighthearted and colorful, apart from its happy suggestion of the joys of student life, the *Academic Festival Overture* powerfully (but not ponderously) illustrates Brahms' wonderful ingenuity in developing variations on themes—his own or others. The overture is a fantasy on German students' songs, among them being: *Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus* (We have built a stately house), sounded out by the brass choir; *Der Landesvater* (The Land Father), heard from the violin section; *Was kommt dort von der Höh'* (What comes from afar), sung in woodwinds, with plucked strings giving it accent, and finally the triumphant *Gaudeamus igitur* (Wherefore let us rejoice), hurled forth in the orchestra's mightiest voice.



## Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major for Piano and Orchestra

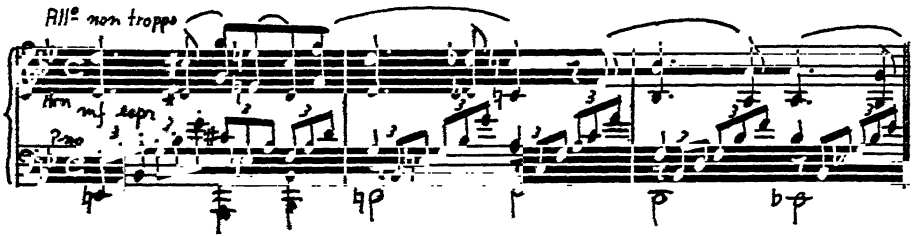
It is reported that Brahms composed this magnificent work while under the enchantment of spring in Italy. The fact is, the concerto was begun following a sojourn in that sunny land, where Brahms had thoroughly enjoyed his visit; but evidently it required a second trip to renew the springs of his inspiration, for the concerto was not completed until April, 1881—three years after the composer had begun work on it. Its first public performance was given from manuscript, with Brahms himself at the piano, at Budapest, November 9, 1881.

It will be noted that the music is in four movements, though three is the conventional number for a concerto. There is evidence that originally there were but three sections to this work, and that Brahms, wanting a contrasting movement between what are now the first and third movements, inserted an *allegro appassionato*. Some students have claimed, also, that this movement was originally written as a part of the violin concerto.

### *First Movement*

The movement is long, involved, and, for the soloist, quite difficult. Truly, as Brahms himself once remarked, it is not "a piece for little girls." During most of the movement, the piano is, nevertheless, definitely subordinated to the orchestra; the composer uses it not primarily as a solo voice, but as an unaccustomed and brilliant color added to the orchestral palette. Nor is the piano usually entrusted with important thematic proposals; its function in this concerto seems to be that of an answering voice among the throng of instruments, and a tonal "edge" that points up the less percussive notes of its fellows in the orchestra.

The germs of the first theme are present as the movement begins, and they



develop into the bright phrase presently proclaimed by the horns. The piano responds with graceful arpeggios. Again, the statement and the answer. Woodwinds suggest a growing emotional tension, and the solo instrument responds with agitated elaborations in cadenza form. Brilliant orchestral passages develop all the thematic material, and from this point onward the piano practically ceases to function as a solo instrument. That is not to say that it ceases to be of importance; on the contrary, throughout the movement its clearest and most polished tones are summoned, in darting arpeggios, to adorn the melodies so rapturously developed in the orchestra. There is a tremendous wealth of these, yet the whole movement is dominated, in spirit, by the singular freshness and romantic appeal of the wonderful horn call that first appeared near the beginning. There are tremendous climaxes; there are antiphonal declamations of piano and orchestra; there are tentative and sometimes even ominous pauses and pianissimi, but the vigor and brightness of the basic theme always return, and never more brilliantly than in the robust measures that end the movement.

### *Second Movement*

This section corresponds, in musical character and in purpose, with the scherzo of a symphony. It is full of storm and fire, of vigorous rhythms and fierce conflicts. There are in it questionings and longings, too; and moments of contemplation. Though scherzo means "playful," a composer can and often does use

it to suggest more serious things—as Brahms does here, as Beethoven did, as Dvořák did in the symphony “From the New World.” The movement has, however, the conventional trio in marked contrast. The melody becomes cheerful, if not delicately graceful; the rhythm is sturdy and vital. The spirit of the first section returns, however, and in it the second movement ends.

### *Third Movement*

Brahms, the maker of the world’s loveliest songs, reveals himself in that character here in the third movement. There are, indeed, suggestions of certain of his songs in the melodic line, but we are assured that these resemblances are quite fortuitous. Remembering that the piano is fundamentally a percussion instrument, the composer assigns the opening theme, not to the brilliant tone of the soloist, but to the cello—one cello alone; then bassoon and violins. Again the



piano is used decoratively, first in free and wandering passages, and again, when the chief theme reappears in the orchestra. The mood is shadowed and brooding; the thematic development, though leading to a climax of some magnitude, generally lies in the darker orchestral tones. The solo cello and later the orchestra itself bring back the romantic theme of the beginning, against which the piano spurts brilliant trills and arpeggios.

### *Fourth Movement*

In the final movement the piano asserts more strongly its rights as a solo instrument, taking to itself not only the first statement of the principal theme, but portions of others. The movement is in rondo form—a form which parallels in music the verse form familiar to every schoolboy. Its pattern is this: A, B, C, B, AA, B, C, B, A—plus the coda, or concluding section. There are three themes of conspicuous importance. The first is the brisk one projected and developed by



the piano, and, later, by the orchestra. The second appears in strings and wood-



wind, with decorations in arpeggio form by the piano; the third is exposed by the piano with accompaniment plucked from the strings.



There is a distinct Hungarian flavor here, as commentators have noted; nor is it the first time Brahms has allowed us this spicy treat. The music is full of hearty good cheer, with just enough occasional wistfulness for contrast. There is brilliant work for the pianist, with dazzling octaves, assertive arguments with the orchestra, swift arpeggios, and display passages that exact the last measure of dexterity and power from the soloist. The rondo form is followed with reasonable definiteness, and the long and elaborate coda achieves a climax of brilliance and sonority not easily forgotten.

# MAX BRUCH

[1838-1920]

**M**AX BRUCH was born at Cologne, January 6, 1838. His musical gifts were evidently inherited from his mother, who came of a well-known and talented family. Young Bruch received his first theoretical education at Bonn, Beethoven's birthplace. He exhibited remarkable ability and won a four-year scholarship to the Mozart Foundation at Frankfort-am-Main, at the age of fourteen, continuing his studies under Hiller, Reinecke, and Breuning at Cologne. Long visits to various musical centers furthered his development, and soon his compositions began to bring him recognition. He taught in his native city from 1858 to 1861 and had the experience, denied so many composers, of witnessing the production of one of his works, in this case his operetta, *Scherz, List, und Rache*, set to Goethe's text. In Munich he became acquainted with the poet, Geibel, whose *Lorelei*, written for Mendelssohn, he put to music. Obtaining the poet's consent to perform the opera, he proceeded to Mannheim, where he busied himself with the study of stage requirements in general, and the production of his opera in particular. He then composed many of the choral works which added so much to his fame in his own country. He was musical director of the Concert-Institution at Coblenz, and later became *Kapellmeister* to the Prince of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen (1865-1870). After his resignation of the latter post, he lived independently—first in Berlin and then at Bonn—devoting himself exclusively to composition, returning to Berlin in 1878 to succeed the renowned Stockhausen as director of the Stern Singing Society. In 1880 he was offered the directorship of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, and England became his home for the next three years. Returning to Germany, the ensuing twenty years of his life were engaged in directing and teaching in Breslau and Berlin, until 1910, at which time he withdrew from public life and lived in retirement near the latter city until his death in 1920.

Although the verdict of musicologists maintains that the reputation of Max Bruch lies in his works for choir and orchestra, popular opinion points to his violin compositions, particularly his G minor Concerto, Opus 26, as likely to provide his most enduring fame.



## Concerto No. 1 in G minor

[Opus 26]

BRUCH, like many another composer of violin concertos, did not become a violinist, but a great deal of his finest efforts as a writer of music was expended in works

for the violin. Among them this work is perhaps the best known. The first outlines of this melodious work were sketched in Cologne, when the composer was but nineteen years of age, but it was not completed until nine years later at Coblenz. The date of the first performance was scheduled for early April, 1866, with Johann Naret-Koning of Mannheim as soloist; but he was unable to appear due to illness, and the concerto had its first hearing later in the month with Otto von Königslöw, concertmeister of the Gürzenich Orchestra and teacher of violin at the Cologne Conservatory, as soloist. Bruch conducted from manuscript. Subsequently it was revised with the assistance of Joachim, to whom it is dedicated, and who brought out the new version in Bremen in 1868.

Pablo Sarasate, the great Spanish violinist, introduced the work to the United States at a concert in New York in February, 1872, and since that time it has been on violinists' programs many times each year.

### *First Movement*

The first movement begins with a five-measure prelude for the orchestra, after which the solo instrument enters with an urgent recitative, restated with florid embellishments and commented upon by decisive chords in the orchestra. A new melody of tender beauty, announced by the violin, is repeated by the orchestra against ascending trills for the solo instrument. The development of the new theme gives the melody to the orchestra with passages ornate and decorative for the solo instrument, violin and accompaniment joining in a sustained and impassioned ensemble of wonderful effectiveness. From this the violin emerges with a restatement of the opening recitative. An orchestral passage leads without pause to the next movement.

### *Second Movement*

An introduction, slow and sustained, ushers in the song of the adagio, one of the most poignantly beautiful of all melodies for the violin. It is a dreamy theme that speaks of romance and yearning and, at times, of anguish. Ornate passage work for the solo instrument brings the movement to a close.

### *Finale*

The orchestra opens this movement with a bold theme for the solo instrument that suggests gypsy melodies and rhythm. This develops ornamental passages in triplets for the violin and a vigorous orchestral background which is elaborately worked out. Phrases stated by the violin and answered by the orchestra exploit melodies of notable beauty which rise to an impressive climax.



## ANTON BRUCKNER

[1824-1896]

ANTON BRUCKNER, one of the most important composers of the last hundred years, was born at Ansfelden, not far from Linz in upper Austria. He was musically trained from childhood, first by his father, the village schoolmaster, later and more formally by teachers in Vienna and elsewhere. As a mere child he was accomplished both as organist and composer, and in later years held important posts as teacher, lecturer, and concert organist. His early life was made difficult by poverty, but such material trials were as nothing compared to the succession of disappointments and persecutions he experienced in his middle and later years. Chief of the disappointments was the coldness and bigotry which Viennese musicians exhibited toward his music, and the incredible difficulties, not only of getting an appreciative audience, but of persuading anyone to play his works.

Bruckner composed much music for the church, several important choral works, a notable string quartet; but it was his eight symphonies that eventually established him as a composer ranking in the same group with the greatest of the nineteenth century. The argument has been advanced that Bruckner's music is too strongly derivative from that of Richard Wagner; to which the Brucknerite counters with evidence that many of the passages apparently Wagner-inspired were actually written *before* the Wagnerian music from which they were supposed to derive. It is a fact, however, that Bruckner had a profound reverence for Wagner, both as man and musician. Wagner, in turn, was profoundly touched by this devotion, and, as for Bruckner's achievements as a composer, he had this reckless statement to make: "I know of only one who may be compared to Beethoven, and he is Bruckner." (Gabriel Engel: *The Life of Anton Bruckner*. Roerich Museum Press, New York.)

The friendship and admiration existing between Wagner and Bruckner were not altogether a benefit to the latter. Out of his adoration for the composer of the *Ring* operas, Bruckner had written his Third, sometimes called his "Wagner" Symphony, in which he actually quotes, verbatim so to speak, passages from Wagner. At the time, the enmity between Wagnerites and anti-Wagnerites was incredibly bitter. Bruckner succeeded in antagonizing both; the one group by daring to write, as they thought, like Wagner the almighty; the other, by afflicting them (*sic*) with more Wagnerian music. But Vienna did not like Bruckner, regardless of his Wagnerian references, and when at last his Third Symphony was performed, under his own direction, by the Vienna Society of the Friends of Music, the audience, headed by a director of the Conservatory, first laughed, and then departed; and before the music was finished there were not more than ten

people left in the parquet. Among these ten was Gustav Mahler, devoted disciple of Bruckner, who attempted to console the heartbroken composer, but in vain.

In spite of cruel disappointment, Bruckner continued working at his symphonies, and was almost finished with the last movement of the Sixth when Hans Richter, the great conductor and admirer of Wagner, discovered the long-finished but unplayed Fourth, or "Romantic," while visiting the composer. He admired it immediately, and determined to play it at the first opportunity. It was a magnificent success. Bruckner's musical fortunes improved, everywhere but in his own country, from that day onward. It is of passing interest to note that his Third Symphony was played in New York, under Anton Seidl, December 6, 1885; some months before Vienna would listen to the composer. But he was not without able protagonists, among them Karl Muck, Arthur Nikisch, and Theodore Thomas.

Toward its close, this life that had seen so much of personal tragedy was made happy and serene; it was even enlightened by a few belated and innocent love affairs with young girls, whose proximity always seemed inspiring to Herr Bruckner. These came to nothing. The aging composer had honors heaped upon him; in them he rejoiced, and with them, his work, and the faithful ministrations of a scolding but devoted maid servant he lived out his days. Brahms, against whom his friends had often tactlessly opposed him, stood outside the churchyard at the funeral, muttering sadly of his own approaching end; Hugo Wolf, another neglected genius, was refused admittance because he was not a member of the societies whose representatives filled the church. The body of Bruckner was taken to the old church of St. Florian, where he had so often made music; and it was laid to rest under the great organ that had served him so well.



## Symphony No. 4 in E flat

["*Romantic*"]

THE wheel of fortune turned violently for Bruckner when, on February 20, 1881, this lovely music was first performed, at Vienna, under the devoted guidance of Hans Richter. Here was the first adequate performance of any of his symphonies, and listening to it was a spellbound audience, which, after each movement, compelled the diffident composer to appear and bow to the applause. The symphony had been completed almost seven years before; but Bruckner had revised it in 1878; and the scherzo, the famous "hunting scherzo," had been inserted, though it had not been a part of the original score.

After the first performance, the overjoyed composer rushed to Richter, and, embracing him, cried, "Take this"—pressing a coin into his hand—"and drink a glass of beer to my health!" Richter, it is related, wore the coin on his watch chain ever afterward.

The music of Bruckner is massive and mighty. At the risk of offending his active and admirable champions, it might even be said that at times it is over-elaborated and by no means simple of comprehension. The latter is not urged as an objection, but as a statement of fact. Though more and more lovers of music are coming, with each succeeding season, to a better understanding and appreciation of such music as this, it must be admitted that Bruckner's works are not easy to assimilate, nor is there any way for the layman to develop an appreciation of them except by repeated hearings. Such notes as logically come within the compass of this book must therefore extend only to a general and condensed impression of the work.

### *First Movement*

Gabriel Engel, in his valuable *Life of Anton Bruckner*, says in connection with the subtitle of this symphony, "There seems little doubt that the detailed 'program' or symphonic plot communicated to his circle of friends by Bruckner was a post-analysis influenced by no other than Wagner, who had even published a rather fantastic pictorial description of Beethoven's Ninth. It is at any rate silly to dilly-dally over the fitness of its details; for the 'Romantic' has so clear and effective a tale to tell that it has become the favorite vehicle for the introduction of Bruckner to a new audience. That the composer did not regard the program seriously is evident from his remark concerning the Finale: 'And in the last movement,' said he, 'I've forgotten completely what picture I had in mind.' The work possesses, however, an unmistakable unity hitherto without precedent in absolute music, for all four parts spring from the main theme, in the first movement. So logical and masterly is the development of this theme in the course of the work that the climax is not reached until the closing portion of the Finale."

This theme is slowly evolved out of the material with which the movement opens. The strings establish the tonality of the movement with a restrained pronouncement of a chord in E major; and almost at once the close-knit fabric of the music becomes discernible. Against the strings, a horn projects a call, and the imitative figures in the woodwind, based on this proclamation, are presently identified as the first theme. The second important thematic idea is sung by violas and later by cellos, against another and harmonizing melody of the same contours, voiced by the violins.

The entire movement is developed with regard to structural formality, and in the final passages, the theme which appeared at the beginning is vigorously recalled.

### *Second Movement*

If by "romantic" we mean sentimental, then the second movement is the section which establishes most firmly the subtitle of the symphony; but if we choose to use the word in a somewhat musical sense, then any movement except the first could justify it, for the second, third, and fourth movements are rather free and unconventional in form. Mr. Philip Hale, the always illuminating author of the Boston Symphony Orchestra program notes, describes this movement as "a sort of romanza built in three themes. The first is given out by the violoncellos; the second is a cantilena for violins, the third for strings and woodwind in full harmony."

There is, to be sure, nothing difficult of comprehension in this lovely and often lyrical movement; and if the song of the violins, in the second theme, does not carry conviction and significance to any sensitive heart, then no explanatory comment can aid it.

### *Third Movement*

This is the famous "hunting scherzo" so enjoyably featured in the revised version of Bruckner's score. Always happy in writing for the horn, the composer here assigns to that versatile, if unreliable instrument, a series of characteristic calls which form the basis for the movement. The outlines of the movement approach the conventional, but the development of the thematic material is elaborate and free. The middle section, or trio, reveals a contrasting mood in moderated time and less emphatic rhythm. Then the bright hunting horn returns in the concluding section.

### *Fourth Movement*

Modeling almost as tangible as that of the sculptor is revealed in the fashioning of the fundamental musical idea of the movement. The phrases of the horns are joined and molded, and developed from their soft beginnings into a bright sentence stated by trumpets; then the whole orchestra drives forth the theme in an aggressive pronouncement. Now the whole orchestra is vitalized, and the texture of the music, though temporarily thinner, is brighter and more intricately woven. It grows simultaneously in sonority and elaboration, and arrives, after extended development, at a conclusion of magnificence and grandeur.

# JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER

[Born 1876]

PSYCHOLOGISTS would be interested in the strange resultants of heredity and environment that produce in John Alden Carpenter, not only a native American but a descendant of Pilgrims and doubtless of music-fearing Puritans, a composer of extraordinary and versatile talent. His music is of its own genre, original and unique, yet he can turn with facility from the often austere and grave patriotic affirmations of *A Song of Faith* to the problematical reflections of an infant in *Adventures in a Perambulator*, or from the vague and subjective musings of the Indian mystic Rabindranath Tagore, to the febrile flush and spasmodic rhythms of a Coney Island panorama.

It is only in recent seasons that Carpenter's music has received the full appreciation of the public, which fact, far from being a disparagement of his work, is more truly a very sincere compliment. Immediate popularity of any music is too often an indication of superficiality and poverty of thought in the music itself, and frequently the instant and violent response of the public to a musical work, with consequent demands for frequent repetitions, has quickly accomplished its extinction.

Supporters of symphony concerts and other sources of musical entertainment are, however, in ever-increasing number, "discovering" John Alden Carpenter's delightful music, and savoring more, with each repetition, its rare humor, its wealth of invention, sometimes startling but always logical harmony, and the extraordinary feeling for contagious rhythms which it constantly exhibits.

Mr. Carpenter is at present busy with composition and other musical matters at his home in Chicago.



## Adventures in a Perambulator

THIS charming work is in itself an adventure, in its musical exploration of infant psychology. What a baby thinks about has been the subject of speculation on the part of perhaps every parent in the world, and while giving us delightful entertainment, Mr. Carpenter suggests a stream of ideas which might very probably occupy the half-formed mind of a passenger in a perambulator. The composer's own notes for the music cannot be improved; and by his express permission they are appended:

*En Voiture!*

Every morning—after my second breakfast—if the wind and the sun are favorable, I go out. I should like to go alone, but my will is overborne. My Nurse is appointed to take me. She is older than I, and very powerful. While I wait for her, resigned, I hear her cheerful steps, always the same. I am wrapped in a vacuum of wool, where there are no drafts. A door opens and shuts. I am placed in my perambulator, a strap is buckled over my stomach, my Nurse stands firmly behind—and we are off!

*The Policeman*

Out is wonderful! It is always different, though one seems to have been there before. I cannot fathom it all. Some sounds seem like smells. Some sights have echoes. It is confusing, but it is Life! For instance, the Policeman—an Unprecedented Man! Round like a ball—taller than my father. Blue—fearful—fascinating! I feel him before he comes. I see him after he goes. I try to analyze his appeal. It is not buttons alone, nor belt, nor baton. I suspect it is his eye and the way he walks. He walks like Doom. My Nurse feels it, too. She becomes less firm, less powerful. My perambulator hurries, hesitates, and stops. They converse. They ask each other questions!—some with answers, some without. I listen, with discretion. When I feel that they have gone far enough, I signal to my Nurse, a private signal, and the Policeman resumes his enormous Blue March. He is gone, but I feel him after he goes.

*The Hurdy-Gurdy*

Then suddenly there is something else. I think it is a sound. We approach it. My ear is tickled to excess. I find that the absorbing noise comes from a box—something like my music box, only much larger, and on wheels. A dark man is turning the music out of the box with a handle, just as I do with mine. A dark lady, richly dressed, turns when the man gets tired. They both smile. I smile, too, with restraint, for music is the most insidious form of noise. And such music! So gay! I tug at the strap over my stomach. I have a wild thought of dancing with my Nurse and my perambulator—all three of us together. Suddenly, at the climax of our excitement, I feel the approach of a phenomenon that I remember. It is the Policeman. He has stopped the music. He has frightened away the dark man and the lady with their music box. He seeks the admiration of my Nurse for his act. He walks away, his buttons shine, but far off I hear again the forbidden music. Delightful forbidden music!

*The Lake*

Sated with adventure, my Nurse firmly pushes me on, and before I recover my balance I am face to face with new excitement. The land comes to an end, and there at my feet is the Lake. All my other sensations are joined in one. I see, I hear, I feel the quiver of the little waves as they escape from the big ones and come rushing up over the sand. Their fear is pretended. They know the big waves are amiable, for they can see a thousand sunbeams dancing with impunity on their very backs. Waves and sunbeams! Waves and sunbeams! Blue water—white clouds—dancing, swinging! A white sea gull floating in the air. That is My Lake!

*Dogs*

We pass on. Probably there is nothing more in the world. If there is, it is superfluous. *There IS*. It is Dogs! We come upon them without warning. Not one of them—all of them. First one by one; then in pairs; then in societies. Little dogs, with sisters; big dogs, with aged parents. Kind dogs, brigand dogs, sad dogs, and gay. They laugh, they fight, they run. And at last, in order to hold my interest, the very littlest brigand starts a game of "Follow the Leader," followed by all the others. It is tremendous!

*Dreams*

Those dogs have gone! It is confusing, but it is Life! My mind grows numb. My cup is too full. I have a sudden conviction that it is well that I am not alone. That firm step behind reassures me. The wheels of my perambulator make a sound that quiets my nerves. I lie very still. I am quite content. In order to think more clearly, I close my eyes. My thoughts are absorbing. I deliberate upon my Mother. Most of the time my Mother and my Nurse have but one identity in my mind, but at night or when I close my eyes, I can easily tell them apart, for my Mother has the greater charm. I hear her voice quite plainly now, and feel the touch of her hand. It is pleasant to live over again the adventures of the day—the long blue waves curling in the sun, the Policeman who is bigger than my Father, the music box and my friends, the Dogs. It is pleasant to lie quite still and close my eyes, and listen to the wheels of my perambulator. How very large the world is! How many things there are!

Mr. Carpenter, when the work was first performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Frederick Stock, March 19, 1915, prepared the following musical analysis of the *Adventures*:

*En Voiture!* The first movement is in the nature of a short prologue, introducing the "principal characters," viz., "My Nurse," "My

Perambulator," and "Myself." The themes representing these ideas reappear constantly throughout the composition in varying form. "My Nurse" announces herself promptly at the beginning of the first movement by means of two violoncellos, *soli*. This soon is followed by the first appearance of the "Perambulator" motive in the celesta and strings, over which, almost immediately, the first flute announces the ingenuous idea, a descending scale, which stands for "Myself."

*The Policeman.* A few introductory measures, suggesting an interested and hurrying perambulator, are followed by the "Policeman" who makes himself known in flute and clarinets over a pizzicato accompaniment. After a short development this is followed by a sort of *Intermezzo* which is intended to suggest the conversation between the "Policeman" and the "Nurse"—the remarks of the former being voiced in a solo bassoon, and the responses of the latter in four solo violins, *divisi* (divided as to parts). The conversation is interrupted by the "private signal"—sounded by a muted trumpet, *ff* (very loudly), over an agitated suggestion of the "Perambulator" theme in celesta and piano. The first part of the movement is then, in substance, repeated.

*The Hurdy-Gurdy.* There is no new material in this movement. Bits of familiar masterpieces are heard on the "Hurdy-Gurdy" (two xylophones and harp) with excited interjections by "Myself" and "Nurse." We all "dance together" to a little waltz based on the "Perambulator" theme. The remainder of the movement requires no analysis.

*The Lake.* The only themes necessary to mention, as belonging to this movement, are the first, suggesting the "little waves," allotted to the flute, and another, suggestive of the large and amiable ones, which is heard in the strings and the horns.

*Dogs.* The woodwind bears most of the burden of furnishing descriptions of dogs, in various themes and snatches of themes, which it would not be of interest to quote. *Ach, Du lieber Augustin* may be detected in the *mêlée*, as well as *Where, O Where Has My Little Dog Gone?* A variation of the last is used toward the end of the movement as the theme of a short fugue in the woodwind, suggesting dogs playing "Follow the Leader."

*Dreams.* A résumé of all the preceding "excitements." It may be worth while simply to call attention to the softened and broadened version of the original "Nurse" theme, which here represents "My Mother," and also the



final *berceuse*, which is made up in part of the "Child" theme over an accompaniment drawn from the "Perambulator" motive.



## Skyscrapers

SKYSCRAPERS was written originally as a ballet, and was first performed as such by the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York, on February 19, 1926, with scenery and costumes by Robert Edmond Jones, *mise en scène* by John Alden Carpenter. In suite form it has been done by the Philadelphia Orchestra and others, with marked success.

Strictly speaking, there is no story delineated in this music; rather, the composer wishes to express the fact that American life, more particularly urban life, reduces itself to two bare essentials—work and play, "each with its own peculiar and distinctive rhythmic character," each alternately dominating. "The action of the ballet," says the composer, "is merely a series of moving decorations reflecting some of the obvious external features of this life."

The ballet is divided into six scenes:

*Scene 1.* Symbols of restlessness.

*Scene 2.* An abstraction of the Skyscraper; the work that produces it; the crowds passing it.

*Scene 3.* The transition from Work to Play.

*Scene 4.* Any amusement park of the Coney Island type, and its varied, restless activities; a "flash-back" to the idea of work, and back again to play.

*Scene 5.* The return from Play to Work.

*Scene 6.* Skyscrapers.

The restless rhythms, the incoherent, almost subconscious suggestions of fox-trotting and similar diversions, then again the inescapable rhythms of industry, of building, of working, condense within relatively few bars of music the blinding brilliance and swiftness and exigent haste and confusion of city life at its most urgent pace. The elaborate orchestration gives the music many voices, and not only are extraordinary tonal qualities fabricated from these, but various instruments, notably the brass and the extremely difficult piano parts, by the character of their respective timbres, and of the parts they are asked to play, express more effectively than words the feverish brilliance and endless variety of the American scene.

The jagged steel of the skyscraper rearing its pinnacles toward the sky, the

snatches of conversation of the passers-by, and even the comments of the loiterers so inevitably attracted by other people working can easily be read into this entertaining music . . . in the rough and irregular rhythms, the half-formed phrases, and high, penetrating, irregular figures for brass and woodwind.

As Scene 4 begins, however, and we approach the Coney Island atmosphere, a more definitely fox-trot rhythm appears in the music, and a merry, careless, rather lazy fox-trot melody is introduced with ingenious scoring. This tune is particularly noticeable when presented by a languidly plucked banjo.

In the following section the music becomes more blatantly that of an amusement park, with its brass bands, its carrousel, its noisy dance orchestras; the atmosphere is charged with that strange mixture of feverish gaiety and, occasionally, maudlin and furtive sentiment which so often infects great gatherings of middle-class America at play. Toward the end of the section we come upon the "Dance of 'Herself,'" introduced by a muted trumpet in a nervous, high-pitched figure, as if "herself," who could be either a Park Avenue "deb" or a "million-dollar baby from the five-and-ten"—except that the "baby" would perhaps look more like a "deb" than the lady from the fashionable avenue! Near the end you will hear a familiar tune ingeniously introduced.

The following section is in much the same mood, up to the introduction of the "Dance of the Strutter." The introduction begins with a sudden forte attack in muted brass, rapidly diminishing in a series of repeated accented dissonances, and, after a snatch of melody, it brings us up short with sturdy utterances of the piano. The Strutter's dance opens with a showy play of brasses, as bold as a frisco dancer's flourish, and presently the Strutter is "doing his stuff" to the accompaniment of a catchy fox-trot tune. Rhythms and moods change, but the general character of the music is maintained to a point where, with a vertiginous glissando, we may suppose that Strutter slides across the stage and takes his bow with an orchestra crash.

The remainder of the section introduces a rather weird solo for English horn against an irregularly rhythmic accompaniment, preparing us for "The Negro Scene" which presently begins.

A "blues" tune rivaling the famous "St. Louis" here appears in the strings, rising in brilliance and vehemence to a climax that involves the whole orchestra for a moment. A return to the "blues" theme, another climax, and a second Negro dance tune, more like a "strut," appears, developing its own climax, and in turn being succeeded by a definitely "fox-trotty" melody. Yet through all this music, outwardly vigorous and grotesquely gay, there is a hint of mystery and of sadness, as if the composer had seen into the secret heart of that strange and half-understood race, and had found there vague memories of other, happier days. However, we are not permitted to linger over sentimental or philosophical considerations, and the scene ends emphatically on a swift fox-trot rhythm.

The next record begins with "The Sandwich Man," and the music suggests not a purveyor of hot dogs but rather one of the melancholy plodding figures, encased in a wooden overcoat, who wanders disconsolately through crowds bearing on breast and back the panoply of commerce. His trudging pace is felt in underlying rhythms, and the shrieking colors of the message he bears are suggested in brilliant curt utterances of trumpets and stopped horns. Later the pace increases, perhaps the music typifies all advertising of the more blatant type, and a reminiscence of "Yankee Doodle" suggests that perhaps here we have an Americanism in the raw.

The final record includes "The Return to Work" and "Skyscrapers." Shortly after the beginning we hear a factory whistle summoning its slaves, and at once the fierce rhythms of "work" again drive the music forward. The thematic content we heard near the opening is introduced anew, with greater brilliance, power, and significance. The sheer massiveness and strict utility of the skyscraper are indicated in the tremendous chords in full orchestra that march irresistibly forward to the end.

# ALEXIS EMMANUEL CHABRIER

[1841-1894]

LIKE HIS compatriot Chausson, Alexis Chabrier was essentially an amateur, educated as a lawyer, and largely self-taught in music. Unlike Chausson, however, he sought after, and often succeeded in attaining, the large dramatic effect.

He was born at Ambert, France, and began the study of music rather late in life—considering the average age of students and beginners. Chabrier had the good fortune to hold a government position while he studied, and probably this one afforded considerable leisure. Though he had at various times several teachers in piano and theory, he acquired most of his knowledge of music through his own unguided efforts.

His two most important works are the *rapsodie, España*, and a comic opera, *Le Roi malgré lui*. The latter has passed into obscurity, at least as far as audiences in this country are concerned; the *rapsodie* remains in the symphonic repertoire as one of its most popular lighter pieces.



## España

[*Rapsodie*]

THIS delightful work was the first to draw public attention to the talents of the composer. Curiously, it is said to contain but one melody original with Chabrier; that one is heard conspicuously in the trombones. The others were collected from the native songs and dances of Spain during the composer's visit there in 1883. The distinguished French conductor Lamoureux conducted the first performance of *España*, November 4, 1883.

The vitalizing elements in the *rapsodie* are two Spanish dances, the jota and the *malagueña*, both of which rhythms have been extensively used by composers seeking to capture the authentic Spanish flavor. The jota is related to the waltz, but its tempo and rhythm are both erratic and elastic, and it is given to much languorous rubato. The *malagueña* is also in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, but it is lively, even madly agitated at times.

The composer has assembled a choice little collection of tunes, and upon them constructed in free form a fantasia of delightful colorfulness and abandoned rhythmic grace. Like so many other composers, foreign to Spanish soil, he captured the essence of the Spanish spirit and atmosphere more effectively and surely than did most of his Spanish contemporaries.

# GEORGE WHITEFIELD CHADWICK

[1854-1931]

GEORGE WHITEFIELD CHADWICK was one of the most highly regarded of American composers. Although perhaps he composed nothing of world-shaking importance, much of his music is worthy of such immortality as possibly can be conferred on mortal things, and his influence both through creative work and through teaching was and is far-reaching and important. He was born at Lowell, Massachusetts, and died at Boston. His early musical instruction was given by his brother, and later Chadwick studied at the famous New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. A very American family, and particularly a Boston one, might well be expected to look with raised eyebrow upon serious musical aspirations on the part of one of its members, and so it happened with Chadwick. For a time he was perforce engaged in his father's insurance business, but in 1877 he decided to devote himself seriously and exclusively to music, and in the face of family opposition he went to Europe to study. He worked under Jadassohn and Rheinberger, and in 1880 returned to Boston where he began his long and successful career as composer, conductor, and teacher. Among his pupils were Horatio Parker, Arthur Whiting, William Grant Still, F. S. Converse, Henry Hadley, Daniel Gregory Mason, and Edwin B. Hill.



## Jubilee

IN 1896 Chadwick published a suite called *Symphonic Sketches*, which included four separate pieces. They are not frequently played today and, in fact, came almost with the refreshing quality of completely new music when they were performed at the concerts of the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York and the National Symphony of Washington during the summer of 1939 under the direction of the author of this book.

The most characteristic of the *Symphonic Sketches*, and perhaps the best example of Chadwick's style is the first of the sketches, called "Jubilee." It is an overture in free style, brightly and cleverly orchestrated, and employing fragments of tunes popular at the time of its composition in 1896. There is a recurrent theme amusingly reminiscent of a popular tune associated with a motion picture of a few years ago, *Street Angel*, called "*Angela mia*." There are certain moments

reminiscent of tunes you know from the hand of Stephen Foster and others. "Jubilee," and the remainder of the *Symphonic Sketches*, are thoroughly entitled to sympathetic and frequent hearing; in fact, the merest acquaintance with them will assure their repeated welcome on symphonic programs in the United States.

## ERNEST AMÉDÉS CHAUSSON

[1855-1899]

CHAUSSON was one of the rarest of musical spirits; a man of wealth and sophistication, who, giving up a lucrative and more or less respectable profession—the law—devoted himself and his sensitive discerning gifts to the pursuit of art. Like an obedient French son, Chausson studied for and was admitted to the bar because of his parents' wish that he do so before devoting himself exclusively to music. He was in classes under Massenet when, at the age of twenty-five, he entered the Conservatoire at Paris. The teaching of Massenet did him little good, and certainly aroused no enthusiasm in him. Fortunately, César Franck was also on the staff of the Conservatoire at the time, and perhaps sensing in Chausson a modesty and hatred of ostentation as well as musical gifts somewhat similar to his own, the kindly Franck took the young composer into the little group of students who believed in and surrounded him, and for three years Chausson sat at the feet of the master.

The French preoccupation with music for the opera and the stage, combined with Chausson's own lack of assertiveness and confidence in himself, probably account for the fact that his music was long neglected by the public. The music itself is not of a type which would normally impress the French musical public. It is rarely dramatic, never flamboyant; and it was suspected of Wagnerian influences. Strangely enough, it was the great German conductor Arthur Nikisch who helped bring Chausson's music to an appreciative public; later Ysaÿe, the Belgian violinist, and Colonne, the distinguished French musician, helped the good work along.

Chausson's standing as a composer was improving with rapidity when his unfortunate death occurred. He was riding a bicycle on his estate at Limay, and losing control of the machine, coasted rapidly downhill and crashed into a stone wall. He died of a fractured skull.



### Poème for Violin and Orchestra

THE influence of César Franck is clearly evident in this lovely music; yet there is more of the personality of Chausson himself, and the charm of the work is enhanced thereby. The meticulous and thorough craftsman is reflected in the soundness without heaviness which marks the structure of the music; and the gentle melancholy, the rhapsodic yet restrained passion, the reserve, the delicacy,

the exquisite economy of means, all are characteristic. It has been said of his music, that it "is saying constantly the word '*cher.*' His passion is not fiery; it is always affectionate, and this affection is gentle agitation in discreet reserve."

The *Poème* lacks none of the qualities here suggested, and furthermore, exhibits a penetrating knowledge of the violin, especially as that instrument is regarded by musicians of the French school, who look more to refinement and delicacy of tone, and perfected technical finish, than to the broader and more passionate utterance which we ordinarily associate with it. Nevertheless the *Poème* warmly commended itself to a violinist who used his instrument, generally, in the more abandoned style—Eugène Ysaÿe, who gave the first performance of this work at Paris, April 4, 1897.



# FRÉDÉRIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN

[1809—1849]

CHOPIN, like Schubert, died in comparative youth and at the summit of his powers. But he had been a delicate lad, predisposed toward the pulmonary disorder which eventually brought about his death. He was born in Poland, one of four children of a French father and a Polish mother. His education was perhaps more comprehensive than most of the classical composers could boast, and he had advantages in his home surroundings and the relative material comfort provided by his father.

The traditional patriotic fervor of the Pole found an illustrious exemplar in Chopin. But though filled with the fierce love of country, of freedom, characteristic of the Pole, Chopin never surrounded himself with the veil of gloom and brooding that so often accompanies the emotional disturbances of the Slav. With his Polish devotion to country he combined the heritage of Gallic fire and vividness of expression which he doubtless took from the distaff side of the house.

And Paris became his home far more than his native land; he was taken to the heart of that sunny land which so warmly welcomes the artist, and particularly the pianist. It is said that there are more pianists in Paris than in the entire rest of the world. Among them the young Pole shone with a pale yet penetrating light.

Chopin had indeed won some degree of fame as a musician when he was but nine years old, but it was as a full-fledged genius of the pianoforte that Paris hailed him. He knew the great ones of the social and artistic world, and was admired and loved by them for his great art, his infinite gentleness, and warmly human personality.

Chopin pioneered bravely in matters pertaining to the piano. In technique and in composition he was equally daring, and though today he is universally recognized as the composer supreme for the piano, he was not without his critics. But the greatest of them—Robert Schumann—said when he heard Chopin, "Hats off, gentlemen—a genius!"

Chopin's playing had the exquisite delicacy that might be expected of a poetic imagination which constantly engaged itself with mystical fantasy, with musical images of ethereal form and texture, of faint elusive color, of indescribable significance. In the originality and daring of his musical ideas, and in his bearing and deportment in exemplifying them, he was a living exponent of that sage motto, "*Fortiter in re, sed suaviter in modo*" (Steadfast in principle, but gentle in its application).

Chopin never married. In his mature years only one of the many women who admired him was singled out for his particular attention. That was the novelist George Sand, whose attitude toward him has been revealed as selfish, domineering, tender, cruel, spiritual, tawdry, maternal . . . depending upon the biographer's

point of view and the particular aspect of this strange liaison under consideration. The actual circumstances of its termination have been the subject of discussion among Chopin's biographers, but all agree that it affected his already declining health.

His body wracked by disease and his spirit torn by even more terrible onslaughts of pain, Chopin died after a short illness in Paris. He was laid in the celebrated cemetery of Père Lachaise, and an orchestral arrangement of the "Funeral March" from the B-flat minor Sonata was played at the service. (The removal of his body to his native Poland was recently projected, but the destruction of Poland in 1939 would seem to have ensured his permanent resting place in France.) He exercised, as his music continues to exercise, a profound influence upon piano composition and technique, and left behind a literature for the piano unmatched in beauty and importance in all the history of the instrument.



## Concerto in E minor for Piano and Orchestra

[Opus 11]

THERE is a marked difference between the Chopin concertos and other music written for the piano by him. In the concertos, he chose to forswear romanticism, at least as far as it affected form, and to adhere closely to the classical concerto model. He who had devised his own forms, and who indeed left some of them as established forms used by later composers, could not have felt free in forms established by others. Also, while so far as the piano is concerned, even in the concertos, Chopin's music is essentially and beautifully pianistic, it cannot be said that he wrote with equal conviction for the orchestra; even when his concertos have been reorchestrated by men more gifted in that branch of music than was Chopin himself, there is sometimes in them a feeling of effort and a certain lack in the orchestral background.

One may venture the opinion that Chopin's concertos are not his best work, but he would be daring indeed who asserted that there is not great music in them. More frequent performances and greater familiarity would very likely establish their place more firmly; and it is one of the valuable functions of recorded music to provide these. Arthur Rubinstein has played this concerto for recording, and the great artist gives a sympathetic and authoritative performance.

The Concerto in F minor was composed before the present one, but the E minor was the first to be published—in September, 1833. Its companion was not published until nearly three years later, in April, 1836. Not the least interesting

feature is the conflict between classicism in the form and romanticism in the substance of the work; and at various moments one or the other predominates. Nothing new or advanced in the development of the concerto as a form of musical expression is introduced.

The principal themes are revealed in the long introductory passage. The movement, marked *allegro maestoso risoluto*, gets under way in a vigorous  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm. There are tentative suggestions and finally a subject of first importance, appearing in the violins. There is a section of episodic matter, projected in the darker orchestral voices, and then the statement of a second theme, again in the strings. The piano appears, finally, against a pizzicato accompaniment, and presently the solo instrument completely dominates the music in its development of the first subject. The passage marked *tranquillo*, coming after twenty-four bars of pianistic comment on the first theme, is a splendid foil and preparation for the excited passages that are to come, and in itself is one of the loveliest moments in the entire work. Now the tonality becomes E major, and the second subject is recalled. The music grows in intensity toward the "working-out" section, and passes through several tonalities before returning, at the close, to the tonic E minor.

The second movement is filled with a lovely serenity, poised by the piano against a softly colored orchestral background. It is called a *romanza*, and marked *larghetto*. The soloist should call forth a particular liquid and silvery tone here, in wonderful contrast to the soft round tone of the horns and the velvet quality of the muted strings. The melodic line is sustained, but, curiously enough it is not, either in piano or orchestra, particularly Chopinesque. The simplicity and poetry of the movement, nevertheless, recall the comment of George Sand, who wrote of Chopin that "he made the instrument speak the language of the infinite. Often in ten lines that a child might play he has introduced poems of unequalled elevation, dramas unrivaled in force and energy. He did not need the great material methods to find expression for his genius. Neither saxophone nor ophicleide was necessary for him to fill the soul with awe. Without church organ or human voice he inspired faith and enthusiasm."

The third movement, a rondo, and played *vivace*, is perhaps the most charming and certainly the most characteristic of the three. A sprightly rhythm is introduced by the solo instrument after a short and somewhat portentous introduction by the orchestra, and while it is occasionally tempered somewhat for purposes of contrast and emphasis, it is persistent to the end, and gives life and dash to the whole movement. The wit and playfulness so often and so happily found in Chopin's music for the piano solo are evident here.

# AARON COPLAND

[Born 1900]

**A**ARON COPLAND is one of the most accomplished and distinguished of American composers. Born in Brooklyn in 1900, he received his musical training in composition under Rubin Goldmark and later at the Fontainebleau School of Music under Nadia Boulanger. He studied the piano under Victor Wittgenstein and Clarence Adler. The Guggenheim Fellowship was awarded to him twice, and in 1930 he received the Victor award for his "Dance" Symphony. He has taken a deep interest in contemporary music and has been active as the executive secretary of the American Composers' Alliance. He was the first director of the American Festival of Contemporary Music at Yaddo, and together with Roger Sessions directed the famous Copland-Sessions concerts (1928-1931) for the presentation of American music. Copland has written specially commissioned works for the American concert series of the League of Composers and of the Columbia Broadcasting System. Aside from his excellence as a composer, Copland is an especially talented writer about music. His articles in *Modern Music*, *The New Republic*, etc., as well as his recent book, make very worthwhile reading.

Copland is not the most prolific of composers. He has written, among other things, a Symphony for Organ and Orchestra, a First Symphony, a "Dance" Symphony, a "Short" Symphony; compositions entitled *Music for the Theatre*, *Music for Radio*; a set of piano variations, and a play-opera for high-school performance entitled *The Second Hurricane*.



## El Salón México

THIS fascinating music certainly comes under the head of "modern composition." To label it so, however, is perhaps to frighten, if not to antagonize, many a music lover who would find it completely fascinating. It is true that much modern music is self-conscious, cerebral rather than emotional or spiritual, and devised more for the exploitation of theory than for the exploration of human feeling.

But if a symphony orchestra playing contemporary music has any terrors for anyone, here is music that will dispel them. It is difficult to believe that anyone with red blood, whether it be the kind that is agitated by Beethoven or the type that moves faster to the goings-on of Benny Goodman, will fail to respond, and respond with active pleasure, to this extraordinary music. To be sure it has its dis-

sonances—but no dissonance that the scholar, the theorist, or the jitterbug need reject. It is light, even vulgar, but it is alive, it is vivid, and it reflects a picture in which the action is forthright and the colors raw, crude, and recklessly applied. This music has the quality of universal appeal, which is certainly an essential of all true art; and the proof of its universal effectiveness is established by its equal success in Mexico City, London, Boston, Cincinnati, or Brooklyn. It is amusing to find *The Boston Herald*, for example, comment that “Mr. Copland has been wasting his time all these years and should have been sunning himself and keeping his ears open in the cafés of Latin America. The public will care little that he ruin his health so long as he produces exotic and exciting scores like this.”

*El Salón México* is the Mexican version of the Roseland Ballroom of New York, or the cheaper dance halls of any large city. It is one of the famous hot spots of Mexico City and Mr. Copland, attracted by the typically Mexican flavor of the place, decided to write music descriptive of it. The temperature of the atmosphere of the music and the dancers quite fascinated him, as did many other details. “Where else in the world,” he asks, “could you find a sign on a dance-hall wall which says: ‘Please don’t throw lighted butts on the floor so the ladies don’t burn their feet?’”

The fact is that though centering his attention primarily on *El Salón México*, Mr. Copland condensed and crystallized the life, the feeling, and the color of all Mexico. In this music, which superficially seems so jazzy, there are flashes of purest Spanish fire as well as fragments of the vulgarest dance music of today, not to mention certain attractive Mexican folk dances which, as he said, he has taken and strung together like beads of a string. Mr. Copland writes, “Other tourists will pull out their snapshots to show you what a country looks like, but a composer wants you to know what a country sounds like.” One feels the composer has been eminently successful in his project.

“I follow no general rule,” he adds, “in the use of the themes that I treated. Almost all of them come from the *Cancionero Mexicano* by Frances Toor, or from the erudite work by Ruben M. Campos, *El Folk-lore y la Musica Mexicana*. To both authors I owe thanks. Probably the most direct quotation of a complete melody is that of *El Mosco* (No. 84 in the book by Campos), which is presented twice, immediately after the introductory measures (in which may be found fragments of *El Palo Verde*, and of *La Jesusita*).”

This music actually pants with excitement and occasionally even staggers with emotional exhaustion. The precise and compelling rhythms, while jazzy enough, might extend even the best dance band beyond its physical powers, but the ecstatic shudders and squeals of the clarinet would be a most welcome invitation to the best possible jitterbug virtuoso. The use of percussion instruments, both those which are standard in the symphony orchestra and several exotic ones, is of exceptional interest, and various instrumentalists in addition to the percussion player, and espe-

cially the solo trumpet and solo clarinet, have parts that might stagger many a virtuoso but can often be realized by players in our better symphony orchestras.

Many alleged experts feel that a symphony player cannot grasp, much less execute, jazz music. Performances of this work by various orchestras, and particularly by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, completely refute any such notion. Here is what might be called subtropical jazz, infinitely elaborated and clarified, bristling with difficulties of all kinds, yet played with conviction, enthusiasm, and expertness by orchestra men who might scowl on a popular fox trot.

## CLAUDE ACHILLE DEBUSSY

[1862-1918]

DEBUSSY was born on August 22, 1862, at St. Germain-en-Laye. His musical proclivities were discovered by Mme Mantet, mother-in-law of the bohemian poet Verlaine, whose writings were later to influence the music of Debussy. Not long afterward little Claude was sent to the Paris Conservatoire, that matrix of so many master musicians; he remained there eleven years. During these years he won many a prize—a first for *sofège*, at the age of fourteen; a second for piano, at fifteen, and at twenty-two, the highest honor the Conservatoire can bestow—the Grand Prix de Rome. This precious scholarship entitles the winner to residence and study at Rome for three years, at the expense of the French Republic. Debussy won it with his cantata *L'Enfant prodigue*—The Prodigal Son; a work which showed little of the style which was to rank the composer among the great innovators in music, but which certainly was and remains delightful music, and an extraordinary achievement for a young man of twenty-two years.

One of the best and most dangerous features of the Prix de Rome is that it allows a great deal of leisure to the student. In the case of Debussy this was an advantage, for it gave him time to develop the radical musical ideas which for some time had been taking form in his mind. From the point of view of the Prix committee, however, Debussy was not accomplishing much, and the first works he sent back from Rome were severely censured.

When Debussy returned to Paris he continued his work as a composer, appeared occasionally as pianist, and wrote musical reviews. He was a remarkable teacher of piano; indeed, he showed a comprehension of that instrument, in both his teaching and composition, that few composers of any period have equaled. The tonal possibilities of the piano are very great, though very subtle. Few performers, and as few composers, have anything like an adequate appreciation of them. Debussy did; he wrote and taught accordingly, and we are fortunate that one of the first to understand and love and intelligently play the piano music of Debussy was an American, George Copeland, friend and pupil of the composer.

During the years that followed, up to about 1910, works of very great significance came from Debussy's hand. The two volumes of Preludes, for piano; the suite, *The Children's Corner*; a lovely string quartet; *Images*, a group of three orchestral pieces; *The Afternoon of a Faun*, *La Mer*, the three Nocturnes—*Nuages*, *Fêtes*, and *Sirènes*—and other more or less important works have found their way into the permanent orchestral repertoire.

The pedants and the purists could not approve the music of Debussy, because it blandly disregarded every canon of accepted form and conventional harmony. That was his great sin. That he had developed a singularly effective and beautiful

system of harmony, quite his own, was relatively unimportant to his critics. He was not "regular"; therefore, he was damned. The curiously rich yet transparent quality of much of Debussy's music is the direct result of his ideas of harmony, and though it arouses no hisses today—we have heard things much more radical!—it was incomprehensible to many of the musical commentators of the '90's and the early part of this century. For some occult reason, this harmony has within itself a most potent suggestion of nature in all her moods; of moving waters and of the sea; of fathomless skies and the silent motion of clouds, and of the mysteries that transpire within the green dimness of forests. There is no reasonable explanation of this, for Debussy certainly does not descend to mere musical imitation of the sounds of nature. His power is suggestive, rather than imitative. It has been suggested that his music and his delicacy of effect are somewhat effeminate. Someone has said that any great artist is half woman and half barbarian. Perhaps this explains Debussy, if explanation is needed.



## Ibéria

[No. 2 from *Images pour orchestra*]

THOMAS CRAVEN, in his priceless book *Modern Art*, quotes from the mouth of the painter Dégas what he regards as an almost perfect definition of impressionism: "To observe his models through the keyhole." But Mr. Craven himself gives a better one—"a snapshot of a little fragment of the visible world." The impressionism of Debussy, who was the most distinguished practitioner of the cult, requires a somewhat more generous view of the subject, but essentially the definition applies to musical impressionism. In this manner of expression the composer would convey a swift yet comprehensive glance at his subject, inclusive but not detailed, softly colored, and blurred like the half-remembered images in a dream.

Debussy had little more than a "keyhole image" of Spain; he had spent but a few hours in that country. Yet from the brief impressions of this visit, and, subconsciously perhaps, from associated ideas drawn from books, from paintings, and from Spanish music that he had heard, Debussy "created spontaneously such Spanish music as might be envied him—who did not really know Spain—by many others who knew her only too well." (Manuel de Falla.)

The composer used the title *Images* rather indiscriminately, applying it to certain piano compositions, as well as to a group of three orchestral pieces, of which *Ibéria* is the second. The first performance was given at Paris, at a Colonne Concert, under the direction of Gabriel Pierné. The French audience's habit of



whistling its disapproval was noticeable, but so also was the warmth of the response from a good number of listeners.

*Ibéria* is divided into three sections. The first:

*"Par Les Rues et par les chemins"*

[*In the Streets and Roadsides*]

There is no need for extended analysis of this music; on the contrary, such prblings as we might be guilty of were exceedingly distasteful to Debussy, and certainly are not consonant with the purpose and character of impressionist music. But there is pleasure in the anticipation of the blazing colors in which the music begins; of the nimble rhythm, marked by the hard click of castanets, that moves through the music; of such incidents as the lovely song given to strings and *cor anglais*, or of the lighthearted one that appears in other woodwinds; and finally, it is well to be prepared for the bewitching effect when so many of these are combined in a gorgeous, a barbaric and hotly colored fabric of tone.

A second section reveals more delicate, but not less exotic color and texture in the music; here Debussy anticipates the polytonalists, and projects an eerie voice compounded of violin harmonics and piccolo, in one key, against the strings in another, with rhythmic emphasis in the percussive tambourine, harp, and castanets. A third section, with more restrained rhythm, brings back eventually the atmosphere of the beginning.

*"Les Parfums de la nuit"*

[*Perfumed Darkness*]

Spanish nights are dark and warm, palpitating and languorous and bewitched by murmurous shadows. Muted strings suggest the almost palpable and fragrant darkness, breathing the aromatic airs that rise from a thousand hidden gardens; and fugitive glints of celesta and tambourine and xylophone, like faint stars in a black sky, make the night darker. There is a lonely song of the oboe and little vagrant phrases for horn and bassoon and solo violin. The perfumed night vibrates with secret ardors and passionate wooings, and, "*avec une grande intensité dans l'expression,*" the orchestra moves toward a brief climax. The movement closes with mysterious communings of stopped brass and woodwind and solo violin, and there is a distant drowsy sound of bells.

*"Le Matin d'un jour de fête"*

[*The Morning of a Festival*]

The night has come and gone, brightening imperceptibly into the fierce sunlight of a Spanish summer. Where are the fantasies of those enchanted hours?

Where the longing, where the pain? The music recalls them mockingly, the glaring light mercilessly exposes them, and the cynical Spanish eye looks upon their distorted recollection with a shrug and a sneer. Now for the life and swift activity of the day; now for processions and games and feasting! And the music marches briskly toward the festival.



## Nuages

[*Clouds*]

THIS lovely impressionistic fragment is one of the three Nocturnes, for orchestra, the others of which are entitled *Fêtes* and *Sirènes*. The latter, which requires a wordless choir of sixteen female voices as well as orchestra, is seldom performed.

Here Debussy does not attempt to paint a picture of clouds moving through the seas of heaven. Rather, one feels, his aim is to evoke such a mood as might come upon one who gazes long upon "the unchanging aspect of the sky, with the slow and solemn passage of the clouds dissolving in a gray vagueness tinged with white." And again he writes, "The title 'Nocturnes' is to be understood in a wider sense than that usually given to it, and should be regarded as conveying a decorative meaning. The form of the nocturne has not entered into consideration, and the term should be viewed as signifying all that is associated with diversified impressions and special lights."

The "diversified impressions and special lights" are here achieved with a marvelous economy of means, and with an effectiveness which depends—aside from the intrinsic and lovely suggestiveness of the music—upon the receptivity of the listener. Too, the subtly and unobtrusively shifting colors of this music, without accent or emphasis, permit contemplation without distraction—and we can make our own pictures!

Clarinets and bassoons and the strangely wild and pastoral suggestions of the English horn achieve an effect of color and motion in silence. The music passes like a dream too lovely to endure.



## Fêtes

THERE is music in this world that accomplishes meanings and suggestions quite beyond words. We know that the music reaches us, and touches that particular

cell within us upon which the composer would lay his hand; but we do not know why the music so reaches and touches us. It is as if we had a sixth sense, which no one can explain, which responds to nothing but certain mysterious and nameless things in music; and which even the composer addresses unconsciously and without design.

*Fêtes* is such music. It is a little thing, but unforgettable. Hearing it is like having brought back to us, almost clearly, the lovely fragments of a dream that is shattered and gone on the instant of awakening. It is music that comes from nowhere, goes nowhere, and stays forever in our ears, whispering of fabulous scenes. These immaterial spectacles are different for each one of us, but always there is revelry, and a swiftly, at first almost silently, advancing column of nebulous dancing figures. They come from limitless, shadowy distances, with light feet marching to the soft impulses of timpani and harp and low plucked strings; with ghostly fanfares of muted trumpets. They crowd and jostle on the scene, yet they are always out of reach; as swiftly they disappear, and the final faint touch on a cymbal is mocking and memorable.



## La Mer

[*The Sea*]

[Three Symphonic Sketches]

SOMEONE has remarked that in the music of Debussy there is always the movement and the sound of water, and surely the composer left many indications of his love and awe of the ocean. It was not strange, then, that what is perhaps his masterwork in symphonic form should have been suggested by the sea. *La Mer* was performed for the first time at a Lamoureux Concert, Paris, October 15, 1905, under the direction of Camille Chevillard; its first American presentation was by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, March 2, 1907.

The titles of the three sections constitute the only program Debussy has indicated for the music; but his impressions of nature's mightiest force are suggested in many of his letters. The following excerpt is of interest:

Here I am again with my old friend the sea, always innumerable and beautiful. It is truly the one thing in nature that puts you in your place; only one does not sufficiently respect the sea. To wet in it bodies deformed by daily life should not be allowed; truly these arms and legs which move in ridiculous rhythms—it is enough to make the fish weep. There should be only

Sirens in the sea, and could you wish that these estimable persons would be willing to return to waters so unpleasantly frequented?

We might have had even more interesting comment if only Debussy could have seen Coney Island.

*"L'Aube à midi sur la mer"*

[*The Sea from Dawn until Noon*]

The ocean, mother of myriad immemorial dawns, slowly heaves and writhes in a mysterious quiet, and another day is born. Muted strings and murmuring drums, and ascending notes of the harp merge into a mist that lies over the orchestra. A single flash of the awakening sun is reflected in the vaguely shimmering waters, and the light grows. Muted horn and *cor anglais* against descending strings suggest the limitless line of the horizon as it materializes through the mist, and the shadowed hues of the darkness before dawn are dissipated, with the clinging mists, in the broad light of morning.

The music shifts in color and transparency like the sea itself, and it is no more possible to separate from its curiously incorporeal and amorphous structure the myriad beauties of which it is compounded than to regard, in the wide expanse of ocean, the gleam and play of each individual wave. But nowhere in music is there so magical a suggestion of the sea, with its incredible blues and greens, its sparkle and motion and clear depths, its mysterious and unforgettable mumurings and its power.

*"Jeux de vagues"*

[*Sport of the Waves*]

The mocking, stormy, placid, deceiving monster is revealed here in yet another mood. The ocean merrily disports itself, and in the orchestra a seeming thousand voices entangle and collide and sparkle like the ocean's own waves and wavelets. Frisky waters throw themselves glittering against the blue air; long rollers rush toward the shore and dissolve in snowy foam; vagrant winds snatch the white caps from tossing billows, and fling the wet spray across the sky. There are little solos for *cor anglais* and horn, for oboe, and for violin; and finally the music, stirred up gradually by its own sportiveness, rises to a brilliant climax of revelry, then wearily subsides into calm.

*"Dialogue du vent et de la mer"*

[*Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea*]

Now the ocean is not playful, but lashed to wild fury by fierce winds descending upon it from the endless reaches of heaven. Madly it heaves itself against the

blast; roaring, the invisible demons of the air hurl its waters back into its distorted face. Throughout the movement—here in the climax of the stormy dialogue as well as in the sometimes tender, sometimes angry concluding passages—strings and wind instruments are played against each other in bewildering and wonderful fashion.



## Prelude to "L'Après-midi d'un faune"

[*The Afternoon of a Faun*]

IN THIS mysterious and magical music the orchestra, taking into its hundred hands the somnolent warmth and anesthetic perfumes of a summer day, fashions a dream and evokes a vision. Nowhere in all music has anyone so deftly and so exquisitely synthesized the heat and silence and voluptuousness of afternoon's golden hours, and by their translation into lovely sound expressed the nameless longings and fantastic fleet visions that youth, unseeing yet gazing into the limitless blue of heaven, alone can experience.

This lovely vaporous web of sound was devised by Debussy as a musical illustration of the poem, *The Afternoon of a Faun*, by Stéphane Mallarmé. The poem itself is a vague and cryptic outpouring, suggesting a literary style paralleled in painting by extreme impressionism, and in music, very often, by the work of Debussy. Paradoxically this music is not difficult to understand; indeed, it is not to be understood at all, but merely heard and felt. Debussy himself tells us that it is not a musical parallel to the poem, but perhaps merely a background for it, and inducement to a mood congenial to the poem.

As Lawrence Gilman pointed out in the program notes of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the English reduction of the poem, by Edmund Gosse, is almost as famous as the original, and certainly more comprehensible. As a possible indication of the atmosphere the music seeks to create, we quote Mr. Gosse's version:

A faun—a simple, sensuous, passionate being—wakens in the forest at daybreak and tries to recall his experience of the previous afternoon. Was he the fortunate recipient of an actual visit from nymphs, white and golden goddesses, divinely tender and indulgent? Or is the memory he seems to retain nothing but the shadow of a vision, no more substantial than the arid rain of notes from his own flute? He cannot tell. Yet surely there was, surely there is, an animal whiteness among the brown reeds of the lake that shines out yonder.

Were they, are they, swans? No! But Naiads plunging? Perhaps! Vaguer and vaguer grows the impression of this delicious experience. He would resign his woodland godship to retain it. A garden of lilies, golden-headed, white-stalked, behind the trellis of red roses? Ah! the effort is too great for his poor brain. Perhaps if he selects one lily from the garth of lilies, one benign and beneficent yielder of her cup to thirsty lips, the memory, the ever-receding memory, may be forced back. So when he has glutted upon a bunch of grapes, he is wont to toss the empty skins into the air and blow them out in a visionary greediness. But no, the delicious hour grows vaguer; experience or dream, he will never know which it was. The sun is warm, the grasses yielding; and he curls himself up again, after worshipping the efficacious star of wine, that he may pursue the dubious ecstasy into the more hopeful boskages of sleep.

Mr. Gosse's version of the poem is imaginative and lovely, yet, listening to the music, may we not surmise a little more? Vague and dreamy though it is, there are certain indications in the music that the Faun's afternoon was not so close to that strange borderland between sleep and consciousness; that there *was* "a whiteness among the brown reeds"; that there were pursuits and embraces and escapes, and little, wondering ecstasies; little, poignant pains.

Exquisite languors are induced as with supple and errant phrases the polished tones of the flute sing unaccompanied. Woodwinds speak; a diaphanous membrane



of sound is made of quick glinting harp notes, and the horns, that seem able to utter in three tones all the sweet and melancholy languidness of summer, bring us to an open and green-floored space in the forest. Here lay the Faun; here we too may lie, looking deep into the bottomless bowl of the sky, or turning to hear the drowsy hum and watch the teeming life of myriad insects, going their tangled and busy ways among ferns and grasses.

Here lay the Faun, and each time we hear this music we can see him again, fitting among the trees, pursuing, hurrying, hiding, laughing immoderately, and pleading. With each venturesome dash the orchestra mirrors his excitement; with each disappointment and each repulsion the glowing and pulsating tone is shadowed. More pursuits and raptures . . . a lightfooted dash that, in the orchestra, suddenly hesitates and almost stumbles. Ecstatic melody in the violins, against woodwind and horns, and finally, after all, the dreamy and voluptuous idea in the languid voice of the flute . . . the thought with which the music opened. At the end, music

sweet and impalpable as a dream—muted and tenuous and fading and—at last—silent.



### Danses: sacrée et profane

A LITERAL translation of this title means little; it seems preferable, in view of the suggestions of the music, to make the title read in English: *Dances, Ritualistic and Voluptuous*. These two short pieces for chromatic harp and orchestra were written shortly after the development of the solo instrument in its higher form, and were dedicated to the inventor of the chromatic instrument. The first performance was given in 1904, by Mme Wurmser-Delcourt at one of the Colonne Concerts in Paris; the first American performance was given at New York, by the same artist, in December, 1919.

The two dances flow imperceptibly, one into the other. Only a slight quickening of tempo indicates the beginning of the second. The first is hypnotic and mystical, curiously rhythmed, as if a rapt worshiper, half unconscious in awe and adoration, moved with sinuous automatic glidings and swayings before the glowering image of the god. The second suggests secret rites and quiet ecstasies; no more than gleams of passion, but a smooth and voluptuous tracing of lovely contours. But let the music make its own suggestions!

The orchestra is incidental, the harp always all important, in both pieces. With due respect to all the great harpists, it is suggested that to hear a performance of this music, even on radio or phonograph, by Edna Phillips, first harpist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, is to realize fully its possibilities and their beauty.

## FREDERICK DELIUS

[1863-1934]

**D**ELIUS WAS BORN in England, and is regarded as an English composer, though his parentage was German. Few sons are approved by their fathers when they decide for a musical career, and Delius was no exception. When he was able to free himself from parental restraints, he went to Florida to work at the cultivation of oranges. This interlude was not entirely without good effect, for it gave leisure and opportunity for the study of nature as well as music; and nature, in Delius' music, looms large. Happily, he was not too interested in the Negro songs he heard, though they did not escape his observation.

When Delius was twenty-two years old, he decided that he had had enough of the citrus grower's life, and that he should devote himself entirely to music. He taught for a short period, at Danville, Va., but realizing the necessity for further study, he went to Germany and studied there under Reinecke, Jadassohn, and, finally, Edvard Grieg.

In recent years Delius became almost totally blind, and suffered from the additional handicap of paralysis. A talented young musician, Eric Fenby, assisted the composer during his last years, as amanuensis. Delius permitted himself no abandonment to his physical trials, in the joy which he had in composing music.

Delius, some time ago, had penetrating and bitter remarks to make on the subject of jazz and modernism; remarks made, not inappropriately, to an official of an agency which has had much to do with the popularity of modern music, jazz and serious: The Gramophone Company, Ltd. "What could be worse," he asked, "than the spectacle of serious musicians trying to imitate jazz? To imitate jazz is as bad as imitating the atonal music invented by Schönberg and Company. Worst of all, I see that the young English musicians are being influenced by what I call this 'wrong note' school of music." And again he remarked, "The only way for any man to write music is to follow the line of his own feelings and not imitate foreigners or anyone else. Such ugliness as is heard in some of the modern music now being written in England and Germany and France can only reveal an extremely ugly soul. It is atrociously monstrous and ugly. In my opinion, the adherents of the 'wrong note' school are merely sensationalists."

Such comment, applied indiscriminately, is of course rather dangerous; but at the same time it is not unnatural in a composer who perhaps was a little embittered by neglect, and who, in his musical ideas, is a distant relative of Grieg and perhaps of Debussy.

In recent years Delius has suffered by overpraise at the hands of persistent and vociferous enthusiasts who feel that because his music is contemporary it is also modern, and new. It is easy to grant the agreeableness of all of Delius' work;



but it is not so easy to see that it is strikingly original, powerful, or permanently impressive. Some English and American supporters see in him a musician ranking with any of the late nineteenth, or of the twentieth century; very likely this is a serious overestimate. It is gratifying, nevertheless, to find his truly lovely music making its way, with growing frequency, into symphonic programs. Whether or not it is to endure, the test of time will reveal.



## Brigg Fair

[*An English Rhapsody*]

DELIUS was always much concerned, in his music, with the loveliness of nature and the appeal of bucolic things. The present work was inspired by an old English folk song, discovered by that indefatigable collector of such treasures, the pianist-composer Percy Grainger. The Rhapsody, incidentally, is dedicated to Grainger; and bears on its title page the words of the folk song, the first and last stanza of which are as follows:

*It was on the fift' of August,  
The weather fine and fair,  
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair  
For love I was inclined.*

*The green leaves they shall wither  
And the branches they shall die  
If ever I prove false to her,  
To the girl that loves me.*

The introduction suggests vividly the sunny warmth and drowsiness of "the fift' of August" in an English countryside: suggests the scene, indeed, by faintly Debussyan handling of muted strings and woodwind and harp. Following the prelude passages, the folk-song theme is presented in the reedy voice of the oboe, and a delightfully ingenuous and pastoral idea it is. After its development, we come upon a tranquil passage in a new rhythm; of this passage, a writer in the *Manchester Guardian* of October 18, 1929, has the following to say:

"A study of 'Brigg Fair,' from the passage marked *lento molto tranquillato* . . . to the close of the climax which leads to the transformation of the main theme into a new melody for trumpet and trombone, with an occasional toll of the bell—a study of this indescribably beautiful passage will bring us into the very heart of Delius the composer and Delius the man. Here, especially, we can look into his rhythmical fluidity, the sign of a musical sensibility that would have been dispersed by the ordinary recurrent rhythms of music." The opinion of this nameless but apparently authoritative commentator has been the deciding factor in the choice

of *Brigg Fair*, rather than any other of Delius' works, for inclusion in this book. There is a rather melancholy solemnity in the theme of the trumpet and trombone mentioned above, but this atmosphere does not endure for long, and a lighter mood returns, with the chief theme conspicuously recalled. A climax is developed along sweeping lines, but the music ends in the resolute and gently serious feeling suggested by the words of the folk song.

# ERNÖ DOHNÁNYI

[Born 1877]

ERNÖ DOHNÁNYI (the name is sometimes given as Ernst von Dohnányi) was born at Pressburg, in Hungary, the son of a talented amateur musician who early perceived the musical gifts of his son, and provided every means for their cultivation. It was not, however, the intention of the family that the boy should become a professional musician, and not until after some time spent as a student of philosophy in the University of Budapest did Ernő decide that music was the one profession in which he could satisfy himself and succeed.

Dohnányi studied piano and composition under several of the foremost European masters, and set about developing himself rapidly and thoroughly. It was not long before his compositions began to win fame and awards, and his playing of the piano soon established him in the front rank of solo artists. His first American appearance was at Boston, with the Boston Symphony, in 1899; and audiences in several other American cities later heard him both as conductor and as pianist.

Although known to fame particularly as a pianist, Dohnányi has written extensively in the major musical forms. Symphonies, chamber music, serious and comic opera, and solo piano works are numbered among his compositions. While a modern, Dohnányi is never guilty of the striving for effect, the use of novelty for its own sake, and similar artistic sins which are often and justly charged against many present-day composers. His music is sound, logical, beautiful, and expressive; more need not be said of any music.



## Suite for Orchestra in D minor

[Opus 19]

THE suite, as a musical form, is the outgrowth of the popularity, at certain periods, of various ancient dance forms. Instead of being played singly as entities, these various dances were artistically combined and contrasted so as to give a group of them (a suite, in other words) a certain balance and continuity.

The modern suite may or may not be constructed of dance tunes, but its germinal idea lies in this sequence of dance rhythms. The suite differs from the symphony in that its themes are not so conspicuous, so pronounced, or so important to the structure of the movement as are those of the symphony. Furthermore, the symphony is usually much more abstract and subjective in character, and its move-

ments exhibit more varied treatment and more melodic and rhythmic contrasts than do the movements of a suite.

The suite, therefore, is less imperative in its demands upon the listener, and returns him more for a modicum of attention and understanding than the symphony. Herein lies a reason for the charm and popularity of the suite. That its musical value, workmanship, and worthiness may be equal to those of a symphony goes without saying—and is demonstrated in the work annotated here.

### *Part I*

#### *Andante with Variations*

You will observe, in the very first measure of the suite, that here is music of a decidedly new and different color. The composer effects combinations of instruments here that produce a peculiarly penetrating, sharp yet sweet quality of tone that is delightfully refreshing. The music that you first hear, a broad and flowing song in which the influence of Brahms is distinctly evident, is the theme about which the orchestra will presently weave a lovely fabric of sound—variations of the theme itself, derived in their every convolution from the first utterance of the woodwind.

The woodwind section is led by the oboe, and joined by the strings, in the first projection of the theme. The first variation is animated in rhythm, and vividly colored . . . the composer again turning to the woodwind section for the particular tonal quality he wishes to achieve. But now the strings are more importantly employed; the curious sharply flickering rhythm that underlies the line of the melody dances from beneath lively bows.

The second variation is even livelier and more vigorous. Bold chords, powerful and deep in the bass, usher it in—and the variation figure alternates between crackling strings and penetrating woodwind. A brief transition passage, a broadening of the melodic line, lead us to the third variation, in which the Brahmslike feeling of the theme is even more pronounced than on its first appearance. Here the deeper strings have the theme in a new form, with accompaniment by horns and the violins. Presently the violins themselves are given the theme in a still further development, but the tranquil atmosphere of the third variation continues for a space.

The fourth variation begins in a gentle mood, but with a lively rhythm underlying it. And presently, with growing animation and vigor, it reaches a briefly glowing climax . . . the *cor anglais* leading a swift and merry procession of orchestral voices to the end.

The fifth variation (livelier still than any that have gone before) begins with a portentous beating of the kettledrums . . . a little movement of darkness that is belied by the quaint, the almost grotesque style of the measures that follow.

Although in a minor key the music is full of robust and vital rhythm. It attains its climax in a broadening of the rhythmic swing and a vast increase in orchestral power, on a retarding series of chords that bring us to the sixth and final variation.

The last of the variations is in marked contrast with all the others, and particularly with the fifth. More of sentiment, more of passion, and less of the sturdy and vigorous rhythms of the first five variations are felt here. The violins sing most eloquently . . . and there are shadows in the low and reedy sweetness of the clarinets. Yet at the close the mood is not one of gloom, but of mellow thoughtfulness.

### *Part II*

#### *Scherzo*

The scherzo lives up to all the requirements of that title, in the briskness of its rhythm, the piquancy of its melodic content, and the sharpness and lightness of its orchestral colors. The little subject given out at the beginning, in the woodwind, and answered by the strings, is the basis for the major part of the movement. It is presented in a variety of phases, worked over orchestrally until the last atom of brightness and gaiety and charm is exacted from it.

There is a contrasting section in which a single note (A), is continually repeated, and made the basis for a very interesting series of harmonies. The use of the timpani in urging forward the ever-lively rhythm is exceptionally effective.

Later, we hear the subject matter of the opening passages presented again in somewhat modified form; then, in the horns, a remembrance of the second, contrasting section; and finally, a deliciously humorous close, involving clarinets, timpani, cymbal, violin in harmonics, and a sudden chord from the whole orchestra.

### *Part III*

#### *Romanza*

A romance, as its name might indicate, is a composition in free style, usually sentimental in character. Here the composer frees himself from the restrictions of form, and gives musical expression to the vague and errant dreamings which all of us, at one time or another, experience but can neither express nor classify.

The movement opens with three measures of introduction in the strings, plucked instead of bowed. Then the principal theme, a sweet little song in the plaintive voice of the oboe, wanders across the scene. Later the cello, in its most suave and ingratiating accents, unfolds a lovely tale of melody. The *cor anglais* suggests its own version, and then, after a hastening of tempo, the harp and strings present a more intense and passionate thought. Yet, at the end, the song of the English horn returns as the final idea, and a soaring violin brings the movement to its peaceful conclusion.

*Part IV**Rondo*

In music, the rondo is analogous to the rondeau in verse. In this form, the subject recurs at intervals, always following the introduction of new matter.

Here the first subject, which is to be the basis of the rondo, and which will appear at intervals, is the vigorous theme which you hear as the music begins. It appears in the strings, and presently is taken up by the woodwind, with the strings now plucked rather than bowed, forming a crisply rhythmical accompaniment figure. The succeeding musical idea, even more gay and colorful, appears now following a powerful chord in full orchestra. After this presentation of the second theme, there is a swiftly descending passage in the woodwind, and the first subject, according to the requirements of the rondo, returns as it was formerly presented. The flute suggests a new musical idea, and, following it, a brilliant and passionate utterance is given out by the string section.

The composer, instead of another presentation of the basic theme, develops this last subject of the strings at some length—and only then returns to a reminiscence of the original subject. Impatient of the confines of the string form, the music broadens immensely, and a powerful, brilliant, and vigorous utterance is drawn from the entire orchestra, with thundering kettledrums and crackling castanets emphasizing the swing of the rhythm.

The second section of the movement receives even broader, but perhaps less brilliant and vigorous treatment in its opening passages. There is, however, a distinct growth in vigor and vehemence as it progresses. The basic theme returns for its last appearance, and then, after a crash of the cymbal, and a moment of intense suspense, the composer returns, not merely to the theme of *this* movement, but to the sweet and passionate song that opened the suite and was the subject of the variations of the first movement. There is a swift and brilliant concluding passage.

## PAUL DUKAS

[1865-1935]

THE COMPOSER was a native of Paris, a graduate of the Conservatoire, and a winner of the Prix de Rome. He has written quite extensively, but the only work known throughout the world of the symphony orchestra is the symphonic episode, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Dukas is remarkable in that he kept abreast of musical developments through all his life and maintained an open mind and broad point of view with respect to music far removed in character from the kind upon which he was nourished from childhood. He was a music critic, as well as composer, writing for various journals in the French capital.



### L'Apprenti sorcier

[*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*]

THIS very familiar and highly descriptive music was inspired immediately by a ballad by Goethe, but remotely by a fable more than eighteen hundred years old. A magician, who traveled about with his understudy, had a favorite trick of turning a broom handle, or any other stick, into a human figure, which undertook the duties of a servant, ordered meals, carried water, and the like. The young apprentice often tried to get from his master the magic words which would accomplish this miracle, but in vain; until one day, having secreted himself within ear-shot, he overheard the charm. When the magician was safely out of the way, the apprentice tried out the words, and immediately changed a pestle into the figure of a man. He ordered it to fetch some water, and was obeyed. Satisfied with his experiment, he ordered the creature to "be again a pestle." But the automaton did not understand; the apprentice had forgotten to learn the words which put the magic into reverse, and the senseless but docile "servant" continued to bring water until the room overflowed. Desperate, the young magician split the stick in two, with an ax—but then there were two painfully obedient creatures bringing water! The fortuitous arrival of the master magician eventually saved the day.

The progress of the little comedy is clearly indicated by the music itself.

# ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

[1841-1904]

**A**NTONÍN DVOŘÁK was born on September 8, 1841, the son of an innkeeper of Mühllhausen in Bohemia. His father had destined him to succeed to his estate, but, as the inn dispensed music as well as hospitality (through the offices of the bands of itinerant musicians who occasionally played for the entertainment of villagers and guests), something stirred within the boy, and, perhaps before he realized it, he had set his heart upon the precarious career of a musician instead of looking to the complacent comfort that was no doubt assured the proprietor of a village caravanserai.

On his own initiative the boy Dvořák persuaded the village schoolmaster to teach him to play the violin and to sing, and presently he was allowed to sing in the church, and to play, too, on special occasions. When he was twelve years old, he was sent by his father to Zlonitz, a town not far from his birthplace, where he was given the opportunity to proceed in his music under the tutelage of the local organist and the discipline of an uncle. Here Dvořák's musical education really began; here he learned the fundamentals of organ and pianoforte playing, musical theory, harmony, extemporization, and other branches of the art.

The elder Dvořák gave the boy permission to go to Prague to study music with a view toward making it his life work. In October, 1857, he did so, entering an organ school and barely living on the small allowance which his father was able to give him. Even this soon stopped, and now Antonín's ability to play upon the violin stood him in good stead, for with it he was able to keep body and soul together, and, meanwhile, to join an orchestra; now he was brought in contact with the masterpieces of music, and, as a viola-player later, came under the influence of the composer and conductor Smetana.

Dvořák probably never dreamed of making his way in the musical world as a virtuoso; composition was the field which more particularly appealed to him, and neither hunger nor poverty, nor the lack of the tools of his craft, could prevent his steady laboring in this direction. He was helped by several kind friends, however, and attained sufficient standing as a musician to be judged worthy of the post of organist at St. Adalbert's church in Prague. He accepted this position in 1873, left the orchestra in which he had been playing, married, and settled down to work harder than ever.

Not until he had reached the age of thirty-two did Dvořák come into notice as a composer, although during his years of quiet yet intense labor he had developed greatly. A patriotic cantata was the vehicle which brought to him the attention of musicians, and, fond as he was of the national musical idiom, Dvořák made a striking success of it. His rise to prominence really dates from this event. As a result of it he obtained both more substantial emoluments and the friendship of musicians



whose position was already unassailable. Among the latter was Brahms who, as a commissioner appointed to pass upon musical works submitted for a prize of an annual pension, came upon certain duets of Dvořák which fascinated him not only because of their general musical excellence but by their demonstration of the composer's knowledge of Bohemian national musical characteristics.

It was not long before Dvořák became known in England and in America. In 1892 he was invited to accept the post as director of the National Conservatory of New York; he came to America, and held this position until 1895. Returning to his native Bohemia, he became head of the Conservatory of Prague, where he remained until his sudden death on May 1, 1904.



## Carnival Overture

IN THIS merry, this almost rowdy music, Dvořák, the composer of that quasi-American symphony "From the New World," was very definitely a Bohemian. He had not yet been obliged or expected to deliver to the world his inspiration from or opinion of America, set to music—though he had been in New York for several days. In the overture he brought with him the wild gypsy rhythms, and passionately gay spirits of his native land, and perhaps the polite audience assembled in Carnegie Hall on October 12, 1892, were a little startled, and a little taken aback, that Dvořák, then the musical hero of America, could offer such gorgeous frivolity.

The overture is the second of a suite of three, called *Nature, Life, and Love*. As a matter of fact the second overture was called, at its first performance in Europe, *Bohemian Carnival*. A carnival it is, glowing with the most vivid orchestral colors, and moving swiftly through wayward, wild, and syncopated rhythms to a bacchanalian climax. In the very middle, however, a more sober thought is intruded, and we come upon one of the loveliest passages in all Dvořák's music. Here solo violin and English horn join in a passage of lyric sweetness, touched with melancholy. Flutes are attracted to this poignant strain—but briefly; the impatient orchestra in agitation revives the colorful rout, and brings presently a whirling, flashing climax of tremendous force.



## Symphony No. 5 in E minor

[*"From the New World"*]

IMMEDIATE and widespread popularity has accomplished the ruin of many musical works of considerable merit, and for reasons much similar to those which make the brummagem songs and dances of Broadway but the ephemeral efflorescence of our swift and brilliant modern life. They are heard too frequently, assimilated too quickly, and their intellectual content is not sufficient to sustain, for any considerable period, the soul of man, to which all valid music must appeal in order ultimately to survive. It would be invidious to compare a work of a serious and sincere but not highly gifted composer with the titillating trifles of Tin Pan Alley, yet, when elusive popularity attaches its dubious hold to either or both, the reason for the general acclaim and the brevity of its duration is the same in both cases—the paucity of substantial material upon which the spirit can feed.

Conversely, great musical works are only in comparatively rare instances "popular" immediately. Sometimes they win the approval of the more esoteric musical circles at first or second hearing, but usually public approbation must wait upon public assimilation—a process which is slow, labored, rarely complete, and sometimes impossible. Nevertheless, there are a few notable works of permanent value that have been immediately accepted and eventually appreciated even by the public at large. Dvořák's symphony "From the New World" is one of them.

We have almost forgotten the storm of controversy that raged in musical circles following the first presentation of the symphony. It had to do with the manner and degree in which the "New World" was influenced by characteristic American music, that is, the music of the Indian and the plantation songs of the Negro.

Discussions of these matters are not of paramount importance now. The "New World Symphony" has been assimilated into the collective body of musical works which we have come to regard as properly in the repertoire of every symphony orchestra; old prejudices and opinions are forgotten in the extraordinary charm of the music itself. Matured judgment of musicians and music lovers has vindicated the declaration of the composer that he sought, not to embody in the symphony a literal version of native American music—assuming that there is such a thing—but rather an interpretation of the spirit of that American music which most closely approaches the folk song.

It is interesting to recall that the symphony was written in America, most of the orchestration being done at Spillville, Ia., whither the composer had fled from New York in a period of homesickness. Here in this little town was a colony of Bohemians; here Dvořák could feel that he was among his own, could hear his native tongue, and feel contact with those who certainly were his friends. The

symphony was written during December, 1892, and the early months of 1893; the last touches were given on May 25, 1893. In the following December, the symphony "From the New World" was given its first performance, in New York City, by the Philharmonic Society of New York, with Anton Seidl conducting and Dr. Dvořák present.

### *First Movement*

The symphony opens with a brief introduction, the melody assigned to the lower range of the cellos, syncopated, yet with its syncopation almost concealed in the adagio movement, and the smoother descending figure of the viola and the double bass. A placid note of the clarinet, and a more sudden utterance of the horn, the latter drawn out and gradually diminishing, occupy the interval that



lies between the first melody and its repetition in contrasting tone colors by flute and oboe. The entire string section, dominated by the cello and the double bass, bursts out in an impatient brief phrase, each repetition answered with equal asperity in the woodwind. In this passionate utterance of the strings lies the first germ of the theme of the symphony, which from this point begins to take form as the plastic but fragile material is strained into one mold and again into another under the pressure of the composer's thought.

A syncopated rhythm has appeared once, and now, more pronounced in the waywardness of its movement, another irregularly accented figure is given to the flute, oboe, and clarinet. Immediately following it, we have the first statement of the principal theme in its most important rhythmic, but not harmonic, form. Now come sudden and vehement chords of the full orchestra, with a swift-rising climax to the beginning of the first movement proper.

The violins carry over the final note of the introduction, and as the movement proper opens, the theme is heard against them in the horn, now in its final rhythmical form and harmonic position. Its first statement is answered by strings, bassoon, and clarinet in a dainty, dancelike rhythm; again it appears in the attenuated tones of the oboe, in the sonorous voice of the trombone, and in the singing strings. After presentation of the theme in various guises, there is a transition to a subsidiary theme derived remotely from the woodwind's response to the first pronouncement of the chief subject of the movement.

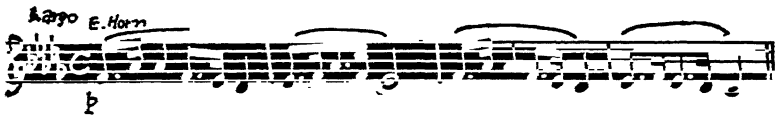
A climax is built upon this plaintive little song, and preparations are made

for the presentation of the second important theme of the movement—a subject for which the melody of the Negro song *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* undoubtedly furnished inspiration. The flute, solo against the string section in pianissimo, breathes the pensive yet moving air; later the violins seize upon it more energetically, and presently it is developed into the final climax of the opening section of the movement. Now begins the wonderful development and working out of the rich thematic material.

The horn breathes a dreamy reminiscence of the second theme, a reminiscence immediately translated into present action by the brighter voices of the piccolo and the strident note of the trumpet in a brief canonical figure. Melodically the figure is the same as when first presented, but there is a slight rhythmic change that adds vigor. Now the themes of the movement are assigned to various instruments and appear in the minor, then in the major mode. The elementary ideas are preserved with clearness and unity, even in contrapuntal passages, chiefly by using the themes in fragmentary and rhythmically altered form rather than by building up harmonic variations of them.

### *Second Movement*

Considered as a complete entity, the second movement, or “Largo,” of the symphony “From the New World,” is one of the most appealing and best-known pieces of music in all the literature of the orchestra. Its principal melody is generally conceded to be one of the most beautiful solos for the *cor anglais*, or the alto oboe, in all music.



The movement opens with solemn harmonies in the brass and woodwind, brightening in color and expanding in volume as they are thrice repeated. Articulated with the last of this series of chords is a second series, now in all the strings, muted, and in pianissimo. Then begins the languishing melody in the *cor anglais*, the strings, still muted, supplying the lovely, chorded accompaniment. Presently the solo instrument is joined by the clarinet for a few bars; and later by the bassoon for an equally brief space, but the clarinet alone breathes the echo of the final cadence. A vivid contrast in tonal colors is presented after the conclusion of the “song” with woodwind intoning an imitation, in higher, clearer voices, of the opening chords of the movement, the full orchestra joining in a *sforzando* at the close.

The mood is not one of violent emotion, but rather of deep and painful long-

ing without surcease. And so the one outburst of passionate emphasis fades, almost as suddenly as it came, into the pleading, almost tearful voices of the violins, putting forth their version of the chief motive of the movement. Presently the plaint of the first solo instrument comes again, and an impression of the terrible loneliness of the prairies, stretching without motion, sound, or variation, for mile after mile under a blazing sky, is easily suggested.

As the movement proceeds we hear an echo of the song of the *cor anglais* in woodwind, followed by the mysterious, dreamy communing of the horns. As their tones fade, a new melody, more definitely sad yet with added vigor, appears in the flute and oboe, with flutterings of the strings beneath it. The soprano oboe joins the flute in a derivation of this new song, against the secretive pizzicato accompaniment from the double basses, and presently the first version of the subject is repeated with fierce emphasis by the violins, while the contrasted flute puts forth cool tendrils of tone like soothing fingers caressing.

By one of those unexpected modulations which, notwithstanding the fact that we have been utterly unprepared, come smoothly, exquisitely beautiful, and refreshing, the composer leads us from the melancholy minor back into the major mode, this part of the symphony ending on the major triad in the key of C sharp. The sudden shaft of light that strikes into the shadows of the still echoing minors is most ingeniously generated by the mutation of a single note—the sharpening of the middle member of the triad, which brings us into the parallel, rather than the relative major—a Bachlike evolution lighting the close with sunset glory.

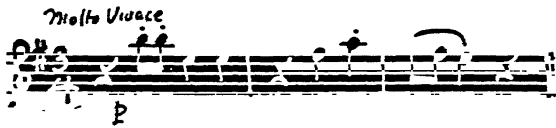
Later occurs a striking instance of the use of silence, as the painter would use complete absence of light as an expressive touch; exactly where one would expect emphasis in the phrase, there is a quick fading, a stillness, a terrible voice more eloquent in what it represses perhaps than any sound could be. If music can either suggest or call forth a tear—and it can—here is a wrenching sob, an inward cry that is stifled into silence before it is born. And the song bravely attempts to go on, but only a single note is uttered before hopelessness once more descends. Another broken phrase; then with more firmness and courage the first phrases of the theme are given again, and we come to a lingering close of exquisite beauty. Imperceptibly a wandering figure leads to a return of the opening phrases of the movement—solemn harmonies low in the horn and brass, brightening in their slow approach to a subdued climax.

### *Third Movement*

The paradoxical combination of the whimsical and the somber, the grotesque and the quaint, give to the third movement, the scherzo of the "New World Symphony," a weird, a macabre gaiety that is utterly fascinating. It is animated by an uncommon rhythm—a rhythm which, whether it attracts to itself a considerable section of the orchestra and thus temporarily becomes uppermost in the scheme

of the movement, or engages but a small number of instruments, always makes strangely moving impulses distinctly felt. Emotionally, the scherzo occupies a plane seldom touched by any other composer—a kind of middle ground between sadness and exuberant joy; and the combination of melodic factors expressing the one, with rhythmic elements suggestive of the other, is unique and highly effective. Here, too, may be observed the appearance of several characteristics of the peasant and gypsy music of Bohemia—an emotional capriciousness, a certain diablerie that in a moment becomes instead pure sentiment; sudden rhythmic impulses, and the use of melodies very like folk tunes of Middle Europe.

Both the rhythmic and the thematic content of the scherzo are present in embryo in the opening chords of the movement, vigorously spoken by practically the entire orchestra. There is an internal rhythm even in the first chord, effected by the syncopation applied to the entering notes of the timpani and horns; throughout the movement an uncommon rhythmic beat can be felt urging on the sometimes plaintive voices that would linger in the delights of sweet melancholy.



Plucked and spiccato strings maintain the rhythm at the beginning, with woodwinds flickering above, entangled in a little canon that is later adopted by the violins, and which leads to a passage descending and rising again in a swiftly growing crescendo. After the climax the whole first section is repeated, and there is a modulation to the parallel major—effected, it should be mentioned, in precisely the same manner as that at the close of the second section of the preceding movement, by the alteration of a single note. Now comes a lovely little song, a song that would linger on its own caressing accents, but is pressed forward always by the nervous rhythm that moves beneath it in the strings. Flute and oboe, doubled in octaves, sing this melody, with the bassoon shadowing their brighter tones. Presently the theme is heard in the reedy voice of the clarinet divided in octaves, and in its most emphatic statement, it appears in the sonorous cello.



The scherzo presents an opportunity to observe how different from that of other composers is Dvořák's manner of expressing and amplifying and elaborating emotional values. Sadness often touched him, and perhaps at no time more than

during the period occupied by the writing of the present symphony; consequently, its traces will be found frequently in his music. And the very fact that the scherzo—ordinarily abandoned in most symphonic writing to the exploitation of less serious thoughts—is distinctly marked by melancholy, is in itself an interesting comment on both the temperament of the composer and on his music in so far as it is a reflection of his temperament. The circumstances of his birth, his early life and surroundings, the influences to which he was exposed, all contributed to the formation of an intense, sensitive, volatile spirit, quickly and powerfully responsive to external influence of every kind. His music reflects these influences. His life was clouded by sorrow, as is every life, but he knew that there is joy in existence, and it speaks from his music as eloquently as the griefs that are so often assumed to be more productive of poetic eloquence. The temperament of the typical Czech is too full of fiery energy to make a rite of sorrow, and Dvořák could not have expressed with such terrible literalness the intolerable woes of Tchaikovsky, for example; yet when he does tell of spiritual pain, his message is the more vital because it suggests suffering in a living organism—one quickened with the breath of life, one that recoils in wounded surprise from the hurts of life. It is the captivating child of nature who speaks in Dvořák's music; never the weary sophisticate. And the pain is quickly gone.

So the feeling of the second movement is longing and love, but not essentially sorrow; and in the third movement, the close approach to melancholy is checked by a rhythm that leaps with vitality, and turns into weird mirth a thought too pitiful for lodgment in the merry heart.

#### *Fourth Movement*

Full of vigor and vitality, the major theme of the final movement bursts forth in horn and trumpet after nine measures of introduction quite as forceful as the theme itself. This bold declaration, in marchlike cadence, in its brazen emphasis, its power reinforced by a throng of instruments, suggests the cortege of some lordly satrap, as it moves in heavy dignity and pompous accent to its completion. Decorative figures are added by the strings as the theme is repeated. Its antithetical phrase also is assigned to the strings, speaking, however, not in their frequent flowing cantabile, but in accents of fierce vehemence.



Between the first and second theme a subsidiary motive is now interposed. Strings once more come to the fore, and move in agitation until a single stroke

upon the cymbal gives pause to their rapid motion. Here we find the second important theme of the movement, and perhaps the loveliest melody in the entire symphony.



With little prelude to herald it, this entrancing melody, hopeful, yet with a faint suggestion of weariness and grief, arises serenely out of the whirling masses of tone that surround it, and undisturbed by interruptions of the restive violin and the touch of ominous meaning lent by quick strokes of the timpani proceeds gently to its conclusion. Within a few bars the violins take up the strain, altering the serenity of the woodwind to a passionate intensity, as well as presenting a varying form of the song, with an elaborated accompaniment based upon the broad and defiant first subject of the movement. A three-note figure (taken from the old ditty, *Three Blind Mice*) is now worked into the texture of the music, and is used as a solid ground bass from which spring several interesting elaborations, finally coming uppermost as the first section of the movement draws to a close. The suggestion of finality contained in this simple group of three notes is borne out as various instruments of the orchestra seize upon it. It passes through the upper strings, and then is suspended imminently in clarinet, oboe, and bassoon; at last, still retarding, one hears it plucked sharply from cello and double bass, quite unequivocally marking the completion of the composer's present thought.

As the present part of the symphony proceeds we shall find in it vivid reminiscences of mottoes from the preceding movements—in fact, there are almost literal repetitions of them. Derivations of the three-note subject that closed the preceding section of the movement appear, flute and oboe giving out the figure with a brilliant trill on its final note. Presently the mysterious voice of the horn presents, in contrast to this item, a form of the bold sentence that appeared as the first important theme of the fourth movement, with an added phrase of less defiant spirit; after a repetition of this subject in various subdued voices, out of the somberness shines the first motive of the second movement, the lovely English-horn melody in almost its original harmonic position, but somewhat altered rhythmically. In the recollection of the themes of the symphony Dvořák goes back even to the first movement, and in a derived form, the syncopated first subject of the opening part of the work now appears, this also in juxtaposition with the bold opening subject of the present movement.

The final section of the movement is devoted practically in its entirety to a résumé of the first themes of the preceding movements, all drawing to a splendid climax in which the first motive of the present movement is given with tremendous



force and decision. Statement of this theme, with harmonic suggestions of others, and a last strong but quickly fading chord, bring the symphony to an end.

Whether or not the "New World Symphony" is America's contribution to music has been discussed these many years, and though prejudices of one kind and another have long since expired, there are those who still insist that the work was inspired by American aboriginal and Negro music, as well as many more who assert the complete independence of the symphony from anything that Dvořák found in the music of America. That question will never be decided, for argument never convinced anyone. Nor is there need for either argument or decision; it is much more to the point to appreciate and enjoy a composition that is musically rich, highly original, completely sincere, and which, if it be not America's tribute to music, is surely music's most beautiful tribute to America.



## Concerto in B minor for Violoncello

[Opus 104]

THIS lovely music has particular interest for Americans, for with the E minor Symphony, the Quartet in F major, the Quintet in E flat, and the cantata *The American Flag*, as well as certain other works, it was written during Dvořák's stay in this country, and dates from 1895. Its first performance, however, was given in London, with the composer himself conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Leo Stern playing the solo part, on March 19, 1896. Another American note is interjected by the fact that Alwin Schroeder, a distinguished American cellist, was consulted by Dvořák concerning the writing of some of the more technical passages, and it was Mr. Schroeder who played the concerto for the first time in America, at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, December 19, 1896.

A third cellist was concerned also in the composition and earliest performances of the work, and apparently Dvořák feared that this cellist might be entirely too much concerned with it. The musician in question was Hans Wihan, founder of the Bohemian String Quartet, first cellist of the Munich Opera, and friend to Dvořák. He attended to the bowing and fingering of the solo part, and the work was dedicated to him. Having studied and worked hard on the composition, Dvořák was fearful that some of his work might be undone, or damaged, by soloists who might play it, and he wrote to his publishers: "I give you my work only if you will promise me that no one—not even my friend Wihan—shall make any alteration in it without my knowledge and permission, also that there be no cadenza such as

Wihan has made in the last movement; and that its form shall be as I have felt it and thought it out. The cadenza in the last movement is not to exist either in the orchestral or in the piano score; I informed Wihan, when he showed it to me, that it is impossible so to insert one. The finale closes gradually *diminuendo*" (*sic!*) "—like a breath—with reminiscences of the first and second movements; the solo dies away to a *pianissimo*, then there is a *crescendo*, and the last measures are taken up by the orchestra, ending stormily. That was my idea, and from it I cannot recede." Rather than risk any alteration, Dvořák himself inserted certain alternate and less difficult solo passages.

It is not surprising that Dvořák should have been so insistent upon a literal presentation of a work so difficult to write, and upon which he had expended so much study and effort. To create an extended work for cello is a task of very great difficulty. The problem is fundamentally related to the character of the solo instrument, which does not possess great variety of utterance. Primarily and naturally, the cello is a *singing* instrument, and the velocity and brilliance of utterance, the vocabulary, so to speak, of its smaller brothers of the viol family, are denied it. True, the virtuoso can execute upon the cello figures as complicated and almost as swift and varied as those of the violinist, but not even the virtuoso can make such pyrotechnics sound like music.

On the other hand, a concerto for cello composed entirely of singing melody, grave or gay, would be intolerable. Dvořák was one of the very few composers who have solved this problem adequately. In the cello concerto, the noble, broad, and masculine singing voice of the solo instrument is naturally employed, and extensively; but through his own musicianship, his careful, thoughtful study, and his readiness to consult expert opinion, the composer was able to add the variety of mood and utterance, the contrasts in figure and color that are necessary to make any concerto a viable work.

### *First Movement*

#### *Allegro*

There is conformity with convention in the long introduction which opens the movement. Here, if anywhere in the concerto, one may find recollections of native Negro melodies which so fascinated Dvořák; not at the beginning of the introduction, where the clarinets give out the principal theme, but later when the horns deliver a second subject—a warm and lyrical and languorous melody. Meanwhile, there are rhythmic and melodic developments of considerable extent and a high degree of emotional intensity; and the basic matter having been exposed, we proceed to the main body of the movement on the entrance of the solo cello.

Up to this point the conventional form has been followed fairly closely; but, after the cello's presentation, *risoluto*, *quasi improvvisando*, of the two basic subjects,

the music is treated in less formal fashion. Really formidable difficulties begin to appear in the solo part—swift arpeggios and many a terrifying figure shrewdly designed to set off the performer's skill, or expose his shortcomings; all leading to a determined statement of the principal theme. The cello proceeds with even more elaborate developments, approaching in both style and difficulty the status of a cadenza. Here Dvořák permitted an alternate solo part to be printed in the score.

With the reappearance of the second subject, in woodwind and violins, there is a transition to the parallel major (key of B), and after some development, the chief theme is stated once more, and a short coda ends the movement.

### *Second Movement*

#### *Adagio ma non troppo*

The cautioning modification "*ma non troppo*" was wise, for almost any cellist, or conductor, would be tempted to linger lovingly over these flowing melodies. Here perhaps, of all parts of the concerto, one might most reasonably expect the native American touch—but it does not exist in this movement. Clarinet unfolds the first subject, accompanied by oboe and bassoons; and the cello presently is attracted to the same melody. A second subject soon appears, with clarinet obbligato and leaping figures in the strings; then the theme is transferred to other instruments while the solo instrument itself assumes an obbligato position. Horns, with strong rhythmic support from the basses, renew our acquaintance with the chief theme, and there is a short cadenza, involving flute and bassoons as well as the solo cello. There is a long concluding section.

### *Third Movement*

#### *Finale. Allegro moderato*

One might have thought that the first movement exploits rather thoroughly the technical resources of the cello. The second movement, or any cantilena, could go on almost indefinitely without repetition—given a cello, a great player, and a fine orchestra. However, in the finale of this work, and incidentally the movement in which Dvořák is most definitely himself, the composer finds new and more difficult tasks for his soloist to accomplish; and does so without for a moment abandoning the movement as pure music merely to afford a display of the soloist's powers.

The fact is, of the three movements, this is the most exciting, the richest in emotional content. The forward-pacing rhythm set up by the winds (horns and oboes) indicates the imminence of important things, and in a moment the atmosphere of expectancy is intensified; whereupon the soloist enters. The cello gives out its version of the theme; the orchestra, in full, gives it emphatic emphasis, and adds a

new thematic fragment, which attracts the solo instrument also. The clarinet is made the vehicle for the introduction of the second chief theme, a gracious figure interestingly harmonized in the typical Dvořák manner, against a series of shapely figures traced out by the soloist. An interesting episode occurs a little later, when after a vigorous assertion by the full orchestra, there is a treatment in canon, by solo cello, flute, and oboe of a thematic fragment. The augmentation of an accompaniment figure with simultaneous diminution in its sonority brings us to the final section of the movement and a change of tempo to *moderato*.

Here a new subject is forthcoming, sounded by the cello, and seemingly the signal for free discussion of and (apparently) improvisation on the thematic matter. There are reminiscences of preceding themes, both from this and from the first movement, the first subject of which can be clearly discerned in the woodwind. The concluding measures of the movement follow the directions laid down by the composer.



### Scherzo capriccioso

A DELIGHTFUL movement exhibiting Dvořák's distinctive and colorful orchestration, and some of the engaging rhythms of the Bohemian music of which he was so fond. The title indicates the light and free character of the music. The horns alone present a leaping figure as introduction; the orchestra puts forward the vigorous main theme. There is a particularly lovely passage in swaying waltz rhythm, and sung with intensity of feeling by the violins; and another section, in which an English-horn solo is conspicuous, reveals again a melody almost as beautiful as that of the slow movement in Dvořák's symphony "From the New World." The whole work is full of lovely melody, which should be even more familiar to concert audiences than it is.

## SIR EDWARD ELGAR

[1857-1934]

EDWARD WILLIAM ELGAR was born at Broadheath, near Worcester, England. He comes of pure English stock, his father being a native of Dover, his mother belonging to a yeoman family of Herefordshire. The father was a musician by vocation as well as by avocation. He had a music shop in Worcester, and in his remaining time played the violin in a local orchestra, and was organist of the Roman Catholic Church of St. George. His taste ran to the classics.

Although the elder Elgar recognized his son's talent, he was unable to afford special guidance for him. Apart from a few violin and piano lessons the youth was left almost entirely to his own devices, drudging laboriously to lay the foundation for future musical expression. This struggle for knowledge was an early indication of Elgar's power of self-assertion; a beginning of his march toward a great ideal; namely, the making of music as a pure and sincere medium of self-expression, and the emancipation of British music.

Of distinct benefit to young Edward was the fact that various musical instruments were available to him. For example, he played bassoon in a wind quintet for which he is accredited with having written music. But his greatest successes were with the violin, which led him to positions in orchestras and appearances as a soloist. An important influence in Elgar's youth was his association with the Worcester Glee Club, an organization in which he appeared as conductor, violinist, and piano accompanist. During all this time of interpretative activities, he was busily engaged in composing music. After careful consideration he decided to abandon the idea of becoming a solo violinist, and in 1885 succeeded his father as organist at St. George's in Worcester.

In 1889 Elgar married the daughter of Major General Sir Henry Roberts, and her companionship and sympathetic encouragement were always a source of inspiration. After his marriage he took up his residence in London. Here his reception proved none too warm, but he continued composing, undaunted by the struggle for recognition. He was nearly forty years of age when he produced his now famous cantata, *King Olaf*. Later *The Dream of Gerontius*, after a poem by Cardinal Newman, was produced, but it was not until after its enthusiastic reception in Germany, where the favorable criticism of Richard Strauss brought the composer into prominence, that the work became popular in England and other countries.

The production in 1908 of his First Symphony marked Elgar as a master of that musical form, in recognition of which his knighthood of 1904 was augmented by the Order of Merit. From then on his successes were unquestioned. The English people have come to look upon him as their private Beethoven, and although Elgar's music scarcely ranks with that of the great classical masters, it has the

charm of sincerity and sound workmanship. The composer's devotion to his purpose of advancing the standards of English music, both in composition and execution, was one of his most admirable characteristics. When he died early in 1934, England lost a valuable protagonist of her claims to distinction in the field of music, nor is there, at the moment, any indication that Elgar's successor is alive.

In America Elgar is generally known almost entirely by the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, one of which has been adopted as a patriotic air, and used both in America and England. Unfortunately it is as unsingable as the *Star-Spangled Banner*, but we nevertheless often hear public assemblages and other groups struggling with *Land of Hope and Glory*.



## Variations on an Original Theme

[The "Enigma" Variations]

THE late Sir Edward Elgar has been represented more frequently on American programs by this work than by any other. It is possible that the music has exercised a fascination more through its puzzling qualities than by any intrinsic value. That is not to say that it has none; on the contrary, the theme and variations are most engaging, and worked out with the scholarly, though occasionally heavy, detail and finish characteristic of Elgar's best work. When, however, a composer poses a problem like this it is but natural that his friends and admirers should try to guess the answer. But no one has completely solved Sir Edward's riddle.

This music was performed, for the first time, under the direction of Hans Richter, on June 19, 1899, at London. It was the first contemporary English work which had much appealed to the distinguished conductor, and when he arrived in England from Germany to give a series of concerts, he was happy to be able to offer a native work of definitely outstanding musical value—a rare thing, from the Continental point of view. Richter's performances of the Variations had much to do with the establishment of Elgar in English minds as a great musician.

There is a basic theme, called the "Enigma" by Elgar himself (although the word does not appear in the formal title of the music) and a set of fourteen variations. The composer wished that the work should be regarded as absolute music, without regard to the significance of the Variations—to which, nevertheless, he



added the initials of certain friends, "not necessarily musicians." And he wrote, "The enigma I will not explain—its dark saying must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the apparent connection between the Variations and the theme is often of the slightest texture; further, through and over the whole set another and larger theme 'goes,' but it is not played." This is something of a poser, but good guessers insist on exercising their peculiar gifts, and several of the Variations have been identified with reasonable certainty. These are the first, which is headed by the initials of Lady Elgar; the ninth, entitled "Nimrod," suggests August Jaeger (German for hunter, or nimrod) who was a champion of Elgar's music; the eleventh, bearing the initials of George Robertson Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral and a friend of the composer.

The main theme with which the music begins is of a sturdy and significant character, but in the variations is modified, of course, to fit the personality Elgar had in mind in each case. It is evident from the lighter and gentler mood of the music, at times, that certain of the fourteen friends were women.

(NOTE: The program notes of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, by Felix Borowski, are the source of some of the facts about the "Enigma" Variations.)



## Concerto in B minor for Violin and Orchestra

THE B minor Concerto for Violin and Orchestra by Sir Edward Elgar is dedicated to Fritz Kreisler. It was performed for the first time at a concert of the Royal Philharmonic Society, at Queens Hall, London, on November 10, 1910, with Kreisler as soloist and the composer conducting. More recently it has been revived by the violinist Yehudi Menuhin.

It was natural that with Elgar's knowledge of the capabilities of the violin his concerto for that instrument would arouse interest. Then, when it became known that the great Kreisler was to introduce it to the musical world, its performance became one of the high spots of the London season. Nor did the work fail to fulfill the expectations of the composer's most enthusiastic admirers, and soon many of the world's great soloists included it in their repertoires. That the work should pass into the ranks of standard concertos is easily understood when one considers its wealth of expression, its richness of melodic content, the beauty of its harmonies and instrumental color. It exacts a heavy technical toll from the soloist, but only by way of obtaining artistic effects. Not one measure in the entire work exploits technical ability per se. The composition is a magnificent ensemble like a broad, beautiful song; restless, rising to great emotional heights, and always sound and convincing.

### *First Movement*

The concerto begins with passages for full orchestra in which several themes are announced and developed. Four distinct motives linked together, each having its particular sphere of activity, spring from the first subject. Then the broad singing melody, which, in its fuller development, becomes the second theme, is softly hinted at by strings and wind choir in lower register. Gradually this phrase is brought forward in tender comment of woodwinds and strings. The orchestra then dwells principally upon the opening motives until a sustained tone for horn provides a background for the entrance of the solo instrument. It is a quiet entrance, but one of gripping beauty and warmth. As the music progresses, the theme becomes more and more animated and colorful. The motives of the first subject are carefully developed, after which the lovely second subject is fully commented upon in passionate tenderness. The treatment of the material already stated holds the interest throughout the development and recapitulation. A vigorous reference to the opening motives terminates the movement.

### *Second Movement*

The andante, in the key of B-flat major, is from beginning to end a poem of contemplation and tenderness. The orchestra states a prayerful theme. The solo instrument then repeats it, slightly altered, flowing along calmly and meditatively to a middle section which develops a second theme. Here the music acquires more warmth and intensity. Passages of deep tenderness for the solo instrument are matched against a sturdy orchestral background. Then toward the close of the movement the music re-establishes the mood of contemplation, dying away in serenity and peace.

### *Third Movement*

The animation of this movement is strongly contrasted to the quiet of the andante. Brilliant passage work for the solo instrument, punctuated by chords for full orchestra, precede a surging of staccato scales of breath-taking rapidity. These recall the lovely theme of the preceding movement, stated first by the solo instrument and repeated by the orchestra, while the violin wreathes the whole with sparkling triplet figures. Material from the first movement now engrosses orchestra and solo instrument. A scintillating cadenza, which affords the soloist wonderful material for technical and interpretative display, follows. A rather mysterious effect is achieved in the orchestra by a *pizzicato tremolando* given to a portion of the strings. This is obtained by directing the players to drum softly on the strings with



the fleshy part of their fingers—a device recently adopted by the jazz bass player, who slaps the strings instead of bowing or plucking them.

A sustained trill for the soloist, and a repetition of the opening motive for the orchestra which is immediately silenced by the solo instrument, precede the end of the cadenza. Immediately a vigorous passage in the solo instrument soars over a restatement of the material of the opening; then impressive chords for the violin lead to a short coda.

# MANUEL DE FALLA

[Born 1876]

FALLA is among the most important of living composers, and very probably the greatest in Spain. He was born at Cádiz, and the foundation of his musical education was laid there while he was a boy. He studied piano and composition, later, at Madrid, and though definitely nationalistic in his musical ideas, he went to France for further study. Here he came in contact with many of the leaders in modern French music, among them Ravel, whose marked Spanish sympathies are well known, Dukas, and Debussy, who became a friend to Falla and was keenly admired by him.

Falla's music for the piano is as distinguished as that for orchestra and other instruments and combinations of instruments. He has perhaps done more than any other individual toward arousing interest in present-day music of Spain and Spanish America, and has unselfishly propagandized for the compositions of others, including musicians of Cuba, Mexico, and South America, as well as those of Spain.

When the First World War broke out, Falla left France, and has since maintained a residence at Granada.



## Danza Ritual del Fuego

*Ritual Dance of Fire, to Exorcise Evil Spirits*

[From the choreographic fantasy, *El Amor Brujo*]

THE musical work of which the *Fire Dance* is the most popular excerpt has a title which is not to be accurately translated into English. *Love, the Magician* does not nearly convey the intended meaning, but it is in fairly common use. The music, in its original form with vocal parts, was performed for the first time April 15, 1915, at Madrid. The orchestral version by Falla was introduced into America by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, April 15, 1922; and remarkable performances of the complete work were given at Paris during the season of 1928.

The music is divided into twelve sections, including both instrumental and vocal parts. In the orchestral arrangement, the voice parts are usually omitted, and the orchestration augmented. The work is based on Andalusian folk tales, and tells the story of a gypsy girl whose dead lover is jealous of the attentions being paid her by his very lively successor. In a series of distressing apparitions, the ghost

attempts to interrupt the progress of his former sweetheart's new romance. Another gypsy girl, bold even beyond her kind, flirts with the ghost himself, and eventually so distracts him from his purpose that the earthly love he sought to prevent is carried out to its logical conclusion without fear of necromantic interruptions.

A weird effect in plucked and bowed strings suggests the darkly flickering fire, reflected from the oozy walls of a cavern. The oboe insinuates a seductive tune, and strange rhythms move secretly underneath. At intervals, terrifying chords in full orchestra interrupt the fierce dance, yet always the sensuous rhythm persists, and thin insinuating voices penetrate the music. The fire motive has periods of dominance, but there is a steady growth and progression toward the abandoned wildness of the final climax.

## CÉSAR FRANCK

[1822-1890]

CÉSAR AUGUSTE FRANCK, in many respects the greatest of "French" composers, was born at Liège, Belgium, of a family of artists, on December 10, 1822. His father's people were directly descended from a long line of painters who were conspicuous in that art through the sixteenth century. His mother was of German blood. The father, noting signs of talent in his boy, saw to it that he was given adequate instruction in piano, first at Liège, and later at Paris, where the family moved in 1835. Later the young Franck entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he achieved notable success and prizes in pianoforte, organ, and composition.

It was at this time that Franz Liszt, one of the greatest virtuosos of the piano in musical history, was startling Europe with his performances, and winning for himself fame and wealth. The elder Franck was ambitious for his talented son, and hoped that he too might, by diligent work and shrewd management, achieve a parallel success. César, naturally modest and retiring, did not regard this idea with any noticeable eagerness, and thereby incurred parental disapproval. He further complicated matters by bringing into the strait-laced Franck family, as his wife, a famous young actress of the Comédie Française. His marriage was the last straw, and he was obliged to leave his father's household, and maintain himself as best he could by giving piano instruction, and later, on his none too generous income as an organist. In 1858, however, fortune smiled upon him, and he was appointed to the post of organist at the fashionable church of Sainte-Clotilde. His success here was marked—so much so that he was retained in the position until his death. What is more important, the organist's position gave him time for composition.

As organist, Franck's extraordinary skill, both in executing the works of the masters and in improvising his own, amazed and delighted his auditors; but his compositions were appreciated by few while he lived. Not until he was almost ready to die did the bigoted musical public of Paris, fascinated by composers of more obvious merits, permit him a really notable success.

Franck certainly was one of the most lovable of the great composers. He was possessed of a curious and engaging and naïve candor, and at the same time of a deep spirituality and gentleness that endeared him to all who knew him. His innocence and sincerity were conspicuous characteristics. When the D minor Symphony was first played publicly, the family were naturally interested, and when the composer returned home from the concert, they eagerly asked if it had been a success—meaning, of course, to ask if the audience had applauded and received it well. Franck smiled his beatific smile, and rather absently answered, "Oh yes, it sounded beautiful, just as I thought it would."

The composer was a devout Catholic and deeply mystical; the brooding and spiritual beauty of his music, especially of the improvisations with which he so sweetly filled the echoing nave of Sainte-Clotilde's, caused it to be said of him that he "conversed not with men but with angels."

Notwithstanding his Belgian and German ancestry, Franck is justly regarded as a French composer. His training was almost exclusively French, and in his personal sympathies he was definitely and enthusiastically a Frenchman. Indeed, shortly after the war of 1870, during which he had been as anxious and disturbed as anyone because of the precarious condition of France, he became a French citizen. His compositions, in their meticulous attention to detail and their perfection of form, in their clarity, unity, and logic, are characteristically French. Finally, his was the influence that helped to develop the golden period of French music during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when such men as Pierné, Ropartz, Lekeu, Chausson, Duparc, Bordes, and d'Indy—all pupils of Franck—brought new vitality and significance to French music.

Franck did not leave a great quantity of music, if that is important. The trying circumstances that beset him practically all his life made composition difficult, and under such conditions the amount, not to mention the quality, of his work is really extraordinary. Among the larger instrumental forms, he wrote (in almost every instance) only one of each variety; but in every case that one is a masterpiece. The Symphony in D minor, the Quartet in D major, the Piano Quintet in F minor; the Violin Sonata in A major, the Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra, the Prelude, Choral, and Fugue for piano, the Chorals for Organ, the oratorio *Les Béatitudes*—all are masterpieces in their genre.

César Franck was never a robust man, but the quiet routine of his life and the shining happiness of his inward being helped to prolong his days. One day in 1890 he was injured in an omnibus accident while on the way to the home of a pupil. Though apparently he recovered, the injury nevertheless resulted in complications which caused his death a few months later, November 8, 1890.



## Symphony in D minor

IN SPITE of Franck's satisfaction on hearing the first performance of his only symphony, it must be recorded that neither orchestra nor audience regarded it very highly. The public first heard the work at the Paris Conservatoire on February 19, 1889. Had the orchestra's opinion been regarded by the management, the work would not have been performed at all—and it must be remembered that this was

no ordinary orchestra, but one made up then, as it is now, of professors and distinguished students of orchestral instruments, and therefore given to strong sentiments and emphatic expression of them. The enthusiasm of the conductor, M. Jules Garcin, at length prevailed, and the concert was given. The public, however, remained either uncomprehending or openly hostile. Vincent d'Indy, a pupil of Franck, in his biography of the composer describes the attitude of the audience:

The subscribers could make neither head nor tail of it, and the musical authorities were much in the same position. I inquired of one of them—a professor at the Conservatoire and a kind of factotum of the committee—what he thought of the work. “That, a symphony?” he replied in contemptuous tones. “But, my dear sir, who ever heard of writing for the English horn in a symphony? Just mention a single symphony by Haydn or Beethoven introducing the English horn. There, well, you see—your Franck’s music may be whatever you please, but it will certainly never be a symphony.” This was the attitude of the Conservatoire in the year of grace 1889. At another door of the concert hall, the composer of *Faust* (Gounod) escorted by a train of adulators, male and female, fulminated a kind of papal decree to the effect that this symphony was the affirmation of incompetence pushed to dogmatic lengths.

Of course this was but one more instance of the curious inability of most people to accept with open mind and heart anything that differs from the conventional. It has happened before, in music; it happens with each succeeding season, and it will continue to happen as long as human nature remains what it is. Nevertheless, we are still, in these days, puzzled by it, especially when we consider the extraordinary popularity of this symphony, its wealth of tender and beautiful melody, its drama, its conflict of mind and spirit, its opulent tonal color. The French say that to understand all is to forgive all. Since we think we have come to understand this music, it is possible that, unlike Franck’s contemporaries, we can forgive daring and originality and even honesty of purpose that disregards all else.

### *First Movement*

The mystic cycle of this symphony begins with the strange and fateful question that has troubled the spirits of so many men of music. Down in the deep and gloomy recesses of tone where only the great basses can speak, we hear, softly and portentously, the wondering phrase—a phrase that Beethoven wrote, almost identically, as the question “Must it be?” in one of the last quartets\*; that mighty Wagner used with dreadful significance in the titanic *Ring* tetralogy; that even the facile and superficial Liszt found occasion for, in *Les Préludes*.

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\* Quartet in F major, Op. 135.

## Violas, Cellos, and Basses



This curious, doubting, and soul-wearied question is the emotional basis of the whole symphony. Throughout the present movement, it is asked by almost every voice of the orchestra, in almost every possible accent; persuasively, piteously, impetuously, hopefully, and almost despairingly. Even at those moments when it seems temporarily banished from the composer's heart, we can almost always find it lurking secretively, buried under more suave and happier utterances; but it is there, leading us with the music through mysterious mazes of distracting loveliness. There is neither escape nor answer. The bittersweet tones of descending woodwinds and strings do not satisfy this persistent questioning, nor is there more than momentary comfort in the lovely song of the strings, coming from pale ethereal heights to warm low soothing utterances. Tremulous flights of tone, again in the strings, suggest the beating of caged pinions; and they beat in vain. Sudden fortissimo chords upraised like barriers against flight, and now the strings together project, with new and stronger emphasis, the questioning motto of the movement. Swift modulations to new tonalities only bring more intense and passionate expression. Yet there are moments when tentative answers to the tormented soul-questioning of the theme begin to appear—moments of such rare and diaphanous and unearthly beauty as to snatch at one's heart and stop one's breathing. There is the piteous half answer of the flute, and the hopeful contemplation of the solo horn, intimating the quiet and the peace that may come. What storms rage through the music thereafter do not banish the faint glimmerings of ultimate glories, and even the relentless and magnificently powerful final utterance of the questioning theme, at the end of the movement, ends upon an exalted major chord that promises ultimate triumph.

It seems somewhat beside the point to disintegrate, even in words, the lovely plastic material of which this music is made. Its structural features are discernible, if not obvious; and despite the multitude of musical elements contained in it, its unity is extraordinarily perfect. Students will doubtless observe the frequency with which Franck resorts to the contrapuntal device of the canon; his modulations to remotely related tonalities; his expansion of the characteristic first-movement form to dimensions adequate to the thought he wished to convey; and the importance given the third theme. The cyclic form, by which the movements are thematically connected, and the logical development and unity of the symphony thereby tremendously enhanced, was not of course original with Franck except in the sense that,

even when employed by Beethoven in the Ninth, it was not used as effectively, nor with such intimate union of thematic ideas.

### *Second Movement*

The English horn, in the hands of an undistinguished player, can be exceedingly disagreeable. Its tone is susceptible of many subtle variations in quality, and not only technical ability, but keen musical taste and discernment, are necessary equipment of the instrumentalist if the beautiful possibilities of this curious oboe are to be realized. Franck, with his acute sense of color, must have heard, or must have had an ideal of, the perfect executant upon this instrument, for in the present movement he has created for the *cor anglais* one of the loveliest melodies ever written for it. But this is a dangerous movement, and a dangerous melody, for a conductor can, by incorrect tempo, either sentimentalize or despiritualize the music and the theme, while the solo player, by unsympathetic phrasing or an ill-chosen reed, can pervert and destroy the essential beauty of the melody.



Harp and pizzicato strings suggest the outlines of the theme as the movement begins. At the seventeenth bar the solo voice of the English horn enters with its exquisitely melancholy song, its brooding tones shadowing the somber theme with rich dark brilliance. A thought upon this theme reveals that it is remotely derived from the fateful and persistent question that moved throughout the whole first movement; and as the music now grows in contemplative spirit, it is as if that old interrogation were taken up and considered in a new and more philosophical light.

The pizzicato strings and harp continue, for a space, in the accompaniment. Presently violas add a poignant countermelody of their own; clarinet and horn in unison continue the theme, and as the flute adds its brighter and more hopeful voice, the cellos are drawn to the countertheme.

Here is one of the loveliest moments in symphonic music—and curiously, one which most commends the symphony to us today, though it was a particular affront to the listeners at the first performance. Why do we love this music so much? To the senses it is a delight—but our senses can be delighted often and variously, and Franck was not the first to use the instruments that sing to us here. It can only be because, in this symphony, there is revealed to us a deep and kindly and lovable spirit, a spirit that strained against the doubts and futilities and disillusionment of this world, and who, while giving expression to the struggles that raged—despite



his placid exterior—within his great and simple soul, is able also to lead us to glimpses of a light beyond the world.

There are flights toward that light as the movement progresses—flights of swift muted notes, like the beatings of thousands of invisible wings, coursing the misty upper airs in clouds of vibrant color and life. Incredibly we find that even this will-o'-the-wisp figure is remotely derived from the eternal question of the first movement—notwithstanding its soaring hopefulness. The meaning seems clear: out of eternal questioning, someday comes an answer; out of living, life.

What if, presently, the fluttering pinions droop, and the sad song of the English horn returns? There has been a moment of pellucid light; there has been a gleam of something from afar, and now the music moves more certainly, with more vitality, toward the coming vision. That vision is not beheld, for the present; yet there are clear intimations of the direction from which it shall come in the slow ascent of luminous tones arising from the harp.

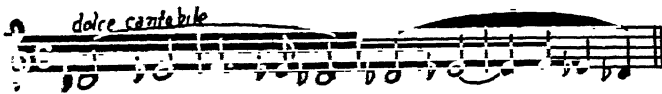
While the symphony is formally divided into three movements, the second movement is actually a combination, an intimate joining, of two distinct sections, the latter of which could very logically be regarded as the scherzo of the work. This part begins following the first abandonment of the theme introduced by English horn, and opens with the fluttering motive of the strings and the answering cadence of the woodwinds. The rhythmic pattern of the two sections changes temporarily with the introduction of the second theme, which would establish a new mood and movement, but the intimate connection of the themes, and the significance with which they are contrasted, weld them together in such a way as to lead the composer to unify them in a single movement. As a matter of fact, it is not difficult to imagine how the composer, if it had suited his purpose, could by transitional passages have joined the entire symphony into a single movement. The sequence of moods is so natural and logical, and the thematic unity so perfect, as to make such an achievement perfectly possible in theory.

### *Third Movement*

Why music in a major tonality suggests happiness, and in the minor conveys varying degrees of melancholy, must be an interesting matter for speculation by the psychologist. True, it does happen that gay sentiments are sometimes transmitted through music in the minor mode, yet there is usually a wry or macabre quality in such gaiety. It is likewise true that the major keys can hold within themselves music that is sad. But in all these exceptions, rhythm has an influence too; and the fact remains that a single chord in the major seems bright; in the minor, depressing.

The very first brief chords that usher in the theme of the third movement change the entire atmosphere. At once there is brightness; at once, hope and good

spirits. The theme that follows hard upon the opening chords sustains these happier feelings, and replacing the melancholy, the philosophical, and pensive, and at times almost despairing significance of the music, there comes a feeling of wholesomeness and vitality and energy as welcome as a cool and sunlit breeze. Indeed, there is something breezy in the soft-spoken but vigorous theme as cellos and bassoons announce it. It is wonderful that—as yet—no creator of fox trots has discovered it. It is a cheerful and ingratiating tune, with syncopation all ready-made, and nothing but reorchestration necessary to make it the masterwork of a Tin Pan Alley genius. Adopted by the violins, and punctuated vigorously with elastic syncopations, it swiftly becomes an exultant song. There is a swift diminuendo, and then softly from the brass comes the solemn yet joyous second theme—the choral-like utterance of triumph that is to climax the movement and the symphony.



“Here,” says Leopold Stokowski, “César Franck seems to come from his church into the sunlight and life of his friends outside.” And Ropartz, in his critical comment upon this music, asks, “What is there more joyous, more sanely vital, than the principal subject of the finale, around which all other themes in the work cluster and crystallize? The symphony is a continual ascent toward gladness and life-giving light, because its workmanship is solid, and its themes are manifestations of ideal beauty.”

All the other themes do cluster and crystallize about this noble proclamation of the brass—and indeed gradually efface its first utterance as they recall the troubled past, and intrude themselves, at times to the point of domination, into the texture of the present movement. But there is power in the basic thought of this movement, and remembrances of the doubts and sorrows of what has gone before are presently thrust aside with almost hysterically joyous cries. Once more the great choral theme is proclaimed by full orchestra, and then there is a recession of orchestral light, and a period of contemplation. There are meditations of the woodwind, and anxious questions of the strings; yet again comes the once melancholy subject of the second movement, but now gloriously transmuted into a great song of gladness; now bravely shouted forth in brazen voices and joyously trembling strings.

The dark past with its misgivings can now be reviewed as some dreadful night that is gone, some fevered imagining driven away by the coolness of sanity and newborn day, and as final uncertainties are overcome, and perceived as definitely in the past, the great choral theme, after a passage of joyous frenzy, projects

itself in glittering blades of tones from the whole orchestra. All evil and all doubt at last done away, we see "the vision splendid."



## Les Éolides

THE AEOLIDAE is of importance to the student because it was Franck's first venture into the form of the symphonic poem—in fact, his first orchestral music of any magnitude; but to the nontechnical listener its charm lies in the lovely effect of breathing winds, of warm and fragile airs, which the composer achieves in it.

Aeolus was the god of the winds; also, a mythical king who discovered the uses of wind and sail. The Aeolidae were soft southern winds, welcome for their gentleness and warmth, in contrast to Zephyr, the violent and cold north wind. Franck's symphonic poem is said to have been inspired by the verses of Leconte de Lisle, beginning:

"O floating breezes of the skies, sweet breaths of the fair spring, that caress the hills and plains with freakish kisses . . . eternal nature wakens to your songs." The music is developed from a brief, pianissimo phrase of chromatic structure; and upon this fragile basis the composer builds up a wonderful texture of suggestive sound.

# ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV

[1865-1936]

GLAZUNOV is one of the many Russian composers who came under the influence of Balakirev and, particularly, Rimsky-Korsakov. His father was well known as a publisher and bookseller, and was sufficiently interested in music to give young Alexander an opportunity to develop the musical gifts which he exhibited as a child. At nine, Alexander began the study of piano and theory, and at thirteen he was able to compose music of considerable merit.

Balakirev suggested that Glazunov study privately with Rimsky, and under that great master the brilliant young man made swift and satisfying progress. Balakirev played his first symphony when the composer was only sixteen years old, and Anton Rubinstein, conducting the orchestra of the Russian Musical Society, performed an overture by the rising young genius. Liszt, always willing to listen, and to further the musical ambitions of talented young men, helped matters along by arranging for a symphony of Glazunov to be played at Weimar, and from that time on his success was assured.



## Concerto in A minor for Violin and Orchestra

LEOPOLD AUER, doubtless the greatest teacher of violin ever to draw bow, was the first performer of this music, giving it with the assistance of the orchestra of the Imperial Music Society thirty-five years ago. Here, as elsewhere, the composer reveals his inclination toward the classical style. In spite of his nationality, and the powerful influences exerted by his associates of the Russian school, the music is not particularly Russian in character. It is beautifully written for the solo instrument, and its orchestration, while not rich, is highly distinctive, and an admirable foil for the solo eloquence of the violin. It is in three movements, but is designed for performance without interruption.

### *First Movement*

Minor and melancholy, the violin sings an expressive melody against restrained accompaniment in woodwind, and brings about an atmosphere of meditation and repose. A second solo violin melody is sung, and is worthy of note if one is following the thematic structure of the concerto, for it will appear from time to time through the music. The violin section reinforces it. A remembrance of the

first theme is brought in by cellos and violins, and with a touch of the harp and a descending passage for solo violin, the second movement begins.

### *Second Movement*

The movement is exceedingly clear and melodious. The soloist gives out a lovely song in the warmest tones of his instrument that gradually becomes more agitated and involves some brilliant playing in scales and figuration. Woodwind reminds us of the second theme from the preceding movement, and the solo instrument decorates it with bright arabesques of tone. Then the relation of violin and orchestra is reversed, with the melody in the former, and the orchestra, most noticeably the flute, developing intricate ornamentation. There is a fiery cadenza for the soloist, and the final section is begun.

### *Third Movement*

Such contrasting voices as violin and trumpet are employed, in the lively finale, in a rather brisk dialogue; later, the softly rounded tones of horn and solo violin are entangled in an ascending figure. A growing agitation, sometimes crisply staccato, recalls the opening measures, and brings the vivacious concluding passages.

# REINHOLD GLIÈRE

[Born 1874]

**B**OTH MUSICALLY and chronologically, Glière occupies an important place between the extreme moderns who are now his contemporaries, and the last of the great nationalistic Russian composers. He was born at Kiev, and educated at Moscow Conservatory, where he studied composition under Taneiev and Ippolitov-Ivanov. He was a brilliant student, and won a gold medal for composition in his graduation year. He lived in various European cities, but the disturbances incident to the war prevented a permanent residence until finally he returned to Russia, where he was appointed head of the Kiev Conservatory. He made a distinguished success of what seemed a hopeless task, bringing the school through a series of troubles to a position of security and importance.

Glière has maintained his standing with Soviet government and people; his ballet, *The Red Poppy*, is at present one of the most popular musical works heard in Soviet entertainment centers.



## Symphony No. 3 in B minor

[“*Ilia Mourometz*”]

THIS symphony, of prodigious length and enormous interest, has for its theme and inspiration a group of ancient Russian folk tales, concerning a hero not entirely legendary, who may have lived during the twelfth century. This was Ilia Mourometz, a man of infinite valor and strength, who feasted and fought on a grand scale, was converted to the Christian faith, and is supposed to have become, eventually (and in no flippant sense), ossified.

Glière inserts, as a foreword to his score, the following story, the basis of the symphony, in Russian and French:

### I.

In the ancient days when the benign Prince Vladimir reigned, there lived a peasant's son named Ilia Mourometz. This young man, for thirty years, had strangely remained motionless in a sitting posture: until one day two wandering strangers, who were really gods, came and cried to him, “Arise and go! You are fated to be a famous and powerful hero!” Ilia arose inspired, and went forth into the lovely countryside. He took a great horse, worthy of a hero, and set out to find a kindred spirit, the great knight

Sviatogor. This giant was so huge that he was restricted to the mountaintops of Sviaty Gory, for the land of Holy Russia would not bear his weight. Ilia boldly approached the great one, greeting him respectfully; and they became friends.

The two heroes mounted swift horses, and coursed over the mountaintops, entertaining themselves with games and trials of skill and strength. They came upon a huge sarcophagus, so deep that when Sviatogor placed himself within it, he could not be extricated; and then he knew that his doom was upon him. But before he died he gave his secrets and his advice to Ilia. Then the dew of death came upon him, and he breathed no more. His powers were transmitted to Ilia, who leaped upon his charger and took the highroad to the great city Kiev. His gigantic steed took lakes and rivers at a bound, and the swish of his tail razed cities.

## II.

In a dark woodland there lived the ferocious Solovéi the Brigand. The road to the seven towering oaks beneath which lay his stronghold was dangerous; slippery and guarded by barriers. This villainous fellow could send forth sweet cries, like a nightingale, or ferocious, bloodthirsty bellowings; he was strong enough to lay forests low, and to crush the unhappy men who might be beneath the trees. He kept three enticing maidens, who played with heaps of gold and silver and jewels, and enticed the unwary with gifts. As Solovéi hears the tread of Ilia's mighty warhorse, he roars with rage, he sends out his seductive birdsong. Ilia answers the summons with an arrow of incandescent steel from his unerring bow. The glowing dart pierces the right eye of Solovéi the Robber; and he falls prostrate on the damp ground. Ilia lashes the unhappy giant to his stirrup leather, and drags him away toward the palace of Vladimir, the prince.

## III.

Vladimir is holding revelry with the heroes and the nobility. Ilia comes before the great gate of the palace, and commands the wounded and captive Solovéi to give forth his cries and his birdsongs. The cowed brigand obeys; the walls and the roof of the palace tremble, the heroes and the noblemen fall—all except Vladimir, and even he is shaken. Then Ilia beheads the cowering Solovéi, and the grateful Vladimir acknowledges him as hero, and gives him the seat of honor at the princely table. Vladimir's guests salute Ilia as brother.

## IV.

In Orda, the land of gold, there arose the chieftain Batygha the Wicked and his pagan host, so numerous that the breath of their horses obscured the

sunlight like a cloud, so villainous that their very odor suffocated a Christian. But Ilia Mourometz at the head of his twelve warriors advanced against them defying them; and battled for twelve days. Then a warrior, huge and terrible as a mountain, detached himself from each of the opposing forces; Ilia Mourometz on one side, Oudalaya Polyenitsa on the other. They rushed together, and in the first encounter neither was injured. Then each seized the other's horse by the mane; still neither was unhorsed. They dismounted and wrestled on the ground. From evening until dawn they struggled, and Ilia was thrown to the ground. But from the warm earth he gained new strength, and dealt his adversary such a mighty stroke upon the breast that the man was driven high above the trees of the forest. Ilia seized the senseless form, put out its eyes, chopped off the head, and mounting this grisly trophy on a Tartar lance, bore it aloft before the cheers of his comrades-in-arms.

Seven of Ilia's heroes advanced with him, scornfully shouting, "Where is the celestial army that we so lately overcame?" Hardly had they pronounced the words, when two mighty warriors sprang from the earth. "Advance, then, heroes," shouted these, "let us have a trial of strength." The two warriors advanced; Ilia cut them down, but they became four, and unhurt. Ilia butchered these, and they became eight, whole and menacing. All of Ilia's men threw themselves upon the enemy, but these continued to multiply, and the little band of heroes fled toward the mountains. As they approached the towering hills, one by one they were turned to stone. Only Ilia remained—and he too turned toward the heights; he too was suddenly stiffened into motionless stone. And since then there have been no more heroes in Holy Russia. (*Translated freely by G. O'C.*)

### *First Movement*

The symphony is tremendously elaborated, and its outlines are often covered with a dense, rich layer of orchestral color. Usually the music is not played in its entirety: for practical reasons cuts are made here and there, and even with them, the symphony can be tedious in any but the most expert hands.

The movement proper is preceded by an introduction, based upon mysterious suggestions from horn and strings, both muted, and forecasting the thematic ideas of the main body of the movement. There are rhythmic indications of growing excitement in the music, and as the tale unfolds, *cor anglais*, and again oboe with strings, suggest thematic material ripe for development; the chief theme of the movement comes, vigorously and strongly rhythmized, in cellos and bassoons. The introduction to the movement is probably intended to suggest the wandering stranger who galvanized the immobile Ilia into life; the theme of the bassoons and cellos could represent the sturdy fellow himself.



Now there is a considerable period of elaborate development, as we observe the exploits of the protagonist and his development to the stature of hero. There comes a pause; then a resumption of the music in a mysterious atmosphere, and a softly intoned theme for the brass, like a choral—hinting, perhaps, at Ilia's eventual turning toward a very muscular Christianity. All the thematic material is now developed on the broadest lines, and every orchestral instrument is required to present its most gorgeous and striking tones. Interesting use is made of the percussion section.

### *Second Movement*

This section is largely given over to a musical portrait of Solovéi the Brigand. His birdlike warblings are frequently heard, first in flutes and at intervals in other woodwinds. The contrabassoon has a figure which must be the lusty roars of the brutal fellow, and near the end of the movement this becomes particularly terrifying as it is shouted out in the powerful voices of trombones (muted), bassoon, and double bass. But the movement ends with little fierceness, and a gradual retraction of orchestral forces.

### *Third Movement*

Now we observe Ilia at the court of the Prince Vladimir. Gently plucked harp strings suggest the improvisations of a minstrel, and presently a voice—clarinet—is heard, closely followed by flute, in a quick but somewhat hesitant figure. This is the basis for a considerable section of the movement, but there are other, rather fragmentary themes, and occasional references to thematic material from preceding sections of the symphony.

### *Fourth Movement*

Here the composer pictures in music the incredible performances of Ilia on the field of battle—prodigies of valor which are arrested only when the gigantic hero is turned into stone. Ominous mutterings of the drums, both timpani and bass; mysterious utterances of the horns (muted), and strange groanings in the strings, prepare us for a scene of terror and strife. As the battle rages this way and that, the orchestra follows with a fugue based on a powerful theme of cellos and bassoons. Hoarse brasses intrude a fierce warlike note, but references to material from the first movement have a calming effect. Mighty climaxes are yet to be attained, however. In the quieter portions that succeed one of these, we may pause and wonder if the dying brigand had put a curse upon our Ilia, for we hear remembrances of that villain's birdlike cries, and shortly thereafter occurs the awful miracle in which heroic Ilia is turned to immovable stone.



## Yablochko

[*Dance of Drunken Sailor*]

THOUGH Glière's music has not appeared with great frequency on orchestra programs in this country, this brilliant extract from the ballet *The Red Poppy* has become, almost overnight, a favorite encore piece and a rather frequent feature of radio concerts.

Typical Russian dance rhythm whips the music through its brief duration to a climax of terrific intensity. The dance is really a simple theme with a series of variations. Its first presentation is heavy and awkward, like a rough fellow whose legs betray him when he essays, with drunken insistence, a difficult dance step. Basses and cellos, roughly bowed, present the theme; later, upper strings and woodwinds giggle and squeak, and always there is an acceleration and a steady swift growth in orchestral power. The rhythm grows mad; powerful syncopations suggest halting and unsteady footwork on the part of the drunken dancer, and finally, exhilarated by vodka and excitement, he completes the dance in a last desperate and powerful rush, which the orchestra accompanies with all enthusiasm.

# MIKHAIL IVANOVICH GLINKA

[1803-1857]

GLINKA WAS BORN into a well-to-do upper-class Russian family, and lived a protected, not to say pampered, childhood life. He was given opportunity to study music, and in his youth worked under several distinguished teachers. The visits of peasant bands to the home of his father acquainted him with much of the rich folk music of Russia, and aroused an interest in that music which was eventually to inspire some of the most original and highly nationalistic of Russian music.

As a young man, Glinka occupied a government position in St. Petersburg, but found time both for travel and, later on, devoted study of ancient and contemporary music. His old interest in the folk songs of his country revived, but an acquaintance, made during one of his Italian visits, with operatic composers such as Donizetti and Bellini, resulted in a temporary fascination with Italian music. However, it is probable that contact with these composers gave birth to the idea of Glinka's composing a national opera of his own, and eventually he did: *A Life for the Tsar*. It was sensationally successful, not only in that it won public acclaim, but because of its expression in music of a true and thoroughly Russian spirit. Another opera, *Ruslan and Ludmilla*, was a failure in public estimation, but was in fact Glinka's greatest musical work.

It is interesting to observe that the works of this composer, though emphatically national in origin (and important on that score alone), have also a warmth and facility of expression, and sometimes an exuberant and unrestrained happiness, that Glinka must have borrowed from the Italians. It is probable that many more notable works would have been brought into being by this remarkably gifted musician had not his delicate health and other factors delayed the beginning of his musical career past the point at which full musical development usually begins.



## Overture to "Ruslan and Ludmilla"

THE opera *Ruslan and Ludmilla* was suggested by the poem similarly titled, by Pushkin. The poet was to arrange the libretto, but before he had more than begun the work, he was killed in a duel. Glinka was nevertheless determined to use the theme of the poem as a basis for his opera, and eventually a libretto was evolved. The opera was not a success, chiefly because of the poorly constructed "book," but the music eventually was recognized as probably the best Glinka had written.

The fable of Russlan and Ludmilla is an ancient one, but the theme is not wholly unfamiliar. Three princes seek the hand of Ludmilla, herself a princess; but she has given her love to Russlan. Her father promises her hand to the suitor who will rescue her from the clutches of Chernomor, a magician who also desires the princess. Russlan acquires a magic sword, and with its help rescues his beloved. But they are waylaid on the road home by one of the rival princes, who puts a hypnotic sleep upon them, and brings the princess back to her father's house, demanding her hand as his reward. Meanwhile Russlan awakens, and arrives at the psychological moment to claim his bride, and marry her.

The overture employs material from the opera, largely drawn from the finale; and hence for the most part is of a brilliant and cheerful character. Full chords, fortissimo, precede a strong melody sung by the violins, violas, and woodwind. A period of development follows, with minor climaxes; then another and more fluid theme appears in the bassoon and lower strings. It is repeated in full orchestra, and interestingly developed. The concluding passages of the overture are tremendously brilliant and lively.

# CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD VON GLUCK

[1714-1787]

GLUCK WAS BORN in a castle, his family belonging to the household of a German prince; and his childhood training was not inferior, in important matters, to the education of a princeling. He learned as a little boy to play on several musical instruments, and later was able to support himself by his abilities along this line. The interest of patrons of music made it possible for him to study extensively and thoroughly, both in his own country and in Italy, then the most important center of musical culture in the world. He was attracted, as a composer, to the operatic form, and though his earliest efforts in this direction met with some success, it was not until many years later that he brought about the revolution in operatic style upon which his fame chiefly rests.

Gluck journeyed to England and to France, and in Paris, attending many operas, he began to perceive the serious faults of the operatic forms then in vogue. Though no one has ever succeeded in making the opera anything but a loosely articulated, hybrid form of art, Gluck set about putting into practice a theory that plot, action, and music should actually have some interrelations. This does not seem astonishing to us, until we find that opera at the time was merely an excuse for vocal and instrumental pieces, loosely strung along a flimsy thread of plot, and having little or no unity with it.

The composer turned to classical subjects for most of his operatic works. In them he used, for the first time, the devices which have made of the opera at least a bearable dramatic entertainment, and at its best a highly effective, if very imperfect, musical form. The omniscient Sir George Grove exclaims, "But how ingenious are the artifices to which Gluck resorts in order to give variety to the recitative and the declamatory passages! How skillfully he brings in his short incisive symphonies (interludes) and how much effect he produces by syncopation! How appropriately he introduces the orchestra to emphasize a word, or to point a dramatic antithesis!"

Gluck wrote a considerable number of purely instrumental works, church music, and other pieces; but none of his compositions approaches in importance the operas. These, however, were of so revolutionary a character, and in themselves so charming, that to have created them is achievement enough to win laurels for any musician.



## Ballet Suite

[Arranged for Orchestra by Felix Mottl]

THOUGH Gluck wrote no great music for orchestra, excerpts from his operas, adapted for the modern orchestra, supply some exquisitely beautiful material to the conductor of today's symphonic organization. The suite arranged by Mottl includes choice excerpts from Gluck's most successful operas, and are all of such naïve charm and pellucid clarity as to require no more than mere identification:

The first two short and contrasting pieces, "*Air gai*" and "Lento," are from the opera *Iphigenia in Aulis*; these two are combined in one number. The second section of the suite is the "Dance of the Blessed Spirits," from *Orpheus*; the next is a "Musette" from the opera *Armide*; then comes a brighter section, again from *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and the final moderate-paced section is a "Sicilienne" from *Armide*.

It is interesting to remember, when listening to this music, the comment made upon Gluck's work by the French critic Marmontel, which is quoted in Grove's article on Gluck:

"Harsh and rugged harmony, mutilations and incongruities (that were) contained in his airs"; and again Gluck was accused of "want of care in choosing his subjects, in carrying out his designs, and giving completeness and finish to his melodies." It is difficult to believe that these words could have been written about Gluck, especially when this lovely, ingratiating, and exquisitely finished music soothes our ears!

## EDVARD GRIEG

[1843-1907]

**E**DVARD GRIEG was born at Bergen, Norway, the great-grandson of a Scotch merchant who, nearly a century before, had fled, with so many other Scots from his native heath, to the hospitable shores of the Scandinavian peninsula. Driven from Scotland after the disastrous rout of the forces of Charles Edward Stuart by the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden, the Highlanders mingled with their Norwegian neighbors, and a century later, we find in Edvard Grieg a man whose very name had become more Scandinavian than Scotch, and whose character scarcely showed the presence of one-eighth Scottish blood.

Grieg's father was a man of broad culture, but not a musician. It was from the distaff side that Edvard inherited his musical genius. Indications of its existence were manifest throughout his childhood, and he himself has left us recollections of many amusing incidents in which his preference for music caused him to run afoul of the rules and regulations that govern the rearing of a Norwegian little boy.

Grieg's career was devoid of the miseries that have marked the lives of so many composers. Though never affluent, his modest needs were always adequately matched by his circumstances. What trials he had came, rather, from within; trials of the spirit, and the struggle, almost lifelong, against ill health. Despite this latter handicap, he was able to accomplish the great work he set out to do, and during his lifetime established himself as one of the foremost of modern composers. England and the Continent knew him through personal appearances as well as through his music. Grieg never visited the United States, although he often wished to do so and was the recipient of many invitations and flattering offers. His health, he feared, would not permit him to undertake the sea voyage.

Grieg died, not unhappily, in his beloved Norway . . . the Norway which owes to him so much, and to which he gave an intense devotion. The state claimed the privilege of honoring him with formal obsequies, and ten thousand of his sincerely grieving countrymen followed his bier to the end. He was laid in a wild spot which he himself had long before chosen as his last resting place . . . a grotto halfway up a steep cliff, overlooking one of the lovely Norwegian fiords . . . a place from which his own home can be seen in the distance. After his ashes had been deposited here, the grotto was sealed, marked with the name EDVARD GRIEG, and made forever inaccessible to the world. Thus Grieg lies in the bosom of the country he loved so deeply.



## Concerto in A minor for Piano and Orchestra

ALTHOUGH the greater number of Grieg's compositions are either for voice or pianoforte, he is best known by the *Peer Gynt* Suite for orchestra, and the A minor Concerto, which has been characterized, perhaps a little recklessly, as the most perfect amalgam of piano and orchestra ever effected.

The concerto is, at any rate, in the repertoire of every great pianist; not as a vehicle for the display of the mere mechanics of the art, but as a sublimely beautiful utterance which explores the dramatic and tonal resources of the piano and, indeed, extends them. Brilliance it has, but also the deeper and more subtle significance that only the serious and sincere composer and performer can impart or reveal. It was composed when Grieg was but twenty-five years old.

### *First Movement*

A long and ominous roll upon the kettledrums . . . a mighty chord in full orchestra . . . a furious descending passage for the solo instrument, and without further introduction we are brought to the first movement proper . . . and to the presentation, in the woodwind, of the most important theme of the movement. It is a curious, memory-penetrating theme; simple in rhythm and melody, but, once heard, impossible to forget or dissociate from this great work. In a moment we hear it given voice in the crystalline tones of the piano, to be succeeded by a momentary ebullition of a further melodic thought; a gay, almost grotesque rhythm that contrasts sharply with the previous utterance.

The second section begins with still more thematic material—an exquisitely flowing melody, purely lyric in character, yet containing within itself elements that are to be developed into a furious outburst of passion. We hear this song first in the restrained voices of the orchestra; then it is given, with its elaborations and development, to the piano, which seizes upon it and makes it the medium for the most powerful and dramatic utterance of the music so far. The formal working-out section of the movement now takes form. Novelty of rhythm, as well as unforeseen melodic development of thematic material, grow swiftly and surely out of the masses of tone that surge upward from both orchestra and solo instrument. Crashing chords from the piano, and emphatic statement of the first theme in the full might of the orchestra's concerted voices, bring us to the cadenza, or display passage for the piano. But it is more than a display passage; it is rather a sublimation of what has gone before, presented with the last iota of power and brilliance which a great performer can call forth from that noble instrument. Underneath its glitter and its mighty chords lies the solid basis of the themes of the movement, and instead of distracting from the thought of the music, the cadenza glorifies and clarifies it in a burst of brilliant light.



*Second Movement*

The somber feeling that is so often a characteristic of Northern genius is the underlying motive of this movement. But you will not confuse it with the abject melancholy of the Slav, for it is vital and moving; there is sadness, perhaps, but not deadly hopelessness.

The melody is of simple lyric character, given to the piano after a somewhat lengthy introduction by the orchestra. There is a distinct feeling of climax, yet not departure from the somber, almost elegiac character of the movement. With a very brief pause, the

*Third Movement*

begins after the dying away of the melodious conclusion of the second. In a moment the entire complexion of the music is altered. A bold passage on the piano ushers in a rhythm of almost violent force, and quaint dancing figures which at times suggest the grotesquerie of *The Hall of the Mountain Kings*. A climax of terrific intensity is reached, the piano ever revealing new influxes of power, new brilliancies, new and vivid colorings. And then, once more, come pale Northern harmonies.

Orchestra and solo instrument presently join again in a mad revel, the occasional dissonances (Liszt loved them!) adding spice and piquancy to the music. Mighty descending passages in octaves for the piano introduce a light and dancelike figure which presently involves, one by one, the various sections of the orchestra, and leads to the majestic finale, built not only of the themes of the present movement, but embodying, too, in heroic form, the once lyric song of the second section of the concerto. Mighty chords for piano and full orchestra bring us to the close.

# CHARLES TOMLINSON GRIFFES

[1884-1920]

GRIFFES had given clear and definite promise of becoming America's greatest creative musician when, at the age of thirty-six, he died after a brief illness. He was born at Elmira, N. Y., September 17, 1884. His musical gifts were evident in boyhood. He studied piano in his native city, and, after being graduated from high school, went to Germany, where he continued to work at piano, and studied composition under the late distinguished composer, Engelbert Humperdinck. To create music was his great ambition, and though he gave piano lessons in Germany, and, after his return, in New York, he continued to work at his compositions, many of which are both beautiful and successful.

The earliest works are marked by the derivative qualities almost always found in a student's work. It was not long, however, before his German teaching made itself felt, and early influences disappeared. His more mature period produced works in which, instead, the effect of impressionism is definitely marked. It is reported by able and intimate musical friends that, when he was so unfortunately removed from this world, he was striving toward a freer style—one not restricted by the limitations of the conventional scale; one that, had it developed, might have influenced the course of modern symphonic music in America, turning it away from insincerity and conscious "effectiveness" toward a reasoned and logical freedom.



## The Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan

[After the Poem of S. T. Coleridge]

THIS richly suggestive and impressionistic music was written during 1916. It reveals both the influence of the French school personified by Debussy and the composer's own acute interest in things Oriental. It is, of course, inspired by the poem *Kubla Khan*, but more explicitly by certain lines in the poem. What the composer himself had to say of the work—quoted by permission from the program notes for the first performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, November 28, 1919—is illuminating:

I have taken as a basis for my work those lines of Coleridge's poem describing the "stately pleasure dome," the "sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice," the "miracle of rare device." Therefore I call the work *The Pleasure*

*Dome of Kubla Khan* rather than *Kubla Khan*. These lines include I to II and lines 32 to 38. . . .

*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round:  
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills  
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.*

*The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
Floated midway on the waves;  
Where was heard the mingled measure  
From the fountain and the caves.  
It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!*

As to argument [continued Mr. Griffes' notes], I have given my imagination free rein in the description of this strange palace as well as of purely imaginary revelry which might take place there. The vague, foggy beginning suggests the sacred river, running "through caverns measureless to man down to a sunless sea." Then gradually rise the outlines of the palace, "with walls and towers girdled round." The gardens with fountains and "sunny spots of greenery" are next suggested. From inside come sounds of dancing and revelry which increase to a wild climax and then suddenly break off. There is a return to the original mood suggesting the sacred river and the "caves of ice."

It is scarcely necessary to add anything to Mr. Griffes' own comment. The glassy tones he evokes for the suggestion of icy caverns, the clouded and mysterious atmosphere of the beginning and the end, the fantastic and abandoned revelries, the majesty and wonder of the pleasure dome—all are explicit in the music as they are in the poem.



## The White Peacock

*The White Peacock*, originally written for the piano, was orchestrated by the composer. Like his *Two Sketches Based on Indian Themes*, *The White Peacock* reveals Griffes' love for rarefied mood and exotic tone color. The love for the exotic and for coloristic effect is one of the paramount features of Griffes' art, and his works include such compositions as *Schojo*, a Japanese mime play, *Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan*, *The Cairn of Koridwen*, and a *Symphony in Yellow*.

## GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

[1685-1759]

ONE OF THE few amusing paragraphs in the several thousand pages of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* has to do with Handel. After generously characterizing him as "one of the greatest composers the world has ever seen," Sir George relates that the composer became a naturalized British subject in 1726, "but," modestly, "to claim him as an Englishman is as gratuitous as it would be to deny that the whole tone of his mind and genius were singularly attuned to the best features of the English character." Then follows an extraordinary expression of the complacency, and sense of superiority, and of a virtual monopoly of all things truly worthy that have made the Briton so arrogantly and charmingly the social arbiter of the world. Listen to Sir George: "The stubborn independence, the fearless truth and loyalty of his character, the deep, genuine feeling which, in its horror of pretense or false sentiment, hides itself behind bluntness of expression, the practical mind which seeks to derive its ideas from facts, and not its facts from ideas—these found their artistic expression in the works of Handel; besides which he was, beyond all doubt, intimately acquainted, as many of his choruses show, with the works of England's greatest composer, Henry Purcell."

Couple this estimate of Handel, his music, and his wonderful impersonation of all admirable British qualities, with the fact that his popular fame in England rests almost solely upon music involving the presentation of standardized religious beliefs, and you have the reason why it is said that music is respected, but not loved, in England.

Handel was born at Halle, in Saxony, the son of a surgeon who vigorously opposed the boy's tendency toward music, and who did everything possible to discourage it. Nevertheless the boy secretly learned as much as he could about music and playing the clavichord, and eventually attracted the attention of a patron of music who saw to it that his musical education was not neglected. When he was eleven years old his teacher admitted that the boy knew more than the master. Handel won his way eventually into musical circles and musical jobs; he made acquaintances and friends among those who could be valuable to him, and won the attention of many people of influence and importance, in his own country, in Italy, and finally in England. He was in England in 1712, regardless of the wishes of the Elector of Hanover, who had subsidized him and consequently wanted him at home. It was therefore quite embarrassing when that same Elector succeeded to the English throne, and found Herr Handel, the runaway, in the neighborhood.

However, Handel was restored to royal favor. He was fifty-three years old when he began work on the music upon which his fame chiefly rests—the oratorios and several other compositions. *The Messiah*, still the favorite in England, was produced during a visit to Dublin; when the performance was repeated in London, the

king and all the audience "were so transported" at the famous "Hallelujah" Chorus that they rose to their feet and remained standing until the end. The detestable habit of rising during performances of this music began with this incident.

Handel became blind before his death, but did not allow this misfortune to handicap him. His disposition, always irascible, did not improve, but he continued to play the organ and otherwise exercise his musical powers. His fame and popularity were daily increasing, and he had almost every reason to be happy when he died, April 14, 1759. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.



## Water Music

THE story concerning the *Water Music*, now regarded as untrue in its central fact—that the music was composed for a certain very special occasion, as a surprise to George I of England—is as follows:

Handel had been chief musician to the Elector of Hanover, and had obtained permission for a visit to England, on condition that it would not be an unreasonably long one. The composer remained in England for two years. Meanwhile, the Elector was named King of England, which was very embarrassing indeed for the truant Handel, who was careful to remain away from the royal presence. But he had a friend who was also a friend and follower of the Elector in Hanover, and this person suggested that, since His Majesty was planning a party to be held in boats on the Thames, here was an opportunity to win back, by music, into his good graces; all the composer need do was to write some music appropriate to the occasion. Handel did so, following the royal barge with his orchestra in another boat, and conducting the music himself. The King was surprised and pleased, and when the errant Handel was brought before him as the composer, Majesty forgave.

The music scarcely requires analysis. It is suavely sweet, and sometimes naïve, and always lovely. It is in the form of a serenade, comprising twenty sections, of which the following, in the order named, are usually played in symphony orchestra performances: *allegro*, *air*, *bourrée*, *hornpipe*, *andante*, and *allegro deciso*. The suite was arranged by Sir Hamilton Harty.



## Concerto grosso

THE *concerto grosso*, as a type, is discussed elsewhere in this book, and it is not necessary to examine many examples of the form, even Handel's, in detail. To say that all are alike would be something of an exaggeration; but the form is a firmly

established one, and the kind of music molded into it is not such as to require extended analysis.

Handel wrote twelve works in this style, richer in orchestral color than was customary, and with a larger solo group, or *concertino*, than the older *concerto grosso* employed. They are all filled with the freshness and spontaneity that marked so much of his music, but they differ essentially among themselves only in melodic content. This is so clear as to explain itself.

# HOWARD HANSON

[Born 1896]

**H**OWARD HANSON, one of the most distinguished figures in contemporary American music, was born in Wahoo, Nebraska, and is at present living in Rochester. His earliest musical instruction was derived from his mother, and later at the Luther College in Wahoo. His studies were continued in the Institute of Musical Art in New York City, and at Northwestern University where he obtained his degree. In 1916, when only twenty, he was appointed Professor of Theory at the College of the Pacific in California. Three years later (1919) he became the Dean of the Conservatory of Fine Arts in the same college. His merit as a composer was soon recognized, and in 1921 he received the Prix de Rome. He spent three years (1921-24) as a Fellow in the American Academy in Rome, and, upon his return to the United States, assumed the Directorship of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.

Howard Hanson has been a vital factor in stimulating interest in American music during the past several years. Perhaps the most noteworthy of his labors in this field has been the inauguration of the American Composers Concerts, in which project he enlisted the support of the Rochester Philharmonic, and the services of ballet groups and soloists. Hanson has also aided American music in many other ways: as Chairman of the Commission on Curricula of the National Association of Schools of Music, as President of the Music Teachers National Association, and as a member of the examining jury for the American Academy in Rome.

Dr. Hanson has also achieved a considerable reputation as a conductor and has led the orchestras of many American and European cities. As a composer, his output is rather large. He has written many songs, and many piano pieces. His chamber music includes a Quintet in F Minor, Op. 6 (1916); a *Concerto da Camera*, Op. 7, for piano and strings (1917); and a String Quartet, Op. 23 (1923). His symphonic creation includes several symphonic poems (*Before the Dawn*: 1919; *Exaltation*: 1920; *North and West*: 1923; *Lux Aeterna*: 1923; *Pan and the Priest*: 1926); a *Symphonic Rhapsody* (1918), a *Symphonic Legend* (1920), a Concerto for Organ and Orchestra (1926), an orchestral Suite from the opera *Merry Mount* (1937), and three symphonies. His First Symphony, the "Nordic" Symphony, was composed in 1922; the Second, the "Romantic" Symphony, in 1930, and his Symphony No. 3 in 1937. Aside from his opera *Merry Mount* (composed in 1932 and produced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York on February 10, 1933) the "Romantic" Symphony presented here is perhaps the most famous of his works. Dr. Hanson was invited to conduct it, in 1930, with the *Augustes* at Rome, which he did with eminent success. In 1933, the work was per-



formed for the first time in New York, by the Philharmonic Symphony, Arturo Toscanini conducting.

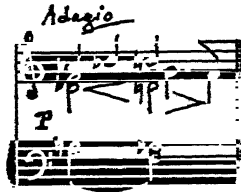


### Symphony No. 2 ("Romantic")

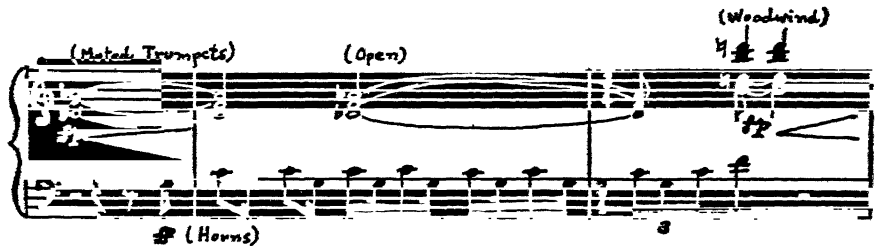
THE "Romantic" Symphony was composed by Dr. Hanson for the fiftieth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It was first performed by that orchestra at the concerts of November 28 and 29, 1930. We are fortunately able to present an analysis of this work which has the complete approval of Dr. Hanson. It follows:

The symphony is in three movements and is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

The first movement, *adagio-allegro moderato*, begins with an atmospheric introduction in the woodwinds



joined first by the horns, the strings, and finally the brass choir in increasing intensity, and then subsiding. A call in the muted trumpets and horns



is followed by the announcement of the principal theme, *allegro moderato*,



by four horns with an accompaniment of strings and woodwinds. This vigorous

theme is imitated in turn by the trumpets, woodwinds, and strings. An episodic theme



appears quietly in the oboe and later in the solo horn, followed by a transition leading into the subordinate theme.

The quiet subordinate theme, a melody of singular beauty,

serves as the unifying idea of the entire symphony. This theme is in reality two melodies projected simultaneously, theme *a* in the strings and theme *b* in the solo horn. A brief fanfare figure in the muted trumpets

leads directly to the development section. The principal theme now takes on a pastoral character and is presented alternately by the English horn, oboe, horn, and flute, much of the time in lengthened note values.

The development of the principal theme leads to a climax of great intensity. The recapitulation follows quickly and the principal theme returns in its original form, accompanied by the horn call. A vigorous and dynamic development of this material leads to the announcement of the lyrical episodic theme sung by the solo clarinet.

The subordinate theme again appears, rises to a climax, and quickly subsides. The movement concludes quietly with the pianissimo echoing of a haunting theme.

The second movement, *andante con tenerezza*, reveals a mood of nostalgic tenderness. The principal theme



is announced by the woodwinds with a sustained string accompaniment. An interlude in the brass, taken from the introduction of the first movement and interrupted by florid passages in the woodwinds, leads to the subordinate theme.



A transition, again interrupted by a florid woodwind passage, leads to a restatement of the principal theme of the movement. The movement ends quietly in a mood reminiscent of the opening phrase.

The third movement, *allegro con brio*, begins with a vigorous accompaniment figure in strings and woodwinds,



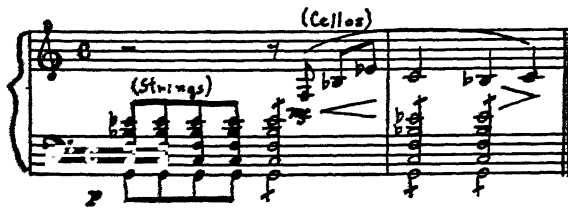
which comes directly from the first movement. The powerful principal theme,



reminiscent of a passage in the first movement, appears in the four horns and is later repeated by the basses. A continuation of the horn theme

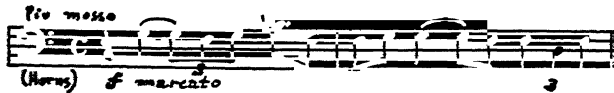


follows. The music subsides and the subordinate theme, *molto meno mosso*,



is announced by the violoncellos and then taken up by the English horn, the development of which leads to the middle section, *piu mosso*.

This section begins with an ominous pizzicato accompaniment in the violas, violoncellos, and basses, over which is announced a horn call.



This call is taken up by the trombones and leads into a brilliant fanfare,



first in the trumpets, then in the horns and woodwinds, and then again in the trumpets and woodwinds. The tremendous climax of the fanfare comes with the announcement fortissimo of the principal theme of the first movement by the trumpets, against the fanfare rhythm in woodwinds. The development of this theme leads into a final statement of the subordinate theme of the first movement fortissimo.

A brief coda of this material leads to a final fanfare and the conclusion of the symphony.



## Symphony No. 3

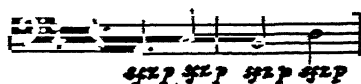
DR. HANSON'S Third Symphony was written on commission from the Columbia Broadcasting System to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of the first Swedish settlement in America in 1638. At the time of the first performance by the Columbia Symphony Orchestra, February 19, 1937, the fourth movement had not been completed and only three movements of the work were performed on this occasion. Shortly thereafter, the work was finished and was performed by Dr. Hanson as guest conductor with the NBC Symphony in the spring of 1938. The first concert performance was given the following autumn by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, on November 3 and 4, 1939, with Dr. Hanson conducting. Dr. Koussevitzky was most enthusiastic about the work and conducted it himself on numerous occasions, including the first public performance in New York and elsewhere. The symphony is dedicated to Dr. Koussevitzky.

The Symphony pays tribute to the epic qualities of those pioneers. The first movement, which has the subtitle *andante lamentando-agitato*, is both rugged and turbulent in character, alternating with a religious mysticism. The second movement, *andante tranquillo*, is, as its name implies, for the most part peaceful and brooding in quality. The third movement, *tempo scherzando*, is in the tempo of a fast scherzo, and is vigorous and rhythmic. The fourth movement, marked *largamente e pesante*, begins with the brooding character of the first movement, developing into an extended chorale in antiphonal style, rising to a climax in the full orchestra out of which appears the principal theme of the second movement, the symphony ending in a note of exultation and rejoicing.

The first movement, *andante lamentando*, begins with the introductory theme



pianissimo in the low strings, mysterious and brooding, punctuated by distant horn-calls, leading into the announcement of a small portion of the chorale theme *sforzando* in the basses and cellos. This motive



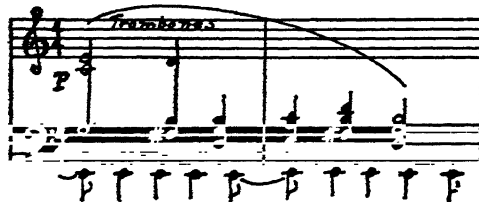
is accompanied shortly by a motive of dynamic intensity in the woodwinds and high strings.



This subsides and leads directly to the principal theme



in the woodwinds and later in the strings. A short development leads to the subordinate theme of the movement,



a chorale given out by the trombones and later joined by all the brasses of the orchestra. This leads directly to the development section, an *agitato* in five-eight meter. In the middle of the development section we hear a subsidiary theme, a vigorous dance of folklike character.



The development section is then resumed, leading to a short recapitulation of the principal theme fortissimo, followed immediately by the chorale. The movement ends quietly with a chorale theme in muted horns and trumpets.

The second movement, *andante tranquillo*, in extended song form, begins with an intimation of the principal theme in the French horn. This theme, quiet and nostalgic in character, is soon taken up by the entire string section.

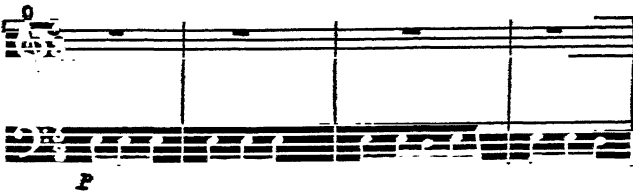


The second theme



is followed in turn by a recapitulation of the first. This song form is followed by an extended development of both themes, interrupted by a rhythmic figure in the woodwinds of more agitated character. The development of the themes continues, is interrupted again by the woodwind figure, and is followed in turn by the reappearance of the principal theme, subsiding in a short coda of elegiac mood.

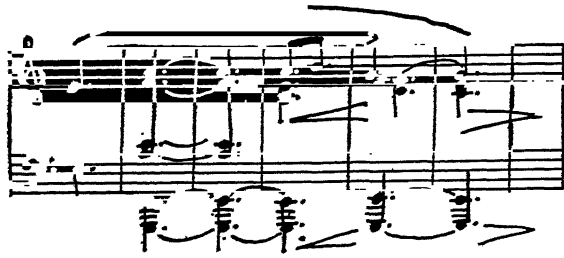
The third movement in scherzo form begins with a vigorous rhythmic introductory theme in the solo timpani.



The principal theme of folklike character



appears in the solo oboe. After considerable development the timpani theme reappears, forming a bridge to the trio,



tranquil and lyrical, in the strings. In the working out of this theme it is combined with fragments of the principal theme, the simultaneous development of both leading to the recapitulation of the first theme again in the solo oboe. The development of this theme, accompanied by the reappearance of the introductory timpani theme, leads to a climax of fierce intensity after which the movement quickly ends.

The fourth movement, *largamente e pesante*, begins with a shrill ejaculation from the entire orchestra



taken from the third motive of the first movement. The introductory theme of the first movement reappears, followed by the principal theme *pochissimo piu mosso*, *malinconico*.



A brief reminiscence of the chorale theme of the first movement leads to a vigorous and rhythmic development of the principal theme of this movement, followed by antiphonal development of the chorale theme by the three sections of the brass choir. A brief reappearance, *giubilante*, of the principal theme of the first movement is soon followed by a second antiphonal development of another portion of the chorale theme over a two-fold bass *ostinato*. This development leads to a



towering climax out of which appears the principal theme of the second movement. The movement ends in a jubilant climax.



### Suite from the Opera "Merry Mount"

THE Suite from the opera *Merry Mount* consists of four short excerpts from the opera. The opera itself was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera Company and received its first performance at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City on February 10, 1934, with Lawrence Tibbett, Edward Johnson, Gladys Swarthout, Göta Ljungberg, and Louis D'Angelo, with Tullio Serafin conducting. The work had been performed the previous spring in a concert version at the Ann Arbor Music Festival with the Ann Arbor Chorus and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, with John Charles Thomas, Frederick Jagel, Rose Bampton, Leonora Corona, and Chase Boromeo, with the composer conducting.

The four movements selected for the Suite consist of the Prelude to the first act, to which a concert ending has been added. This Prelude forecasts the general mood of the opera, and is based upon the choralelike theme which characterizes the Puritans. The second number is the short and lively "Children's Dance" taken from the first act. The third number of the Suite is the "Love Duet" somewhat reorchestrated for concert performance and with the voice parts eliminated. This is the duet which occurs at the end of the infernal scene and which is sung by the Puritan pastor, Wrestling Bradford, and the Cavalier heroine after the episode in which Bradford, in his feverish imagination, has descended into Hell and signed away his soul to Satan in return for the love of the lady of his dreams. The Suite concludes with the "Maypole Dances" celebrating the Cavalier festival of May Day.

The Prelude to the opera, *Merry Mount*, with which the Suite begins, is based upon a choralelike theme.

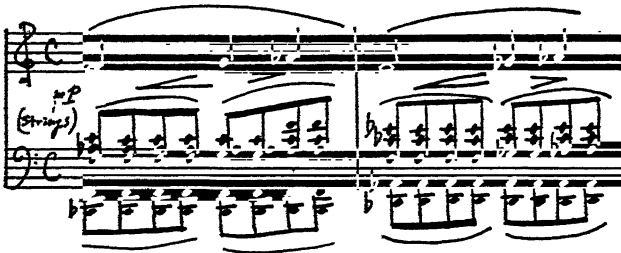


This theme, solemn and religious in character, not only sets the mood for the opera itself but is symbolic of the Puritans.

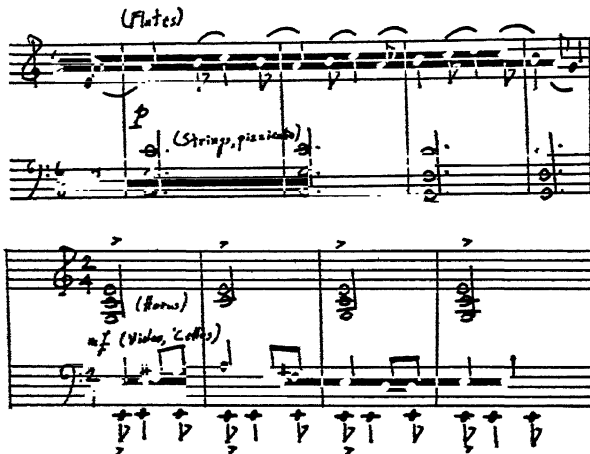
The "Children's Dance," gay and boisterous in contrast, is based upon a short rhythmic motive.



The "Love Duet" in its orchestral version consists essentially of one lyrical theme developed with constantly increasing intensity until it arrives at its final climax.



The "Maypole Dances" consist of a short introduction, followed by the development of two dance tunes.



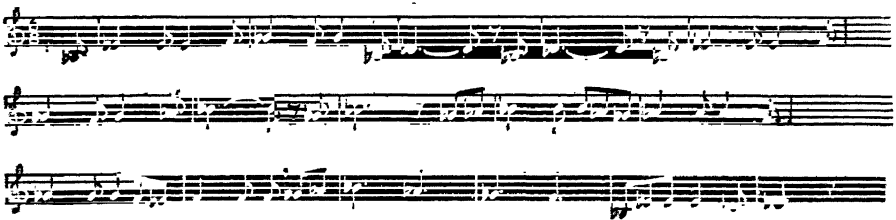
The first of these, though it does not make use of actual folk material, is patterned directly after the rhythmic characteristics of certain dances of the period. The work is essentially a tour de force in orchestration, and calls for a high degree of virtuosity from every section of the orchestra.

## ROY HARRIS

### Overture: When Johnny Comes Marching Home

“**R**OY HARRIS’ success story differs from many others because it has been achieved without any sacrifice of the ideals and standards of a singularly high-minded, sincere and uncompromising artist. The melodies, the harmonies, the rhythms, the counterpoint have lived their own way with an independence and a power that bespoke the presence of that rarest thing in art, a genuinely individual voice.”

When the late Lawrence Gilman wrote these prophetic words seven years ago Harris was just beginning to get into his stride. He had just enjoyed the world *première* of his popular overture, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, under the baton of Otto Klemperer. Actually it was not the first performance of this work. It was already published on Victor Records performed by Eugene Ormandy with the Minneapolis Symphony. Victor had been so pleased with the response to the recording of Harris’ *Three Variations on a Theme* performed by the Roth Quartet, that they commissioned him to write the overture, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, especially for recording. The work was soon performed by our major orchestras, and since then has settled into a steady, well-established repertory work—for popular concerts, winter concerts, and children’s concerts. This work is based on the Civil War tune from which it took its name. The overture is a theme-and-



variation form but not the variation style we are accustomed to. The original theme, fragments, characteristic intervals, general melodic contours, augmentations are so skillfully interwoven to give a simple, direct, open-sounding overture that we little suspect how contrapuntal the work is. *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* has the general shape of a scherzo, fast, slow (trio), fast, prefaced by a short introduction which is in itself a closely knit stretto of fragments of the subject over an augmentation of the opening section of the theme. Especially unique, with its tenor tuba solo in B flat minor over a sustained and pizzicato accompaniment in D flat major, are some of the most successful pages of polytonal writing to be found in modern music. Again the broad chorale treatment of the strings over the short accented statement of the subject in brass and low strings clearly stems from Bach

—yet it is as American as the theme it treats—as nostalgic and rough hewn in force and controlled power as the story behind it. Harris tells us that his childhood experiences determined the mood and shape of this work. The gay tune was one of his father's favorite tunes which he used to whistle in merry mood in the morning as he went to the fields behind his prancing horses. At dusk the weary horses would come home slower and with head down, while his father whistled the same tune in the melancholy and reflective mood of evening time.



### Symphony for Voices

THE *Symphony for Voices* is probably the boldest choral writing since Bach. It is written for an eight-voiced *a capella* chorus in three movements. Each movement treats some characteristic Whitmanesque subject. Harris is devoted to the poetry of Walt Whitman and has often declared that Whitman has influenced him more than any other writer or philosopher. Like Whitman, Harris has roamed all over America, riding the bumpers, hitch hiking, walking, driving his own car (he is an inveterate driver), and has often told me that the American composer really should go to some new and wonderful place in our land for each new work: "Where some great river meets the sea—or mountains rise up out of the plains—or cities swallow the lives of strong men—or deep into the waiting, age-old desert." This has been his dream—and who knows, maybe that is the way to hear the songs of America, and to capture them for the choruses and orchestras and bands of America. Certainly Whitman has had a deep and lasting influence on this Westerner. It is not surprising then that one of his strongest works is *Symphony for Voices* on words by Whitman.

Critical reaction to this *Symphony for Voices* has been extraordinarily enthusiastic. And it is quite understandable, because this choral work is absolutely revolutionary in choral orchestration. The first movement, "Song for All Seas, All Ships," achieves a vigorous, salty surge by its canonic motive between tenors and altos, only to become the background for long declamations in the antiphonal treatment of sopranos and basses. The calming of this surge into the long lyric swells, peaceful and contemplative, which arise on the song of basses answered by sopranos, all woven together in the coda—all this creates a sea mood which is unmistakable in its saltiness and untamed pantheism.

"Tears" sings and chants the sorrow of the sea of humanity's multitudes. Its incessant rise to a fierce, wild cry of anguish marks it as a modern *Miserere* which we will not soon forget. Many critics have found in it the melancholy of the Celtic race, which is not amiss because Harris is of Scotch-Irish ancestry.

But the first two movements of this remarkable "Choral" Symphony would be incomplete without the relentless power and bold outline of the last movement. Choral directors say that such freedom of choral writing has not been dared since Bach. Conceived as a triple fugue on three lines from Whitman's inscriptions, it creates a new standard for choruses—a new dynamic, a new concentrated power and length of conception.

The first section is a closely knit stretto fugue on Whitman's words:

*Of Life immense in passion, pulse, power.*

Of life im-mense in pas-sion, pulse, pow-er  
 Cheer-ful, for free-est ac-tion formed un-der the laws di-vine  
 The Mod-ern Man I sing

Brilliant, open, powerful, almost brutal in its demands of bravura choral singing. Coming to a dramatic climax, this first section is immediately contrasted with a singing legato, youthful subject on the words: "*Cheerful for freest action—formed, under the laws divine.*"

This section treats the voices in a light, sweet, buoyant manner, while the structure complements this treatment with a much more open texture than the first movement. Then the first subject begins to intrude more and more insistently on the second mood, leading to the heroic final subject on the words: "*the modern man I sing.*"

This subject goes immediately into an eight-part canonic stretto which achieves a sonority which, in the words of the great contrapuntal scholar Jeppesen, "is something new and most exciting to the world of counterpoint."

The dexterity with which Harris has woven the three themes in the coda marks him in the history of choral achievement. Lazare Saminsky, himself a choral director of national repute, has written, "he has become a master of broad and powerful technique."



### Symphony No. 3

THOSE who are most deeply interested and well informed about Harris' large and growing literature seem to be about equally divided in their opinions concerning

his most important contribution. Chamber-music musicians think that he has achieved his greatest expression in chamber music—such as his Piano Quartet, Third String Quartet, or the Viola Quintet; while choral enthusiasts are convinced that his most significant work has been achieved in his choral writing, such as *Song for Occupations*, *Symphony for Voices*, the *Folk Song Symphony*.

But I feel confident that his largest and most enthusiastic audience would unhesitatingly vote his symphonic music most important, and I sympathize with Dr. Serge Koussevitzky in the opinion that: "Harris' Third Symphony is the greatest orchestral work yet written in America."

In years to come we will probably realize that this symphony marks the beginning of a new era of American music; without precedent, yet as bold, simple, direct, and unhesitating as our architecture, our bridges, our roads, our way of speech.

In this work Harris has attempted and solved a most difficult problem in form. Beginning with a bold entrance in the strings, he has succeeded in making an arched

Section I - Tragic - low-string sonorities.

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The first staff is marked 'Tutti' and 'sonore molto tenuto'. The second staff is marked 'Poco più mosso'. The third staff is marked 'sub. mp'. The fourth staff is marked 'Poco meno mosso' and 'A tempo'. The fifth staff continues the musical line.

span of seventeen minutes' duration. We all realize that it is infinitely more difficult to write a sustained movement of this length than to write a three-movement work of greater length. I think that this aspect of the Third Symphony is most noteworthy because it is evidence of a new high point of achievement in orchestral resourcefulness. And not only resourcefulness in orchestration, but in all the elements of form: harmony, rhythm, melody, counterpoint. For instance, the long, intense opening for low strings, in which only organum harmony is used (i.e., fourths, fifths, and octaves), reserve a new harmonic color for the entrance of the violins in which harmonic thirds and sixths were introduced, while the lower voices continued on their organum foundation harmony. Again the complete contrast of

the next section when new intensity was achieved with large sonorities (all the woodwinds) in two-part counterpoint to the violins, leading to a high climax of only a single voice in the violins, which prepared the ear for a new kind of in-

Section I - Lyric - strings and woodwinds

tensification. But this time a soft, very diversified sonority of wide range in the four-part canonic passage work of the strings; all of which was only background for the slender, graceful pastoral melodies in the woodwinds. As the librarian of

Section II - Pastoral - Woodwind melodies against a polytonal string background

the Boston Symphony said in wonderment: "I know all the orchestral literature—but there is something absolutely new—a sound I've never heard before from the orchestra." And so it is: delicate, fragile, not of man—yet with all the devil-may-care freedom of a liberated soul. It is doubtful that Harris will ever achieve a greater, long, gradually growing climax than the growth of this pastoral to its wild, dancing, unleashed madness which leads to dramatic fugue entrance.

Thematic material - Symphony #3 (cont)

Section II - Dramatic - Fugal - brass sonorities

Here again a new sonority of the orchestra enters. The work is half over and we have never heard the percussive, *marcato* utterance of a modern symphony orchestra. But when it does come, how welcome it is—with what authority it enters—only to toss about the ribald rhythms with utmost contrapuntal abandon—with

an unbridled expulsive force, which could only lead to the long, broad, sonorous weaving of the coda. The long, tenuous line in the violins which winds its way

Section V - Dramatic - Tragic - theme from Section I:  
strings in canon with woodwinds; rhythmic motif from IV (brass)

The image shows a musical score for a section of a symphony. It consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Motif:' and contains a melodic line with various notes and rests. The middle staff is labeled 'Brass Choir' and contains a rhythmic pattern of notes and rests. The bottom staff is labeled 'Tympani' and contains a rhythmic pattern of notes and rests. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

down through the antiphonal brasses to the final cadence could be cited as one of the highest peaks of achievement in modern form. The whole symphony is a masterpiece in form. Witness *Modern Music*, in the issue of October-November, 1939:

So far, it is safe to say, there is no work to equal it in American music-making. For significance of material, breadth of treatment and depth of meaning; for tragic implication, dramatic intensity, concentration; for moving beauty, glowing sound, it can find no peer in the musical art of America. Here is music of the bleak and barren expanses of western Kansas, of the brooding prairie night, and of the fast darkneses of the American soul, of its despair and its courage, its defeat and its triumph, its struggles and its aspirations. From the great sweep of the opening phrases in the lower strings, through the pastoral middle sections to the importunate plangencies of the dirge and the final climax, there is a sense of inevitable compulsion.

The Third Symphony expounds a new approach to the orchestra. The style is nearer to Beethoven than to the romantic masters, depending on the material itself for interest rather than on the orchestral palette.

Yet one cannot say that the orchestral treatment is without color. On the contrary the color is unique and very clear. The instruments are used in their most telling range. But yet it is not *the* important part of the symphony. It is, one may suppose, a return to the classic attitude in which the medium of expression is taken for granted, to be used as a vehicle of the music, not as an arbitrary end in itself.

This suggests a few comments on Harris' form. He describes his attitude toward form as "autogenetic." He says that a form should grow like a tree grows from its seed; that each work should be a new form—determined by its material. He is extremely concerned about the variation form, as was Beethoven in his later years. But he feels that the variation must be an organic growth of ideas, "*not* just embroidery or species counterpoint exercises on a given *contus firmus*." This attitude



has led him into a great deal of research work in the study of melodic development. He holds that *literal* sequences are not tenable unless they are only there to constitute a polyphonic background for further development in highlighted voices. This concentration of melodic invention and harmonic texture makes his music difficult to listen to. At first hearing one is apt to get lost—especially those of us who are accustomed to the literal sequential form development of the nineteenth-century masters. Perhaps this explains why Harris' greatest success has been achieved in his recordings. Whole concerts of his recorded music are often given—and record societies invite him to lecture on his music. Harris himself believes that "Records are the American composers' greatest friend."

## FRANZ JOSEF HAYDN

[1732-1809]

HAYDN, THE FATHER of the symphony, was born at Rohrau, Austria. His father, a mechanic, and his mother, daughter of a cook, were poor in material things, but gifted with a love for music—a rich endowment which they passed on to their son. It was the mother's wish that the boy should study for the Church, but, when finally convinced of his talent, she gave up her ambitions for him, and permitted him to become the pupil of a relative who happened to be a musician.

When the boy was eight years old he became a chorister in the church of St. Stephen, Vienna, and when the weakness of his voice became apparent enough to cause his discharge from this position, he turned to the study of music in other forms. Several years of concentrated work developed his talent, and by the time he was twenty-seven years old he had achieved a conspicuous place in Viennese musical circles. When he won the position of *Musikdirektor* to the Viennese Count Morzin, he felt secure enough to marry. The Count, however, dismissed his orchestra within two years.

More important than his marriage or the position which had made it possible was Haydn's connection with the famous Hungarian noble family of Esterházy. The Esterházys, like so many of the European nobility, were generous and consistent patrons of music. Prince Pál Antal, at the time head of the house, became interested in Haydn and offered him a position as assistant conductor of the orchestra maintained by the family. Haydn accepted, and was emphatically successful. When Prince Miklós succeeded Pál Antal, he made Haydn first conductor, and later practically imprisoned him in the remote and beautiful family estate Esterház, where the composer, far from distraction and care, and cut off from communication with the world, had full opportunity to pour out his ideas in composition, and to satisfy the endless demands of the music-loving prince for new scores.

Prince Miklós died in 1790. His successor, Antal, was no great musical enthusiast, and dismissed most of the musicians who were being maintained at Esterház—among them, Haydn. The composer, however, continued to receive a generous annuity from the estate of Prince Miklós. Now he began to recall the offers he had been forced to decline during the period of his "confinement" at Esterház. By a happy coincidence, J. P. Salomon, of London, one of the concert managers who had, from time to time, asked for his services as composer and conductor, happened to be traveling through Germany when he heard of Prince Miklós' death. Suspecting how matters might be with Haydn, he renewed his offers. Haydn accepted, and the two set forth to London.

His success was immediate and emphatic. He played to none but crowded halls. He was invited everywhere, and honors, including a degree from Oxford

University, were heaped upon him. He nevertheless found time to fulfill that part of his contract with Salomon which required him to compose six symphonies for performance in London. He left London, happy, prosperous, and famous, and found at home a measure of acclaim that heretofore had been denied him. A subsequent visit to England resulted in a repetition of his success, and the composition of six more symphonies for Salomon. Among the twelve commissioned by this publisher we find the best of Haydn's symphonies—the "Clock," the "Surprise," the "Oxford," and the "London."

Haydn was summoned back to Austria in 1795 by the then head of the Esterházy, and was received with such honor as he had never before known in his native land. The fact that it came after his success in a foreign country was not lost upon him, and he commented upon it with some bitterness. He was an ardent patriot, however, and had not been home long before he composed the noble hymn *Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser*, which became the national anthem of Austria, and was in use as such until after the World War. The melody, with variations, also constitutes the slow movement of Haydn's beautiful "Kaiser" Quartet.

Three years after Haydn's final return to the Continent from England, the first performance of his celebrated oratorio, *The Creation*, was given. This was his most ambitious work, and was a magnificent success. The English fondness for this type of music, and the devotion and skill which they bring to bear upon oratorio performances, can be traced in great measure to the works of Haydn in this form.

Haydn was now beginning to feel the weight and the infirmities of many years. Neither his health nor his disposition was improved when he found his beloved Vienna invaded by the French in 1805—and again in 1809. In spite of their attendant slaughter, wars were more politely conducted in those days, and Haydn was treated with great respect by the invaders. Many of the French officers came to call on him, and no doubt to hear some of his music at first hand.

There was a concert and performance of *The Creation* early in 1808. Haydn, physically weak but burning with all his old enthusiasm, was carried into the hall. The performance was a triumph, and the old musician was so excited that his friends thought it best to remove him even before it was finished. From this night he became gradually weaker, and it was evident that his end was near. Haydn himself sensed it, and one day in May, 1809, he summoned his household, asked to be supported at his clavier, and played for the last time the "Emperor's Hymn." Even as he played the French were once more in Vienna.

Five days later the father of the symphony was dead.

It is not without reason that Haydn is called the "father of the symphony." He lived at a time when music in the contrapuntal, polyphonic style, beautifully contrived by both Italian and German composers, had been brought to the ultimate limits of its possibilities by Johann Sebastian Bach. Composers then as now sought

individuality and originality in style, and Haydn looked about for some larger form that would give opportunity for exploitation of his truly remarkable fund of musical ideas. The works of Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach, son of Johann, gave Haydn the foundation for his idea. K. P. E. Bach, though his works are of interest chiefly to the musicologist and the historian, is generally credited with having been the first to employ two themes simultaneously in certain formal relationship. This is the basis of the sonata form, which Haydn fully developed, and which in turn is the foundation of the classical symphonic movement. (See note on "The Symphony," page 25.)

In the sonata form, two themes of equal importance are treated in several sections, in one of which *duality* of key relationship is maintained; in the second of which *plurality* of key relationship occurs, and in the third of which *unity* of key relationship is effected. Sometimes an introduction precedes the first section, or exposition; then comes the development section; then the recapitulation. Often there is a coda, or tailpiece, to finish off the movement.

Haydn admitted his debt to K. P. E. Bach. It was, however, the wealth of invention and the amazing clarity which marked his works that made Haydn truly great. He brought to bear upon the "bones" of the sonata structure the products of his own fertile imagination, and developed this structure from a stiff and attenuated skeleton to a full-bodied, richly colored, and musically satisfying entity.

That is not to say that the Haydn symphony is to be compared with the romantic or modern. It is too rigidly symmetrical, reserved, stylized, and relatively poor in emotional content. We must, however, consider it against the background of the times, and mark what a bold and constructive departure from the commonplace it represents. The orchestra and its repertoire are today infinitely richer in resources than in Haydn's time, but his music, though it rarely flames and never explodes, still sparkles; though it has little mystery for us, it has magic. He took the best from the world of music as he saw it, and made of it a firm structure upon which the greater men who came after him built so proudly.



## Symphony in G major

[The "Oxford"]

ONE of the most charming of the Salomon group of twelve symphonies by Haydn is this one, in G major, which was the musical *pièce de résistance* on the occasion of the conferring of the degree of doctor of music upon the composer by the English university. Three concerts were given at Oxford during Haydn's visit, and at the second, Haydn himself conducted this work, since generally known as the

"Oxford" Symphony. It exhibits the characteristic grace, vitality, and exquisite finish of all the music in the Salomon group, and perhaps because of its particularly happy spirit and vivacity it is easily one of the favorite Haydn symphonies.

The composer's skill as a conductor was noted with pleasure on this and other occasions. At the time, the art of conducting as we know it was unheard of. Orchestral concerts were directed from the piano, and, from time to time, the conductor played chords from the score before him, merely to give a degree of security and precision in attack to the orchestra men. The concertmaster also directed, standing up in his place and beating time with his bow as a baton, or with his foot, or perhaps by striking his bow against his music stand. The conventional baton did not come into use until many years later.

We have a survival of this style of conducting at present, when occasionally a great pianist is also a conductor. Bruno Walter and José Iturbi frequently conduct and play concertos while seated at the piano.

### *First Movement*

The symphony begins with an introduction twenty measures in length, of which all but seven are written for strings alone. Then the first theme of the main subject occurs. This bold and animated melody is also assigned to the strings, and is repeated presently by the flute. The development following involves scales that sweep up and down at breakneck speed, punctuated by a softly interposed comment of bassoon and oboe.



The contrasting second theme is a more sentimental and gracious melody, sung by violins. Here the quality of the music suggests the curving grace of femininity . . . grace and winsomeness in charming contrast to the virility of the first theme. Stated first by the strings alone, the theme is repeated with accompanying descending and ascending scales by the flute. In the development of this material woodwinds and strings superimpose sparkling musical gossip. The second theme, originally stated by the violin, is now heard in the plaintive voice of the oboe, and then clear and tranquil in the flute.

### *Second Movement*

There is a gracious dignity and stateliness to the second movement of the symphony; a formality that suggests panniers, powdered wigs coiffed high, and satin knee breeches, lace cuffs, and snuffboxes.

The music is in three-part form, with the first and third divisions made up of the same material. The second, for contrast, differs in tonality as well as in subject matter. The strings have the opening theme, a melody of straightforward simplicity. Flute and oboe add their voices, and the theme is expanded in the measures preceding the second division.



Here the subject in D minor is cast in a more serious mold. The forte chords which introduce it are in direct contrast to the serene termination of the first section. Four notes for bassoon in descending sequence usher in a passage for flute and oboes, whose piquant charm relieves the severity of the strident chords. Strings, in variation, repeat it softly, just before a return of the sinister chords that mark the close of the second division.

Then the piercing voice of the oboe—supported by strings and horns—restates the theme of the first division. Strings continue with it, woodwinds contribute plaintively, and the lovely melody dies softly away.

### *Third Movement*

Like the preceding movement, the menuetto is written in three-part form. The first part is a virile melody presented by full orchestra. The customary trio is announced by bassoons and horns with pizzicato accompaniment in the strings. The third part of the movement is an exact repetition of the first.



### *Fourth Movement*

The lively finale opens with a theme assigned to the strings. Flutes and horns enter at the sixteenth measure, and the melody is repeated by bassoons and lower



strings. Somewhat later the strings announce a second theme, softly; a dainty mincing figure which the flute imitates. In the development, both themes are

worked out with fascinating effects, being transferred from the string to the wind section with the finesse of perfect jugglery. One waits, breathless, to hear what more can be achieved with these delightful melodies . . . and suddenly the movement is ended.



## Symphony in D major

[*The "Clock"*]

[B & H No. 4]\*

THE number of symphonies written by Haydn exceeds one hundred. It is estimated as high as one hundred and fifty-three, but in a collection of his complete works the number is given as one hundred and four.

When Beethoven could write but nine, Tchaikovsky six, and Brahms four symphonies, it will be easy to conclude that, if Haydn wrote a hundred, the symphony of his time must have been something quite different from that of the romantic and modern composers. It was. It was infinitely less complicated in scoring; narrower in its dynamic and emotional range, and in every aspect, less exacting. It bears the same relationship to a Brahms' symphony that a miniature bears to a mural. Consequently, we cannot expect to find here the emotional ferment that agitates the larger and more modern works. The audiences for whom Haydn wrote would have been shocked and displeased, their ears would have protested at, say, the Sixth Symphony of Tchaikovsky. The stylized, the formal, and well-bred, the restrained and polite, the correct and perfect thing, appealed to them.

This is not to intimate that Haydn's music is without charm. Quite the contrary. There is something singularly refreshing and relaxing in the sweet simplicity, the fine direct line, the firm symmetrical contours of this music. The world seems to be turning a degree or so toward graciousness and ease and leisure—enforced or otherwise; perhaps this influence will be felt in music, and such symphonies as this will become even more widely popular.

### *First Movement*

The movement has an introduction, slow and grave, a foil for the sprightly music that constitutes the main body of this section. A slowly ascending passage for strings and bassoons sounds against woodwind and one section of violins; then, anti-

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\* Breitkopf & Härtel number this symphony "4" in their catalog of Haydn's music. It is the fifth in the second series of six composed by Haydn for the London publisher Salomon.

thetically, violas and cellos in opposite motion give a descending phrase, repeated by flutes. The movement proper begins with a vivacious announcement, by the first violins, of the swiftly ascending scales which constitute the first theme. Later the same instruments are entrusted with the presentation of the second theme, and both are presently involved in elaborate counterpoint, the themes reversed and contrasted and otherwise called forth in contrast to, and support of, each other.

### *Second Movement*

It is this movement which has caused the work to be known as the "Clock" Symphony. The fanciful title is not so farfetched as some. It arises from the firm slow rhythm with which the movement progresses—a rhythm marked by staccato notes of bassoons, violins, cellos, and basses (the strings playing pizzicato), against which first violins play a singularly delicate and simple melody. With occasional robust passages for contrast, the idea presented in the opening section of the movement persists throughout, the respective melody and "ticking clock" parts being assigned to different groups of instruments.

### *Third Movement*

It was a convention which persisted for some time after Haydn that the third movement of a symphony be cast in the form of a minuet. Polite eighteenth-century society knew nothing more abandoned. The present movement is in characteristic form, but somewhat jollier, though not less graceful, than the typical minuet of the period. There is an incident in harmony here which is strange to the music of Haydn but sounds conventional enough to modern ears. It occurs in the trio—the second section of the minuet—and produces a dissonance not at all disagreeable. The eminent critic Mr. Lawrence Gilman held that it was not Haydn's or a copyist's mistake; that it appears in the Haydn manuscript and can be regarded merely as a drone bass.

### *Fourth Movement*

It must have been such sprightly and ingenious music as this which captivated the English at the Salomon concerts; indeed, it would fascinate anyone who has ears to hear. The strings have a broad phrase to deliver as the chief subject of the movement, and in a few moments the lightfooted vivacious rhythm asserts itself, sparkling through all sections of the orchestra and eventually involving the ensemble in a brilliant fugue based on the opening subject.





## Symphony in G major \*

[The "Surprise"]

THIS delightful and perfect little symphony was one of the group commissioned by the London publisher Salomon. It is number three in the first group bearing the name of the publisher, and was first performed in London on March 23, 1792. Sometimes it is called the symphony "*mit dem Paukenschlag*"—both this title and the appellation "surprise" being assigned to it because of the sudden orchestral crash occurring at the end of a pianissimo passage in the second movement. It has been asserted that Haydn had noticed a number of drowsy people at certain London concerts, and that he inserted the pianissimo string passage, interrupted by the rude *sforzando* in full orchestra, to lull the ladies into a trap of somnolence and then awaken them with a "bang." He is quoted as having gleefully exclaimed, "Here the ladies will shriek!" Perhaps they did in those days, but the bombshell is a squib to modern ears. After all, we have heard Wagner and Stravinsky!

*First Movement*

It must always be remembered that the symphonies of Haydn and his contemporaries cannot be regarded in the same light as those of the later classical, and more recent romantic, composers. They are symphonies in miniature, so to speak, and though fascinating in their delicate and perfect workmanship, in their charming melodic line and grace of form, they must not be expected to reveal the large effect, the intense emotional expressiveness, the glamorous color, and wide dynamic range of the more modern symphonies.

The present work is important as well as charming, for in it Haydn reveals a beautiful example of the three-part sonata form which he himself had so highly developed. There is a brief introduction, with a delightfully melodious passage given alternately to a woodwind and horn combination, and to strings. After the fine crescendo and diminuendo there is a distinct atmosphere of anticipation, and here the first movement proper begins.

It opens vivaciously, with the first theme, entrusted, appropriately, to the violins, which sing it softly but with sparkle. Its second phrase sounds more vigorously in full orchestra. The theme is "appropriate" to the violins because of its close resemblance to a typical Hungarian gypsy tune. Haydn, whose acquaintance with the wonderful treasury of melody to be found in the folk music of Middle Europe, did not hesitate to draw upon it frequently for thematic material, and the present theme is certainly one of his happiest selections.

The second part of the first theme is considerably exploited and repeated, until the first phrase appears again, in flute and strings. Now the key of D major—

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\* No. 6 in Breitkopf & Härtel's edition of Haydn's works.

the key of the dominant—is emphasized, suggesting that it will be the contrasting tonality in which the second theme of the movement will be proposed. And so it happens. The second theme is not particularly outstanding; you will hear it in the running string passages, but its second phrase will be more conspicuous. This is a vigorously rhythmic and buoyant melody, leading to a transitional passage which precedes the development section of the movement.

The development begins with fragments of the first theme, heard in the strings; some modulations through related keys, and then an announcement of the chief theme in the key of G major—indicating that the development section is finished and the recapitulation about to begin. The development section of this movement is curiously brief and loose in structure, but contains elements that suggest the broader thematic treatment which was later to be a conspicuous feature of symphonies of the romantic school.

In the recapitulation, convention requires that the thematic material be so brought together as to agree in tonality and exhibit *unity* in contrast with preceding *duality* and *plurality* of key relationship. This Haydn neatly accomplishes, and even brings in charming ornamental ideas which have not heretofore appeared in the movement.

### *Second Movement*

In Haydn's time the second movement was a great favorite with his audiences, not alone because it contains the famous "surprise," but because of its intrinsic beauty and charm. It is cast in the form of theme and variations: a movement built up of a single basic theme, manipulated successively in many different derivations of itself. The basic melody is heard in the strings, softly, as the movement begins. It is repeated even more softly, and as it reaches the extreme of pianissimo, we are expected to be startled by the "*Paukenschlag*," the drumbeat pointing the orchestral crash which gives the symphony its nickname.

In the first variation the melody is given out strongly by second violins and violas, with the first violins presenting a variation of it. The second variation appears in the key of C minor, beginning with sweeping and powerful octaves, alternated with a first-violin passage leading to the key of E-flat major. The third variation is first assigned to the oboe—still in E-flat major—then to violins, and a moment later it appears in a lovely passage for flute and oboe. The fourth version of the theme is announced by full orchestra, fortissimo, contrasted with a softer passage in which the violas have prominence. A fifth variation is projected, but scarcely materializes before the movement softly ends.

### *Third Movement*

The third movement presents another innovation attributed to Haydn—the introduction of a popular dance form as the third symphonic section. Haydn, of

course, used the minuet, the dance of polite society in his day. A contemporary composer could use a fox trot with perfect propriety—just as Beethoven incorporated boisterous dancelike movements in his symphonies, just as Tchaikovsky employed the waltz in his.

This minuet is in characteristic style, the first and third parts dainty and playful, the middle part, or trio, somewhat more grave.

#### *Fourth Movement*

The final movement is a brief rondo, built upon two simple themes, and proceeding at a furious pace through all its short but merry life. The music must have been particularly exacting for the fiddlers of Haydn's time, for it is exigent enough even today, after all the years of improvement and development in violinistic technique.



## Symphony in C major

[*Salomon Set, No. 1*]

### *First Movement*

THE symphony opens with a short introduction in C major, for strings and woodwinds. The main theme of the movement is ushered in by a fortissimo assertion in full orchestra. This theme is then commented upon by strings and woodwinds in the pleasing variety of tone color which these instruments offer. Woodwinds finally give way to the strings, which state, in unison, a boldly triumphant phrase that directly precedes a second theme. Violins announce this second theme—a lilting phrase timidly introduced and later gaining assurance in a forceful triplet figure. There is a repetition of both themes and their development, leading to the second movement of the symphony.

### *Second Movement*

The slow movement in 4/4 time, begins in F major. The theme, announced at once by the strings, is a gentle melody, full of happiness and serenity. An emotional surge at the realization of such contentment is expressed by the long violin tone sustained over the ascending crescendo scale in the bass, easily discovered a few moments later. The theme is then heard in a triplet figure in the strings; then there is a milder section in F minor. A return to the major key changes the mood again, and the theme is then presented in delightful variation, mischievously parody-

ing the quiet melody . . . until descending thirds in the various choirs bring the movement to a close.

### *Third Movement*

The minuet, in typical Haydn style, commences with a theme for full orchestra. The trio, or middle section, is a particularly charming one. It is built upon a subject played by first violins, oboe, and bassoon. The opening theme is repeated, and leads to the finale.

### *Fourth Movement*

The finale in 2/4 time is in rondo form. It is highly animated, and sparkles with audacity and verve. Here the entire orchestra is involved in friendly chatter; an interchange of queries and answers in the string and wind choirs, such as Haydn delighted to suggest, keeps the music interesting and lively to the close.

# GUSTAV HOLST

[1874-1934]

**G**USTAV HOLST, though born in England, came of a family that had its roots in Russia and Sweden and Poland. Several generations, however, were native to the British Isles. Gustav was born at Cheltenham, the son of a musician; his father wanted the boy to follow a musical career, but did not expect that it would be along the line of creative music. The boy learned to play piano and organ; later, several other instruments. His most interesting studies, however, were those in composition under Villiers Stanford. He was noted also as conductor and teacher of choirs, and made numerous public appearances in these positions.

Holst was a modern, but a reasonable one. His music, while sometimes strange and difficult, seems valid and sincere, with no struggling for "effect at any price." Much of his music has been heard in America, and continues to be heard with increasing frequency.



## The Planets

[*Suite for Orchestra*]

THE suite is composed for large orchestra and organ, and there is a chorus of female voices in one section. The composer, when interviewed before the performance of *The Planets* in 1920, gave the following statement, which is quoted from the program notes of the Boston Symphony Orchestra for the concert of Holst's music, conducted by the composer, January 22, 1932:

These pieces were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets; there is no program music in them, neither have they any connection with the deities of classical mythology bearing the same names. If any guide to the music is required, the subtitle to each piece will be found sufficient, especially if it be used in a broad sense. For instance, Jupiter brings jollity in the ordinary sense, and also the more ceremonial kind of rejoicing associated with religious or national festivities. Saturn brings not only physical decay, but also a vision of fulfillment. Mercury is the symbol of mind.

1. *Mars—The Bringer of War*: A single note is played by strings *col legno*, and by percussion. Bassoons and horns bring forth an aggressive figure, and wars rage in the brass. The organ adds its might to a great climax.

2. *Venus—The Bringer of Peace*: She has never been noted for it! But the movement is rather peaceful and slow, and features a violin solo.

3. *Mercury—The Winged Messenger*: Mercury is known in this character to everyone. He is also the patron of thieves.

4. *Jupiter—The Bringer of Jollity*: Olympian merriment rocks the orchestra; horn and woodwind inaugurate the theme. More solemn joys are expressed as the movement progresses.

5. *Saturn—The Bringer of Old Age*: Surly phrases for double bass, and later, footsteps toward oblivion, also in the bass strings, pizzicato.

6. *Uranus—The Magician*: The magic occurs largely in the lower sections of the orchestra, basses, tubas, and bassoons having important roles. A distressing slide, fortissimo, on the organ, and an immediately following suppression of all instruments, suggests horrors and black magic.

7. *Neptune—The Mystic*: The score requires a chorus of women's voices, but this is not always employed. The principal incident is projected through two flutes, *soli*. The conclusion is lively.

# ARTHUR HONEGGER

[Born 1892]

HONEGGER was born of Swiss-German parents at Le Havre, where his family had been settled for some time. His mother encouraged his musical tendencies, and his surroundings supplied his mind with vivid images—the sea, the teeming harbor, the great locomotives that drew the *rapide* to Paris. The latter were eventually to suggest the music by which Honegger is best known in this country—*Pacific 231*—but which has mercifully disappeared from symphonic programs during the last few years.

Honegger was sent, at the age of sixteen, to study music in Switzerland; later he worked with private teachers in Paris, and finally at the Conservatoire. The war interrupted his studies, but he continued them eventually, becoming the pupil of such eminent masters as Charles Marie Widor, the venerable organist of St. Sulpice, and Vincent d'Indy. His most important work, perhaps, is *Le Roi David*, a "symphonic psalm," with narrator, soloists, and chorus. His best-known orchestral works are *Pacific 231* and *Rugby*; neither is of great moment, though both have distinct elements of interest.



## Rugby

[*A Symphonic Movement*]

THIS curious music claims the title "symphonic" because it begins and ends in the same key. Yet so distinguished a critic as Henry Prunières is not quite sure even of this; from which one can deduce that the music is rather free and vague in form.

Honegger seems to have that dangerous facility that sometimes entices men to the production of work unworthy of their real talents. *Pacific 231*, with its rather cheap imitation of a locomotive and its strident dissonances, was an example of this. "Was" is used deliberately, for the piece seems to have been consigned to "the limbo of forgotten things." *Rugby*, in spite of its looseness, does not descend to cinematographic representation of the game of football; on the contrary, it contains what one might reasonably call the abstract pattern of a game, for the formations, the movements, the jarring stops, the oppositions, and struggles—all are suggested skillfully, and with masterly command of orchestral resources.

The composition of *Rugby* was more or less an accident. It is related that Honegger once said to a newspaperman that he could, while watching a game of football, visualize its movement and pattern in music. The reporter burst into print with the story that Honegger was writing a football symphony; and the idea so amused the composer that when he was asked to write a *pièce d'occasion*, he wrote *Rugby*.

# VINCENT D'INDY

[1851-1931]

VINCENT D'INDY lived through a period which saw the rise and decline of more than one musical reform and revolt. It is astonishing, somehow, to find that he was a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War, knew Liszt, Brahms, Franck; and was present at the first performance of Wagner's *Ring* operas; yet lived through the World War, knew the music of Stravinsky and Ravel and Schönberg, and, it seems, left us only yesterday.

The composer was born at Paris, and died there. As an obedient son, he studied for the bar at the wish of his parents, though his musical inclinations were strong. His father was not unsympathetic to music, and played violin himself; on the death of his mother, d'Indy was entrusted to the care of his grandmother, who was an excellent musician and taught him much. He became a member of an orchestra, playing timpani; later won an appointment as a chorumaster, and finally studied under César Franck at the Conservatoire. He was not satisfied at the school, and became a private pupil of Franck.

In 1905, d'Indy was invited to conduct a series of concerts in America, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He accepted, and appeared in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and New York, playing many of his own works with conspicuous success. The composer has written a number of books, among them a life of his friend and teacher, César Franck; a biography of Beethoven, and technical works on music. He has composed much chamber music, as well as choral, and some beautiful things for the piano.



## Istar

[*Symphonic Variations*]

THE strange and exotic beauty of this music, and of the timeless tale which inspired it, have made the *Variations*—not to be anticipated as something formal and scholastic, but rather as a fantasia or symphonic poem—a welcome incident on orchestral programs. Eugène Ysaÿe was first to perform this music, conducting it at Brussels, January 10, 1897. During the next season it was played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra—the Theodore Thomas orchestra—and conducted by that devoted and illustrious musician.

It has been pointed out that, appropriately to details of the story which accompany the music, the composer has not built up to an elaborated climax, but rather



away from it; the theme is not presented entirely, nor with final clarity, until the end, where Istar stands forth in lovely nakedness, passing the last gate in the house of death, and releasing her lover.

The darker and more mysterious tones of woodwind and horn project the beginnings of the subject, and a curious irregular rhythm is established by the woodwind. The significance and development of each variation is indicated by the verses of the ancient Babylonian poem which inspired the music, here given in the version of William Foster Apthorp:

Toward the immutable land, Istar, daughter of Sin (a proper name), bent her steps toward the abode of the dead, toward the seven-gated abode where HE entered, toward the abode whence there is no return.

At the first gate, the warder stripped her; he took the high tiara from her head.

At the second gate, the warder stripped her; he took the pendants from her ears.

At the third gate, the warder stripped her; he took off the precious stones that adorn her neck.

At the fourth gate, the warder stripped her; he took off the jewels that adorn her breast.

At the fifth gate, the warder stripped her; he took off the girdle that encompasses her waist.

At the sixth gate, the warder stripped her; he took the rings from her feet, the rings from her hands.

At the seventh gate, the warder stripped her; he took off the last veil that covers her body.

Istar, daughter of Sin, went into the immutable land, she took and received the Waters of Life. She gave the sublime Waters, and thus, in the presence of all, delivered the Son of Life, her young lover.

# MIKHAIL IPPOLITOV-IVANOV

[1859-1935]

THE composer was born at Gatchina. His father was a mechanic, but was able to provide the rudiments of a musical education. The boy studied violin, and, in his seventeenth year, was admitted to the Conservatory at St. Petersburg. There he had the advantage of working under the great Rimsky-Korsakov, and he employed it so thoroughly that on his graduation he was appointed conductor of the concerts given by the Imperial Russian Musical Society at Tiflis. He held a succession of important positions under the old Russian regime, including conductorship of the Imperial Opera and of the Moscow Choral Society, and a professorship at the Moscow Conservatoire.

Ippolitov-Ivanov, while conductor of the symphony concerts at Tiflis, made a penetrating and thorough study of the folk music of the Caucasus, and wrote an exhaustive report of his findings which is the absolute authority on the subject. His suite, *Caucasian Sketches*, is, of course, one of the results of his investigations.

The composer managed to maintain his prestige under the Soviet, as well as under the Czarist, government. He was given national honors by the former in 1923.



## Caucasian Sketches

[*Suite*]

THIS pleasant music remains a favorite with the radio and summer concert audiences. Occasionally in the past few years it has appeared in programs of the regular season of symphony orchestras. The suite is in four sections, each colorful, picturesque, and contrasting with its fellows. The suggestion of Georgian folk music is powerful. The four parts are, in order, "*Dans le défilé*" (In the Mountain Pass), "*Dans l'aoûle*" (In the Village), "*Dans la mosquée*" (In the Mosque), and the ever-popular and grandiloquent "*Cortège du sirdar*" (March of the Sirdar).

# WERNER JANSSEN

[Born 1899]

**W**ERNER JANSSEN was born in New York into the family of a famous restaurateur. He had a thorough musical as well as general education, graduating from Phillips Exeter Academy and Dartmouth College, and studying with Chadwick and Friedheim in theory, composition, and piano. His musical inclinations were discouraged by his father, who preferred a Boniface to a Beethoven in the family. His career as composer began when he was in college, where he wrote the music for several of the college stage productions; his activities continued more or less along the same line after graduation, when we find his name associated with the music of a number of Broadway entertainments, among them the *Ziegfeld Follies* of 1925-26. He became assistant conductor at the old Roxy Theatre in New York, and two years later won the American Prix de Rome with the composition discussed here. He has conducted in Italy, Germany, and with sensational success in the Scandinavian countries.

Mr. Janssen was chosen as one of the American conductors of the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York, for the season 1934-35, and is one of the few native Americans ever to conduct regular concerts of this great orchestra. He later was conductor of the Baltimore Symphony, and is at present writing music in and for Hollywood.



## New Year's Eve in New York

[*Symphonic Poem for Symphony Orchestra and Jazz Band*]

THE possible utility of jazz in the field of symphonic music has engrossed many modern composers, particularly those in America. For a time jazz seemed a quite important musical development, but now, since the excitement of Whiteman concerts in Carnegie Hall, and the frank interpolation of jazz into various pieces for symphony orchestra, it is evident that jazz music, virtually all of it unoriginal and uninspired, has little to contribute to symphonic music, and *that* little is remotely derived from serious music anyway. It should be remembered that there is no harmonic, rhythmic, or melodic device characteristic of jazz that has not been employed, countless times, in serious music; and this long before there was any such thing as jazz. Jazz orchestration has of course introduced some novelties, mostly raucous.

Nevertheless, any folk expression, whether poetic, or crude, or merely cheap

and noisy, is significant; so regarded, it is entitled to consideration by the serious musician. Mr. Janssen relates, in the programs of the Chicago and Cleveland orchestras, that he discussed this point with Mr. Carl Engel, late chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress, now head of the publishing house of G. Schirmer. Mr. Engel, a musician and scholar of distinction, suggested the employment of jazz as a logical feature of a work designed along the lines of *New Year's Eve*; and a year later Mr. Janssen began work on it.

The old-time New Year's Eve in New York is largely a thing of the past. The years of prohibition and depression gradually took the sparkle out of it. There is still noise and some excitement, but the evening Janssen celebrates is a wilder, and at the same time a healthier and more spontaneous, bacchanalia. Americans seem to have become too cynical, too blasé, for such outpourings, yet we are, as a nation, too unsophisticated to invent any other kind of joyful expression.

The restless rhythms of the music suggest the aimless wanderings of the crowds along Broadway. Everyone is awaiting the stroke of twelve. Taxis dart here and there, the bright lights glare, newsboys cry the morning papers, "white-top" restaurants disgorge visitors from the Bronx, the tolerant cop ignores the noisy drunk but not the flashing traffic light. Excitement grows as the midnight hour approaches; the clock strikes twelve and pandemonium reigns. Here the jazz band is introduced, and the symphonic poem temporarily becomes a modern *concerto grosso*.

Besides the usual orchestral instruments, the orchestra includes a fire siren, automobile horn, paper horns of the type peddled in the streets on holidays, banjo, piano, and rattles.

## WERNER JOSTEN

[Born 1888]

**J**OSTEN IS GERMAN BY BIRTH, American by adoption. He was born at Elberfeld, Germany, and came to New York in the early '20's. His musical education was carried on in Germany and Switzerland, and, in recent years, in America. In 1923 the composer was offered a teaching post at Smith College, which he accepted and still holds. He has been active in the revival of many ancient operas, especially those of Handel and Monteverdi. Several operas of the latter have been produced for the first time in America under Mr. Josten's direction.

Mr. Josten has composed a number of important works in various forms. His *Concerto sacro* reveals musical tendencies of great interest; *Jungle* is his most popular and best-known music.



### Jungle

[Symphonic Movement for full orchestra]

*Jungle*, though, according to the composer, inspired by a painting—the work of Henri Rousseau—entitled *Forêt exotique*, is definitely absolute music, with no program or story through which it might be interpreted in detail. The fragments of weird melody that appear in it are original with the composer; no native tunes are used, and the only aboriginal derivation is, according to the composer's note in the program of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a rhythmic motive of voodoo origin.

The teeming life of the jungle, the fetid growths, the primitive struggles of plant and animal life for survival, the shuddering cries of victims of ferocity—these and other details have an effect that is at once subduing and exciting; and it is the responses of a civilized man to these stimuli that the composer, according to his own word, wishes to suggest.

The orchestration includes a large percussion section, which requires among other effects, a "lion roar."

# ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

[Born 1882]

**Z**OLTÁN KODÁLY was born at Kecskemét, in Hungary. His musical gifts were not particularly noticed when he was a small child, for an inclination toward music was entirely normal in a little Hungarian boy at the time. At the age of eighteen, however, the young man was enrolled as a student at the Conservatory in Budapest, and there studied under Hans Koessler. The great influences of the time—Brahms and Debussy—had their effect upon Kodály in his student days, and several early works reveal that the young composer was enthralled by the music of the older masters. However, it was not long before he became interested in the folk music of his own country, which eventually quite engrossed him. Indeed, the study of Hungarian folk music should be rich in interest for any student, for though it is known to have been affected by native gypsy as well as foreign influences, its original sources are obscure. Whatever Kodály may have accomplished in tracing the origin of Hungarian music, he performed a priceless service for music in general when he collected, often from the very mouths of the peasants who sang them, a wonderful group of native melodies. It is reported that he has gathered together, in collaboration with Béla Bartók, several thousand folk songs of his own country.

Six years after his enrollment at the Budapest Conservatory, Kodály became head of the department of composition there. A few years later, he had as one of his pupils the brilliant conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy. Mr. Ormandy has established himself as the authoritative interpreter of Kodály's music, and particularly of the suite, *Háry János*.



## Háry János

[*Suite*]

PERHAPS the most important work of Kodály, to date, is the opera, *Háry János*, based upon Hungarian legend and folk music. It was presented for the first time, and successfully, in Budapest, in October, 1926. The orchestral suite, which has become one of the most popular of recent novelties on American symphonic programs, is drawn from the opera, and was first performed at a concert of the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York, under the direction of Willem Mengelberg, on December 15, 1927. It has been given many times since, and promises to become an established favorite in the symphonic repertoire.

Háry János, according to the story of the opera, is a national hero whose personal characteristics and achievements are, to say the least, apocryphal, but nevertheless firmly believed by the Hungarian peasant. Háry is so prodigious, yet so naïve, a liar that not only does he convince his listeners of the truth of his tales, as he sits comfortably in the inn surrounded by a gaping audience; what is more important, he believes them himself!

He is a fellow of rare imagination and inventiveness, and the romantic Hungarian peasant believes him, not because his tales are true, but because the storyteller is a dreamer, a fellow romanticist, and an excellent storyteller. Belief is the most sincere applause, and by believing Háry János' audiences wish merely to compliment the excellence of his fantastic tales.

The action of the opera, if translated into real life, might have had interesting effects upon the political map of Europe. It takes place a hundred years ago, with János, a typical peasant soldier home from the wars, relating his adventures to a circle of admiring villagers. He tells them about the time when Marie Louise, daughter of Emperor Francis and wife of Napoleon, was on her way to Vienna from Paris, via Russia. She and János meet almost at the same time Orze, Háry's sweetheart, arrives on the scene. The Empress falls violently in love with the soldier, and insists that he accompany her on her journey. This Háry refuses to do, except on condition that Orze join the party also. The braggart and heartbreaker of course delights in this situation, wherein he has two lovely women, one princess and one peasant, quarreling for his favors. To add interest to the triangle, the chancellor who accompanies the Empress as a kind of moral guarantor (supplied by Napoleon) vigorously resents the presence and charm of the Hungarian soldier. This personage eventually persuades Napoleon to declare war on Austria, as the direct result of Háry's philandering.

But this was another made-to-order situation for János. On the battlefield he performs prodigies of valor and military efficiency. Whole troops of the enemy are mowed down before his lethal blade, and regiments quake at his approach. He cuts his way through to Napoleon himself, who, no better than his underlings, quails and begs for Háry's mercy. This does not endear the Emperor to his wife, who is more than ever convinced of the depth and sincerity of her passion for the Hungarian conqueror. After a rather cruel and boisterous humiliation of Napoleon, involving well-placed kicks and similar indignities, he is released.

The scene now shifts to Vienna, where, after a triumphal entrance, Háry János abandons himself to luxury. Yet at the height of his triumphs and in the midst of all his imperial splendor, the conqueror is not happy. The attentions of the Empress have become wearisome, and he discovers that there is a definite hiatus in his scheme of things. The entrance of Orze into the scene at this point makes János realize that she, his faithful sweetheart of less fortunate days, is quite necessary to his happiness. Whereupon he discards the trappings of royalty, and declares

to the assembled guests that they may judge him and do with him as they see fit. The Empress, the "woman scorned," would like to have him properly tortured to death—or nearly; but in the face of his popularity she is afraid to take steps against him. So Háry János, forsaking all for love, takes his sweet Orze by the hand and leads her back to his native village.

Again the scene changes, returning to the village inn where the boastful ex-soldier is holding forth. Again the awestruck burghers are enthralled by his tales. Presently the door opens, and the woman for whom, says Háry, he has abandoned an empress and all glory enters. It is Orze, old and ugly and querulous. She takes the braggart by the ear and leads him home.

The suite derived from the opera of course omits many of the incidents amusingly outlined in the stage version of the work. The score as usually played is divided into six sections: "The Tale Begins," "Viennese Musical Clock," "Song," "The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon," "Intermezzo," "Entrance of the Emperor and His Court."

### *The Tale Begins*

There is a Hungarian superstition to the effect that if anyone sneezes during the telling of a story, it is proof of the speaker's truth. Háry has a receptive and credulous audience indeed, if we are to judge by the tremendous, long-drawn, and concerted sneeze with which the orchestra opens the first section of the tale. There ensues a pregnant suspension, as if the listeners waited with bated breath for the old soldier to proceed with his romancing. The chief melodic idea is a charming theme suggesting the sentimental goings-on of our hero's youth; it is assigned to the clarinet, and later, in a more emphatic presentation, to a voice compounded of the tones of cello and horn. The violins adopt the same idea, and sweep gradually upward to a climax terminated by a tremendous *sforzando* chord in full orchestra. Now having put his audience into the proper frame of mind, and having, as it were, pounded the table and commanded silence, Háry leisurely turns to the telling of his fantastic tales.

### *Viennese Musical Clock*

Here is indescribably gay and colorful music. The troops have marched into Vienna, and here the innocent countryman, for all his brave uniform and braggadocio, is tremendously impressed by his first sight of the famous musical clock in the imperial palace, which not only plays merry tunes, but makes little painted figures of soldiers perform their military evolutions in time with the music. Underneath the clamor of chimes and celesta and glockenspiel, we can both hear and feel the brisk, marchlike, military rhythm. All the wild chimes of Vienna join the



clangorous chorus, and the rising climax finally rests upon a sturdy orchestral chord, edged with bells.

### *Song*

It is perhaps in this movement that the influence of Hungarian gypsy music is most keenly felt. This warm and passionate utterance, with its romantic suggestions and whimsically changing moods, is absolutely typical. Here János and his peasant sweetheart, dismayed by military discipline and regulation, sit mooning and reflecting upon the simple joys of their deserted and distant village. One may intimate, as the music progresses from the tender viola solo at the beginning to the impassioned climaxes, that possibly they found adequate consolation in making love to each other.

The viola solo is one of the few opportunities given to players of that sometimes ungrateful instrument to shine with distinction—or to exhibit the worst qualities of the viola. Another interesting feature is the use, in the development of the viola theme, of the characteristic gypsy instrument, the cembalo. There are so few capable players of the cembalo in this country, however, that the piano, a closely related instrument, is generally used in concert presentations of this work. This substitution has the approval of the composer.

### *The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon*

This highly entertaining movement pictures, very graphically, the desperate struggle between the Austrian and French forces, in which the carnage was so terrible that finally only Háy and the Emperor Napoleon are left to fight it out hand to hand. The marching of hosts, the terrible presence of Háy, and, at length, the cringing pleas of the discouraged Emperor are amusingly depicted; there is highly dramatic use of the brass, there are amazingly suggestive echo effects, and a musical dialogue between Háy and the Emperor, to which the peasant hero puts a period with a hearty kick at the Emperor, the kick arriving, as planned, squarely in the bosom of the potentate's pants. The suave yet "jittery" saxophone accomplishes the Napoleonic pleading, which is heard importunately above a dirge suggestively derived from a few notes of the *Marseillaise*. The ludicrous glissando in the bass is as insolent and insulting as the well-known gesture of the little boy, involving thumb, nose, and certain wiggings of the fingers.

### *Intermezzo*

The "Intermezzo," though it is without significance so far as the action of the opera is concerned, nevertheless constitutes one of the most charming incidents

in the suite. Here is genuine Hungarian music, highly flavored with the spicy romanticism and hot passion of the gypsy; wayward in rhythm and capricious.

A vigorous and marchlike figure gets the movement under way, and, after a little detached and hesitant phrase, the swinging march is repeated, and this time progresses into a short period of development. A marked change in rhythm, and a reduction of orchestral power, precede the introduction of a lovely theme for horn. Strings and, later, woodwind, elaborate this delightful melody. The same tentative little phrase that interrupted the opening march reappears, and now serves to recall that stirring episode. The cembalo adds the soft glint of its peculiar tone color, and the movement ends with the conventional three chords that mark the conclusion of every typical Hungarian gypsy dance.

### *Entrance of the Emperor and His Court*

The rhythmically compelling combination of drums and other percussion instruments, which Kodály uses often and effectively through this music, here serves again to introduce a section of the work. Here is orchestral magnificence indeed! Now every instrument must put forward its most powerful and brightest tone; now all must move in the swift, the domineering march of this brilliant music. Pauses serve to fascinate attention for bold and strident pronunciations of the brass; fierce, swift crescendos, pointed with the brazen clangor of the cymbal, rush toward the massive chords near the end. And, driving home the pointed chords in the last measures, comes a tremendous stroke upon the great bass drum.

# VICTOR LALO

[1823-1892]

VICTOR ANTOINE ÉDOUARD LALO, a famous composer of Spanish origin, was born at Lille, France, January 27, 1823, and died in Paris in April, 1892. His early musical education was received at the Lille Conservatoire, where he studied violin under Muller; and violoncello with the German, Baumann, who had played under Beethoven's leadership at Vienna.

In 1839, Lalo came to Paris to continue his violin study at the Conservatoire, and to round out his musical education with private lessons in harmony and composition. His first works date from the year 1845, and include songs published three years later.

In a competition at the Théâtre-Lyrique, his opera, *Fiesque*, won third prize. Later, a violin concerto, and the *Symphonie espagnole* for violin and orchestra, dedicated to and introduced by the eminent violinist, Sarasate, firmly established Lalo as a front-rank composer.

His talent was highly individual, and was influenced not so much by the course of study at the Conservatoire, as by his own concentration upon the music and methods of such masters as Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann, for whom he had a special liking. Among his chief characteristics are an unusual grace in the expression of ideas, a piquancy in the treatment of themes, and, above all, a dexterity and skill in orchestration.



## Symphonie espagnole

THE first performance of this popular and exceedingly "violinistic" work was given at Paris, February 7, 1875, with the almost legendary Sarasate as soloist. It was highly successful, and even other composers admired it. Although in a style somewhat outworn today, it remains a favorite with all the great contemporary violinists, and certainly gives them delightful if not too exacting opportunities.

### *First Movement*

The main theme of this movement has two divisions. The first is a vigorous phrase given alternately to the orchestra and the solo instrument. The second is a melody begun with an ascending scale in the solo instrument, which continues partly in triplets with pizzicato accompaniment in the strings. Passage work developing this material leads to a short tutti, which ushers in a second theme in B-flat major, played by the solo violin. The development here consists primarily of bravura passages for the violin. There is a return of the two themes, the second

stags." The *Plaintive Melody* is well named, a lonely voice rising and falling along a lovely melodic line. Lively strings suggest the buzzing of a mosquito in the *Humorous Song*, wherein a peasant dances to a naïve figure in woodwind. The *Legend of the Birds* has obvious bird voices in the orchestral arrangement. The *Cradle Song* has the swaying motion and the note of melancholy impossible to dissociate from a lullaby. The *Round Dance* is largely in pizzicato strings, crisp and lively, with a charming melody briefly fugued. The climax is the vigorous and merry *Village-Dance Song*, characteristically Russian in rhythm and melody, ending in a vigorous, vibrating chord for full orchestra.



## Kikimora

[*Legend for Orchestra*]

LIADOV never worked in the "grand" style, and even when he employs the symphony orchestra, his music has an ultrarefined, and almost salon quality that would make it sound weak were it not for the intelligence and charm of his orchestration. Perhaps he—and we—should thank his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov for this!

Liadov was much engrossed in Russian folklore and folk music; and this little work, like *Le Lac enchanté* and *Baba Yaga*, illustrates one of the most familiar Russian tales. Kikimora is a precocious but highly unattractive female, who lived in the house of a magician, and grew to maturity in seven years. Her early maturity was partly the result of the information she gained from daily conferences with an omniscient feline, who related many strange tales of far and wonderful places. Kikimora was thin and sallow, her head no bigger than a thimble, her body thin as a straw. Her conversation took the form of horrid hisses and whistlings, and as she occupied herself with spinning and weaving, she planned evils and miseries against mankind.

# FRANZ LISZT

[1811-1886]

ONE OF THE MOST spectacular and eccentric geniuses in the history of music, Franz Liszt may be remembered longer because of what he did for the music of others than by his own creations. His family was an obscure one, in the service of the famous Hungarian noble family, the Esterházy. His father was sufficiently interested and capable in music to give the child piano lessons, with such success that at the age of nine years Franz made his debut—and a successful one—as a concert pianist. This attracted the attention of certain wealthy patrons of music, who subscribed to a fund which guaranteed some years of further study for the boy. The result of this was that when Liszt was only eleven years old, he gave a concert in Vienna which won the hearty approval of everyone who heard it—including Ludwig van Beethoven.

Liszt was now regarded as an important musician, in spite of his childish years; but he was not a completely developed one. He was not permitted to enter the Paris Conservatoire, where he sought further training, but he found teachers elsewhere who helped him greatly. He began a series of concert tours which took him virtually all over the Continent, and to England, and which established him without question as the greatest pianist of his day. His admirers were virtually idolatrous; and one of them, the Countess d'Agoult, whom Liszt met in Paris, became his mistress and bore him three children. Even in fathering these extralegal progeny Liszt did a service to music and to a composer whose music he was to espouse with enthusiasm; for one of them, Cosima, became the wife of Richard Wagner, and his helper and ferocious protagonist to the end of her days.

In 1849 Liszt settled at Weimar, and became director of the court theater there. He abandoned the career of a virtuoso to accept this position, and did so in order that he might be in a position to forward the works of other composers. This act, though it may not have been done without an eye to his own limitations and advantages, was nevertheless not without elements of a fantastic generosity—a quality which always had distinguished the man. From one point of view it fits neatly into the pattern of his life and character. Though a pianist whose gifts have never been duplicated, Liszt was always at his best in works by other composers, and had a singular adeptness in comprehending their meanings, and exemplifying them with more accuracy and expressiveness than the composers themselves. He was indifferent or, at the most, tolerant when musicians played *his* music badly, but would fly into terrible rages if they played imperfectly, say, a Beethoven sonata. Richard Wagner, perhaps in compensation for holding his tongue in his cheek as far as Liszt's own music was concerned, praised Liszt as an executant, and, in effect, asserted that here Liszt was really a composer; that he did not *reproduce*, but *produced*, the music of other composers.

In his later years Liszt, after having had a merry time of it in his youth, and always a brilliant and worldly life, turned with strange devotion to the more ascetic type of Catholicism. While in Rome he became a member of the Franciscan brotherhood, and was invested with the minor orders—porter, reader, exorcist, and acolyte. He was tonsured, and wore clerical garb, in which he is often pictured, the center of interest in a brilliant salon.

After attending a performance of *Tristan und Isolde* at Bayreuth, July 4, 1886, Liszt was stricken with his final illness. He died a few weeks later.

The composer left behind him an astonishing amount of work, vocal, instrumental, and literary. Much of his music is bombastic and vacuous; some of the piano transcriptions are exceedingly brilliant and vulgar; but there are treasures among his works, nevertheless. The arrangements of some of Bach's organ works are superb; and the Hungarian Rhapsodies, while not profound as a rule, are wonderful display pieces. Liszt invented the "symphonic poem"—music of symphonic dimensions but free in style, and usually in one movement—and though others have made better use of the form, Liszt will be remembered for having devised it.



## Symphonic Poem No. 2: "Tasso: Lamento e Trionfo"

[*Tasso: Lament and Triumph*]

TORQUATO TASSO was a mad Italian poet who, in lucid intervals, wrote numerous poetical works, some of them of considerable importance. He was installed under the patronage of the Duke of Ferrara in the latter's residence, but his recurring fits of insanity, during which he had the wildest hallucinations and on at least one occasion attempted murder, resulted in his being confined. He escaped, regained his mind, and returned to Ferrara, only to become subject to further fits of madness. He was returned to the asylum and, after a long period spent there, appears to have regained his senses completely. After some years in which he gradually attained a position of literary eminence, he was offered national honors in recognition of his work, but while on his way to Rome to be invested with them, he fell ill from excitement, and died.

The stormy and melodramatic life of this poor madman appealed very powerfully to Liszt, who liked stormy and melodramatic things; and when Goethe, the great German poet, fashioned Tasso's life history into a drama, this music, though not originally written for the purpose, was used as a prelude.

The music makes eloquent use of the contrasts of Tasso's life, and as is usual in Liszt's symphonic poems, it is marked by thematic unity and continuity. The

music, especially in the early sections, has an Italianate warmth and melodic quality that are unusual in Liszt and certainly not ungrateful to hear. The portentous theme, most strongly uttered by cellos at the beginning of the work, is the basic musical idea, and is transformed, at the close, in the theme of triumph.

*Tasso* was first played, with Liszt conducting, before a dramatic production of Goethe's work at Weimar, August 28, 1849. According to the program of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Liszt wrote an epilogue to the work, and sent the score to Dr. Leopold Damrosch, father of radio's musical instructor, and noted American conductor. Leopold Damrosch was at the time conductor of the New York Philharmonic Society, and to him the composer dedicated the epilogue, *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*. This was performed, then, for the first time anywhere, on March 24, 1877, at New York.



## Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra

LISZT, possibly the greatest of pianists, could be depended upon to produce a concerto that would give him an opportunity to display his talents. He possessed a technique that enabled him to discount at once the difficulties of a work and to concentrate upon its inner meaning. It is unfortunate that in many of his own works there was so little inner meaning upon which to concentrate. This music is an old-fashioned concerto, a dazzling display piece for piano with orchestral background; but it differs somewhat from the classical type in that relatively little thematic material is employed, and in the final section, virtually none—the last movement being given over to re-presentation of previous themes in new rhythmic, harmonic, and orchestral dress.

The scherzo of this work is of especial interest, partly because of its extraordinary brilliance and its exigent demands upon the soloist, and partly because it employs, in the introduction, an instrument of percussion—the triangle—which aroused the ire of a certain Viennese critic. But even its glittering tones do not shine with the brilliance Liszt expects—and doubtless extracted—from the solo instrument.

This concerto has somewhat fallen from grace in these modern days, except with a few of the great pianists who are still capable of astounding audiences somewhat sated with technical displays. Liszt himself was the first performer of the work, presenting it at Weimar, February 16, 1855.



## Symphonic Poem No. 3: "Les Préludes"

LISZT, as a philosopher, was possibly at his worst; but in this instance, though his subject is sometimes a rather cynical and superficial melancholy, his musical presentation of it embodies much that is beautiful. This symphonic poem was inspired by verses of Lamartine, entitled *Les Préludes*, and Liszt's condensed version appears on the flyleaf of the score. In the poem, life is looked upon as a series of preludes to death; love as an evanescent joy soon destroyed by vanishing illusions and the trials of life. The soul, hurt by struggle and defeat, seeks rest—but at the first spur of ambition, the first summons to renew the struggle, it rushes back into the fray to discover and test itself, and to conquer.

The music, though readily divided into sections by changes in rhythm and mood, is given continuity by a marked thematic relationship in all its parts. The basic theme is proposed almost immediately, and continues prominently in strings and brass. It is heard in various guises throughout the music, and finally is shouted out by the brass, "when the trumpet gives the signal," with active string passages surrounding it, indicative of man's return to the battle and the ceaseless bustle of life.



## A Faust Symphony in Three Character Pictures

[After Goethe]

LISZT was one of many artists who were attracted to the strange story of Faust, especially as related in Goethe's dramatic poem. His musical version is not strictly a symphony, but a symphonic poem in three movements. Liszt himself conducted the first performance of the work at Weimar, September 15, 1857. It is dedicated to Hector Berlioz.

### *First Movement*

#### *Faust*

The composer attempts to apply the quality of universality to the suffering, the dissatisfaction, the jaded impotence and weariness of Faust; and would use Goethe's protagonist as a lay figure bearing the burdens of all humanity. Lower strings, muted, and presently touched with piercing woodwinds, suggest the disheartened and gloomy mood of the hero. Once this melancholy atmosphere is established, there is a quickening and a brightening in the music, and a transitional passage, in which emphatic phrases are proposed and answered in strings and woodwind, leads to the main portion of the movement.



Now the music takes on a totally different character. Faust dallies with the dreadful notion of selling his soul. At one moment, he is filled with terror and repulsion; again, as the possible joys of recovered youth are suggested, he rages with longing, with ambition, with desire. He doubts, he hesitates, he falls; and a quiet passage, strings against woodwind, suggests the workings of the magic. Now life is infused into the scene, as Faust, his veins expanded with new, warm, rich blood, looks about him for a world—and a woman—to conquer. An aggressive utterance of the trumpet suggests the burning glance with which he contemplates his surroundings and his future. The remainder of the movement is filled with ceaseless activity, climax after climax, yet at the end there is a suggestion of the sense of satiety and depletion which was noticed in the introduction.

### *Second Movement*

#### *Marguerite*

Oboe, against an arpeggiolike figure in the solo viola, suggests the sweet maid Marguerite; but in that keen and pensive and somewhat passionate voice of the oboe there are suggestions of unnamed longings and a certain restlessness. These are satisfied with the entrance of another theme in woodwind, supposedly indicative of the dawn of love. There is a passage of intense beauty, wherein the strings sing of passion not only awakened but returned and realized; and an amorous conversation of cellos and violins. Near the end of the movement we are reminded of Faust's resolution by a reference to the trumpet's bold cry in the first movement.

### *Third Movement*

#### *Mephistopheles*

One of Liszt's directions for interpreting this movement is "*ironico*"; and the character of the musical content lends itself admirably to ironic treatment. Here the motives of the preceding movements are horribly distorted and burlesqued. Mephistopheles sneers and jeers at the recollection of Faust's grandiose plans and resolutions; he mocks the thought of an innocent virgin. Sometimes he roars in paroxysms of laughter; he poisonously snickers, through the medium of sharply plucked strings, at melancholy Faust. And as the movement proceeds toward its close, the Devil rocks from side to side in Gargantuan scornful mirth. He is restrained toward the end, and a chorus of men's voices sings philosophical reflections upon the vanity of life.



## Todtentanz

[*Dance of Death*]A paraphrase of *Dies Irae* for piano and orchestra

THE eloquent music from the Mass for the Dead in the Roman Catholic Church has attracted the attention of more than one composer. Depending upon his own temperament, each has treated it differently, but certainly no one has wrung from it, as thematic material, so brilliant and so varied a musical fabric as that which the virtuoso Liszt has left to us. The *Dies Irae* has an ominously impressive theme, capable of many a variation, involution, and distortion; its exploitation even by Liszt has not been completely exhaustive—as witness the Rachmaninoff variations—but no one, in a single work, has exposed so many aspects of this provoking and macabre tune.

There are two theories advanced to account for the motive and inspiration which resulted in the composition of the *Todtentanz*. One holds that the work is the result of Liszt's effort to translate into music the essence of a series of etchings by Holbein, entitled *The Dance of Death*. This belief was entertained by Richard Pohl, an intimate of Liszt and author of his biography. The more likely theory, however, has to do with Liszt's impressions of a fresco in the Campo Santo at Pisa entitled *The Triumph of Death*, which fantastically portrayed the effects of death upon, and the afterexistence of, a great group of humans, varying in social importance from peasants to princes and popes and cardinals. Lina Ramann, in her biography of Liszt, condemns the first-mentioned theory, and is quite certain that the fresco (attributed to Andrea Orcagna) was the inspiration of the work.

The music itself is highly interesting from various viewpoints. Technically it is a tour de force for the pianist, calling upon the ultimate tonal resources of the instrument and the extreme technical abilities of the soloist—a genuine Lisztian exhibition of glittering brilliance, intense if not always profound emotion and highly colored picturesque, almost programmatic quality. On the strictly musical side, one is conscious of Liszt's various attitudes toward death—mockery, reverence, compassion, cynicism, triumph, contempt, and resignation. As a pseudo churchman, as a worldling, as a sinner of no small sins, as a darling of society, as a genius, the composer must have had a curious attitude toward death, if he thought about it at all; and we may with reason suppose that here the music reflects his considerations of that final event.

The music was completed by the composer in 1853, and revised six years later. The first performance was given at The Hague, March 15, 1865, with Hans von Bülow as the soloist. The performance by Alexander Siloti at New York, March 18, 1898, was advertised as the first performance in America, but there is some

doubt about this, as Edouard Hesselberg is reported to have played it in Chicago and Philadelphia some years before this date.

The work has a subtitle, *Danse macabre*—but it has nothing in common with Saint-Saëns' orchestral piece of the same name. It is in the form of a theme and variations, the theme being of course, the *cantus firmus Dies Irae*, which is first exposed, after a weird and sinister introduction, by a low-voiced ensemble of clarinets, bassoons, trombones, tuba, and the strings from viola down. There is a brief and fiercely brilliant cadenza for the piano and a repetition of the theme. Then the variations—five in number—begin; but the work is by no means strict in form, and there are important sections, particularly toward the close, which, while based on the theme, are not in any strict sense variations of it. The first variation breaks up the thematic matter into its elements, dividing them between piano and orchestra. The second assigns the theme to the pianist's left hand, reinforced and sometimes doubled by pizzicato strings, with a solo for horn conspicuously present. The third variation again reveals the theme divided between soloist and orchestra, sometimes rather fully concealed in the accompaniment. The fourth variation resorts to the canon as a device for varying the theme; the piano is heard solo, and the dissection of the *cantus firmus* is clearly evident. Yet even here, in the midst of what can be a dry and dull contrapuntal device, Liszt makes it the vehicle for a distinct and moving change in emotional content, and the soloist takes full advantage of the opportunity presented.

The fifth variation treats the theme in *fugato*, beginning with the piano and later involving the whole orchestra. The dynamic resources of the orchestra are brought more and more into play as the music progresses, and as the variation form is abandoned for a freer style. There are weird dancelike passages, strongly rhythmical and glittering, sometimes, with a hard brilliance. Toward the end there is a prodigious cadenza, and a short and powerful coda ends the work.

Liszt's *Todtentanz* is dedicated to von Bülow. Other notable performers have been Alexander Siloti and his pupil, the late Alexander Kelberine, who in 1940 died by his own hand shortly after his last public performance of the work.

# GUSTAV MAHLER

[1860-1911]

**G**USTAV MAHLER was born at Kalischt, in Bohemia, to parents who were poor in this world's goods, but not unacquainted with more permanent and desirable treasures in the form of books and music. The boy soon showed signs of interest in both. When he was six years old he preferred playing the piano to games, and, when he was eight, gave piano lessons to a seven-year-old pupil. Music so fascinated him, and so clearly revealed itself as the dominating passion of his young life, that his father finally took the boy to a famous teacher at Vienna and asked if Gustav had sufficient talent to justify the expense of a musical education. The answer was definitely in the affirmative.

Mahler entered the Vienna Conservatory at the age of fifteen. At the end of the very first year he won a prize for piano-playing, and another for composition. Later he distinguished himself further at the piano, and there is evidence that he could have had a virtuoso career with that instrument had he so chosen. During and after his period at the Conservatory, Mahler supported himself by teaching piano; but not long after leaving the school, he obtained the first of a series of positions as conductor in various minor musical centers. Eventually he became assistant to Anton Seidl, later to Arthur Nikisch; and finally chief conductor at Budapest. He was established as an important musical figure in Europe, and so it was natural that when the post of conductor of the Vienna Opera became vacant, Mahler was chosen. Later he directed the Vienna Philharmonic Society.

In 1907, Mahler was engaged by Conried to conduct at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and during the season of 1908-09 he was appointed to direct the Philharmonic Society. A terrific schedule of concerts was undertaken, and the health of the composer, never robust, gave way under the strain. He had conducted two seasons with the Philharmonic, but was unable to finish the third. He returned to Europe, vainly sought to restore his health, and finally went home to Vienna, to die.

To estimate the works or the importance of Mahler within the limitations of this book is not possible. For an adequate biography one may turn to that very sympathetic one written by Gabriel Engel, and published (1932) by The Bruckner Society of America. Mahler's music, when performed in America, has created unprecedented sensation, and success; yet it is played all too infrequently. When Leopold Stokowski gave nine successive performances of the "Symphony of a Thousand" in Philadelphia and New York, it made, to quote the conductor, "an impression on the public unlike anything else I have ever experienced . . . so deeply moved the public that the greater part of the listeners were in tears at the end of the performance."

In spite of public receptivity, conductors as a rule have neglected Mahler's

works until comparatively recent years; and we must half sadly, half hopefully join in his own frequent and confident declaration: "*Meine Zeit wird noch kommen*"—My time will yet come. There are indications that his "time" is imminent.



## Das Lied von der Erde

[*Song of the Earth*]

[*Symphony for Tenor, Contralto, and Orchestra*]

THIS deeply reflective and philosophically beautiful work was first performed in America by the Philadelphia Orchestra, under Leopold Stokowski, December 15, 1916, following its presentation under Bruno Walter in Munich five years previously. Notwithstanding the inclusion of the solo voices, it is in every respect a symphony; and one built along imposing lines. There are six movements, each based on one of a group of Chinese poems. The verses are philosophical, but not necessarily gloomy, although the final one has the immemorial bittersweetness of farewell. Indeed, the music is regarded by admirers and students of Mahler as his artistic leave-taking.

The solo voices sing alternately. They are not woven into the music in Wagnerian style, but stand forth against an exceedingly rich orchestral background, serving as an accompaniment, but absolutely symphonic in scope. No description of the music is adequate without the words of the poems, which, unfortunately, cannot be reproduced here. The titles of the poems, which will give clues to the significance of the movement with which they coincide, are as follows:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>The Drinking Song of<br/>Earthly Woe</i> | 4. <i>Of Beauty</i>                                       |
| 2. <i>Autumnal Solitude</i>                    | 5. <i>The Drunkard in Springtime</i>                      |
| 3. <i>Of Youth</i>                             | 6. <i>Awaiting a Friend; the<br/>Farewell of a Friend</i> |

The verses date from the eighth century, and are from the poems of Li Tai Po (1, 3, 4, and 5), Tschang-Tsi (2), Mong-Kao-Jen (6*a*) and Wang-Wei (6*b*). They were translated into German by Hans Bethge, and modified by Mahler to suit his purposes; an English version was made for the Philadelphia Orchestra program by Dr. Phillip Goepf.



## Symphony No. 2 in C minor

[*For Orchestra, Chorus, Soli Soprano and Contralto*]

THIS gigantic work was written in 1895. Performances in America have been exceedingly few, primarily because of the extensive orchestral resources required by the score, and also because of the indifference to the music of Mahler which existed for many years, among both conductors and audiences here and abroad. The decline of ultramodern music during the past few seasons has had a counter-effect in the development of public taste for music of the post-Wagnerian period, during which Mahler and Bruckner produced their greatest works.

The symphony required an enormous orchestra, chorus, soli soprano and contralto, pipe organ, and church bells. A recording of one of the few performances ever given, when all the requirements of the score were available, is in existence.

*First Movement*

*Allegro maestoso*

The music is full of powerful contrasts. The solemn atmosphere which surrounds the music early in the first movement is often interrupted by high drama and heroic song; the suspension of vitality that sometimes seems to be indicated is frequently contrasted with musical utterances suggesting the most vigorous action. Intermingled with these come frequent melodies of the most ingratiating and buoyant character. Strings and brass are used for contrasts of both timbre and emotional significance, but the resolute song that forms the basis for the movement is finally dominant.

*Second Movement*

*Andante moderato*

Those who have too eagerly accepted the dictum that Mahler is dull and heavy should turn to the elastic rhythms and charming melody of this movement for a demonstration of the falsity of the accusation. Here a little folk song is carried forward, of a quaint and moving rhythm. Ultimately there is a leisurely development suggesting a fugue and a climax of impressive power in brass and strings, but the movement ends in an atmosphere of quiet courage and complacency.

*Third Movement*

*With quietly flowing movement*

The movement has some of the stark and detached quality which in recent seasons we have come to associate with much of the symphonic work of Sibelius. Normally this movement would be the scherzo of the symphony, but that term

cannot be applied to it with any degree of accuracy. Though there are flashes of humor and mischievousness and often quite frisky rhythms, the mood of the movement is not exactly playful. Its atmosphere is at moments quite pastoral and the composer makes use of what are unmistakably old folk songs and dances.

#### *Fourth Movement*

*Primal Light (Contralto solo. Very solemn but simply; like a chorale.)*

The fourth movement of the symphony is inspired by verses taken from a collection of Germany poetry, *Knaben Wunderhorn*. This verse is sung by a contralto voice accompanied by the orchestra. The orchestra, in fact, projects its own wordless interpretation of the verses in contrast and complement to the verses sung by the contralto. They are as follows:

*Thou red, red rose!*  
*Ah, man lies in bitter throes.*  
*Yea, man lies in greatest woe—*  
*Far rather I would to heaven go.*  
*I entered upon a broad highway.*  
*Then came an angel bright and wanted to stay me.*  
*Ah no, I would not let him stay me!*  
*Ah no, I would not let him stay me!*  
*I am from God, I will go back to God!*  
*The merciful God, the merciful God, a candle will be sending,*  
*To light my way into a blessed life unending.*

#### *Fifth Movement*

*Female: "The Great Summons"*

The inspiration of the fifth movement is also a poem, entitled *The Resurrection*, written by the German poet Klopstock, with the orchestra supplying a rich and variously colored background. The poem is delivered in the form of solos for contralto and soprano with chorus in the background. The climax is one of the most splendid in all music. Here chorus, orchestra, and organ join in a fervent outpouring, above which rises the clangor of great bells. At the end the music reaches a degree of sonority almost unmatched in symphonic music.

## HARL McDONALD

[Born July 27, 1899]

FOR HARL McDONALD music has been an art, a science, and a business. At this time or that, one aspect will have the ascendancy, but music has always dominated his life. He was born on a cattle ranch in the Rockies above Boulder, Colorado. Since his was a musical family, he had a healthy admixture of outdoors and of music in his upbringing.

Early lessons on piano, violin, and French horn led to professional engagements. Work with a number of Los Angeles church choirs helped finance further education. Study in Europe was made possible by prizes awarded for a "Suite for Orchestra" and a ballet.

In 1927 he was appointed lecturer in composition at the University of Pennsylvania and since then he has made Philadelphia his home. From 1930 to 1933 under a grant of the Rockefeller Foundation he collaborated in research dealing with the measurement of instrumental and vocal tone, new scale divisions and the resultant harmonies. In 1933 he became Director of the Music Department of the University of Pennsylvania, where in addition to administrative duties he taught numerous courses and directed various undergraduate musical organizations. He gained wide renown as a choral conductor at this time.

In 1934 he was named to the Board of Directors of The Philadelphia Orchestra Association. This allowed him an insight into the executive and financial problems of the organization and gave him an opportunity also to work in close collaboration with the conductors. He was appointed manager of the orchestra in June, 1939.

During the past few years Mr. McDonald's compositions have been performed by many American and European orchestras. In addition to many works for piano, voice, violin and chorus, the list includes *Festival of the Workers* (1933-34); Symphony No. 1, "The Santa Fe Trail" (1934); "Rhumba" Symphony, "Reflections on an Era of Turmoil" (1935); Symphony No. 3, "Choral" (1936); *Three Poems for Orchestra on Traditional Aramaic and Hebraic Themes* (1936); Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra (1937); Symphony No. 4 (1938); and *Lament for the Stolen*, for chorus of women's voices and large orchestra (1939).

In spite of this catalogue, Mr. McDonald's interests have not always been exclusively musical. A little patch of silver in his skull is a memento of a youthful ambition as a rodeo performer. A nose slightly out of plumb is a reminder of the fact that he once proudly raised his arm as amateur champion lightweight of the Southwest. He found out, however, that the sport was injurious to his hands and regretfully hung up his gloves.





## Festival of the Workers

THIS work, originally in three movements, is not a sociological preachment, Mr. McDonald points out, but is a series of tone pictures of a labor rally.

The first movement, "Procession of the Workers," opens with the muffled pulse of thousands of heavy-booted feet approaching from a distance. The solo bassoon is heard in a melancholy song, which grows more and more powerful until the

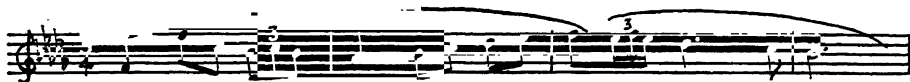


whole orchestra presents it fortissimo. As the procession disappears in the distance, the song of the bassoon is heard again faintly.

"Dance of the Workers": The gaiety of the workers is tinged with sadness and the rhythms of the dance reflect this spirit. Pizzicato strings and light woodwinds provide an accompaniment for the theme (again bassoon) which opens the dance.



After some development of the theme and a minor climax, the second theme, *Lento rubato* is heard in solo clarinet. A brief return of the first theme brings the



dance to a close.

The third movement of this suite, "Exaltation of the Workers" was destroyed by the composer in 1940.



## Symphony No. 1, "The Santa Fe Trail"

THE "Santa Fe Trail" is a program symphony in three movements.

"When I was a small boy in the Southwest, I heard many of the old men describe their experiences in the early days when they came to the new country. Coming, as many of them did, from the orderly and restricted life of New England, this first plunge into a brutal, uncaring existence was a terrifying experience.

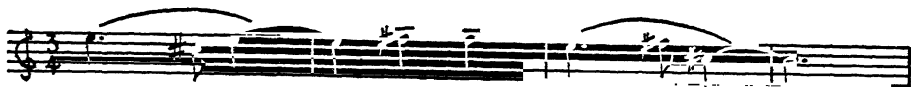
From small communities in which the welfare of every individual was a matter of concern to all, they marched forward to a world in which their lives were held by a precariously small margin, and death was frequently attended only by buzzards and coyotes. With few words and long periods of silence, they painted pictures so vivid that they must remain clear in my mind as long as I live. My purpose in this work is to re-create in tone something of the spirit and experiences of these pioneers.

*First Movement*  
(*The Explorers*)

“Across the face of the great plain of infinite sweep moves a group of tiny figures. Surveyed from a distance, one would hardly be conscious that they move at all, so slight is their progress from day to day. A cloud of dust hangs over them, partly concealing their advance, making breathing an agony, and red-rimming their eyes. By night they shiver under insufficient blankets, and by day their lips and faces are blistered by the sun and alkali dust. It seems to many of the group that they have always been a part of this dust cloud moving westward, and occasionally they speculate on their chances of ever escaping it.



“An exclamation focuses every unbelieving eye upon the dim outline of distant mountains, and weeks of weary plodding are forgotten in the new impatience to reach the Spanish settlements. The excitement is climaxed when they reach the crest of the first range, and gaze in ecstasy at the panorama which is unfolded before them. Behind them the desert sleeps on, undisturbed.



“This movement opens *molto andante* (the desert), and leads to an *allegro risoluto* (the mountains), becoming again *molto andante*.

*Second Movement*  
(*The Spanish Settlements*)

"This movement (an *allegro scherzando*, with a trio, *molto moderato*, of Hispanic-Jota patterns) reflected the spirit of the life in the Spanish settlements, where the explorers come upon a kind of life which is beyond their comprehension. At first these cold men of the North and East are dimly aware of the gaiety and indolence of the Hispanic life, but soon it becomes the pulse of their existence.



*Third Movement*  
(*The Wagon Trails of the Pioneers*)

"This third movement, *allegro moderato e vigorosoamente*, is built on several



subjects, and represents the many influences—Hispanic, Nordic, and American Indian—that combined to build the spirit and substance of the Southwest. In this movement I have carried to completion the principal subject of the first movement, and while there is a considerable interplay of thematic material in the three movements, I have given more thought to the sequence of emotional states than to any purely technical devices of structure."



## Symphony No. 2, "Rhumba"

In 1935, at the time of the first performances of his second symphony, Mr. McDonald wrote the following explanatory notes:

"It is no claim to distinction in the congregation of creative artists to say that one of my major interests is in the field of social and economic problems. Naturally, our troubled times have led to more and more speculation and discussion along these lines, and several years ago I began to think of a large-scale composition which would be based on my reactions to and reflections on the current turbulent scene.

"About a year ago, I chanced to spend some time in Pittsburgh, where I was greatly excited by the wonderful work being done in the Carnegie Institute of

Technology and the Mellon Research Laboratories. It seemed that at last mankind had been liberated by the scientist, and that we no longer need to fear the bitter decree, 'by the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread.' In the midst of this scene of effortless production and new methods of creating an age of plenty for humanity, I came face to face with bread lines, hunger, labor strife, and the final intervention of the Federal government. Out of all these contradictory experiences I began to write, not of my social philosophy, but of my experiences. Tumult, accomplishment and frustration, industry and stagnation, were all a part of the scheme, and I felt and hoped that I was getting something of the pulse of my own day. At about the time that I was sketching the third movement and had completely immersed myself in the spirit of our hectic, dynamic gaiety, there came very disturbing news of the Fascists and Nazis, adding unbelievably to the complications surrounding our precarious state of civilization.

"This fixed in my mind the character of the fourth movement, and the score was finished shortly after.

"This symphony is in no sense a program composition, and the title, 'Rhumba' Symphony, has to do only with the fact that I have used rhumba rhythms in the third movement.

"My reflections on our turbulent age are entirely personal, and I make no effort to paint graphically, nor do I wish to create the scene of my experiences in the minds of listeners.

"Some people will find bitterness in parts of this music, and I hope in other parts they will find ecstasy and elevation. The realization that great multitudes are living in want while we debate the problem of overproduction; that the ambition and spiritual development of thousands of young people is aborted every year because the greatest industrial nations of history can't use their man power—all this must lend a flavor of bitterness to any thoughts of our times.

"With all this tumult of accomplishment and frustration, I am always conscious of the fact that I am living in an age that has an almost insatiable appetite for gaiety and entertainment. In this part of my score I have used a rhumba, for the two reasons that I like rhumba rhythms and also because they seem to be a part of the pulse of our times.



(Mr. McDonald has supplied thematic excerpts of only the third "rhumba" movement of this symphony.)

"The modern orchestra affords innumerable colors in which one might picture the martial hosts that are springing up all over the earth. The swashbuckling blackshirts, brownshirts, and their ilk occupy an alarmingly important position on our stage, but I cannot feel the rhythms of marching soldiery without sensing their avowed purpose of bringing death. I have suggested all this in the fourth movement.

"There is considerable interplay of thematic material, except in the third movement. There are no devices of form or structure for the sake of adherence to the traditional, yet the first and last movements are noticeably in sonata form, with a few individual excursions."

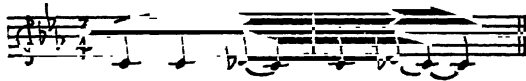


### Symphony No. 3, "Choral"

"BASED on a text by Huan Hseih drawn freely from *The Lamentation of Fu Hsuan*.

"In form, this composition makes many departures from the conventional symphonic structure. I have introduced the thematic material of the whole composition in the first movement and thereafter varied it according to the needs of the several sections. Except in the first movement I have intended that the chorus shall be, as much as possible, an integral part of the orchestra; that the tone of instruments and voices combine in the tonal fabric.

"The symphony opens with a dirgelike rhythm which is carried insistently



under the cry of high strings and woodwinds. A bleak melody leads to an agitated



section which in turn subsides again to the dirge figure. An off-stage chorus is heard, faintly, on the lines, '*The night is calm and softly breathes the earth*'—(and then the chorus hums an accompaniment to the soloist's *sprech-stimme*, 'a voice whispers, yet no one answers my call.')

The chorus and soloist gradually fade, and again are heard the off-stage voices—'the night is calm.' The movement closes with the plaint of solitude in the solo part which is carried to conclusion in the cellos.

"The second movement opens with a clangor in the orchestra which introduces the soloist's spoken lines—'once more may I gaze upon thy face,' and, with subdued force, combine in a slow, undulating rhythm on the words, 'between thee and me move the waves of a sea of tears.'

"The third movement, *con ismania*, springs from the hallucinations and delirium that accompany frenzied grief. Demons and shadows, minions of the god of death, shout their victorious battle cry which is sometimes heard and sometimes lost in the turbulent orchestral music.

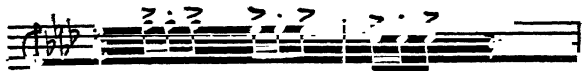
"As the fourth movement opens, the clangor and wailing song are again suggested, this time by the orchestra alone. There is a brief return of the *agitato* theme of the first movement and the soloist sings—'a cloud of darkness covers all the earth as death enfolds me.' The theme of this brief solo is then taken up by the chorus in a chant which continues to the close. The chorus is at all times supported and sometimes engulfed by counterchorales in the orchestra, the whole mood being austere and quasi-ecclesiastical."



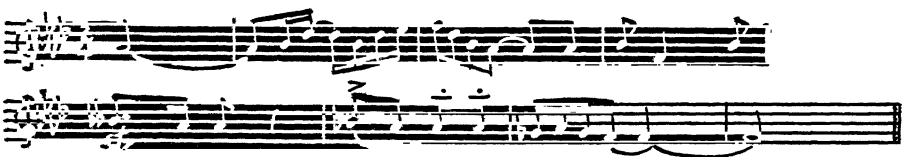
### "Cakewalk" (Scherzo) from Symphony No. 4

MR. McDONALD explains that his fourth symphony is now being revised and for that reason he supplies information only on the "Cakewalk" movement which is to remain in its original form in the revised symphony.

The "cakewalk," originally a gay American-Negro dance, attained world-wide popularity during the first decade of this century. "I used a cakewalk as scherzo in my Fourth Symphony, not with the idea of paying my respects to a folk-dance form but because the spirit and style of the cakewalk are strongly American and, therefore, a natural medium of expression for me." The movement opens in the characteristic, rhythmical style, and after fifty bars devoted to dance



patterns the principal theme appears.



"The melodic line in the 'trio' is accompanied by pizzicato strings, rein-

forced by the unconventional but thoroughly American device of foot-tapping and hand-clapping in crossed rhythms."



## Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra

### *First Movement*

"THE first movement opens *molto moderato* in a broad melodic line over an *ostinato* pattern in cellos, basses, and bassoons. At the end of twenty bars this theme



is taken by the solo instruments and leads to the *subito allegro*. After some dialogue between orchestra and pianos, the principal thematic material falls to the orchestra, and the soloists' parts become largely ornamental. Suddenly, at bar 98, the pianos announce, *fortissimo*, a rhythmic pattern, which, in turn, becomes a *pizzicato* accompaniment for the first (introductory) theme. Development continues, with the use of both principal and secondary themes, and is carried into a long *cadenza*. There is a brief recapitulation, *vivo*, and the movement closes with a sweeping, double *glissando* in the two solo instruments.

### *Second Movement*

"The second movement is a set of free variations on an original theme, *andante espressivo*, in three-two time. The theme is first heard in the first violins;



continues as an oboe solo over a string background; and then is taken up by the pianos. The first variation, which is an *allegretto scherzando* in two-four rhythm, finds the soloists embellishing the subject matter, which is given to woodwinds and *pizzicato* strings. The second variation, *adagio maestoso*, in three-four, is introduced by the two soloists, who later weave counterlines around the orchestra. In the third variation, *moderato e gaio*, again in three-four time, the orchestra is used, sometimes in choirs and sometimes as a whole, in a highly rhythmic style while the

soloists counter with a little scherzo. The fourth and last variation is a chorale in five-four time for wind instruments, countered and embellished first by one soloist, then the other.

### *Third Movement*

"The last movement of the concerto is Hispanic-American in style, and in it I have utilized some devices common to many Mexican concert bands. These have to do with the practical elimination of dialogue between soloists and orchestra; the occasional use of the solo instruments as a part of the orchestral fabric; but in general, constant emphasis on continuous and uninterrupted sonorities and rhythms. The *juarezca*, a dance of northern Mexico, has been popular for about fifty years, and along the border has taken on something of the character of American jazz. It is in two-two time and allegro. The movement opens with twelve measures of percussion; the subordinate theme is then introduced in the orchestra with piano decoration, and after a few bars the second piano presents the principal theme.



Development of the material is accompanied by constant increase in orchestra volume, until a brief diminuendo leads to a *malagueña* in the two pianos. The rhythms of the percussion instruments are heard again in *juarezca*. The movement closes *fff*."



### Three Poems (on Aramaic and Hebraic Themes)

"THE themes on which I have built this suite are from a collection made by the celebrated musicologist, Dr. Abraham Idelsohn. For the most part they are of great age and I have woven together four Aramaic and three traditional Hebrew tunes because of their fundamental similarity of style and spirit.

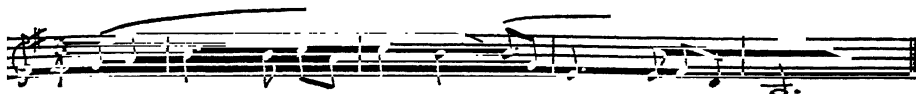
"The first *Poem* is in a happy vein, and the opening section may be considered a nature poem. Then appears the theme of an Aramaic chant, which is broken by



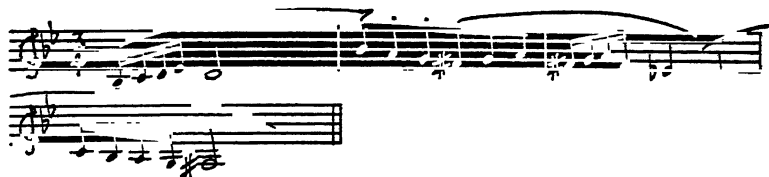
the cry '*Eli, Eli*—.' It closes with a suggestion of the opening passage.



"The second *Poem* is a song of lamentation, based on an Aramaic tune and Hebraic theme of similar character.



"The third *Poem* is built on three themes, two of which are dance tunes.



While I have felt free to reshape the original material even to the point of inverting lines, I have tried at all times to maintain the important rhythmic and phrase peculiarities of the originals. In the matter of harmonic language, and, to a certain extent, the orchestral style, I have attempted to preserve the character of the traditional material rather than to allow myself too many excursions in a too personal vein."



## San Juan Capistrano—Two Evening Pictures

MR. MCDONALD has written as follows concerning this work:

"*San Juan Capistrano* was composed in the latter part of 1938. The music is meant to reflect two scenes in the little mission community of Capistrano which lies near the Mexican border in California. For nearly three hundred years the mission has dominated the town and its inhabitants. Except for an occasional automobile, at which children stare as it passes through, life in Capistrano goes on in much the same fashion as it did a century or two ago.

"The first movement, 'The Mission,' opens in a quiet vein suggesting the tranquillity of early evening. Occasionally the soft music of the strings is punctuated by the sound of mission bells. Faintly, from a distant procession, comes a strain reminiscent of a seventeenth-century ecclesiastical melody, and gradually the chanting and the clangor of the bells engulf the scene. As the procession disappears in the mission the subdued and languorous music of the opening passages is heard again.

"The second nocturne, 'Fiesta,' pictures the community *baile* or *danza* which is held in the mission square. The movement opens with the fast Spanish-Colonial *jota* in 6-8, 3-4 rhythm; there is an abrupt climax and the music then pictures the ever-popular *danza dueto* in habanero tempo. A return of the *jota* music brings the piece to a close, fortissimo."

# FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

[1809-1847]

“FELIX” (the happy one) was a well-chosen name for Mendelssohn, for fortune smiled on him, and bestowed on the boy her choicest gifts; a diadem of genius for his curly head, inherited wealth from his father, a winning charm of manner, and a graceful upright physique.

The Mendelssohn family, though of Jewish origin, eventually became Christian, one branch being received into the Roman Catholic faith, the other, including Felix, accepting Protestant Christianity. The primary reasons for this were political and social, rather than religious. Some of the Mendelssohns added the name “Bartholdy” to their branch to distinguish it from other branches.

From boyhood Mendelssohn won laurels as a pianist, first appearing on the concert stage at the age of nine. He and his sister were devoted, and practiced at the same piano, their delightful mother sitting near by with her knitting. Felix also counted landscape painting, Greek, and composition among his studies, in all of which he was remarkably bright.

At twelve he began to compose, and a year later he met Weber. At once admiration, which he never lost, was born in the heart of the lad for that romantic composer. Although the influence of those for whom he had great respect affected him—he loved Handel, Bach, and Beethoven deeply—he never “copied” anyone, and his music has a style and character very definitely his own.

His pen flowed with melody, giving to the world a perennial springtime of music. He “discovered” Shakespeare in the German editions when he was but a boy, and admired the English poet so much that he wrote the charming music inspired by *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Overture to which was completed when Felix was but seventeen years old. Later, Mendelssohn lived in England, and was enormously popular there.

He was particularly fortunate in friends, numbering among them Schumann, Chopin, Spontini, and Moscheles. He himself was the favorite of kings and emperors, who vied with each other to do him honor. Loving life, loving beauty, loving people, this magnetic personality drew everyone to him. He lived, wedded, and died happily; and he left happy music behind him.

The character, the personality of the composer are invariably revealed, somewhere or other, in his music. Not always does he speak, deliberately, from the depths of his soul, and yet he often reveals, unwittingly, depths of which he himself is scarcely conscious. He says more than he intends to say. There are moments in the music of Beethoven, for example, when the tragedy that haunted his life stalks boldly across the page. Again, there are times when the grim humor of that strange man rises above his melancholies, and he laughs gruffly at his own misery. Yet he could write his gayest music—and he *could* be gay—while in the

depths of unhappiness, just as the struggling poet, starving and sweltering in a city garret in midsummer, might sing his daintiest song of Christmas lights and Christmas snows.

But Mendelssohn very consistently revealed his *real* self—the cheerful, successful, contented, happy man that he was; and there is nothing in his music to indicate that his gaiety is constrained. The delicacy and sprightliness that were integrated with his character shine forth in his music; his love of the refined, the aristocratic, the cultured, is faithfully reflected in his work.



### “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” Music

IN THE *Midsummer Night’s Dream* music Mendelssohn could and did have free play for the delicacy and polished workmanship characteristic of his music. In Shakespeare’s fantastic play he found the inspiration for this exquisitely wrought and fanciful music—gaily yet subtly colored, touched with magic and with mystery, painting pictures of exceeding loveliness, and telling a tale of delicious fantasy.

Mendelssohn was but a youth, impressionable, eager for knowledge, when he wrote the first item of the incidental music to Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*—the Overture. This was in 1826. Not another note of the music was written until 1843, yet Mendelssohn, who lived in an apparently perennial youth, completed the music after this long interval without losing the sense and the expression of wonder and delight; without writing a phrase that did violence to the spirit of his youthful and, up to the time of its composition, his only notable work.

The Overture was originally written as a piano duet, and was performed privately in that form. The music was completed at the command of William IV of Prussia, and consisted of thirteen pieces. The four described here constitute the usual concert form of the *Midsummer Night’s Dream* music.

The incidental music does not, of course, carry in its suggestions a complete, coherent version of the plot of Shakespeare’s play. It is, in truth, *incidental*; many episodes of the play are portrayed or suggested, but to the listener who wishes to fit the music definitely to the story, a certain degree of familiarity with the lines of the play itself is necessary. This is still more obvious in view of the fact that the arrangement of the music usually presented is a condensation in the form of a suite for orchestra, made by Mendelssohn for concert performance.

It is not necessary for your enjoyment that you be familiar with the play, however. The music is so exquisitely beautiful in itself, so filled with fairylike

delicacy, with quaint and *féesque* humor, with romance and lovely orchestral color that it needs no program to make itself felt and enjoyed.

. . . *Once I sat upon a promontory  
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song  
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres  
To hear the Mermaid's music.*

Thus says Oberon, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In such a fantastic tonality the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music is pitched. There is a magic in it . . . an elfin gaiety, a diaphanous delicacy, an ethereal quality compounded of dew and honey and the nectar of flowers, the scents of flowers on warm midnight airs, the rhythm of flowers and of tiny feet dancing 'neath towering blades of grass. There are pranks and clowning, true love and black magic, pathos and the pleasant, impossible conceits of a poet's imagination.

The Overture embodies many of the themes of the incidental music to the play. Motive would perhaps be more accurately descriptive than theme, for little episodic phrases are given definite significance by the composer. It opens with four lovely chords in the woodwind, faint and mysterious. Swiftly, delicately, wavering, and intangible, the music of the fairies follows in the violins, with occasional pizzicato notes from the violas. Suddenly the whole orchestra bursts forth in a joyous revel, and again the fairy music, developed in much greater volume and definiteness, appears for a space.

Toward the end of the first section the Bergomask\* dance from the fifth act of the play appears—a jolly rhythm and tuneful. A little later you will notice the curious bray of the brass that typifies Bottom, the dolt of the Shakespearean comedy who through fairy magic is given an ass's head instead of a human. You will note, too, a rapidly descending passage for the cellos, said to have been suggested to the composer by the buzzing of a huge fly in the garden where some of his music was written.

From this point the Overture is largely devoted to development of the fascinating material already introduced—and always lively, colorful, and full of the dainty witchery with which Mendelssohn has invested all of this lovely music.

### *Nocturne*

The Nocturne, occurring in the play at the end of the third act, when sleep has quietly and sweetly descended upon all in the drama, embodies one of the

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\* Named for the uncomely inhabitants of an ancient Italian town whose grotesque manners and rough humor were a favorite subject for burlesque and mimicry.

loveliest passages for the horn in all music—and some of the loveliest music, the most mysterious and dreamy, the most romantic and expressive, that ever came from the hand of Mendelssohn. The horn passage, which is the most important melody of the Nocturne, appears at the very beginning, and for a space occupies the scene completely. But presently the strings attain more prominence, and come strongly in contrast with the horn; first, in the lower ranges, and then on a sustained high note. The countertheme is presented in strings and woodwind.

It would be difficult to find, outside of the work of Wagner, music so expressive of love, and of the sweet warmth and drowsiness of a midsummer night. Here the clownish Bottom is sunk in slumber, while Titania, the bewitched and lovely, sleeps delicately the while she caresses the uncouth head of her lover. To the end the eerie singing of the strings and the communing horns maintain their gentle sway.

### *Scherzo*

The infinite delicacy, playfulness, and fairylike grace of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music reach a climax in the Scherzo, which is used quite like a prelude to the second act of the play. Here Mendelssohn "discloses the fairy world, with its chattering elves and their mischievous gambols, interrupted now and then by the griefs of the unfortunate and tormented lovers." In spite of its delicacy and grace, it has a kind of fierce energy at times—little bursts of fury that flash for a moment and are gone. But it dies away into impalpable delicacy, and finally, silence.

### *Wedding March*

Much of the Wedding March is familiar to everyone. Its joyous pomp and lively rhythm, its bright orchestral color, and the inevitable note of sadness that seems inexplicably to touch every bridal with smothered misgiving—these have made it almost universally the customary recessional for the marriage ceremony. Its principal melodies are sufficiently familiar, however, to require no comment; it is the composer's treatment of them, and in them the gathering together of all the emotions usually experienced by any and all of the participants in a wedding ceremony, that will most excite interest and pleasure.



## Symphony No. 3 in A minor

[*"Scotch" Symphony*]

SCOTTISH music and Scottish history inspired this symphony, though we will happily find in it no sound of bagpipes or battle. Mendelssohn had visited Scotland in 1829;

and heard the pipers skirling their wild music, and had visited the very room at Holyrood, where Mary had lived, and stood on the spot where an Italian musician, once a favorite of the queen, had been murdered. "I believe I have found," wrote the composer, "the beginning of my Scotch symphony." It was not so Scotch, however, that it could not be misinterpreted, for it is related that when Robert Schumann heard it, and was told that it was Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony, he declared it so charmingly represented Italy as to compensate one for never having been there!

The symphony was performed for the first time at Berlin, March 3, 1842, under Mendelssohn's direction.

### *First Movement*

The movement has a grave introduction; portions of its thematic material are supposed to have been written down by Mendelssohn on the second day of his visit to Scotland. There is a "motto" theme, heard at the beginning, and recurring at periods through the work, which is probably the musical idea that so promptly impressed the composer.

The movement proper is in somewhat more vigorous, but not less romantic, style than the introduction. There are typically Mendelssohnian melodies, gently melancholy, and a return to the somberness of the introduction.

### *Second Movement*

The second, rather than the third, is the scherzo movement of this symphony. A transitional passage for horn and woodwind precedes the establishment of the graceful rhythm—one which, however, seldom becomes boisterous. One might have expected Scottish dancing here, but though the spirit of the music is light and gay, there is none of the robust vigor associated with, say, a Highland "fling."

### *Third Movement*

The third movement may have been suggested by Mendelssohn's reflections at Holyrood castle. It has gravity, even majesty, with a reflective and somewhat melancholy note that could be a remembrance of the tragic events that came to pass in that gloomy keep. But the music could as well suggest the wild hills and solemn forests of Scotland, or the overbearing sadness of plains and lonely moors.

### *Fourth Movement*

If anywhere this symphony is, in a musical sense, definitely Scotch, it is in the final movement. Here the wild Highlander, claymore in hand, sweeps down

from his rugged hills joyously to do battle; but we are spared a too literal description of the fight. Here, too, is the impetuous, the vigorous dance of the North, and a retailing in suggestive musical terms of the glorious deeds of Scotland's heroes. There is a contrasting section, somewhat more restrained, yet even more suggestive of Scottish music.



## Concerto in E minor for Violin and Orchestra

[Opus 64]

THE concerto in its original form is primarily a showpiece for the solo instrument. Modern trends in instrumental music have made the chief instrument more strictly a voice of the orchestra—outstanding, it is true, but more closely identified with the orchestra than the original purpose of the concerto would justify.

Mendelssohn, in the present work, leans toward the more classic style. The orchestra is, generally, subdued; the violin stands out like a silhouette—a moving, vital, highly colored silhouette—against the pastel-tinted background of the orchestra. Thus, without effort, both the melodic line of the solo part, and the beautiful tone of the solo instrument, may be traced throughout the concerto.

It will be of great interest to compare this work with the Beethoven violin concerto. Such a comparison will be a fascinating revelation of the differences in style and treatment characteristic of Mendelssohn and Beethoven, and the following anecdote will add further light:

Ferdinand David, a violinist of note and a contemporary of Mendelssohn, visited the composer at his home while work on the concerto was being finished. "This," said David, "is going to be something great!" "Do you think so?" asked Mendelssohn. "I'm sure of it." David was enthusiastic. "There is plenty of music for violin and orchestra, but there has been only one real great big concerto—now there will be two."

"No, no!" said Mendelssohn, "if I finish this concerto it will be with no wish of competing with Beethoven."

Yet musical history has inevitably made comparisons, and often with the conclusions expressed by Sterndale Bennett on this same occasion. "There seems to me something essentially and exquisitely feminine about it, just as in the Beethoven concerto there is something essentially and heroically masculine. He has made the Adam of concertos, and you have mated it with the Eve."

This occasion took place in 1840. Mendelssohn, on being asked when the concerto would be completed, replied jestingly, "In five years." It was first played in public on March 13, 1845, at Berlin.

*First Movement*

With a fine feminine freedom and curving grace of melodic line the first movement begins, the violin springing swiftly into a lovely flight of melody above the restrained accompaniment of the orchestra. This melody is in fact the first main theme of the movement, and its subsequent brilliant development, and contrast with the countertheme, is effected with the most exquisite delicacy and skill, as shall be perceived later in the movement.

Now the orchestra reiterates the theme, and the solo instrument ranges almost to the limits of its scale in laying on tonal ornament. Now a phrase of pure melody, now brilliant fragments, now a reminiscence of the first theme in the silvery uppermost tones of the instrument.

There is a faint touch of melancholy in the second subject, first presented in the dulcet voices of flute and clarinet, then taken up in the even lovelier, warmer tone of the violin itself. Succeeding it is a new version of the first songlike melody, appearing now in the major mode. The composer plays delicately with his subject, exploiting its possibilities to the limit, yet with never a moment of pedantry or heaviness. Meanwhile, a climax is being developed which bursts into being in the marvelous cadenza at the end of the second section of the movement. Now the resources of the violin are extended. Rich tone, deep and full from the G string; glittering, or again, ethereal harmonics deftly conjured from the remotest upper ranges of the instrument; flying bow . . . and lingering; all fashioned into a gorgeous ornament of tone as solidly constructed as a Gothic ornament in stone; and as delicate and meticulous as a dry-point etching.

The lovely, almost Mozartian countertheme of the first movement is presented again; then the main theme as the final section of the movement begins. The coda—the peroration of the movement—is built largely upon the main theme, and new wonders in delicacy, new outbursts of vigor, new intensities of sentiment are presented.

*Second Movement*

In contrast with the light mood of the preceding movement the music now is shaded with a spirit that is almost religious—when it does not breathe with the gentle cadence of a *berceuse*like melody of exceeding beauty. A short and softly intoned introduction by the orchestra precedes the lovely song of the solo instrument. Here the composer of the inimitable *Songs Without Words* is characteristically himself—the creator of suave melody, springing spontaneously from a spirit almost overburdened with it.

Still the feminine character of the concerto can be felt; perhaps it is responsible for the rhythm here which so strongly suggests the cradle song. But there is another powerful, and very strange suggestion here . . . the curious resemblance,



vague but unmistakable, of this movement, particularly in the opening measures, to the marvelously beautiful and touching slow movement of the Beethoven Quartet, Opus 135—incidentally, the last complete work from the hand of that master.

In the latter half of the movement the orchestra comes to the fore more conspicuously than at any previous period in the concerto, yet the penetrating tone of the violin is invariably dominating, and toward the end surmounts the orchestra's muted thunders in a final utterance of the eloquent song that opened this section of the work.

### *Third Movement*

How vigorous and vital a thing the violin can be; how varied and colorful the tonal effects that can be drawn from it in the hands of a master, may be discovered in this one movement alone. Its tones dance as lightly as a will-o'-the-wisp above the sonorities of the orchestra . . . or, as the bow is drawn powerfully across the G string, it utters such expressions of somber passion, of passionate warmth that penetrate immediately to the innermost heart. Now an ethereal harmonic, mysterious, luminous, hangs imminent for a moment like a pale star . . . or melody sings like a quivering projection of flame.

The rhythmic foundation of the movement lies in a simple, almost crude figure, much like an old folk song or dance—but upon it is reared an airy structure of tone, infinitely graceful and dainty; polished and sophisticated; rising to a dynamic and tonal climax surpassingly powerful and brilliant.



## Symphony No. 4 in A major

· [*“Italian” Symphony*]

[Opus 90]

MORE than one hundred years ago, Felix Mendelssohn, after a leisurely and round-about journey from his beloved England through Germany and Austria and Switzerland, arrived at Rome for a sojourn of several months. The moment of his visit was most fortunately timed. He witnessed and was fascinated by all the great popular festivals, with their colorfulness, their mad abandon, their wild dances and often charming songs; and what impressed him even more as an artist and musician were the gorgeous rites accompanying the coronation of Pope Gregory XVI, at which Mendelssohn was a spectator.

The sights and sounds of Italy, the soft beauties of the Alban hills, the gran-

deur of Rome, and the ever-near spectacle of the sea—which always fascinated him—all left their mark upon the music Mendelssohn composed during his Roman visit. It is interesting to note, and perhaps reveals musical and personal characteristics of the man, that he was definitely, almost indignantly, unsympathetic toward the liturgical music of the Catholic Church, as performed during the ceremonies at St. Peter's and elsewhere. Considering the often lush sentimentality of Mendelssohn's own music, it is not remarkable that he could not appreciate the austere and passionless beauty of the Gregorian chant. Mendelssohn frequently exhibited in his music the warm, and often unctuous, facile, and fulsome emotionalism that occasionally marks artists of his race. He did not, by any means, lack spirituality; but to him an emotion could not be detached from the warmth and naturalness of human relations, and a music designed to celebrate a deity of such powers and magnificence as are attributed to the Christian God must needs, in Mendelssohn's notion, be itself splendid and adorned and rich with Oriental sumptuousness.

The present symphony appears to have been composed, in large measure, during Mendelssohn's stay in Rome. Certainly it has a definitely Italian flavor; it is colored by the impressions of sights and sounds which so delighted the composer in that sunny land. Mendelssohn himself never heard it, as it was among the great mass of manuscript left behind at his death, nine years after he had written it.

The symphonies of Mendelssohn have passed through a curious cycle in public estimation. Mendelssohn enjoyed an enormous prestige among his contemporaries, and almost anything he wrote was warmly received. The symphonies attained the peak of their popularity in America perhaps during the "gay" '90's, and the first twenty years of this century. Then for some years they were played with relative infrequency, and only during the past several seasons have they begun to win back toward the place they once occupied. The taste of the concert public seems to incline toward more robust fare, in these times; yet there is a suave charm in Mendelssohn's music which will not be denied. As long as there are people who love beautiful melody and finished musical craftsmanship, Mendelssohn will have an audience; and while more and more people turn to the symphony orchestra for their musical entertainment, the symphonies of Mendelssohn, peculiarly attractive to the unjaded musical appetite, will have their devoted admirers.

### *First Movement*

The spontaneous flow of melody—rarely a deep flow but always clear and shining—that characterized most of Mendelssohn's works is exhibited almost in the first measure. Violins are entrusted with the principal theme, woodwind and horns supplying a richly colored accompaniment. An interlude, in which the introductory motive of the movement is heard again in woodwind against a crisply

staccato counterfigure in the strings, precedes the more powerfully scored representation of the chief musical idea.

Mendelssohn was a romantic, both in the literal and musicological meanings of the word. He was not thereby prohibited from the sacred ground of classicism, however. Furthermore, a man with his love of fine workmanship could not always forgo the intricacies of the classical style. Hence it is not so surprising to find in this vigorous and free and beautifully fashioned movement, as part of its development, an ingenious *fugato* in the strings. It occurs approximately four minutes after the beginning of the movement, and leads to a general interweaving of previous thematic material, which persists to the close of the movement.

### *Second Movement*

There is something songlike in almost everything that Mendelssohn has left us. Melody—song—came to him almost as easily as to Schubert. Someday a great pianist will really understand and cultivate Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*—and he will have a popular success of impressive proportions. The present movement is a song so lovely and so simple and so moving that, as someone has aptly said, it would, if written apart from the symphony and appropriately titled, have rivaled in popularity the famous *Spring Song*. Let us hope so.

Particular interest attaches to the brief introductory figure, not because, as Sir George Grove remarked, it is "like the cry of a muezzin from his minaret," but because, apart from its intrinsic appeal, it appears frequently and importantly at intervals throughout the movement. The introductory figure is heard in woodwind (flute, oboe, bassoon) and the upper strings. It is succeeded by the chief theme of the movement, which you will hear in the mellifluous combination of oboe, bassoon, and viola, to an accompaniment by low strings and woodwind.

Some of the more fanciful commentators upon Mendelssohn's music have referred to this movement as "The Pilgrim's March." This idea was doubtless begotten by the fact that the music was written while the composer was in Rome, and undoubtedly under the influence of what he saw and heard there. Probably he observed many a pontifical procession and penitential march, but in this case, as in most others where an imaginative title is attached to a musical work, there is no reason to suppose Mendelssohn had any picturesque idea in mind.

### *Third Movement*

Musical scholars have not always agreed with Mendelssohn's brother-in-law, who stated that this movement was originally a part of an earlier unpublished work. Such matters are not of particular interest here; what does interest us, however, is the sprightly and vigorous music, logically placed and developed in this symphony,

which we find in this delightful scherzo. Melodically and rhythmically, it is one of the pleasantest things in symphonic form which Mendelssohn has left us. Violins have a graceful and lively tune; bassoons and horns, contrasted both in timbre and in melodic figure with violins and flutes, give us the highly effective trio, and a combination of strings against bassoons, brass, and timpani supplies interesting color and rhythm.

#### *Fourth Movement*

If we are told that the slow movement of this symphony represents a procession of penitents, we are equally at liberty to believe that the present section represents the same devout people after having received the absolving sacrament. Here is a typical Italian peasant dance, directly based on the saltarello—a rather rowdy and certainly vigorous performance, done by men and women in pairs, in which arms and legs are used as violently, if not as elegantly as possible. The dancers circle about, approaching and retreating, with the woman manipulating her apron, now in inviting gestures, again as if to repel her suitor. Meanwhile rapid and exhausting steps, with hops and skips, soon have the dancers breathless. It is a dance of quite vigorous and abandoned character, but definitely not lascivious or lewd.

Mendelssohn, having been in and about Rome during the festival periods, must have seen the saltarello many times, and he did indeed capture here the bounding vitality and spirit of it. The peculiar rhythm of the dance is introduced at the second measure of this movement, in a figure for woodwind and strings. Five bars later the chief subject of the movement—a series of thirds in the flutes—is heard. Later a third musical idea, exposed in a dialogue between the two sections of violins, is introduced. Here there is an impressive climax of animation and brilliance, succeeded by an even more frenetic outburst when, after the violins introduce a new theme, the music adopts the mad rhythm of the tarantella. (This is a wildly exciting and vigorous dance, supposed anciently to drive from the body the poison of the tarantula's bite. When the dancer was exhausted, he was either dead or cured.) Both dance rhythms are now employed with brilliant effect, the original impulse of the saltarello becoming dominant at the end.

## ALEXANDER MOSSOLOV

[Born 1900]

**M**OSSOLOV is one of the more important younger Russian composers, most of whom are or have been engaged in music which attempts political propaganda. His earlier works happily do not reveal this futile tendency, and some of them are of great charm. Unfortunately only his *Soviet Iron Foundry* is known in this country.

Mossolov studied at the Moscow Conservatory with Glière and Miaskovski, which fact alone should assure his ability.



### Eisengiesserei

[*Soviet Iron Foundry*]

THIS symphonic fragment is by no means as terrifying as it sounds. It employs no bizarre instruments or noisemaking devices except a single steel plate which is vibrated occasionally. Some of the regular instruments are used unconventionally; otherwise there is nothing startling about the piece except its complete formlessness. It attempts to reproduce not merely the noise, but the atmosphere of a steel mill, with its flaming forges, shadowy figures darting, and ceaseless activity. The first performance was given at Liège in 1930; the first American performance was at Cleveland, under the direction of Nikolai Sokoloff, during the same year but the following season (November 6, 1930).

## W. A. MOZART [1756-1791]

**W**OLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART, the supreme figure among natural geniuses in music, was born at Salzburg, in the Bavarian Alps, on January 27, 1756, the seventh child of Leopold and Anna Maria Mozart. He was christened Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus, to which at confirmation was added the name Sigismundus. Most of his works were signed, simply, W. A. Mozart.

Mozart discovered the family clavichord when he was only three years old, and he began to pick out harmonies on this instrument, an ancestor of the piano. A year later his father, a professional musician, began to give the child lessons. He soon began to "compose little pieces," some of which remain in existence. In 1762, with his elder sister Maria Anna, familiarly "Nannerl," he was taken by the father to Munich and Vienna. At the Austrian court, Wolfgang climbed into the lap of the Empress, and he and Nannerl, who was then in her eleventh year, were accepted as playmates by the young princes and princesses. At Vienna he was said to have learned, without instruction, not only the organ, but the far more difficult violin. The following year the family went to Paris, where Wolfgang's first compositions appeared—four sonatas for piano and violin. In 1764, they went to England, remaining more than a year. It was at this time that his father said of him that his "high and mighty Wolfgang" knew everything in his eighth year that could be required of a man of forty. On the return to Salzburg, Mozart continued composition and study. In 1767 he composed his first oratorio. Again in Vienna, the following year, he wrote his first opera, *La Finta semplice*, which now and again is revived and staged.

In 1769 an Italian tour was arranged. In Rome he achieved one of the great feats of musical history. This was in Holy Week, when he went to hear the Sistine Chapel choir sing Allegri's *Miserere*, which it was forbidden to copy and circulate under pain of excommunication. On going home, he wrote down the entire work from memory, correcting only a few passages at a second hearing. This came to the ears of the Pope, who sent for Mozart, not to excommunicate the youth, but to give praise to his extraordinary genius. Not long afterward he was made a Knight of the Papal Court.

By the time he was eighteen years old, Mozart had to his credit something like twenty-three sonatas, eighty-one brief symphonic works, nine Masses, three oratorios, five organ sonatas, and miscellaneous works beyond record.

In 1768 he had been appointed concertmeister to the Archbishop of Salzburg, but his patron died in 1772 and gave way to a successor who cared nothing for Mozart's genius. Moreover, the income was small, and he resigned in 1777, resuming the post after his mother's death in 1778.

The young man, while in Mannheim, had fallen in love with Aloysia von Weber, who seems for a time to have returned his affection. He married, however, Aloysia's sister Constance, in 1782, establishing family ties with another great composer, Carl Maria von Weber, who was a nephew of Fridolin Weber, the girls' father. With his wife Mozart now settled in Vienna. The two met with poverty, but it was during their life together that the three great operas, *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*, were given to the world. All were artistically successful, and it seems that one of them, at least, was a source of profit; but Mozart, like many men absorbed with the ambitions and the problems of achievement and not possession, remained poor. Then, too, there was parsimony in musical and court circles.

Just before completing *The Magic Flute*, Mozart was commissioned to compose a Requiem for Count Franz von Walsegg, who shabbily intended to have it performed as his own work. But constant labor, pecuniary failure, family troubles, illness had brought Mozart close to the end of his physical resources. After the success of *The Magic Flute*, composed upon a plot derived from Freemasonry, his health, never good, broke down. He began to feel that his days were numbered, and he worked unremittingly upon the Requiem, sensing that it was to be his own.

The very day before his death, he asked that the finished score be brought in to him. He distributed the soprano, tenor, and bass parts among those around the bedside, reserving the contralto for himself. The music was sung, but at the end of the *Lachrymosa* he no longer could contain himself. He knew the eyes of death were upon him, and under their gaze, the spirit of Mozart broke. The next day was his last. After hours of agony and delirium, there came unconsciousness. Toward midnight he revived for the last time; he sat erect, and his eyes filled with light. Then he sank upon the pillow and turned his face to the wall.

He was buried, in a storm of wind and rain, in an unmarked grave in the paupers' cemetery of St. Marx, in Vienna. His widow, seeking the spot a few days later, could not find it, for the keeper of the cemetery himself had taken no note of it. Sixty-eight years afterward, the city of Vienna built his monument. It was not necessary then, for his music, gentle, innocent, childlike for the most part like his character, was written in something more durable than stone.



## Symphony in C major

[*"Jupiter" Symphony*]

THE "Jupiter" Symphony of Mozart represents one of the greatest feats in the history of music. The thirty-ninth of Mozart's symphonies, it was written, with two

others, within a period of six weeks; to be exact, between June 26 and August 10, 1788. This fact alone would establish Mozart's as one of the great musical intellects of the world; add to it the circumstance that the composer was under spiritual and physical stress at the time, and we have an almost miraculous feat of composition. With his wife ill, and with no apparent source of income, with creditors harassing him, Mozart, driven to desperation, summoned every ounce of physical and mental energy and produced in this short period not only three symphonies, but the greatest of all his symphonies. It was also his last.

How the name "Jupiter" came to be attached to this work, or by whom it was first applied, is not clear. In order to appreciate it, the C major Symphony must not be compared with the Fifth or the Ninth of Beethoven, but with the earlier symphonies of Mozart himself, or perhaps with those of Haydn. Thus compared, the majesty, the dignity, the loftiness of thought and seriousness of purpose, together with the relatively magnificent scope of the work, immediately demonstrate the appropriateness of the somewhat cryptic title. It frequently happens that the works of a composer are given names by popular fancy or sentiment. It happens much less frequently that these names are justified either by the composer's intent or the material of the composition itself. In this case, however, it is generally conceded that the fanciful name which tradition has assigned to Mozart's last symphony is deserved and fitting, and for its use we have the authority of no less a personage than Mendelssohn.

It should be remembered that Mozart himself was hardly sensible of the real and full poetic power of the symphonic form. The symphony in his hands did not reach its highest development, and, wide as is the gulf between his early symphonies and the "Jupiter," the latter was written when the symphony was still in the formative state. There is nevertheless an unconscious, rugged strength in it; a frank and concise statement of ideas, a coherency, a proportion and balance, and, as far as those qualities mentioned are concerned, a work very unlikely ever to be surpassed.

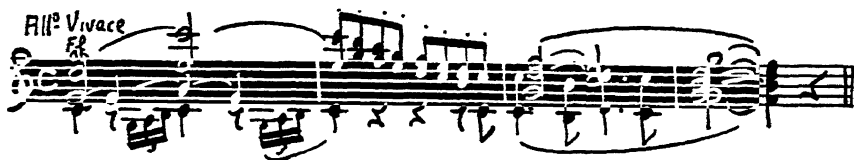
The symphony consists of four movements, the first, *allegro vivace*; the second, *andante cantabile*; the third, *menuetto*, and then the finale, *molto allegro*. It is more heavily orchestrated than was usual in Mozart's symphonies; in fact, it approaches the modern symphonic work in the deft arrangement among the instruments of items of musical interest, and in the contrasts and the power achieved by the composer with the instruments at his command.

### *First Movement*

Preparation for the final climax of the "Jupiter" Symphony begins with the first note of the first movement. Through three entire movements that preparation is carried on and worked out completely, and so, it is not unnatural that we feel



the atmosphere of suspense gathering more and more heavily as the music takes its course; nor is it strange that the first three movements seem like an immense prelude to the last. In this one characteristic the "Jupiter" is distinguished among all Mozart's symphonies, and here makes its closest approach to the modern symphony as well as its greatest departure from the composer's earlier works in the same form.



Since the first three movements, as we have noted, are in a loose sense but a prelude to the last, it follows that the profoundest depths will not be plumbed here as the symphony begins. But broad phrases for the full orchestra ring out in the opening sentence; phrases with a distinctly upward, cheerful inflection. Half-melancholy, half-merry utterances in the upper strings respond; a bold brief passage in which the orchestra speaks with all emphasis, and we come upon exquisite counterpoint, with woodwind and the lower strings in duet. You will look vainly here for sustained melody; it is not in the composer's scheme of things at the moment. Rather he passes before one's attention a succession of episodes which are treated almost as separate entities. Far from being meaningless, however, they are indices of the plane of the entire symphony, and they grow in significance as they are repeated.

The redistribution of items of musical interest among the instruments of the orchestra is the commanding feature of the second portion of the first movement. The principal themes, almost fragmentary as they are, have already been given out; no new thematic material appears.

The significance—and the aptness—of the popular name of the symphony not infrequently is questioned at various places throughout the work. There is, it is true, little reason for naming the symphony after Jupiter Tonans—the Thunderer; the work is much too finished and refined. Nor has it the flashing brilliance that would evoke the patronymic of Jupiter Fulminator, the god of Lightning. If we need find a definite contact between the symphony and the supreme among the gods, it must lie in yet another title of the ancient Roman deity—Jupiter Invictus, Jove the Unconquerable. The spirit of the work is one of invincible optimism—a vague and perhaps unreasoning cheeriness that in intensity of expression varies between joyous fanfares and frivolous titillation of the musical scale. The present moment in the work is largely of the latter character, and might indeed justify a question of the appropriateness of the title did we not remember that even Jove had his lighter moments.

The movement does not long continue on the rollicking note, however. There

is some presentation of previous themes with colors enriched either by the addition of other instruments to the voices which originally announced the thematic material, or by giving out previously heard ideas in new voices. The flute and bassoon sometimes double the melody of the upper strings an octave above and below; horns and the heavier strings are more conspicuously used. One familiar with the spurious Twelfth Mass will find expressions here strongly suggestive of certain of the more florid and grandiose passages in the Gloria of that rather gaudy work.

### *Second Movement*

For the moment, Mozart has done with the bravura style. After the first movement, his audience is quite under his control; its attention has been seized with no uncertain hand, its anticipation aroused and quickened. All available resources have been brought into play upon the thematic material already put forth, and any further exploitation of it would lose the ground already gained in the mind of the listener. But the composer is not yet ready to present the great climax of the symphony. It is necessary then not only to abandon the bravura mood for a time, but also to produce a new thought, presented in a new way. In this necessity, the style of the second movement originates.

One cannot but feel the solidifying of the elements of the symphony as the second movement proceeds. There is stricter adherence to the lovely melody—the principal theme of the movement—given out at the beginning by strings *con*



*sordino* (muted). A massive chord, delivered forte by the whole orchestra, answers each opening phrase of this flowing utterance, and now begins a more coherent, more knowledgeable, a fuller and richer musical treatment of the composer's thought. The melody in the strings is fortified by the woodwind, with a pulsing accompaniment by the remainder of the orchestra.

There is more of pure sentiment in the second movement of the "Jupiter" Symphony than in any other portion of the work. Here is the most candid emotional expression and the closest approximation of the style of the modern symphony. Particularly in the present section of the movement, we sense that the composer has searched the secret places of his heart and brought forth utterances of poignant eloquence. The cold formality and reserve of the first movement have melted under the warm suasion of the lovely melody, and the melody itself—you have already heard it as the theme of this movement—has agitated the deeper springs of feeling, so that, quite unexpectedly in Mozart, the movement is thrown

into a veritable emotional ferment. There are intimations of joy and of tears, of aloof contemplation and swift activity, and of remembrance. But, recalling the devotion to form and structure that was the earmark of the symphony in the time of Haydn and Mozart, you will not expect the large impassioned utterance of Beethoven, the soul-searching pathos of Schubert, or Tchaikovsky's gorgeous trappings of woe. There is always the restraint which is perhaps even more forceful than utter abandon. The movement is like a Horatian ode in the moderation and invariable graciousness of its suggestion of the deeper feelings. Yes, and there is also the spice of a Falernian cup in the occasional light figures that come to belie certain hints of melancholy.

### *Third Movement*

Powdered wigs and silver buckles. Mincing step and curtsy low. Candles glinting from a thousand prisms. Lavender and old lace. And the quaint courtliness of a day that is forever gone. Such is the picture suggested in the third movement of the symphony—a picture that Mozart must have frequently seen in the original, and one which often was animated by music from his pen. Vienna was dancing-mad in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and not only Mozart, but Haydn and, later, Beethoven wrote music for its frequent masquerades and other parties. Some of this music has contributed to the fame of its composer, but never won the respect of those for whom it was written; a pleasure-craving public looks with nothing more than contemptuous toleration on those who provide it with amusement.



Strings give out the simple subject of the movement at the very beginning, with an orchestral tutti on the answering cadence, emphasized always by the timpani. Woodwind and strings vary the theme somewhat, and there are fragments of charming counterpoint in which two simple melodies become artfully entangled. There is little elaboration of the thematic material, but the delightful rhythm, the grace and delicacy of the entire movement sustain interest to the very last note.

The playful character of the *menuetto* arouses the suspicion that we are being prepared for a return to serious things. Throughout the three-movement "prelude" the composer has led us farther and farther away from his real intent. He has aroused us with the promises of the first movement; lulled into calmness the agitation of the first with the suavity of the second, and awakened the dreams of the

second with the elastically springing rhythm of the third. How could the alertness produced by the third movement be justified and satisfied, how could the *promising* character of all three movements be fulfilled, except by a noble conclusion?

#### *Fourth Movement*

In the fourth movement of the "Jupiter" Symphony we come upon one of the transcendent things in all music, and certainly the zenith of Mozart's writings. Seizing upon what is perhaps the most formal and constricted of musical structures—the fugue—he has made of it "the vehicle for a flow of fiery eloquence, and has spread abroad glory and beauty without stint." A simple theme, a rigid form, yet warmed and lighted with the white incandescence of Mozart's genius in a truly inspired moment. No one, however, unfamiliar with the technicalities of the art, can be insensible to the magnificence of this movement as it grows from the first timid utterance of the violin into an elaborate fabric of beautiful sounds, glowing with the richest orchestral colors, intricately woven of many voices, yet clear, logical, final in the perfection of its pattern.



The four-note phrase of the first violins—the first notes heard as the movement begins—is derived from an old church tone of indefinite age and origin. It has been used by Mozart in several of his more important works, and indeed by other composers as well. It appears in the Credo of Mozart's Mass in F major, in the Sanctus of his Mass in C major, and in one of his symphonies. Bach, Mendelssohn, and Handel have used it in its original or in a derived form, and in spite of its ecclesiastical origin it can be traced to so profane a work as *Tristan und Isolde*, though, we are told, "its appearance there in the passionate disguise which Wagner's imagination gave it was no doubt fortuitous."

This single phrase is the basis for the entire movement. Its first pronouncement leads to some bars of introductory matter, bold, authoritative, and large in style. A few moments of this, and the great five-voice fugue begins, with first violins, second violins, violas, cellos, and basses in turn weaving their separate colors into the intricate pattern. Each voice entering cuts off the last note of its predecessor, and presently we are in the very midst of one of the world's master-

pieces of polyphony. The rhythm is swift and always moving; the orchestra speaks in its noblest and most emphatic accents; now, at last, Jove thunders.

The music here is ever in a state of flux, and it is not easy to separate out from the glowing mass the components that give it being. We sense rather than see the constant growth and development; imagination and senses are held enthralled, and only by a distinct effort of the pure intellect are we able to discern the elements that make up the complex and yet homogeneous structure of this music. We do note the strengthening of the melodic factors by the addition of woodwind to the strings; the wonderful entangled scales—a kind of *chevaux de frise* with which the composer surrounds the more solid portions of the movement. Wood and brass now have a larger share of the great fugue, and underneath their sonorities ring always the emphatic timpani. Power and vigor increase steadily as the movement proceeds, and still Mozart has reserved the most wonderful achievement of all for the end, where all the principal melodic and rhythmic elements of the movement are combined in a perfectly harmonized unit.

Much of Mozart's writings, it must be conceded, were no more than *pièces d'occasion*; many were "pretty," more were ingenious, all were charming. But the spirit of the times was not one likely to encourage the writing of music calculated to give expression to the deeper pulses of human life and thought. Particularly was this true in Vienna, then the world center of musical life, where the public was intoxicated with the elaborate pleasures of the court, and where Mozart's patrons, when they commanded his services at all, did not ask for opera, cantata, or symphony, but for dances. Therefore, his production of the present work was the more remarkable. Mozart put aside the exigencies of time and circumstance, and, we imagine, wrote a symphony after his own heart. There has been nothing, and there are no indications that there will be anything, in music to surpass it in its special virtues. In it, the inner Mozart spoke. He wrote not for the age, but for the ages.



## Symphony in D major

[*"Haffner"*]

[Köchel No. 385]

MOZART had the unfortunate talent of being able to compose, quickly and easily, and at will. This faculty exposed him to the demands of courts and musical dilettanti, and he, on his part, pressed as he often was for funds, was seldom able to refuse. The result was that in spite of his expressed determination to do nothing

slipshod, he wrote some music that was considerably less valuable than his best.

This symphony was written to order, and in the short space of two weeks; this at a time, too, when Mozart was quite busy with other matters. Nevertheless, it cannot be dismissed as one of the composer's many occasional pieces, for it ranks, both in musical merit and in popularity, with any of his symphonies except the great "Jupiter." During the early months of 1782, Mozart was much preoccupied with work on the opera *The Elopement from the Harem*, and incidentally with efforts to win his father's consent to his marriage with Constance Weber. Beset by work and worry, he was not overjoyed to receive a letter from his father, informing him that a well-to-do merchant of Salzburg named Haffner desired to commission music for a festive occasion, and was interested in having Mozart write it. Partly because he needed the money, and perhaps partly to install himself in the good graces of his father, the composer grudgingly undertook the work.

As originally planned, the music was to take the form of a suite, including two minuets, an andante, a march, and a finale. Such was the pressure of work, however, that Mozart was unable to complete the composition as planned, and later revised it to bring it closer to the conventional symphonic form. He omitted the march and one of the minuets, and enriched the orchestration by the addition of flutes and clarinets. As the Symphony in D major, then, he left us one of the most charming of his works.

### *First Movement*

There was certainly no occasion for profundity in the composition of this symphony, nor shall we find it here. All is brilliance and gaiety as the movement opens, with the theme, a vigorous and buoyant one, put forth by the whole orchestra. There are moments of hesitation, perhaps of doubt, and the vigorous subject returns with accessory scales and impetuous strong chords. Ingenious development, in which the principal subject is seldom difficult to locate, brings us eventually to a brief reflective period, not sad, but for a moment withdrawn from the first outbursts of joyousness. The chief subject returns, and is treated with various ingenious contrapuntal devices, and exchanged, in canon form, between bass and treble. Fluttering yet brilliant trills, rushing scales, and emphatic chordal pronouncements are used in sustaining the jolly mood to the end of the movement.

### *Second Movement*

The slow movement is always tender, sometimes impassioned, but, excepting a brief moment for the sake of contrast, never solemn. Its chief interest is the opening melody, assigned to the violins, and full of warm and vibrant feeling. Now the violins are taken to their upper ranges, and the theme becomes one of airy grace and loveliness. After a repetition of this part of the movement, there occurs an

interlude of almost ecclesiastical solemnity, but without ecclesiastical gloom. The prevailing note of warmth and ease and complacency is resumed with the return of the opening section, which, in somewhat modified form, and with its melodic line somewhat changed, brings us to the close of the movement.

### *Third Movement*

What would be the scherzo in a modern symphony is, of course, a minuet in a work by Mozart. No dance form, except the polonaise, is so fitted to the expression of stately and dignified festivity. The familiar three-beat rhythm of the minuet is very definitely marked, and the melody written over it has the softly lustrous brilliance of candlelight. The trio, or middle portion of the minuet, brings about a touch of intimacy and tenderness, as if some bewigged and powdered dandy paused a moment in the dance to "whisper sweet nothings" in his lady's ear—and then the opening section is repeated with brilliance.

### *Fourth Movement*

All the lighthearted vigor and suggestion of merriment which Mozart could in so unique a fashion command is applied to the finale of this charming work. There are but two musical ideas of importance—yet the composer weaves of them a glittering and exquisitely designed web of sound, highly elaborated, yet delicate. The first subject is intoned quite softly by the strings; it is repeated with a slight alteration, and the humor of the movement is at once established. The second subject is somewhat more restrained on its first presentation, but grows in vigor and in wit as it is developed. Incidentally, the movement is marked presto (very fast), and Mozart wrote to his father that it should be played as rapidly as possible. A first-class symphony orchestra of today can make a very brilliant and glowing effect in this movement and, at the same time, can preserve the essential clarity and cleanness of detail so vital to the good performance of Mozart's music.



## Symphony in D major ("Prague")

[K. 504]

THIS engaging little symphony dates from 1786; it was composed during December of that year and performed at Prague early in 1787—probably on January 19—for the first time, and under the direction of the composer. In that month Mozart conducted two concerts, and this work was played at one of them. One of

his biographers, Franz Niemtschek, of Prague, wrote "the symphonies which he [Mozart] chose for the occasion are true masterpieces of instrumental composition, full of surprising transitions. They have a swift and fiery bearing, so that they at once tune the soul to the expectation of something superior. This is especially true of the great Symphony in D major, which is still a favorite of the Prague public, although it has been heard here nearly a hundred times."

Mozart had a good time during his visit at Prague, both because of the warmth of the public toward his music, and the gay parties that had been arranged for him. Prague knew his music; his opera *The Marriage of Figaro* had been presented there during the preceding season with prodigious success. People went about the streets whistling the tunes of the opera, as they were to do again less than a year later, when they became acquainted with *Don Giovanni*.

As has been noted, the performance of the present work brought forth the warmest enthusiasm. At the conclusion of the symphony, the audience would not let Mozart depart until he appeared and improvised at the piano for their delectation; and when he played an impromptu set of variations on the aria "*Non più andrai*," his audience was completely at his feet.

One of Mozart's letters to his friend Gottfried von Jacquin gives an interesting sidelight on his enjoyment of Prague and his success there, as well as an indication of his sly humor. On the very evening of his arrival at Prague, he attended a ball, perhaps given in his honor—the "Breitfeld Ball, where the flower of the Prague beauties assemble. You ought to have been there, my dear friend; I think I see you running, or rather limping, after all those pretty creatures, married and single. I neither danced nor flirted with any of them—the former because I was too tired, and the latter from my natural bashfulness. I saw, however, with the greatest pleasure, all these people flying about with such great delight to the music of my *Figaro* transformed into quadrilles and waltzes; for here nothing is talked of but *Figaro*, nothing played but *Figaro*, nothing whistled or sung but *Figaro*, no opera so crowded as *Figaro*, nothing but *Figaro*—very flattering to me, certainly."

It is at once obvious, upon hearing the music, that it was designed for and can adequately be played by a quite small orchestra. Indeed, most music contemporary with this was so designed. Probably any version used today employs a fuller orchestra than Mozart had at his disposal when he first conducted the work; for at that time the orchestra of the Prague Opera House, also used as a concert orchestra, was meager, with a string section numbering only six violins, two violas, and two basses. Small orchestras were not the invariable rule, however, even in Mozart's time, and on great occasions bands of as many as two hundred players were assembled! And the orchestra of the Loge Olympique, in Paris, was comparable in size to any of our symphony orchestras of today. The symphony is scored for pairs of oboes, flutes, bassoons, horns, trumpets, timpani, and the usual strings.



*First Movement*Introduction, *Adagio, Allegro*

One of the remarkable things about this symphony is that it *has* an introduction of appreciable length—uncommon in Mozart and in his contemporaries. This section of the work makes no pretense to form; it is free, almost rambling in style, but by no means weak or purposeless. The strong chords in unison at the beginning suggest portentous matters, and the wandering figures given to the strings, as well as the pause, piano, on the harmonically unsatisfying dominant, indicate a somewhat tentative attitude.

Then the movement proper—a typically Mozartian movement, informed with vigor and with bright spirit—gets fairly under way. It may be stressing the obvious, nevertheless it is impossible to avoid mention of the anticipations of other works that lie implicit—and sometimes almost explicit—in this movement. Suggestions of both *Don Giovanni*, and of certain melodic details of *Die Zauberflöte*, are inescapable. The movement is formal, the themes straightforward, their development thorough and rather unusually lengthy.

*Second Movement**Andante*

Now the music moves to the key of the dominant (G major), and develops a vernal freshness and measured calm at contrast with the somewhat nervous activity of the preceding movement. Yet it has pace and grace, and even at the slower tempo one feels the coursing of its lifeblood and the vitality that is in it. The movement is in sonata form, but its adherence to that mold is not intruded upon one's attention. The texture of the music, too, undergoes a change, and gains in suavity what it loses in brilliance and rhythmic impulse by the omission of timpani and trumpet, which are *tacet*.

*Third Movement*

A Mozart symphony without a minuet movement is almost a curiosity, but here is one. We are wont to assume that all, or nearly all, symphonies of this period employed the minuet in one movement—the surviving member of the suite form that preceded the symphony. As a matter of fact, in Mozart's own time there were protests from the musical intelligentsia—evidently as irritating a breed then as now—against the employment of the minuet; it was not sufficiently serious, it was vulgar, it was gay, it disturbed the line and mood of the music. The lighter touch is always incomprehensible to, and therefore resented by, the humorless dolt; music must, regardless of its nature, always be played “with a straight face”!

The movement is full of animation and zest; and beneath its sparkle and glow and apparent joyous freedom there are, nevertheless, the elements of strict form. It is rich in contrast and color, and notable for the marked extremes of dynamics as well as shrewd juxtapositions of orchestral color which Mozart introduces. Eric Blom, commenting on the symphony as a whole, remarks, "The wonder of the symphony is, however, that in spite of the variety of the visions it may suggest to the hearer, it is a perfect whole. Every structural part and every thematic feature is exquisitely proportioned. No separate incident is allowed to engage attention independently of the scheme in which it is assigned its function, even where it is as incredibly beautiful as the second subject of the first movement, which is surreptitiously introduced by a passage that is apparently merely transitional, or as engagingly sprightly as the second subject of the finale with its bubbling bassoon accompaniment."



### Overture to "The Magic Flute"

THE opera *The Magic Flute* was Mozart's last great work, and one of which the composer was particularly proud. The subject of the opera is of no importance now, except that it has often been characterized as one of the worst librettos ever written for any opera. It is based, in part, on a mythology derived from Egypt, and is singularly incoherent and improbable. The music, and particularly the overture, is as lovely as any that Mozart left, in operatic form. Particular interest is derived from the apparent references to Masonic symbolism to be found in the overture.

The great chords in brass, in the slow introduction, are supposed to have Masonic significance. The initiated will know; to others, this is a fateful pronouncement, a summons, and a portentous warning. In the main body of the overture, there are two important themes; the first, presented in the violins, becomes the subject of ingenious and highly developed fugal treatment; the second is given out by the flute, but in association with references to the first theme. The significance of the three trombone chords, which first came to attention in the introduction, is recalled now in a short section played with gravity and impressively slow rhythm; then follows the complicated and brilliantly developed section devoted to exploitation of the given thematic material.



## Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro"

THIS characteristically Mozartian delicacy is one of the most delightful trifles, and at the same time, one of the most brilliant pieces of writing for strings, in the orchestral repertoire. *Le Nozze di Figaro* is a comic opera, the details of which are of no concern here. It is based on a comedy by Beaumarchais, and was first produced in Vienna in 1786. The overture is full of the grace and delicacy that always marked the music of Mozart; it has in addition a nervous vitality and humor that are most engaging. The strings begin, very softly, very rapidly, a suggestion of the principal theme; a more definitely thematic phrase presently appears, first in the woodwind, then in full orchestra, fortissimo. With this as a starting point, the music hurries along in a succession of coy melodies, brilliantly developed. Toward the end occurs one of the most exciting crescendo passages to be found in all Mozart's music; and the conclusion has a brevity and wit that are surprising and delightful.



## Concerto No. 4 in D major for Violin and Orchestra

### *First Movement*

NONE of the vigor, the vitality, the sprightly humor and vivaciousness usually associated with the music of Mozart is lacking in this beautiful work. To those familiar with it, or habituated to the music of Mozart in general, it will reveal great delights; to the uninitiated, it may quite possibly be the starting point of a journey into musical realms, the beauty of which will surprise and charm. One needs not to know, but merely to love, music in order to feel the charm of its naïve directness and candor, its freshness and originality; nor is it required that the hearer possess a knowledge of the technique of the violin in order to appreciate it.

The orchestral introduction to the concerto is quite extensive, occupying approximately two minutes. The introductory chords leave behind them a pedal point against which a vivacious figure is developed over several measures. The pedal point (on the tonic) underlies the greater part of the introduction, skillfully combined with the harmonies that develop around it. Presently the solo violin enters, its solitary voice dominating the entire ensemble more by the singular beauty of its tone than by its strength. A melody, which is immediately recalled as having been present in embryo in the introduction, is given to the solo violin, and is modestly elaborated in trills and changes of rhythm until the close of this part of the concerto on emphatic chords of the dominant.

Rigid formality and emotional expressiveness are not frequently found together in music. They are, to a certain degree, mutually repugnant. While complete disregard of form results merely in a concatenation of meaningless sounds, absolutely strict adherence to conventional forms is often equally as unsatisfactory from the point of view of the listener of emotional temperament. There is, of course, a certain sublime complacency in a musical composition which formally is flawless—and complacency has a definite emotional value; but in such cases the feeling inspired or expressed is akin to that of the mathematician who has solved a particularly intricate formula, being far more intellectual than emotional.

The audiences of Mozart's day looked for excellence of form more than for eloquence of expression; they neither expected nor did they hear the perfect execution of musical compositions to which we are accustomed. As form could not be distorted even by indifferent performance, perhaps it was sought because it was the one factor in the music not subject to the shortcomings of the executant. But Mozart was not content with merely formal beauty; he invested his music with the brightness of spirit that was his. So here in the second part of the concerto we find not only skillful manipulation of the musical textures in which he works, but emotional expressiveness garbed in the most exquisite raiment, richly colored, intricately woven, and patterned after perfection.

The concerto is, of course, primarily a showpiece—one designed to display the skill of the solo performer in every department of his art. Thus far, the music has revealed the beauty and variety of the violin tone, but little of the violin technique. Here, however, in the concluding portion of the first movement, the composer introduces a magnificent cadenza, in which the violin in solitary splendor is heard in a bewildering sequence of flying notes.

The orchestra gives out thematic matter quite similar to portions of the movement already heard; there comes a gradual broadening of tone and tempo, and then the violin stands forth alone. The cadenza begins with rather simple elaborations of a subject germane to the first movement theme, but soon glows with colors of prismatic purity and richness, and moves with fleet touches over the entire scale. Double-stopping arpeggios, natural and artificial harmonics, incredibly swift fingering of difficult phrases, all appear with consummate ease and grace and beauty of tone from a master violinist's singing strings.

### *Second Movement*

A stirring of the depths of emotion is not necessarily reflected in an agitation of the melodic current in music. On the contrary, a smooth flow of melody may bear an emotional content of more gravity and tenseness than the most exuberant outburst—perhaps because of its likeness to song, and song's likeness to speech. The present movement of the concerto is a case in point.

It has been pointed out in these pages that Mozart, notwithstanding his adherence to form as the exigencies of his time required, invested his compositions with a quite definite emotional beauty. Glimmerings of it are seen even in his most casual *pièces d'occasion*—and these were rather numerous; and in his more serious works, the “Jupiter” Symphony or the present concerto as examples, emotional expressiveness rises to a parity with strict form.

Effusiveness, or even radical departure from his customary idiom, should, however, have been quite inconceivable to Mozart. So, while in this portion of the concerto we find a melody that speaks with passionate eloquence, we feel too the familiar Mozart cadences; we anticipate, quite frequently, the structure of phrase and harmony. There is an orchestral introduction of almost ecclesiastical solemnity, from which the solo instrument presently borrows the first phrase of its song. Contrasting voices, subdued but effective, speak from the orchestra as the solo violin traces its exquisite melody in tones of piercing plaintiveness—a quality that does not leave its voice whether it soars in the soprano register or moves along the warmer G string.

The exquisite melody, now in the upper ranges of the solo instrument, is more animated as the second portion of the movement begins. Rhythmical chanting of the orchestra supports and vivifies it, though the tempo is still *andante* and the sentiment solemn. Presently we hear it in counterpoint, but without the intricacies of that figure which if too strongly emphasized would perhaps be a distraction rather than an elaboration of either emotional or purely ornamental character.

After a short pause following the contrapuntal treatment of the theme we come upon one of the loveliest passages in the concerto, if not in the entire body of the Mozart compositions. To call it a *cadenza* is misleading, for the word connotes a merely technical display, brilliant but usually devoid of emotional significance, and designed to amaze by agility rather than to move by expressiveness. In the passage now at hand, we have technical brilliance, it is true, and skill of a subtle rather than obvious kind; what is more important, however, we have phrases pregnant with meaning, which only incidentally require for their proper execution the most wonderful digital dexterity. What does it matter that a trill against double-stopped thirds is an exceedingly difficult feat of violin technique, when that particular phrase utters something from the soul of one of the world's most remarkable men? So it happens that, with the consciousness that this passage is at one with the exalted mood of the entire movement, the perfect technique that makes its execution possible is quite unnoticed in the spell which the music itself, purely as music, puts upon its hearers.

### *Third Movement*

The *rondeau*, or *rondo* as it is more commonly known, is one of the oldest of the many patterns on which formal musical composition is designed. Remotely it is

derived from the poetical form of the same name, in which the first and last lines of the stanza are identical. The musical rondo parallels this style of construction by providing for a return to the first subject after the introduction of the second or even the third subject—these being always in related keys, and usually in the key of the dominant. Notwithstanding its simplicity, the rondo achieves contrast and a finished, rounded melodic line that are as pleasing to the ear as to the sense of musical justice and logic and mathematics.

The final movement of the concerto is cast in the graceful mold of the rondo. The form must have appealed to Mozart, for it is one that would readily be adapted to his style, and in which he wrote with singular felicity. The first subject is announced by the violin against the accompanying orchestra, with the latter more prominent in succeeding cadences. After a repetition the secondary subject is introduced, and elaborated to the close on the chord of the dominant.

The rondo, like other rather mathematical forms, is a temptation to the composer to become cold, formal, architectural rather than sculptural; the sprightliness of Mozart, however, cannot be repressed even by so rigid a pattern. Within the confines of the form his ebullient spirits find space for expression, and whether the thought be serious or gay, it is never obscured by purely structural intricacies.

The first subject of the rondo now returns and is again presented with the lightness and humor that marked its first appearance as the movement opened. Transitions from the second subject back to the first, and then from the first to the third, are effected without the slightest break in the curvilinear structure of the movement, though the contrasts in the character of the various motives are emphatic. The vivaciousness of the music becomes quite modified as it progresses, and there are moments touched with a quasi-religious melancholy; nevertheless, the inherent vitality of the composer's thought invariably wins through, and each phrase closes in tonal brightness.

As in the preceding section, the music now exhibits a repetition of the first subject of the rondo. This theme, however, is not elaborated as extensively as in its previous appearances, and an even more joyous note is sounded just before the opening of a cadenza, brief but brilliant, that prefaces a recapitulation of several episodes of the movement.

One may investigate the vast treasury of Mozart music and easily find works designed on a greater scale than this; others more expressive of the deeper emotions; more representative, perhaps, of Mozart at the very zenith of his powers—but none in which all the perfections of form and expressiveness are to such a degree combined in the characteristic Mozart manner.

# MODEST MUSSORGSKY

[1839-1881]

MUSSORGSKY did not consider music as a profession until he was twenty-two years old and an officer in a famous Russian army regiment. He was born of a musical family, and had shown considerable talent as a child, but following the usual course of education allotted to a Russian boy of the better classes, he contented himself with a dilettante attitude until he happened to become acquainted, while still in the army, with several prominent Russian musicians.

Immediately he decided to give up social position and a comfortable income for the precarious existence of an artist. Nothing could dissuade him, and if he paid for his determination with a lifetime of poverty, he rewarded himself also by creating some very beautiful music.

Eventually he accepted a poorly paid government position, which kept him alive while he worked at music, but was also the source of troubles which led the composer to indulge in liquor and drugs to an alarming extent. His health broke down under abuse; then moderation of his habits restored him for a while, and enabled him to do some of his most important work. One of the few happy turns of fortune he ever experienced was his acquaintance with Rimsky-Korsakov, who later was to make a viable musical work out of Mussorgsky's greatest achievement, the opera *Boris Godunov*.

Mussorgsky never had a thorough training in the technique of his art, and consequently, though much of his music has elements of greatness, it often requires revision by finished musicians before its qualities can be justly revealed. The composer was never recognized by the public as a distinguished musician during his lifetime; but his musical friends knew his qualities, and did their best to help him. He was of an exceedingly attractive personality, though careless, ill-kempt, and disorderly; and his indulgence in drugs of course removed him from the circles wherein he might otherwise have found valuable support. He died at the age of forty-two, half developed, wholly ruined by himself.



## A Night on the Bald Mountain

[*Fantasy*]

IF THERE is any excuse or pretext for indulgence in narcotic drugs, it is that some of them violently stimulate the imagination, and provoke images which may possibly be of use in creative work. Mussorgsky was so vacillating in his original con-

ceptions of this music, and at times thought of inserting such fantastically unreasonable ideas, that the suspicion arises he may have been under the influence of drugs (as he often was) when he wrote it. Certainly the orgiastic celebrations suggested in it have never been seen by mortal eye, but materialize in the music like the wild and terrifying illusions of a dream. It would be more realistic to suggest that the composer's friend, Rimsky-Korsakov, had something to do with the extraordinarily descriptive and colorful music, for he revised, reorchestrated, and put it into playable form.

A detailed description of the music is scarcely necessary, considering the program which is printed in the published score:

Subterranean sounds of unearthly voices; appearance of the spirits of darkness, followed by that of the god Chernobog; Chernobog's glorification and the Black Mass; the revels; at the height of the orgies there is heard from afar the bell of a little church, which causes the spirits to disperse; dawn.



### Prelude and Entr'acte from "Khovantchina"

FOR the plot of his opera Mussorgsky chose the stirring incidents of the end of the seventeenth century, when, as his friend Stasov suggested in his *Life*, the passing of the old and the birth of the new Russia "afforded a rich subject." There were at the times such disagreements on matters of national policy that serious struggles between opposing factions kept the country in a state of ferment. One of the prominent figures in these struggles was that of the Prince Khovantsky, and from his name is derived the name of the opera.

The Prelude is highly atmospheric, descriptive, and moving. It paints the pale and wintry skies as day breaks over the Kremlin in Moscow, and establishes a mood superbly in keeping with the highly dramatic scenes that follow upon its conclusion.

The Entr'acte usually played on symphonic programs is extracted from Scene II, Act IV, of the opera. Here one of the figures in the drama—a victim of the uprising of the New Russia—begins his long journey into exile. There is a gloomy and terribly persistent figure in the bass, compounded of the low strings and bassoons; this, with the melancholy song that appears above it, produces an atmosphere of desolation and loneliness almost without parallel in orchestral music.





## Pictures at an Exhibition

ONE of Mussorgsky's most intimate friends was a painter-architect named Victor Hartman. Their association was terminated by the death of Hartman at the age of thirty-nine—one of the great sorrows in Mussorgsky's life. Other friends and admirers of Hartman planned to honor his memory with an exhibition of his paintings in oil and water color, and this was the occasion for the composition of the delightful music, descriptive of the exhibition, which we are considering here.

The music was not written originally for orchestra, but for piano. The orchestral arrangement is the work of Maurice Ravel, and was done at the request of Serge Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The first performance was given by Mr. Koussevitzky in Paris, May 3, 1923; the first in America by the same conductor, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, December 3, 1926. In orchestral guise, the *Pictures* take on color and form impossible to realize in the original piano version, and exhibit both Ravel's respect for the designs of the composer, and his own extraordinary skill in the difficult and subtle art of orchestration.

The music begins with a bold, striding theme, quite Russian in character, and called "Promenade." It is not difficult to imagine here a casual gallery visitor, walking boldly in, looking about, and then perhaps uncertain where to begin. The theme is in the brass; first trumpets, then horns, trombones, and tuba join in it. On the entrance of strings and woodwind our promenader wanders toward a picture called

### *Gnomes*

Here is a grotesque bandy-legged fellow, alternating spry and jerky movements with dragging steps and awkward posturings. Woodwind and plucked strings, muted brass and descending scales draw the picture for us.

The "Promenade" theme, slower in tempo and less vigorous, and with interesting changes in orchestration, brings us to the next picture, which represents

### *The Old Castle*

It is a medieval castle perhaps, with a troubadour standing in the shadow of its tower, singing to his lady. The song is wistful. The dark bassoon first presents it, and then the alto saxophone, with lovely string accompaniment, breathes forth the melody again.

The "Promenade" indicates that we proceed to another picture; this time we hear it in tones of trumpet, then trombones and tuba. A brief passage in plucked strings leads us to a scene in the

*Tuileries*

In this Parisian retreat for politer children (of all ages), we hear anxious nurses scolding their charges; pert youngsters, chattering and capricious; and there is a soft and lovely background such as the mist-wreathed trees of Paris might present of an April morning.

Usually the "Promenade," at this point, is omitted, and we come next to a picture entitled, simply,

*Bydlo*

A *bydlo* is a crude farm wagon, common in Polish agricultural districts. It has great wheels made of solid wooden discs; it is springless, cumbersome, and usually is drawn by a pair of stolid oxen. The halting and irregular rhythm of this conveyance and the sound of its great wooden wheels are wonderfully suggested in this little piece.

The next appearance of the "Promenade" is in the minor mode, which provides an effective preparation for the music depicting a drawing entitled

*Ballet of the Unhatched Chickens*

This was a sketch for a stage setting, made by Hartman for the ballet *Tribby*. So fantastic an idea as chicks dancing in their shells would have appealed powerfully to the ready imagination of Mussorgsky, and with the Ravel orchestration a brilliant, a charming, and almost pathetically "cute" effect is achieved. You can hear the little creatures chirping, bouncing about, and pecking at their shells from within; you can almost see them pirouetting on their little horny toes!

*Samuel Goldenburg, and Schmuyle*

This must be a caricature—a wealthy Polish Jew and his sycophantic "yes-man." Goldenburg is represented by a suave melody, rich in the colors of strings and woodwind; then comes the nervous, alert, obsequious Schmuyle, interjecting himself in thin tones of the trumpet. Both themes are now entangled, no doubt as Schmuyle importunately buttonholes his rich compatriot. Goldenburg cannot endure this insignificant person for long, however, and (at the end) abruptly, rudely dismisses him.

*Limoges: The Market Place*

Anyone who has ever seen a Gallic housewife effecting a bargain will need no further comment upon this delightful fragment. Would that she and all her sisters, arguing in unison and ad lib., could sound so amusing!

From the vivid color and animation of this scene, we descend, paradoxically by a swift ascending orchestra figure, to the

### *Catacombs*

Here in earthy cells lie the martyred fathers of the church; here were celebrated, in darkness and secrecy, the mystic rites of early Christianity; here now echo the ghostly voices of worshipers long silent. Here one walks with solemn step; here the "Promenade" is given a solemn and churchly guise, and mournful woodwinds intone their harmonies over hushed strings. Ascending scales on the harp bring us back to the light of day, and from the city of the dead we are swiftly transported to a land of fantasy, where in amazement we see

### *A Hut on Fowl's Legs*

Baba Yaga, in Russian legends, is a witch who dwelt in such a hut. On special occasions she used, for purposes of transportation, a glowing-hot mortar, which she rowed through the upper air with a pestle, reaching out behind from time to time to obliterate all traces of her passage with a flaming broom. One of her favorite diversions was the collecting of human bones, and of the bodies of her petrified victims, which she pounded to convenient size with her pestle.

Hartman's drawing was a clock in the form of Baba Yaga's hut; Mussorgsky added suggestions of the activities of the witch herself, as described above. With these in mind, the music becomes highly suggestive.

### *The Great Gate at Kiev*

As architect and engineer, Hartman had made plans for a monumental gate in the city of Kiev; as artist, he had made an imaginative painting of the gate, and it was this painting which suggested the present and concluding section of the work. The gateway is in the massive old Russian style, turreted and high, perhaps with a peal of bells flinging their wild harmonies from its stately pinnacles. Here the music is noble, broad, and richly colored; the sonorous brass drives forth great masses of tone, bells add a glamorous richness, and the music mounts to overpowering heights.



# MUSSORGSKY-STOKOWSKI

Boris Godunov

[*Symphonic Synthesis*]

THE opera *Boris Godunov* has a curious history and a complicated one. Mussorgsky produced it first in a loose and unintegrated form; Rimsky-Korsakov twice rearranged and reorchestrated it, and made it into something quite at variance with the composer's own version; Mussorgsky published an incomplete vocal score, and finally, there is the complete orchestral score, published in 1929, and revealing completely how far the operatic version, as witnessed in America and Europe, deviated from Mussorgsky's original. The complete and authentic edition was performed for the first time anywhere on February 26, 1928, at the Mariinsky Theater in Leningrad; the first American performance was given in concert form, under the direction of Mr. Stokowski and with the Philadelphia Orchestra, at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, November 29, 1929. Mr. Stokowski used at that time the first of Mussorgsky's two versions of the work.

*Boris*, work of wonder that it is, cannot in the technical sense be considered good opera. The composer himself was sensible of this, and in a second version called it "a musical folk drama." It lacks the continuity of plot, and is too completely episodic, to make a theoretically good opera. Although with its marvelous music, its pageantry, its moments of high tragedy, of terror and ambition and wickedness, it makes a superb dramatic spectacle, it must be confessed that but for the existence of the incomparable Chaliapin most people, even seasoned opera enthusiasts, would find the work something less than satisfying. Sometimes one has difficulty in accepting the necessary polyglot performances, with soloists singing in French, Italian, and German, the chorus in French or Italian, and the protagonist in Russian!

For these and other reasons, one suspects, Mr. Stokowski chose to bring to bear upon this stupendous score his unique gifts for transcription and execution. Here, as in his Wagnerian syntheses, he has distilled out the basic elements of the work, and blended them into a kind of tone poem as beautifully constructed as a symphony, and as skillfully calculated to control and direct the emotions in a series of crises and climaxes. In so doing, Mr. Stokowski, as no other orchestrator did, has adhered to the spirit of the original score, and quite often to the letter. Of his transcription he writes:

"I based this transcription only on the Mussorgsky original score—not on the Rimsky-Korsakov. Although Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov were intimate friends, and for a time lived together like two brothers, yet as creative musicians they were at opposing poles. Their approach to music was totally different. With generous intentions Rimsky-Korsakov tried to reorchestrate and reform *Boris*.

Instead, he made something far from the spirit of Mussorgsky. The original orchestration of Mussorgsky shows clearly what he was trying to say, but sometimes he failed to express his musical conception, because he was inexperienced in the vast, subtle, and highly differentiated world of the modern orchestra. There are exceptions to this, notably the 'Siege of Kazan' [Varlaam's narrative—Ed.], in form a theme and variations, in spirit a fantastic scherzo. This is a masterpiece of orchestration, especially that variation which describes how Ivan the Terrible lit the fires and exploded the mines under the walls of the Tartar fortress. Mussorgsky's score is full of inspired music of symphonic quality. Wherever the orchestration of Mussorgsky only partly expresses the spirit of his musical conception, I have tried to help the orchestra more completely say what Mussorgsky was aiming to express, keeping the music in the dramatic sequence of Pushkin's poem and Mussorgsky's score. The result is something like a free modern symphony, which in this form is available to music lovers who otherwise rarely hear this music of power and imagination and genius. Mussorgsky paints richly in tone the Russia of Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky—a life which few other peoples have approached in pageantry, cruelty, and sensitive perception of the beauty and horror of which life is capable."

The sequence of the music, in Mr. Stokowski's symphonic synthesis, is as follows: outside the Novodievchy Monastery; the people ask Boris for protection; pilgrims are heard singing in the distance; they come closer and enter the monastery; coronation of Boris; monks chanting in the monastery of Choudov; siege of Kazan; outside the church of St. Basil; the Idiot foretells the fate of Russia; the starving crowd asks Boris for bread; death of Boris.

These episodes are drawn from the following scenes in the opera:

*Prologue, Scene 1.* The courtyard of the Novodievchy Monastery. The people, at the instigation of the police, entreat Boris to accept the Russian throne. A procession of singing pilgrims passes and enters the monastery. *Prologue, Scene 2.* The coronation of Boris at the Kremlin. *Act I, Scene 1.* Pimen's cell in the Choudov Monastery (where the chanting of the monks is heard from off stage). The novice Grigory awakens from a dream of ambition and power. Hearing from the monk Pimen—an eyewitness—of the murder of the Tsarevitch Dmitri, and learning that the murdered boy, had he lived, would have been Grigory's own age, the novice resolves to impersonate the murdered prince and attempt to get the crown for himself. *Act I, Scene 2.* An inn on the border. Varlaam and Missail, wandering friars, enter with Grigory who is in disguise and is making an attempt to cross the border into Lithuania. Varlaam, drinking deeply, narrates in a half-drunken and highly colored style the story of the siege of Kazan. *Act IV, Scene 1.* The Red Square, before the church of St. Basil, Moscow. Music is heard from within the church. An Idiot appears, and is tormented by street urchins. Presently Boris and his courtiers emerge from the church. The people beg Boris

for bread, and the Idiot sings a song foretelling the downfall of Russia and miseries to come. *Act IV*. The great reception hall of the Kremlin. A council of state. The old monk Pimen is brought in, and he tells of a miracle that has taken place at the tomb of the murdered Dmitri. Boris cries aloud, faints, and embracing for the last time his loved son, dies.

Extended or detailed comment upon this music is hardly necessary or desirable. The very first notes we hear, the weirdly sad and lonely voice of the bassoon, lead us into a mysterious, an enchanting, if sometimes terrifying, world of swift, tense emotions. With the sketches of the sequence of the work given above, and any degree of acquaintance with the story of the opera, the eloquence of this orchestral version becomes at once apparent. From a certain point of view, the symphonic synthesis is more eloquent and more compelling than the opera itself. It integrates the dramatic moments of the work much more closely; it strips away what is unessential and sometimes poor; it disposes of the pitiful artificiality of the stage, and gives us with a rare degree of purity that powerful distillation of Russian life now forever gone. Finally, the barrier of language, more or less essential to the opera, is done away with by the substitution of pure music, which everyone understands.

Some interesting features of the transcription should be especially noted. The unbelievable fidelity of the reproduction of bell effects—in the coronation scene and the death scene—is something to marvel at. Tam-tam, tubular chimes, muted trumpets, plucked strings, and other instrumental devices are employed in combinations which produce tones never before heard from any orchestra. Effects that are almost vocal, in certain choralelike passages associated in the opera with the chanting of monks and pilgrims, are accomplished by the string choirs. Brasses and other instruments of the orchestra combine in groups that suggest a distant great pipe organ. Atmospheric effects peculiar to this music, scenes that are almost visible, so suggestive is the music, are accomplished with tremendous power and conviction, and the climaxes, especially those of the coronation, the tale of Kazan, and the death of Boris, are overpowering.

The real significance of the music lies of course in the composer's own concept, which, though immediately a failure, has finally been realized and recognized. As for Stokowski's orchestral version of *Boris*, one may with reason decide that it reveals the absolute and essential meanings as no version, operatic or other, has done heretofore. If justification for the synthetic orchestral form is necessary, or if one wonders whether or not Mr. Stokowski has actually accomplished for Mussorgsky's music what the composer himself failed in, we have only to turn to Mussorgsky's own words. In a letter he wrote that he strove to reproduce in his music "the expressive qualities of the *tones* in which human beings, while speaking, convey their thoughts and feelings. If my way of doing so is musical and artistic, then the race is won."<sup>2</sup>

This transcription has contributed much to the winning of that race. The passage quoted above might with justice have been written of Mr. Stokowski's work, for he asks the orchestra to speak with the *expressive* tones with which humans transmit their thoughts; he has devised new and more expressive ones, and through this marvelous medium, he has conveyed the crystal-clear essence of the horror, the tragedy, the strange wild humor, the barbaric beauty, the wonder that was Russia. One reads, after hearing this wonderful music, with an assenting and sympathetic attitude the comment of the late Lawrence Gilman:

The immense pitifulness, the sorrowing tenderness, the fathomless compassion of Mussorgsky's music are among the precious heritages of our time. There is nothing at all like it in the whole stretch of the art as it has come down to us. Its simplicity of accent and gesture, its overwhelming sincerity, its unsounded depths, are without analogy. In some of Bach's chorale-preludes, in certain episodes of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, we catch glimpses of a world not far removed from that inhabited by Mussorgsky at his most typical. But his world is his own—there is none other like it in music.

It is not in the sombrely splendid moments of *Boris Godunov* that Mussorgsky is greatest; nor even in those moments that imprison the clutching horror of the Macbeth-like hallucination scene, in which the tortured Boris grovels before the specter of the murdered Dmitri. It is when he is simplest, most intimate, most quietly compassionate that he is to be most treasured; when he voices an immemorial sorrow, an ageless grief, as in the scene between the dying Boris and his son, or the scene in which the piteous Simpleton weeps in the snowy, bitter dusk.

# IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI

[Born November 6, 1860]

A RECENTLY published and the only authentic biography of Paderewski gives in detail the complex history of events which have combined to make his life one of the most fascinating stories of modern times. To this biography, which is in fact an autobiography, we must refer the reader if he wishes to study in detail the background against which this gigantic musical figure has moved for fourscore years.

Paderewski was born November 6, 1860, in the province of Podolia, in Poland. As a small child he was attracted to the piano and was seriously studying it before he was eight years old, with a provincial teacher named Peter Souruski. He made such progress that his parents sent him, in 1872, to Warsaw where he studied harmony and counterpoint at the Conservatory. Later he pursued his studies in Berlin, and when only eighteen was engaged as instructor in piano at the Warsaw Conservatory. Nothing in his teaching activities was particularly gratifying to Paderewski, but necessity forced him a little later to accept a professorship at the Strasbourg Conservatory—an engagement which terminated very soon after it had been begun. It was the great Leschetizky who most influenced Paderewski as a pianist, although it might have been he also who suggested to Paderewski that it were better if he pursued his studies of the trombone as he was not likely to become a pianist of any considerable ability! It is related, too, that Paderewski was more interested in composition as a career than in the executant side of music and that he became a pianist primarily to assure himself of satisfactory performances of his compositions. His development as a performing artist was such, however, that he established himself as one of the greatest pianists of all history and, as everyone knows, his name has become a synonym for the ultimate in pianistic art.



## Concerto in A minor

[Opus 17]

PADEREWSKI relates in his memoirs that the concerto, which is perhaps his most important and enduring work, was begun in 1888 and finished in 1889. It was given its first performance by Mme Essipoff-Leschetizky, who played it under the baton of Hans Richter. Paderewski himself played the work at his American debut in New York on November 17, 1891. It was with this work, therefore, that



Paderewski's great first impression was made upon the American public. It is interesting to search out the press comment of the time, which seemed devoted more particularly to the performer than to the music itself. The *New York Sun* wrote of Paderewski, "clear-cut, poetical, dreamy face, with tawny hair lying in masses of curls about his well-shaped head." The *New York Herald* described the concert as "an intoxicating success." The *Times* had a curious comment to make: "Paderewski is his name," said the reviewer. "It is not a pretty name, and it is not a pretty man, but he can play the piano."

Although the concerto dates from a period when compositions of this kind were designed chiefly for exploitation of the technical abilities of the performer, it is interesting and gratifying to observe that while certainly there is plenty of opportunity for display, Paderewski subordinated the piano to the orchestra much as in the more modern concertos. On the other hand, the concerto is definitely in the manner of the romantic school with its wealth of melody, its profound emotionalism, its use of unsophisticated and, to some degree, nationalistic thematic material, and its frank concern with beautiful sound rather than with cleverness and quasi-sophistication. At the same time there is a vigorous drive especially in the orchestral portions of the first movement, and where one might expect a moody and possibly a morbid introspection in view of the composer's character as a patriot and his use of Polish musical idiom, we find a wholesome and muscular vitality both exciting and refreshing.

Comparisons of Chopin and Paderewski are perhaps inevitable since both were natives of Poland, both came under the musical influences of Paris, and both were intensely patriotic. Many listeners will convince themselves that the influence of Chopin is marked in this concerto, and particularly in the second movement. One will find here, however, none of the often morbid nostalgia and the polite complaints of Chopin. Paderewski was always fiercely patriotic and here develops his *romanza* over what might well be the melodic lines of a Polish folk tune, but the music is ever wholesome, vital, and boldly striding with life and vigor even in its most sentimental moments.

If anywhere this is to be regarded as a display piece it is in the third movement where the lighter themes and the fascinating difficulties assigned to the soloist brighten the whole spirit of the music. Nevertheless, though the piano is now given more prominence, its music is closely integrated with that of the orchestra and the roundness and fullness of the composition are never disturbed by the flashes of pianistic lightnings.

# GIOVANNI PAISIELLO

[1741-1816]

## “The Barber of Seville”—Overture

**P**AISIELLO was one of the most prolific of composers, leaving nearly one hundred operas behind him. Most of them probably were successful during their little lives and his opera, *The Barber of Seville*, remained a success for a great many years. Indeed it was the respect and affection in which his opera was held that brought about the early failure of Rossini's work of the same name, which was presented thirty-six years after Paisiello's *Barber*. It must be remembered, incidentally, that the story of *The Barber of Seville* antedates both the Paisiello and Rossini operas by a considerable period.

This dainty little overture is all that remains, outside of libraries and the dusty tomes of musicologists, of Paisiello's opera. It is quite Mozartian in style, and could easily be mistaken for a work of that incomparable master in one of his more whimsical moments. It is formed with an astonishing degree of perfection and is filled with a sprightly and innocent humor that is most ingratiating. Its first American performance was given at Boston by the Boston “Pops” Orchestra under the direction of Arthur Fiedler, in the season of 1939. Its first performance in New York seems to have been the one given by the Philharmonic Symphony Society at the Lewisohn Stadium, under the direction of the author of this book.

## SERGE PROKOFIEFF

[Born 1891]

PROKOFIEFF, with a group of other and somewhat younger composers, is of the musical hierarchy of the Soviet Republics today. The ultraconservative would have us believe that music, or any other art that will not or cannot contribute something to the Soviet political scheme, is lightly regarded, if regarded at all, by the powers that be in Russia. The radical, on the other hand, holds that this is as it should be, and that the social and political experiment now in process under the Soviets is of such magnitude, of such importance to humanity, that every human activity should in some manner be devoted to it. Between these extreme views lies what is perhaps the truth—that valid music, like any valid art, does and should reflect contemporary life, but need not and generally should not be polemic.

The more recent music of Prokofieff falls upon this middle ground. Rarely has he fallen to the mischievous delusions of extreme musical radicalism; he has demonstrated the soundest kind of composition, even to writing a charming symphony in the classical manner; and his major works, including some of the most modern ones, are highly interesting and effective.

Prokofieff was born in the Ekaterinoslav district of Russia on April 23, 1891. He was something of a child prodigy. At six he composed a march, a waltz, and a rondo, and three years later exhibited the beginnings of a tendency which has since materialized into some of his best music—the preference for composition accompanying stories of his own invention. Before he was ten years old he had written a three-act opera to his own story entitled *The Giant*, and at twelve years he completed another opera based on Pushkin's *Feast During the Plague*. A boy with such talent could hardly have existed without further development and he had the benefit of working under such masters as Glière, Rimsky-Korsakov, Liadov, and Tcherepnin.

Prokofieff left Russia in 1918, coming to America by way of Japan, and then established a home in Paris. In 1934 he returned to Russia and has, with the exception of a few brief intervals, lived there since.

There is a mischievous quality apparent in almost all of Prokofieff's music, though it is not always obvious. Even his "Classical" Symphony was not without elements of mockery. His Opus 17, entitled *Sarcasms for Piano*, is frankly what its title implies. In the suite *Lieutenant Kije*, Opus 60, and *Peter and the Wolf*, Opus 67, his humor is more pointed but less obvious, wittier and better humored than some of his earlier mockeries, yet one may easily read into these later works political satires not without an element of bitterness.

Prokofieff had been engaged for many appearances in America as pianist during the season 1939-40, but the difficulties of the war intervened.

## “Classical” Symphony

THIS little symphony, aside from its charming melodic content and polished formal perfection, is interesting chiefly because of the composer's purpose in writing it. Bearing in mind that Prokofieff is one of the most radical, as well as one of the most intelligent, of modern composers, it is illuminating to discover that “the composer's idea in writing this work was to catch the spirit of Mozart and to put down that which, if he were living now, Mozart might put into his scores.”

What Mozart might put into his scores now is anybody's guess; but there can be little doubt that Prokofieff has recalled that blithe spirit in the delightful music he has written here. The melodies, the structure, the dance movement (a gavotte rather than the classical minuet)—all could have been written by Mozart, except for curious surprising echoes in the harmony, occasionally; and turns of phrase that reveal somewhat more of sophistication than we find in any of the old master's symphonies, except the “Jupiter.”

The symphony is in four short movements.



### Le Pas d'acier [*The Age of Steel*] [Ballet]

*Le Pas d'acier* is one of the few Soviet-inspired musical works to find a firm foothold on the concert stage. It is highly probable, in fact, that the music as distinct from the ballet is more successful than the complete form of the work. Though definitely “modern,” in the sense that established laws of form and harmony are disregarded, the music is by no means unpleasant to hear. It is often dissonant, almost always powerful, acrid, and angular, but it is also convincing to a high degree.

The work was staged, with a modified scenario and new scenery by Lee Simonson, by the Philadelphia Orchestra in co-operation with the League of Composers, and under the direction of Leopold Stokowski, April 10, 1931, for the first time in America. Excerpts from the score had been previously played, for the first time in this country, by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky.

Mr. Stokowski, on the occasion of the presentation of the complete work, made the following comment, which was reported in the program of the Philadelphia Orchestra:

Prokofieff's *Le Pas d'acier* is a vigorous dynamic painting in tone of the transition period through which the Western world is passing, from the former ideas of life, to the new and as yet only dimly visioned possibilities.

The regular throb of the rhythms, the clear incisive orchestration, the long swinging strokes of the musical fabric, stun and dazzle and bewilder and fascinate, just as do the rare good manifestations of modern life, from among the great mass of imitation of externals. This is music of vitality, and the thrill of speed and power.

A reviewer of the first performance in England, writing in the *London Daily Telegraph*, commented upon the charmingly simple music associated with one scene in the ballet, and continued: "Not that the music elsewhere was complicated or painful to our ears. Prokofieff has always a hard and steely style, but musically *Le Pas d'acier* is by no means cacophonous. Raucous it may sometimes be, and the percussion does not suffer from reticence."

The ballet is called "a ballet of work." It exhibits in two tableaux and many scenes the two chief preoccupations of contemporary Russian life—work and life in the country and on the farm, work and life in the city and in the factory. In the concert suite drawn from the ballet, there are six pieces: "Train of Men Carrying Provision Bags," "Sailor with Bracelet and Workingwoman," "Reconstruction of Scenery," "The Factory," "The Hammers," "Final Scene."



## Lieutenant Kije—Suite

[Opus 60]

IN 1933 the Russian film corporation, Belgoskino, produced a highly successful sound film, *Lieutenant Kije*, for which Prokofieff was commissioned to write the music. The concert suite is extracted from the incidental music for the picture, and was published and first performed in Moscow in 1934. The first American performance was given, October 15, 1937, by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky, at a regular concert at Symphony Hall, Boston; it was repeated in New York and elsewhere by the same artists during the season 1937-38 with conspicuous success.

The sound film for which this music was written was exhibited in New York several years ago. For a sketch of this story, we turn to the writings of Nicolas Slonimsky, who says: "The subject of the film is based on an anecdote about the Czar Nicholas I, who misread the report of his military aide so that the last

syllable of the name of a Russian officer which ended with 'ki' and the Russian intensive expletive 'je' (untranslatable by any English word but similar in position and meaning to the Latin 'quidem') formed a nonexistent name, Kije. The obsequious courtiers, fearful of pointing out to the Czar the mistake he had made, decided to invent an officer of that name (as misread by the Czar). Hence all kinds of comical adventures and quid-pro-quo's." (Kije is also sometimes written "Ktje," but to English-speaking people this presents somewhat of a problem in pronunciation.)

### *The Birth of Kije*

Like that mythical deity who sprang "full-panoplied from the head of Jove," our hero is a full-grown and gorgeously uniformed fellow at birth, and properly approaches the scene to the accompaniment of a very military figure sounded at first faintly, then somewhat more assertively, by a cornet off stage. The rasp of the snare drum and the thin brilliance of the piccolo are presently heard, and attract other instruments of the orchestra to the splendid parade. There is something amusingly broad and vulgar in the orchestration here, suggesting a pompous, rather stupid, overdressed, and yet amiable fellow.

### *Romance*

In the sound film, a solo baritone voice was employed in this section. In the concert suite the part is taken by a tenor saxophone. The words of the melody, which is the central feature of this movement, are printed in the score, and run as follows:

*Heart be calm, do not flutter;  
 Don't keep flying like a butterfly.  
 Well, what has my heart decided?  
 Where will we in summer rest?  
 But my heart could answer nothing:  
 Beating fast in my poor breast.  
 My gray dove is full of sorrow—  
 Moaning is she day and night.  
 For her dear companion left her,  
 Having vanished out of sight,  
 Sad and dull has gotten my gray dove.*

### *Kije's Wedding*

There is a curious and amusing combination of military stiffness and ordinary sentimentality here—incidentally a shrewd comment upon some of those who

professionally are hard-boiled but, subcutaneously, soft to the point of stickiness. The notation *allegro fastoso* appearing in the score at this point is an uncommon one. *Fastoso* means pompously.

### *Troika*

Again the saxophone substitutes for the original baritone voice, as do other instruments occasionally. The song is an old Russian tavern ditty, and the words are as follows:

*A woman's heart is like an inn:  
 All those who wish go in,  
 And they who roam about  
 Day and night go in and out.  
 Come here I say, come here I say,  
 And have no fear with me.  
 Be you bachelor or not,  
 Be you shy or be you bold,  
 I call you all to come here.*

*So all those who are about  
 Keep going in and coming out,  
 Night and day they roam about.*

### *Burial of Kije*

If one expects anything resembling a dirge here, he shall be much disappointed. It is easy to believe, from what we know of the story of the film, that Lieutenant Kije's fellow officers were more than glad to be rid of him. His quasi-existence must have been a strain, and his comrades' relief at his final dissolution can definitely be felt—rather than any grief—in the music. There are remembrances of all his exploits here in the music, and he departs in much the same atmosphere that prevailed at his birth. A distant cornet introduces a review of his short life, and at the end, the same off-stage brass accompanies his final departure.

The suite is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, tenor saxophone, cornet, two trumpets, four horns, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, military drum, triangle, cymbals, tambourine, sleigh bells, harp, celesta, piano, and the usual strings.

The political implications of *Lieutenant Kije*, if any, caused a curious incident at a Lamoureux concert in Paris, February 20, 1937, when the music was performed under the direction of the composer. An unidentified man attempted to tell the audience about Russian music in general and Prokofieff in particular. "But," according to the *Musical Times*, "he did not get very far. By the time he had reached his third or fourth platitude folk became impatient, and when a French

audience becomes impatient it lets it be known in shrieks, hoots, howls, whistlings, and Gallic vociferation of displeasure. The lecturer beating a retreat to the tune of what was by now a rather tumultuous invitation to disappear, Bigot (who conducted the rest of the program) put in an appearance and got on with the concert."

The writer in *Le Menestrel* had more to say: "At the beginning of the concert, a speaker came forth to read remarks which were loudly cut short by a public of little patience. If he intended to elucidate the two composers, he taught us little. If to spread national propaganda, the attempt was clumsy and useless as well." In spite of this contretemps, the music was enormously successful, as it has been wherever played since.



## Concerto No. 2 in G minor for Violin and Orchestra

[Opus 63]

PROKOFIEFF'S Second Concerto for Violin and Orchestra was completed during the latter part of 1935, while the composer was living in Russia. The first performance was given by the Madrid Symphony Orchestra, with Robert Soetens as soloist, under the direction of Enrique Arbós, December 1, 1935. The first American performance was given at Symphony Hall, Boston, with Jascha Heifetz and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky conducting, December 17, 1937. The concerto was recorded by Mr. Heifetz and the Boston Symphony Orchestra on December 20, 1937.

If we can accept the verdict of so eminent an authority as Jascha Heifetz—and we can—this is one of the five or six great violin concertos. With the Beethoven, the Brahms, the Tchaïkovsky, the Sibelius, and the Elgar concertos, it should take positive and permanent rank. In listening to it, we need not and should not be concerned with cryptic political meanings, with Sovietism, the life of the worker, the philosophy of Stalin, the machine age, or anything else not germane to music as such. It is beautiful and wonderful music, written in a fresh and stimulating idiom, and with exhaustive knowledge of the violin as a solo instrument. As for the orchestra and its possibilities, few men living are more intimately acquainted with it than Prokofieff.

There have been few occasions, if any, when a solo performer of a contemporary work could look out upon his audience and find them moved to tears. The moderns have looked with jaundiced eye upon sentiment, upon emotion, largely because their music has for the most part, when it has been rational at all, dealt with cerebral rather than emotional reactions. Emotional response, because it is not easy to achieve, has been looked down upon by the poseur, the "faker,"



the *soi-disant* intellectual, the little musical snobs, dolts, cranks, and camp followers. Happily, in the present work, Prokofieff, who has before now demonstrated his ability in the most coldly classical as well as in the modern styles, is not concerned with these ragtag and bobtail of the musical art. He writes here from the heart, and from a profound intellectual appreciation of the resources upon which he draws and the territory upon which he enters. In one sense his Second Concerto for Violin and Orchestra is not modern at all, but quite old-fashioned, as were Beethoven's and Brahms' and Sibelius'. In other words, he is not ashamed that his music, while incidentally exploiting anew the resources of violin versus orchestra, should speak eloquently of beauty and of the things that remain remote and hidden in the recesses of the human heart and mind.

If sometimes his harmonies are acrid and strange, it is because the conflicts and contacts of life are also, often, harsh and forbidding and unaccustomed, but it should not and does not follow that all experiences must be so. Prokofieff is forward-looking, original, and daring enough to forge his own tools of harmony and structure; he is also intelligent enough to employ the means that other great men have developed and left ready to his hand. He is neither archaic nor futuristic—but only logical, sensible, sensitive, and convincing.

### *First Movement*

#### *Allegro moderato*

There is more than one reminder of the "Classical" Symphony of Prokofieff in this concerto, but, though it is roughly conventional in form, it nevertheless strikes out along a new path in its field. The composer uses the conventions, but is not inhibited by them. Obvious atonality is not laboriously intruded, and we find the solo violin giving out a definable chief theme for the first movement, solidly established in the key of G minor. In the first few measures it is unaccompanied. There is some elaboration, and a second, quite melodious subject is presented against a soft and rhythmical figure in the orchestra strings. The movement is developed in sonata form.

### *Second Movement*

#### *Andante*

It was during the lovely second movement that many of the first audience to hear this work in America were moved to tears. Here the music is almost Mozartean in its clarity; but its complexity of rhythms and harmonies is much more involved than any Mozart ever gave us. The soloist reveals the principal thematic material, variations of which are subsequently developed. The feeling of the whole *andante* is romantic and lyrical. The tonality is ultimately E-flat major,

though before this key is reached there are many diversions and digressions, both in tonality and in the mutations of the chief thematic idea.

*Third Movement*

*Allegro ben marcato.*

The finale presents a marked change in spirit, and a revelation of a style more characteristic, perhaps, of the contemporary Prokofieff than anything that has yet appeared in the concerto. The movement is a kind of rondo, practically devoid of sustained melody, but with swift and powerful rhythms urging it on through every bar. It is by far the most brilliant section of the concerto, and perhaps the most exacting so far as the soloist is concerned. There are some rhythmically difficult but fascinating passages in 7/4 and 5/4, which the conductor's incisive beat and the soloist's unerring accuracy make doubly attractive. One is reminded now of the piano concertos, with their whimsical, sometimes bitterly ironical suggestions, and vigorous "busy" rhythms. In the coda percussion and plucked strings are adeptly used as foils against the crisp and biting tone of the solo violin.



Peter and the Wolf

[*An Orchestral Fairy Tale*]

[Opus 67]

*Peter and the Wolf* was composed in 1936 and first performed at a children's concert at Moscow in May 2 of that year. The text as well as the music is Prokofieff's own invention. It is curious that this work, which pretends to be a fairy tale told with orchestral accompaniment to and for children, nevertheless commends itself, like *Alice in Wonderland*, equally to grownups. It is possible to read into it a rather obscure political satire, although such a connection is rather difficult to establish. Taken at its face value it is music of a gentle charm and apparent simplicity, but it is also music most subtly wrought, extraordinarily suggestive and descriptive, and completely captivating. Various instruments or groups of instruments in the orchestra are used to represent characters in the story, just as orchestral rhythms, melodies, and rhythmic manipulations are used to suggest dramatic incident and situation. One of the most ingenious and picturesque details is the curious progression of the strings as Peter lets down his lasso from the tree and catches the Wolf by the tail. The dispute of the Duck and the Bird is another moment of delicate and gentle humor.

Prokofieff's own story supplies all the description necessary to a complete understanding and enjoyment of this music. The story is as follows:

My dear children—Each character of this tale is represented by a corresponding instrument in the orchestra: the Bird by a flute, the Duck by an oboe, the Cat by a clarinet staccato in a low register, the Grandfather by a bassoon, the Wolf by three horns, Peter by the string quartet, the shooting of the Hunters by the kettle-drums and the bass drum. Thereby, dear children, you will be able to distinguish the sonorities of the several instruments during the performance of this tale.

Early one morning Peter opened the gate and went out into the big green meadow. On the branch of a big tree sat a little Bird—Peter's friend. When he saw Peter he chirped at him gaily, "All's quiet here."

Soon a Duck came waddling around. She was delighted to see that Peter had not closed the gate, and decided to have a nice swim in the deep pond in the meadow. When the little Bird saw the Duck, he flew down, settled himself in the grass beside the Duck—and shrugged his shoulders. "What kind of a bird are you if you can't fly?" said he. To which the Duck replied, "What kind of a bird are *you* if you can't swim?"—and dived into the pond. They argued and argued—the Duck swimming in the pond, the little Bird hopping back and forth along the bank. Suddenly something caught Peter's eye. It was a Cat—crawling through the grass. The Cat said to herself, "Now the bird is busy arguing. I'll just grab him!" Stealthily she crept toward him on her velvet paws. "Oh—look out!" cried Peter—and the Bird flew quickly up into the tree, while the Duck quacked angrily at the Cat—from the middle of the pond. The Cat crawled round and round the tree and thought, "Is it worth climbing up so high? By the time I get there the Bird will have flown away."

All at once Grandpapa came out. He was angry because Peter had gone to the meadow. "The meadow is a dangerous place," he cried. "What if a wolf should come out of the forest? What would you do then?" Peter paid no attention to Grandfather's words. Boys like Peter are not afraid of wolves. But Grandpapa took Peter by the hand, led him home, and locked the gate. No sooner had Peter gone than a big gray Wolf did come out of the forest. In a twinkling the Cat sprang up into the tree. The Duck quacked in great excitement, but in her over-emphasis, jumped out of the pond. But no matter how hard the Duck tried to run, she couldn't escape the Wolf. He was getting nearer—and nearer—catching up with her—and there he's got her! And with one gulp he swallowed her.

And now this is how things stood—the Cat was sitting on one branch up in the tree, the Bird on another—not too close to the Cat. And the Wolf walked round and round the tree, looking at them both with greedy eyes. In the meantime, Peter without the slightest fear stood behind the closed gate, watching all that was going on. Presently he ran into the house, got a strong rope, hurried back, and climbed up the high stone wall. One of the branches of the tree, around

which the Wolf was pacing, stretched out over this wall. Grabbing hold of this branch, Peter climbed over into the tree. Peter said to the Bird, "Fly down and circle around the Wolf's head—only take care he doesn't catch you!" The Bird almost touched the Wolf's head with his wings—while the Wolf snapped furiously at him from this side and that. How that Bird did worry the Wolf! And oh how that Wolf tried to catch him! But the Bird was too clever for him, and the Wolf simply couldn't do anything about it.

Meanwhile, Peter had made a lasso; and carefully letting it down, he caught the Wolf by the tail and pulled with all his might. Feeling himself caught, the Wolf began to jump wildly—trying to get loose. But Peter had tied the other end of the rope to the tree—and the Wolf's jumping only made the rope tighter around his tail! Just then, the Hunters came out of the woods, following the Wolf's trail, and shooting as they came. But Peter, sitting up in the tree, cried out, "Oh don't shoot! The Bird and I have already caught him! Just help us take him to the zoo."

And there they go. Imagine the triumphant procession: Peter at the head, after him the Hunters, leading the Wolf, and winding up the procession, Grandfather and the Cat. Grandpapa tossed his head: "This is all very well, but what if Peter had *not* caught the wolf—what then!" Above them flew the little Bird, merrily chirping, "Aren't we smart, Peter and I? Just see what we have caught!" And if you listened very carefully, you could hear the Duck—quacking away inside the Wolf—because in his haste the Wolf had swallowed her alive!

# HENRY PURCELL

[1658-1695]

**H**ENRY PURCELL was born probably in 1658, about two years before the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II, at a time when musical people, both composers and performers, regarded the service of the King as the final mark of artistic distinction. Purcell's father, also named Henry, and his Uncle Thomas were both Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal when that institution was re-established in 1660. Purcell, Senior, was, it appears, a good musician—a singer, organist, and lutanist. Henry, Senior, died while our composer was still a little boy, but his Uncle Thomas, who likewise had access to the Court and the Chapel Royal, gained admittance for young Henry to the training department of the Court, known as the Children of the Chapel Royal. Both Captain Cooke, the first master of the Chapel Royal, and Thomas Purcell, who was one of the conductors of the King's string orchestra, took active interest in young Purcell's creative activities.

Pelham Humphrey, Cooke's successor, was an even better teacher, for apart from his own notable talent he had the advantage of studying in France under Lully. When Humphrey died at the age of twenty-seven, Purcell worked under the not inappropriately named John Blow, organist and master of the Chapel Royal, and it probably was Dr. Blow who advanced Henry Purcell most rapidly along the road of musical knowledge.

In 1677 Purcell secured for himself a sound position as Composer in Ordinary to His Majesty's Violins, and three years later he succeeded his old teacher, John Blow, as organist at Westminster Abbey.

Purcell died when he was thirty-seven years old, yet in the short span of his life he established himself as incomparably the greatest of English composers down to the present day. It seems apropos to quote the dictum of John Dryden, his contemporary, who wrote in the published edition of *Amphitryon*, "What has been wanting on my part has been abundantly supplied by the Excellent Composition of Mr. Purcell, in whose Person *we have at length found an Englishman equal with the best abroad.*"

Though musicians are rarely politicians, at least outside of their own field of activity, occasionally even the most nonpolitical of them gets himself into trouble. This happened to Purcell who, through his music, was made to appear both an admirer and hater of King James II. An ode composed for this King's birthday represents him as a great ruler annihilating the monster of revolt, and yet another of Purcell's compositions became one of the most effective popular weapons used for the overthrow of James II. The story is as follows:

A Quickstep of Purcell's appeared in 1686, the year of the appointment by James of the thoroughly hated General Talbot to the position of Lord Lieutenant

of Ireland. A doggerel poem, entitled *Lilliburlero*, set to the music of Purcell's Quickstep, soon went the rounds and became shortly the popular rallying cry of the Protestants in the struggle against James. "The whole Army and at last the people, both in city and country, were singing it perpetually," writes Bishop Burnet, "and perhaps never had so slight a thing so great an effect." The mating of verse to music has been attributed to the Irish Viceroy, Lord Wharton, and it was his boast "that the song had sung a deluded Prince out of the three Kingdoms."



## PURCELL-BARBIROLI

### SUITE FOR STRINGS

(With 4 horns, 2 flutes and English horn)

Derived by John Barbirolli

from the "Dramatick Musick" of Henry Purcell

PURCELL wrote much incidental music for plays produced during his time. Though the plays were almost without exception unimportant, much of the music is exceedingly beautiful. Mr. John Barbirolli, whose researches in the early English music have produced many long hidden and beautiful things, has selected six movements from a variety of Purcell's music for the drama and has arranged them into a coherent and beautiful suite.

The first movement is taken from the music to a comedy entitled *The Gordian Knot Untied*. The authorship of this play has not been established. The second movement is taken from the music to *The Virtuous Wife*, a comedy by Tom D'Urfey, whose plays were frequently more distinguished by Purcell's music than by their intrinsic worth. The third and sixth movements in the suite are extracted from the incidental music to Dryden's *King Arthur*. The fourth movement Mr. Barbirolli locates in Volume 15 of the Purcell Society Edition. The fifth movement, one of the loveliest fragments in all Purcell's music, is the "Lament of Dido" in the opera, *Dido and Aeneas*. It is in the form of a miniature *passacaglia* with the cellos and basses repeating, unchanged, a four-measure theme and the English horn giving forth the melancholy loveliness of the vocal line.

# SERGEI VASSILIEVITCH RACHMANINOFF

[Born 1873]

MORE OFTEN than not, material circumstances discourage the development of musical talent, but in the case of Rachmaninoff, they indirectly brought about the discovery of his genius. He was born on April 1 of a wealthy family, at his mother's estate in the province of Novgorod. The first nine years of his life were spent in the seclusion of this remote and very "Russian" part of Russia; the boy lived as the typical youngster of his class, without, perhaps, a great degree of development, but quietly and happily. He had shown considerable interest in and talent for music, but no great attention was paid to this side of his personality until a change in family fortunes made it impossible to send him to the aristocratic school his parents had chosen. Since some formal schooling, and some preparation for life were imperatively necessary, Rachmaninoff was sent to the Conservatory at St. Petersburg, in the hope that his musical talents might prove to be of such caliber as would enable him to provide for himself by their exercise.

At the Conservatory he was a distinguished student, but no prodigy. It was apparent that his musical foundations were broad and firm, and work at St. Petersburg further solidified them. It was not until he had transferred to the Moscow Conservatory and, on the completion of his studies there in 1892, had won a gold medal for his opera *Aleko* that he gained serious attention. At Moscow Rachmaninoff studied with his relative Siloti, a pupil of Liszt; and with Taneiev and Arensky, both distinguished composers. At Moscow he came under the influence of the great Tchaikovsky also, for the latter was at the time active in the affairs of the Conservatory. Doubtless this accounts, in a measure, for the melancholy that often pervades Rachmaninoff's music, for he had reverent admiration for Tchaikovsky and, though never imitative, was unquestionably influenced by the older master.

Succeeding years brought him positions of honor and responsibility, and gave him as well considerable time to devote to composition and conducting. During the season of 1909-10, Rachmaninoff paid his first visit to America. When the tour was first proposed, he was hesitant, expressing the belief that he was not known to America, and that therefore a concert tour could not be a success. He was persuaded, however, and found that America knew him not intimately but well, through one of his smaller compositions—the famous C-sharp minor Prelude for piano. The American tour was but the first of many successful ones. Rachmaninoff has made his home here since the First World War, and has been so completely adopted that he has come to be regarded almost as an American institution.

Though a contemporary, Rachmaninoff is by no means a modernist in the musical sense. Highly individualistic, his music is nevertheless marked by the con-

servatism inherited from his teachers and impressed by the composers he most admires. Furthermore, there is in the man as well as in his music a rugged honesty, a deep and serious sincerity, which would almost certainly inhibit him from seeking after the often false gods of sensational modernism. His place as a pianist is among the greatest, and as either pianist or conductor, he brings to bear upon music a technique so highly developed that it can be forgotten, and a rare and grave musicianship always refreshing and always satisfying.



## Concerto No. 2 in C minor for Piano and Orchestra

OF RACHMANINOFF's four concertos for piano and orchestra, the second, in C minor, and the third, in D minor, are among the most popular in the pianist's repertoire; the first and fourth are seldom heard. This beautiful work was heard publicly for the first time at Moscow, at a concert of the Moscow Philharmonic Society, October 14, 1901, with the composer at the piano. It was first performed in America not, as many have believed, by Rachmaninoff, but by the great French pianist Raoul Pugno, who played it November 18, 1905, with the Russian Symphony Orchestra during the visit of that organization to New York. Rachmaninoff himself played it with the Boston Symphony Orchestra during the season of 1909-10, under the direction of Karl Muck; at the same concert, Rachmaninoff conducted his symphonic poem, *The Isle of the Dead*, after the famous painting by Böcklin. The concerto is the composition which won for Rachmaninoff, in 1904, the Glinka prize of five hundred rubles, and helped notably in establishing him as a composer of distinction.

### *First Movement*

It is almost incredible, but it is true, that relatively few pianists, even among the great, recognize or appreciate the tonal possibilities of the piano. It follows that among students of the instrument, and, quite as lamentably, among the musical public, there is even less understanding of this superb, this subtle, and difficult instrument. Contemporary composers who regard the piano at most as a shallow percussion instrument, or at most as a mere tool of their trade, have utterly no conception of its powers and its beauties. Rachmaninoff is a shining exception.

It would seem that the pianist who is also a tonalist would, under such deplorable conditions, find it difficult to assemble an audience. Such is not the case, for, as everyone knows, Rachmaninoff is one of the few musical artists who today can fill any concert hall with his admirers. And he is definitely a tonalist.



Happy in the possession of a technique so perfect that it can be ignored, this great artist can, and does, concentrate upon the interpretive values of the music he plays, and by bringing to bear upon it a mature and sober intelligence, a sound and sincere musicianship, and a profound appreciation of his instrument, he is able to reach and hold the imagination of most people. Though the majority do not know it, he accomplishes his most striking effects by subtle variations of *tone*.

Many of us will say, "You strike the piano key, and a sound comes, loud or soft, depending upon the force with which you strike it. You can't affect the actual tone quality." Strangely, that statement is not true, and any really great pianist, who has ears capable of appreciating subtle variations of tone and the technical ability to produce them, can, by the use of pressure, weight, force, pedaling, laxity or rigidity of the fingers and wrists, demonstrate to you definite, if subtle, variations of tone quality.

The point of this discussion cannot be escaped if you hear a great artist play this concerto; to hear Rachmaninoff himself play it is an experience which no lover of the piano can ever forget. The eight solemn chords with which it begins, each individually shaded and colored, yet progressing as a unified phrase, and with growing power, toward an inevitable climax and response—these glowing yet somber utterances of the piano constitute one of the great exordiums of music. The response to them, low in the strings, is indeed the first theme of the movement; still lower moves the piano, in full-flowing and legato waves of tone. An accented bass note at the beginning of each measure sustains the dark color of the music that was first applied in the descending octaves at the end of the introductory eight-note phrase.

Later the piano moves into its brighter upper register, and the liquid tones with which it overlays the shadowed voices of the strings and woodwind presently resolve themselves into a very positive and vigorous rhythm. The curiously acute rhythmic sense of the Russian is Rachmaninoff's in an extraordinary degree, and here he exhibits it with subtle charm. One is scarcely conscious of the point at which the flowing cantabile of the first theme in the strings, by some strange metamorphosis, becomes angular, and abrupt, and powerful.

A subsidiary idea, powerfully pushed to the front by the brass, suggests a change in mood, and the second most important theme of the movement appears in the most limpid tones of the piano. In its development, however, the piano is not the prima donna of the ensemble, but rather a partner with the orchestra in exploring, quite fully, the possibilities of the music. Almost unnoticeably we are led back to a re-presentation of the first theme, which now appears in much the same tonal guise as originally, but with brilliant and markedly syncopated chords of the piano sounding powerfully above it. Here is a marvelously seductive fox trot for some enterprising soul to "borrow"—although Rachmaninoff calls it, in the score, a march (*alla marcio*).

One of the loveliest moments in the whole work occurs in the succeeding section, where the horn, solo, takes up the second theme and breathes it softly, yet with passion, against a breathlessly delicate accompaniment. Later, strings and piano are heard in a countertheme of the *alla marcia* section; toward the end, a soft suggestion of the strings sends piano and orchestra into a swift accelerando, with vigorous figures torn violently from the solo instrument, and three powerful chords ending the movement.

### *Second Movement*

Rich chords in muted strings, ecclesiastically suggestive yet filled with typically Russian passion and warmth, introduce the second movement, and, after wanderings of the piano in a wayward and pastoral melody, we encounter the central musical idea of the movement, presented by the flute and accompanied by piano. Again, the theme is given to the piano, with strings supplying the accompaniment. Still further in the serene progress of the movement, we find the theme assigned to the violins, the piano painting in a lovely and richly colored background. By one of those strange mutations so often encountered in the music of Rachmaninoff, wherein rhythms seem to develop within and finally to engulf and absorb other rhythms, we find the pace of the music suddenly and greatly increased. There is fantasialike treatment of a subsidiary theme, and on a *sforzando* chord of the orchestra a gorgeous cadenza, filled with traps for unwary fingers and exacting from the soloist exceedingly difficult requirements in the way of digital dexterity, accuracy, and velocity, leads to a serenely beautiful coda.

### *Third Movement*

The lower strings enter furtively, but in a sharp staccato, and typically a Rachmaninoff rhythm. The phrase and its responses grow stronger with repetition, and develop, presently, into an orchestral climax of some force. There follows a piano passage, solo, in which figures suggestive of some of the composer's popular short pieces (*Polichinelle*, Prelude in G minor) appear briefly, and lead to the main theme. A sequence in the major tonality (the movement as a whole is in C minor) follows, marked strongly with Rachmaninoff characteristics in rhythmic pattern and melodic outline. A transitional passage leads to the second theme, a passionate song of piercing beauty, reminiscent of the first theme of the concerto. It is sung, of course, by the violins.

Treatment of the thematic material is broad and varied. A little *fugato*, a curious descending dialogue between piano, on the one hand, and, in opposition, horns and woodwind in brief sharp phrases, and unexpected yet pleasing modulations, are interesting features of the movement. The second theme is dominant as the close approaches, but there are derivations of the first in the commentary of the

piano that runs along with the chanting of the strongly bowed strings. At the end, a powerful and rhythmically eccentric figure, of the type so dear to this composer, provides a final fillip.



## Concerto No. 3 in D minor for Piano and Orchestra

### *First Movement*

RACHMANINOFF himself gave the first performance of this work during his first American tour, on December 28, 1909, with the New York Symphony under Walter Damrosch.

The curious contradictions we find in this engaging music are reflections from the personality of the composer himself. Under a sober, a serious, and almost melancholy exterior, he conceals a warm, vital, and friendly personality, modest yet forceful. Somehow this music effects a projection of the character of its maker. The very opening is shadowed and somber—yet within two measures a vigorous and moving rhythm is established; within a dozen, the pensive yet bright and sanguine melody which the piano sings overcomes the gloomy atmosphere pervading the orchestra. The music explores dark minor harmonies—yet moves through them with surging vitality and drive.

One can feel here the shade of the introspective Tchaikovsky—but only a shade. There is something from his orchestral palette in the “color” of this music; something, too, in the turn of a phrase here and there, and certainly more than traces of melancholy. But if it is melancholy, it is of the philosophical kind. If it is introspective, it is not morbid. Its musings are *dégagé*, and wholesome, and normal. Its warmth is the warmth of vitality, not the blaze of febrile passion. Here there may be suffering—but no tears.

The chief theme of the movement (if you are sufficiently curious to identify and follow it) occurs almost at the beginning, with the first notes of the solo instrument. Strings and bassoon supply background and contrasting color, and then the piano departs in a long and errant flight through contours derived from the theme, while the orchestra itself adopts a more explicit version of it. The piano, solo, with soaring arpeggios and swift plunges into the bass, presently puts an emphatic period to this episode, and portentous utterances of the low strings foretell a change of mood.

There is a change of rhythm, too, as strings and piano alternate in fragments of a new motive, still in a dark minor key, but, for a moment, rather frisky nevertheless. Curiously enough, this quaint episode is the germ from which springs, a few seconds later, a melody of lovely lyric quality, exchanged periodically between

piano and orchestra. It grows in emotional intensity and dynamic power until a great climax is reached; its rhythms change, and suddenly we find ourselves returned to the atmosphere of the opening of the movement. The thematic cycle is established and complete. Now its possibilities are exploited, and with them, the technical and tonal resources of the piano. The development explores and exacts from both solo instrument and orchestra the last flashing color, the swiftest dashing flights, the ultimate variation of the theme, and the climax of this is the magnificent cadenza that occurs near the close of the movement.

The cadenza is not only a brilliant piece of musical pyrotechnics; it is a logical and beautiful piece of music, its swift brevity encompassing, in gorgeous elaboration, the basic themes of the movement. Rachmaninoff did not leave to the soloist the development of the cadenza, as is frequently done in the classical concertos; rather he brought to bear upon it his own musicianship and superb technique, and posed a problem that interests the greatest of pianists and baffles lesser ones. As it proceeds, it involves the voices of flute, oboe, clarinet, and horn, each stating in modified form a portion of the chief theme of the movement, the piano following with a suggestion of the second theme. Then comes a succession of piano gymnastics, calling for almost incredible rapidity and brilliance; there is a recapitulation of the movement's chief subjects, and it quietly ends.

### *Second Movement*

In his most heartbreaking utterances Tchaikovsky never expressed weariness and piercing woe more eloquently than does Rachmaninoff, in the poignant cry delivered by the strings at the opening of this movement. In a Tchaikovsky symphony however, the sorrow-laden atmosphere momentarily created by this anguished outpouring would have been the dominant feeling of the movement. Rachmaninoff almost immediately contrasts with it a brighter thought, and introduces rhythmic elements which by their vitality deliver the movement from deadliness and unmitigated sorrow.

Here the composer uses woodwind most eloquently, calling upon its mellower voices as foil to the bright and sometimes crystal-white tones of the solo piano. The melodic line unfolds slowly, sending its curving coils through lovely harmonic progressions and modulations. Running passages for the piano build up from the long firm lines established by strings and woodwind, and a sweeping climax rises out of the whole glowing mass of colored tone.

After a recession from this peak of sonority, there is an interesting transitional passage; a change in rhythm, and in a moment the entire character of the music is radically altered. The piano, glittering above the new melodic subject in clarinet and bassoon, has passage work of terrific difficulty and iridescent brilliance: the rhythmic impulses of plucked strings, curiously waltzlike, move persistently in

the bass. Presently a new and brusque idea projects itself through the sonorous bass of the piano, and crashing chords lead directly to the third movement of the concerto.

### *Third Movement*

It is interesting to consider that nowhere in the concerto, except in the cadenza near the close of the first movement, has the piano been treated as a display instrument, quite distinct from the other instruments of the orchestra. This would not have been true in the earlier, classical concerto, nor is it by any means the invariable rule in modern and contemporary works in this style. Rachmaninoff prefers to use the piano, generally, as a new orchestral color—more penetrating and more prominent than most, perhaps, but, nevertheless, an orchestral instrument laying a shining patina of tone over the whole.

Such treatment of the piano is perhaps more agreeable, for purely musical reasons, than the showpiece style. Yet it has one disadvantage, in that it often conceals the prodigious technical ability of the solo artist. Rarely are we conscious, through this work, that the pianist is performing virtuoso feats of skill; yet the piano part bristles with the most exacting difficulties, and relatively few are the pianists who can do it justice.

The rippling triplets with which the piano enters the final movement, the great clanging chords in the orchestra, and a second theme shared by piano and strings, evoke a succession of richly colored musical images. Varying orchestral tones are applied; shifting rhythms pique one's interest, as does the introduction, about halfway through this section, of thematic material derived from the first movement. The agitated rhythm becomes calmer, and a retarded passage, gentle and suave, prepares us for the contrasting swift coda, with its breathless acceleration and brilliant thrusts of tone.



## Symphony No. 2 in E minor

RACHMANINOFF in an interview once very gracefully dismissed the idea that he is a pupil of Tchaikovsky, though proudly admitting that he had received help and suggestion from that great master. The Tchaikovsky influence is very definitely felt in this symphony, but, though the music is for the most part grave, and at times even melancholy, its seriousness, passing through the purifying alembic of Rachmaninoff's own personality and genius, is freed of any trace of morbidity, of excess, of despair.

This symphony dates from 1908, during which season it was performed for

the first time at Moscow, Rachmaninoff conducting. Also during this year the composition was awarded the coveted Glinka prize—the second time Rachmaninoff has achieved this distinction; the first being on the occasion of the publication of his Second Piano Concerto. The E minor Symphony was played for the first time in America at a concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra, November 26, 1909; Rachmaninoff was the conductor. The symphony, which is very long, is usually played with cuts, which have been authorized by the composer.

### *First Movement*

One cannot but reflect, in hearing the shadowy and somber opening of the introduction, how incredibly beautiful and subtle a language is music! Its implications, its suggestions, its forecasting of its own progress, its power to bring into being the germ of an idea and to indicate, all in a little moment, the direction of its development—all are singular beauties of this wordless yet so comprehensible language. This music, hard upon the intensely somber and reflective first measures, when the violins enter above the declining lower strings, implants a thought which at the moment seems an inconsiderable fragment of the web of tone that is being woven before us, yet later, in developed form, is to be recalled with piercing and significant emphasis as the first theme of the movement. The whole introduction is a closely woven network of melody, and of harmonies rich and dark; so that when the voice of the *cor anglais* appears, it stands forth in clear and solitary loveliness, and with an intensity in its passionate brief song that is like the final distillation of all that has gone before.

With a few measures establishing a new rhythm, the curving melody of the main theme traces its way in the violins—and we remember the darker and more solemn intimations of this song in the introduction. It is vital and moving and bright now; and it gives such impetus to the orchestra that a brief climax of vigor and assertiveness is developed. There is a pause, a suggestive phrase of clarinets, and then comes the second theme—a simple figure of three notes, yet, in its particular orchestral color and the setting against which it makes itself heard, it is one of the most poignantly eloquent expressions of loneliness one can find in music. Soft woodwinds give it voice, and strings suggest a comforting answer.

It is easy to perceive in the two melodic ideas, which now become the basis of the symphony, the healthy and contemplative quality of Rachmaninoff's melancholy. Here, certainly, is none of the facile tearfulness of Tchaikovsky, nor yet a storming and inconsolable grief; rather, a gentle regretfulness that is not without a sanguine note. In succeeding passages the latent power and virility of the music assert themselves: then there is a recession of the orchestral powers through a long and, ultimately, a delicate diminuendo, which continues until but one voice—a solo violin—remains. This recalls the first theme, and inaugurates a period of develop-

ment in which all apparent possibilities of the subject are alluringly explored. The little second theme, colored more brightly still, in its brief utterance conveying a feeling of intolerable sadness, returns momentarily. The movement is not to close in this spirit, however. A potent rhythm in the typical plastic and vital Rachmaninoff style is introduced in the concluding measures, and the music ceases after a final aggressive rush.

### *Second Movement*

The second movement constitutes what might be called the scherzo of the symphony. Brilliant strings establish a swift rhythm in two short measures, and the horns pour out a wild sweet tune, to which the violins are presently attracted. There is another and even lovelier cantabile for the sweeping strings, and sudden secretive passages in which a return to the urgent rhythm of the beginning is suggested.

Perhaps it is the composer's rare and delightful sense of humor that prevents his graver moments from becoming too solemn, and invests his humorous ideas, paradoxically, with a saturnine suggestion. At any rate, given the tonality and the instrumentation of this movement, one could imagine the beginnings of a tragic utterance; Rachmaninoff prefers a tragicomedy. The occasional moments of pompousness are, with brusque good spirits, thrust aside; the insistent rhythm of the opening returns again and again, and eventually involves the whole orchestra in its humor. Nor does the faintly ominous suggestion of the brass, in the closing measures, overcome the spirit of wry-faced badinage.

### *Third Movement*

In the tangled web of melody devised by Rachmaninoff for the third movement, there is an atmosphere strangely compounded of both peace and longing. In the first song of the strings one can feel it, and yet more strongly in the lovely solo of the clarinet. The whole tangle of melodies that twine themselves into this lovely fabric are, notwithstanding their involutions with one another, always clear and individual; as if the composer had deliberately chosen to utter the same sentiment in half a dozen ways simultaneously. Near the end, we are recalled again to the cryptic significance of the first movement's theme.

### *Fourth Movement*

Almost belligerently, the music leaps out from the orchestra, in a theme of boundless vigor and elastic rhythm, coursing freely and powerfully. For a time it is completely in control; then, its powers spent, the orchestra pauses upon a long-held note of the horn, *con sordano*. The basses, plucked, descend step by step into their lowest range; then begins a grotesque little march that once more infuses

vitality and mobile rhythm into the orchestra, and the bold opening subject returns.

The strings sing a more romantic melody, which establishes the mood of the section of the movement based on the second theme. There is a long diminuendo, with harmonies almost visibly suspended, finally resolving in a tenuous pianissimo. There are sudden silences and sudden attacks; remembrances (flute) of the first theme in the first movement; suggestions of the quaint march of the previous section, and finally a conclusion of noble power and brilliance.

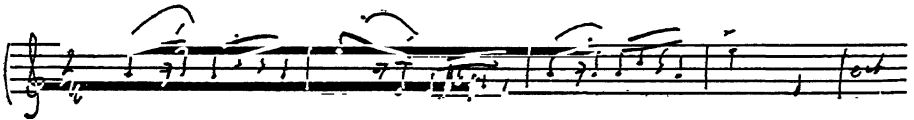


### Rapsodie for Piano and Orchestra on a Theme of Paganini

IT IS characteristic of Rachmaninoff to give himself wholeheartedly to whatever task he undertakes, so that when, in the spring of 1934, he cut short a tour that deprived thousands of his admirers of their annual Rachmaninoff recital, the rumor that he had gone abroad to compose was not altogether without grounds. As a matter of fact, the Rapsodie was begun at Rachmaninoff's summer home on Lake Lucerne. In these beautiful surroundings opposite Tribschen, Wagner's abode from 1866 to 1872, the composition, begun on July 3, was completed August 24. Its first performance was given, with the composer at the piano, in Baltimore, November 7, 1934, at a concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

The work is in the form of a theme with variations. The music by Paganini which Rachmaninoff selected appealed not only to him but to a great German composer also, for it is the same Paganini theme which Johannes Brahms used in his Variations for Piano. The great Russian begins his twenty-four variations with a short introduction. He then departs from custom by forecasting the theme in the first variation before actually presenting it.

The introduction of nine measures for full orchestra is followed by the first variation, after which the theme, stated by first and second violins, is heard.



*Rapsodie on a theme by Paganini*

*Sergei Rachmaninoff*



The second variation (*Pistesso tempo*) is presented by piano with soft accompaniment of horns and trombones. The piano, over strings, begins the third variation (*Pistesso tempo*), to which is added a chattering in the woodwinds. The fourth variation (*più vivo*), in which the piano distinctly sings the melody, develops less than a minute later, and after sharp chords in the piano is followed by number five (*tempo precedente*). Here the decisive chords for piano continue with soft accompaniment of strings, developing sweeping arabesques that lead at once to variation six (*Pistesso tempo*). This variant of the theme rushes in headlong brilliance and agitation that subsides with the same phrase for piano that announced the variation. It is followed by the mournful comment of the English horn, and ends with a soft ascending scale for piano. Variation seven (*meno mosso e tempo moderato*) is heard when the piano intones a solemn melody based upon the *Dies Irae*, while the cellos and bassoons play the Paganini theme. The eighth (Tempo I) begins with a forte passage for the piano which is almost Lisztian in style. Variation nine (*Pistesso tempo*) begins with a syncopated figure in a kind of galloping rhythm with the phrase ending in descending chromatics. Variation ten (*poco marcato*) may be recognized by a repetition of the somber *Dies Irae* theme which the piano plays forte while strings weave fragments of the original theme. Against a whirling variant for the piano of the Paganini theme, the strings take up the *Dies Irae* music, to which the winds add comment. Sweeping chromatics lead to variation eleven (*moderato*), introduced by strings, tremolo, from which the piano emerges like the song of a bird soaring skyward. Brilliant passage work against woodwinds and harp glissando follows, and finally the piano, in a solo passage, terminates the variation with a four-note figure also suggestive of the song of a bird. Variation twelve (*tempo di menuetto*) is aptly described by its marking. It is one of those lilting melodies that, beautiful in itself, is made even more so by the singing accompaniment that is woven into it. Before the sweetness cloys we are swept into the martial allegro of variation thirteen. Strings present the theme while the piano contributes strident chords. A shrill scale for piccolo, flutes, and clarinets leads without break to variation fourteen (*Pistesso tempo*), which may be recognized by the vehemence with which the lower strings and horns establish its rhythmic pulse. This is a stormy passage that suggests cloudy, ominous skies at the beginning, which lighten as the music progresses, and clear to show the musical rainbow that is variation fifteen. If this variation (*più vivo*), scherzando, were published anonymously, there would be little difficulty recognizing its composer. It is distinctly Rachmaninoff. Nothing quite so characteristic appears elsewhere in this brilliant music, and in passages like this lies the explanation of the reluctance of even the greatest technicians to essay a public performance of the Rapsodie. Its difficulties are prodigious. Like a capricious wind, the music advances, now softly, now emphatically with sudden crescendo, until, spent with the vigor of its own force, there is a pause for breath before the final chord which ends this magnificent variation.

In the next (*allegretto*) the melody is assigned to the oboe, while strings furnish a wavering background. There is rich embroidery for the solo instrument, and then a return to the opening measures of the variation before the announcement of the seventeenth variation.

In the seventeenth variation melody and accompaniment are both given to the piano while woodwinds supply subdued background. The calmness of this music establishes the mood for variation eighteen (*andante cantabile*). This is a serene and expressive song for the solo instrument, which is later taken up by strings with piano and woodwinds furnishing accompaniment. The nineteenth variation is announced brusquely with a triplet figure for pianos against a pizzicato accompaniment of strings. A quickening of tempo in the strings introduces number twenty (*un poco più vivo*). The piano moves along in a skipping figure, returning in variation twenty-one to a triplet figure, staccato, that moves with exceeding animation to number twenty-two (*un poco più vivo*). Descending chords for piano mark the beginning of this variation in which a high climax is reached. Here, at moments, one is reminded of the grandeur of the composer's *Toteninsel*, as the music sweeps passionately upward to the brilliant cadenza just before the beginning of variation twenty-three. Fortissimo chords usher in the theme assigned, in less ornate fashion than previously, at the piano.

Variation twenty-three begins simply enough, but soon becomes involved. The piano comes forward at an incredible speed, engaging at last in a whirl of chromatics followed by four chords, pianissimo. As the solo instrument forges madly ahead in the tempestuous finale, the theme is heard at first in the woodwinds. Then, when the piano states it, the brasses and strings blare forth ominously with the *Dies Irae*, from which the solo instrument emerges with a fragment of the theme and ends the composition.

The work is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets in C, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, bells, harp, and strings.

## MAURICE RAVEL

[1875-1937]

**R**AVEL was born, March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, a small town in southwestern France, just across the border from the land of the Basques, the mysterious people who inhabit northwestern Spain and a part of France. At an early age, he was taken to Paris, and in 1889 he was admitted to the Conservatoire, where he received the usual thorough foundational musical training there given. Five or six years later, at the publication of his *Habanera*, the musical world was given notice of the appearance of a young composer whose work was strikingly original in character. This short though highly colored piece was later incorporated into the orchestral composition, *Rapsodie espagnole*, which was first played in 1908, and still appears frequently on symphonic programs. It is undoubtedly significant of one aspect of his character that this early composition as well as the highly seasoned musical comedy of his middle years, *L'Heure espagnole* (The Spanish Hour), and one of his later works which more than any other has made the name of Ravel well known in the United States, the *Boléro*—are all Spanish in idiom.

During the years following the publication of the *Habanera*, Ravel continued his studies at Paris, pursuing some of the deepest mysteries of his art with two famous masters, André Gédalge and Gabriel Fauré—the former one of the world's most remarkable masters of the art of counterpoint and fugue, the latter one of the great composers of modern France, who brilliantly championed the theory that originality of melody and harmony should be sought within the limits of classical form. Under Gédalge, Ravel doubtless gained much of his own uncanny technical facility in his art; and under Fauré, whose work especially roused his enthusiasm, the younger composer learned the deep regard for formal perfection that has always characterized his compositions.

The youthful composer also fell under the spell of that strange genius, Erik Satie. The unconventional titles Satie gave his compositions were in themselves enough to frighten the more conservative portion of the musical public. (For instance, some of his pieces are named: *Genuine Lazy Preludes for a Dog*, *The Man Carrying Heavy Stones*, *Disagreeable Glimpses*.) His music is often pointedly ironical in character, his harmonies are revolutionary. The story is told that at the harmony class at the Conservatoire, while waiting for their teacher, Ravel used to play Satie's *Sarabandes* and *Gymnopédies* to his scandalized fellow students.

While he was continuing his studies, the ever-industrious Ravel also produced a number of important compositions, notably the well-known piano pieces, *Pavane pour une infante défunte* and *Jeux d'eau*. In 1901 he entered the contest for the Prix de Rome. The winner of this prize is entitled to three years' residence in Rome at government expense and so is insured the leisure to devote himself to

musical composition in the favorable environment of the Eternal City. Ravel's sense of humor—or at least of artistic propriety—here betrayed him. For the text of the cantata which the contestants were required to set to music was of such maudlin sentimentality that Ravel was moved to write his cantata in the languorous waltz style of a comic opera. Some of the judges, evidently suspecting the ironic implications, objected to Ravel's being awarded the Prix de Rome that his work merited, and a compromise was reached by giving him the rather empty honor of a second prize. Having once received this official stigma, he again failed in 1902 and 1903, and in 1905 was even refused admittance to the contest, although that decision kindled general indignation, for by that time Ravel had become recognized as a composer of importance, even by those who disapproved his artistic methods.

Meanwhile, undismayed by this lack of official recognition, Ravel had composed a number of significant works. At the beginning of the First World War in 1914, Ravel joined the colors but was soon invalidated home. Among his works written since the War should be mentioned: the suite of piano pieces written in memory of fallen comrades in arms, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (1918); *La Valse* for orchestra (1921); and the *Boléro* (1928), the most amazing orchestral tour de force of recent times.



## Ma Mère l'oye

[*Mother Goose*]

[Five Children's Pieces]

RAVEL, the musical cynic of *La Valse*, the musical sensualist of *Rapsodie espagnole*, the musical exhibitionist of *Boléro*, is revealed in these little pieces as the delightful lover and entertainer of children. This charming music was written originally for and dedicated to a little boy and a girl, friends of the composer. It was made for the piano, in a four-hand arrangement, and played for the first time at the Salle Gaveau, Paris, April 20, 1910, by Christane Verger, six years old, and Germaine Duramy, ten. The orchestral version was made for a ballet, and revised for concert performance. In the concert suite five numbers are usually included. Walter Damrosch was the first American conductor to perceive the charm of this music, and presented it at a concert of the New York Symphony Orchestra, November 8, 1912. The music scarcely needs extended analysis. All five pieces reveal the extraordinary beauty and appropriateness of Ravel's orchestration, and an ingenuous

charm far different from the kind we generally associate with this composer's music.

The titles of the subdivisions are as follows: "Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty"; "Hop-o'-My-Thumb"; "Laideronette, Empress of the Pogodes"; "Beauty and the Beast"; "The Fairy Garden."



## La Valse

THE sweeping, the compelling rhythms of this music, and its marvelous evocation of the orchestra's final powers and most vivid tonal hues, are not so disturbing as an inescapable feeling of bitterness and cynicism which it seems to reveal. It has certain associations, chronological at least, with the First World War, for it was planned during that distressing period, and played for the first time at Paris, December 12, 1920. It has the mad abandon of many postwar musical celebrations, with certain prophetic and tragic suggestions which may be comment upon the carelessly wicked spirit that seems to have captivated the world since November 11, 1918.

The score of *La Valse* includes the following descriptive note: "Whirling clouds give glimpses, through rifts, of couples waltzing. The clouds scatter, little by little. One sees an immense hall, peopled with a twirling crowd. The scene is gradually illuminated. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth, fortissimo. An imperial court about 1855."

The music can readily be divided, as Alfredo Casella points out, into three distinct sections: The Birth of the Waltz, The Waltz, The Apotheosis of the Waltz. The dance seems to materialize out of a vague and shadowy background, fragments coming now and again to the surface, in various colors, and ultimately becoming synthesized into a clear waltz rhythm and melody. From these formless beginnings the waltz passes through a period of fairly conventional development, into an orgiastic perversion of itself. The rhythm that had seemed so full of grace becomes dreadful and menacing and mad; horrid dissonances replace once bitter-sweet harmonies, and the music speeds to an almost insanely violent and abandoned climax.



## Boléro

THIS amazing tour de force of orchestration and orchestral dynamics accomplished for its composer, in the space of two weeks, more public notice than he had been able to achieve in more than fifty musically productive years. Its American performances—all within the space of the few weeks following its introduction by the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York, under Arturo Toscanini, November 14, 1929—made Ravel almost an American national hero, and caused such wild excitement and enthusiasm as had never been seen in American concert halls. Popularity, especially if it is immediate and widespread, is a dangerous thing, and has accomplished the elimination from the orchestral repertoire of many a competent work. This extraordinary piece has withstood popular enthusiasm without parallel, not to mention the onslaughts of many a misguided conductor and many a pitiable orchestra. Yet its maddening rhythm, its hot and glowing color, its crushing climax never fail to excite and fascinate most listeners.

The *Boléro* is more of an exercise in orchestration and an experiment in psychology than a musical masterpiece. The use of an unvarying rhythm beyond the point of boredom to the verge of madness is not a new idea in music—but its execution here is original and superbly effective. The masterful and imaginative and colorful orchestration, by which a single theme is in constant use for about twenty minutes yet by the variety of orchestral color in which it is repeatedly presented always seems new and interesting, is a really singular accomplishment.

The work is dedicated to the great dancer Ida Rubinstein, and was first presented by her at Paris in November, 1928. It was staged as a ballet divertissement, the setting suggesting a Spanish inn, the dancer performing on a large table. The Rubinstein performance almost resulted in a riot. The mounting excitement of the music, the hypnotic power of the persistent rhythm, and the magically suggestive performance of Rubinstein herself brought about a disordered scene in which the dancer barely escaped injury, and both audience and actors became involved in a violent and dangerous melee.

The music itself is not truly a bolero. The characteristic dance of this name is one of dignity and modesty, not unrelated to the minuet; also, it is usually, if not always, in duple time, whereas the *Boléro* is in triple rhythm. At any rate, the music, like so much of Ravel's work, is highly flavored with Spanish essence, and the theme itself, if not Spanish in origin, is sufficiently typical to have originated south of the Pyrenees.

The theme is really in two distinct parts, with accessory derivations which occasionally have important place in the structure of the music. The first part of the basic subject, after a few bars of an insinuating rhythmic figure established by the drums, is projected in the solo voice of the flute:



The second section of the theme comes a little later, played solo by clarinet:



Now the wind instruments in turn, beginning with a solo bassoon, present the curious wayward melody or some closely similar derivation of it. We hear it, solo, in the E-flat clarinet; in the *oboe d'amore*, in the flute again; it comes successively in muted trumpet, in tenor and in soprano saxophone; finally, as the crescendo which began almost with the opening note exceeds the possibilities of solo instruments, the theme is transferred to groups of instruments. Almost without exception, these groups bring into being weird and brilliant and novel qualities of tone. The first group, for example, creates a strange effect—celesta in octaves, piccolo, and the melody in the solo horn. Another bizarre presentation occurs when the theme comes in a combination of oboe, *oboe d'amore*, English horn, clarinet, and bass clarinet. Still later, with a slight recession of dynamics, the theme is revealed as a trombone solo.

It is impossible to convey, except through the orchestra itself, the power and the fascination of the cumulative effect. The tune never becomes monotonous; the rhythm established and maintained in the accompaniment is monotonous to an agonizing degree—which is precisely the effect the composer wishes to create. It is an exemplification of the old Chinese torture of the endlessly repeated drops of

water. Singly they are harmless, but their relentless repetition drives one toward frenzy.

Meanwhile, with every re-presentation of the theme, the orchestra's powers are more heavily drawn upon, and the endlessly varied and brilliant color of which it is capable more wonderfully revealed. Now Ravel uses the instruments in pairs, contrasting yet blending with one another in the most fantastic combinations. Underneath moves the maddeningly persistent rhythm, enforced now not only by drum, but by dissonant chords of the harp, and pizzicato strings. Now the theme is transferred to bowed strings, and again to the first and second violins divided in weird harmonies against similarly divided and harmonized woodwinds. When the composer has matched all the orchestral voices against each other, he is by no means at the limit of his resources, but changes the character of the tonal effect still further by reinforcing the harmonics of one instrument with the fundamental of another.

Ultimately the whole orchestra sways in the wicked rhythm, and with a potency of utterance that seems to exact its ultimate powers. But the end is not yet! The canny composer, at what seems to be the very peak of this mountain of vibrant sound, introduces a slight change in the melodic line and in tonality—most noticeable in violins and woodwind—which somehow seems to add still more power, though actually it does not. There are short syncopated phrases which we have not noticed before; new accretions of power in the brass, and finally, after poisonously dissonant glissandos in which the trombones' coarse bray is most conspicuous, the piece ends in a single crushing mass of tone.

Ravel's *Boléro* is hardly great music, as music per se. It is, nevertheless, a gigantic masterpiece of orchestration, and if, while it entertains, it reveals to us the enormous dynamic powers of the orchestra, and the almost infinite variety of tonal color of which the modern symphonic organization is capable, it shall have served a useful purpose.



## Daphnis and Chloë

[Suites]

THE lamented Nijinsky and his lovely partner Karsavina made one of their most complete successes when they appeared in the first performance of the ballet (or "choreographic symphony") *Daphnis and Chloë*, produced by the Ballet Russe to a scenario by Fokine, at Paris, June 8, 1912. Pierre Monteux, sometime conductor of the Boston Symphony, and guest conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, was in command of the orchestra. Later the composer arranged two suites from the



music of the ballet, each including three pieces. The first was made up of a "Noc-turne," and "Interlude," and a "*Danse Guerrière*"; the second comprises "Day-break," "Pantomime," and a "General Dance."

The following outline of the significance of the music of the First Suite from *Daphnis and Chloë* is printed in the score:

A little flame shines suddenly on the head of one of the statues of nymphs. The nymph moves and descends from her pedestal. The second and third nymph likewise come to life, leave their pedestals, and begin a slow and mysterious dance. They perceive Daphnis, bend over him, and wipe away his tears. (He is weeping for his beloved Chloë, who has been abducted by pirates.) They arouse him, and invoke the god Pan. Little by little the form of the god becomes visible.

Voices are heard, at first from afar. The pirates' camp is revealed, with cypresses on either side. In the background is the sea. A trireme is near the shore. The pirates, laden with booty, run to and fro. Torches are brought in, and illuminate the scene.

The score also gives an outline of the action of the ballet as reflected in the music of the Second Suite:

No sound but the murmur of rivulets fed by the dew that trickles from the rocks. Daphnis lies stretched before the grotto of the nymphs. Little by little the day dawns. The songs of birds are heard. Afar off a shepherd leads his flock. . . . Herdsmen enter, seeking Daphnis and Chloë. They find Daphnis and awaken him. In anguish he looks about for Chloë. She at last appears encircled by shepherdesses. The two rush into each other's arms. Daphnis observes Chloë's crown. His dream was a prophetic vision: the intervention of Pan is manifest. The old shepherd Lammon explains that Pan saved Chloë, in remembrance of the nymph Syrinx, whom the god loved.

Daphnis and Chloë mime the story of Pan and Syrinx. Chloë impersonates the young nymph wandering over the meadow. Daphnis, as Pan, appears and declares his love for her. The nymph repulses him; the god becomes more insistent. She disappears among the rocks. In desperation he plucks some stalks, fashions a flute, and on it plays a melancholy tune. Chloë comes out and imitates by her dance the accents of the flute.

The dance grows more and more animated. In mad whirlings, Chloë falls into the arms of Daphnis. Before the altar of the nymphs he swears on two sheep his fidelity. Young girls enter; they are dressed as Bacchantes and shake their tambourines. Daphnis and Chloë embrace tenderly. A group of young men come on the stage. Joyous tumult . . . a general dance. . . .



## Rapsodie espagnole

THE mystery of a Spanish twilight, charged with secret yearnings, sweet scents, and sensuous suggestions; the provocative rhythms, the ecstasies of Spanish dances, the flaming color and vivid life of a Spanish festival—these are of the texture of this rapturous and incandescent music. It is not strange that Ravel should exhibit Spanish influence, for he is from the Basque country, the high country of those strange people who are neither Spanish nor French, but reveal certain sympathies with both.

Ravel's *Spanish Rhapsody* was first performed in 1908, on March 19, at a Colonne Concert, Colonne himself conducting. It is divided into four sections, played continuously.

### *Prélude à la nuit*

There is something acrid, yet sweet, in the complaining phrase of muted strings at the beginning; and, paradoxically, as the hard light of day fades, and the loveliness and loneliness of darkness penetrate the music, there is growing warmth, there are anticipations of promised ecstasy in fierce little bursts of harp and woodwind. Two clarinets course over a rapturous cadenza, and, a little later, the shadowy tones of the bassoons imitate it, with a quartet of violins abandoned to trills and moving harmonics. There are languorous chimings, and at the end, the lingering liquid sweetness of the celesta.

### *Malagueña*

A fascinating rhythm moves through basses and, presently, bass clarinet, to ensnare a typically Spanish dance melody. Suggestions of it appear in plucked strings, and in woodwinds almost glissando in the rapid smoothness of their scales; a distant and muted trumpet adds its penetrating phrase, and a fierce brief climax brings a suggestive pause. Now the *cor anglais*, against trembling strings and celesta, intones a languid melody; the plaint of the strings from the opening passages returns briefly, as does the rhythmic introduction to this section. A delicately flirtatious flick of string tone dismisses the yearning sentiment, and ends the dance.

### *Habanera*

The habanera derives its name from Havana, and it originated in Cuba. Ravel's version is a seductive and languorous dance, artfully syncopated and slow; the clarinet first establishing the rhythm, and woodwinds later introducing a melody typically Spanish in outline. Little climaxes and restless hastenings of the rhythm occur; then, wearied with ecstasy, the dance ends in faint sweet tones of celesta above the clarinet's insistent figure.

*Feria*

Here is a glowing picture of the colors and movement and variety of a country fair in Spain. Here, too, for the first time in the music, the orchestra speaks with its fullest power; now in swift climax, in fragmentary dance tunes, ultimately in a wild mélange of all the burning color and febrile activity of the scene. But there is a section wherein all the blinding brightness and distractions of the fair are forgotten, and the *cor anglais* sings of romance and of passion with little ecstatic rushings of the strings—all against the very Spanish melody boldly sung forth in strings. Presently dances and wild songs come once more, and the persistence of the rhythm, emphasized in mighty chords of full orchestra, is almost maddening in its excitement and power. The end comes abruptly on a swift climax.

# OTTORINO RESPIGHI

[1879-1936]

RESPIGHI was born at Bologna, of a highly gifted family of artists. His paternal grandfather had been organist and choirmaster at the parish church, and his father was a pianist of ability. Respighi's mother came of a family noted in other artistic directions.

The composer's first lessons in music were given him by his father, and the boy set out to become, eventually, a violinist. He studied later at the Rossini School of Music at Bologna, and after leaving it, gave a number of violin recitals. Eventually he returned to the piano, and he has played his own piano compositions at many a concert, including some in the United States.

Respighi soon turned his attention toward composition, and studied under several very distinguished masters, among them Bruch, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Martucci. He held various teaching posts in Italy, but his compositions were so successful that he was able to abandon this refuge of the struggling musician.

His compositions are many and in varied form. He is known chiefly for the three Roman poems, a *Suite of Ancient Dances*, a suite for small orchestra called *The Birds*, and orchestrations of several works by Bach. Respighi visited, and was warmly welcomed, in America, where he played and conducted his own works with distinguished success.



## Pini di Roma

[*The Pines of Rome*]

*The Pines of Rome* is the second of the series of symphonic poems in which Respighi celebrates the ancient dignity and grandeur of the eternal city. Its first performance in America was given by the New York Philharmonic, under the direction of Arturo Toscanini. On the following day it was performed in Philadelphia, by the Philadelphia Orchestra, under the direction of Respighi. It was instantly successful, and since these performances has been in the repertoire of every important orchestra in America.

The background of the piece is explained in a note which the composer contributed to the program notes of the Philadelphia Orchestra:

While in his preceding work, *The Fountains of Rome*, the composer sought to reproduce by means of tone an impression of nature, in *The Pines of Rome* he uses nature as a point of departure in order to recall memories

and visions. The century-old trees which dominate so characteristically the Roman landscape become testimony for the principal events in Roman life.

The music is divided into four connected sections, played without pause.

### *The Pines of the Villa Borghese*

It is not difficult, for one who loves nature, to believe that trees are living and sentient beings, with souls and memories. Surely they have the power to make us remember; how often do we say, "It was under that very tree that thus and so happened"? Trees do associate themselves with human activity; and what trees could be more crowded with memories than those grave and shadowy and ancient giants that stand, quiet and majestic, against the landscape of historic Rome? But in the first section of the music the trees look down upon children at play, shrill and lively as birds. No memories of the glorious past are here, but perhaps the kindly trees contemplate the busy youngsters, and remember them against the day when they, too, may make history in these ancient groves.

### *The Pines Near a Catacomb*

The scene changes, and we are conducted into the gloomy shadow of the pines that stand before the entrance to a catacomb. How often have these trees seen trembling figures in the night, stealing beneath the branches to this tomb of the living, fearful of every shadow, shuddering in the night wind, yet determined to witness, in the subterranean caverns, the sacrifice that was life and health and salvation? Strings and horns, both muted, suggest mystery and darkness, and presently in the orchestra we hear an echo from a distant day. It is the chanting of worshipers, muted by the sheltering earth; a primitive, earnest and churchly utterance in the lower strings, wordless but significant. A distant trumpet is heard.

### *The Pines of the Janiculum*

Rome's famous hill lifts the pines toward heaven, and in the full light of the moon a nightingale sings. (Here Respighi requires in the orchestration a phonograph record of the song of a nightingale.) Against the bird voice is a tremulous and transparent accompaniment of muted strings and harp, like the mists that nightly rise above Rome. The music is heavily charged with mystery and languor, and the mists hang luminously over the hillside even through the dawn, when we behold the lordly

### *Pines of the Appian Way*

Through the centuries, armed men have paced this ancient highway; marching forth on Roman conquests, returning to add luster to their city's magic name.

In the music there is a suggestion of countless footsteps. Ghostly legions approach, with banners and blaring trumpets, and there are visions of ancient triumphs, of blazing glories, as the music rises to one of the most sonorous climaxes in symphonic music.



## Fontane di Roma

[*The Fountains of Rome*]

OF THE three symphonic poems composed by Respighi on aspects of Rome, its landscapes and its history, *The Fountains of Rome* is the first and perhaps the most popular. It was written in 1916, and its *première* given at Rome under the direction of Arturo Toscanini, February 10, 1918. The first performance in America was by the Philharmonic Society of New York, under Josef Stransky, February 13, 1919.

The composer finds powerful imaginative stimuli in various details of the Roman scene, and vividly describes them in his music. Four of Rome's many beautiful fountains are described in this tone poem, and the name of each is given to a section of the music.

The score of *The Fountains of Rome* gives a clue to the composer's attitude:

In this symphonic poem the composer has endeavored to give expression to the sentiments and visions suggested to him by four of Rome's fountains, contemplated at the hour in which their character is most in harmony with the surrounding landscape, or in which their beauty appears most impressive to the observer.

### *The Fountain of Valle Giulia at Dawn*

The first part of the poem, inspired by the Fountain of Valle Giulia, depicts a pastoral landscape; droves of cattle pass and disappear in the fresh, damp mists of a Roman dawn.

### *The Triton Fountain at Dawn*

A sudden loud and insistent blast of horns above the trills of the whole orchestra introduces the second part, the Triton Fountain. It is like a joyous call, summoning troops of naiads and tritons, who come running up, pursuing each other and mingling in a frenzied dance between the jets of water.

*The Fountain of Trevi at Midday*

Next there appears a solemn theme, borne on the undulations of the orchestra. It is the Fountain of Trevi at midday. The solemn theme, passing from the wood to the brass instruments, assumes a triumphal character. Trumpets peal; across the radiant surface of the water there passes Neptune's chariot, drawn by seahorses and followed by a train of sirens and tritons. The procession then vanishes, while faint trumpet blasts resound in the distance.

*The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset*

The fourth part, the Villa Medici Fountain, is announced by a sad theme, which rises above a subdued warbling. It is the nostalgic hour of sunset. The air is full of the sound of tolling bells, birds twittering, leaves rustling. Then all dies peacefully into the silence of the night.



## Feste romane

[*Roman Festivals*]

THE proud and ancient city has looked upon many a festival; festivals so contrasting in character as those which were celebrated with the wholesale slaughter of the early Christians, and those which marked the coronation of a pope; revelries that marked the rape of the city by barbarians, and the foregatherings of Roman patricians when the "glory that was Rome" was at its zenith.

The music completes the group of symphonic poems through which Respighi wishes to convey his impressions of various aspects of Rome and Roman life. It was composed in 1928, and was given its first performance under the direction of Arturo Toscanini, with the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York. In it the composer seeks to accomplish "visions and evocations of Roman fetes."

The work is divided into four connected sections, the first of which is entitled

*Circus Maximus*

The composer has caused to be printed in the score an explanation of the meaning of the music. Here he paints on a great canvas the crowded aisles and benches of the Circus. The mob, intent upon games, gorged with free food and cheap wine, sweating and shouting its habitual cry "*panem et circenses*," swarms through the stone-walled passages so aptly named *vomitoria*. The sky is overcast

and threatening, but the throng sees only the bright sand of the arena and the purple booth of the Caesar, whom they greet with lusty "Aves." A band of Christians is led into the arena, singing a hymn of joy and resignation. The cages of the lions are thrown open, and their howling mingles with the voices of their victims. The song of the martyrs is triumphant—and then obliterated.

### *The Jubilee*

Weak and weary and almost despairing, a band of pilgrims plods along the road to Rome. Laboriously they climb to the summit of Monte Mario, and then suddenly bursts upon their vision the incomparable panorama of the eternal city. "Rome! Rome!" they shout in frenzied joy, and they join spontaneously in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, while from the church towers of Rome comes a welcoming reply.

### *The October Festival*

The harvest is in; the grapes have given their lifeblood for the making of rich wines. The populace takes to the woodlands and the fields, with games and sports and love-making; with hunts and merry music. After nightfall, serenades and swift, cool kisses and the eternal stratagems of youth.

### *The Epiphany*

A feast often celebrated more enthusiastically than Christmas by some European peoples. Religious exaltation transposed into very human revelry. Trumpets are like strident young imperative voices in the crowd. Peasants dance, wildly, heavily, with abandon; the leaping measures of the saltarello are heard, and the harsh sweet whining of a barrel organ. The uproar is terrific.



# NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

[1844-1908]

**R**IMSKY-KORSAKOV was born in a little Russian town called Tikhvin. Of aristocratic family, he never faced the physical hardships and difficulties that have beset so many of the great musicians and composers. The development of his musical talents was handicapped, however, by the very fact of his fortunate birth. While the education of which he was assured by the standing of his family included an elementary instruction in music, this had presently to be abandoned in favor of one of the very few professions regarded as suitable to a young man of his birth—that of a naval officer.

He had shown such marked ability in his primary musical studies that even while a student in the Naval College, and later as an officer on a three-year cruise, he was able, under great difficulties, to pursue his studies. His first symphony was composed during this long voyage, and was sent in sections to Balakirev, another Russian composer of note, for correction.

After his period of service in the Russian navy, Rimsky-Korsakov soon became one of that important group of Russian composers who form the so-called neo-Russian school. Among them were César Cui, Balakirev, Borodin, and Musorgsky, all of whom were playing conspicuous parts in the development of Russian music as we know it today.

Following his First Symphony came two compositions which attracted to Rimsky-Korsakov the attention of the whole Russian musical world. These were the symphonic poem *Sadko* and *The Maid of Pskov*, an opera. Now the composer retired from his duties in the navy, and accepted a position as professor in the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He held a succession of musical positions, and as a teacher was conspicuously successful, developing as his pupils such noted musicians as Liadov, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Sacchetti, Gretchaninov, and Glazunov.

Rimsky-Korsakov had already become successful as a composer when he began to entertain serious doubts as to the thoroughness and utility of his own musical education—which had been largely accomplished through self-teaching. Accordingly, he set about acquiring the most thorough knowledge of the classical requirements of the composer, and by this noble gesture of self-discipline called forth the admiration of all his musical friends, including the great Tchaikovsky, who paid him an exceptionally warm tribute.

The music of this composer is, generally speaking, strongly marked with national characteristics. What is perhaps even more remarkable is the fact that it is sometimes deeply tinged with the wondrous colors of the East—the East which, though we infrequently realize it, lies close, in spirit as well as in location, to Russia. Yet Rimsky-Korsakov could compose, also, in so definite an Iberian strain as we

note in the *Spanish Caprice*. In the field of opera the Russian master achieved conspicuous success, chiefly with *Sadko*, *Snegurouchka*, and *Le Coq d'or*.



## Overture: "La Grande Paque russe"

[*The Russian Easter*]

HERE is tremendously thrilling music; music that leaps innumerable years, and involves at once the solemnity of the Christian Easter, the wild vernal rites of pagan times, and the orgiastic celebrations of peasant Russia. It is indescribably nervous music—in the somberness of its ecclesiastical themes, in the restless rhythms that move through it, in the high-pitched and frenetic exaltations of its climax. It is, almost from beginning to end, an emotional and dynamic crescendo.

There are derivations of two ancient Russian hymns—*Let God Arise!* and *An Angel Mourned*—in the solemn introduction. Yet these very motives, sober as they are, contain the germs of the febrile figures that play furiously through the music. Pompous brasses declaim, like tall and deep-voiced mitred priests in an echoing cathedral; and the choirs of the orchestra reverently respond. There are in the music, says the composer, recollections of the gloom that overlay the sepulcher of Christ after the Resurrection, when His friends came and found the tomb empty. But these do not endure for long. At the realization of the Resurrection, the central proof of redemption in the Christian faith, joy is unbridled, frantic, wild. A short solo for timpani sets the pace and rhythm for the remainder of the overture, which is a gorgeous orgy of orchestral sound, culminating in a climax of electric brilliance and crushing power.



## Scheherazade

IT WOULD be difficult to conceive a more fitting subject for exploitation by a composer of Rimsky-Korsakov's particular gifts than the *Arabian Nights*, or more properly, *The Thousand and One Nights* stories. The Orient is but next door to Russia, and few are the Russian composers who do not feel its subtle influence. Rimsky-Korsakov was almost unique in his ability to write music pervaded with the perfumes, the glowing colors, the brilliant and exotic life of the oldest part of the Old World. The modern orchestra, with its inexhaustible resources of tone

color, lay like a great musical palette, ready to his hand. With the wealth of pigments which it supplied, Rimsky-Korsakov compounded tonal hues in almost bewildering variety and of a strange and wonderful beauty. Combined with the seductive rhythms of the East, these marvelous sound colors take life and motion as the orchestra projects them in a gigantic musical kaleidoscope.

The composer declares explicitly that in the suite he had no intention of depicting, in detail, any of the *Arabian Nights* stories. We cannot definitely connect, with certain exceptions, the divisions of the suite with definite episodes in the stories. In fact, Rimsky-Korsakov was so averse to the hearer's seeking a "program" for the music that in one edition of the music he abandoned even the hints given in the titles of the sections of the suite.

In composing *Scheherazade* [he writes in his autobiography], I meant these hints to direct but slightly the hearer's fancy on the path which my own fancy had traveled, and to leave more minute and particular conceptions to the will and mood of each listener. All I had desired was that the hearer, if he liked my piece as symphonic music, should carry away the impression that it is beyond doubt an Oriental narrative of some numerous and varied fairy-tale wonders, and not merely four pieces played one after another and composed on the basis of themes common to all four movements. Why, then, if that be the case, does my suite bear the name, precisely, of *Scheherazade*? Because this name and the subtitle, *After the Thousand and One Nights*, connote in everybody's mind the East and fairy-tale wonders; besides, certain details of the musical exposition hint at the fact that all of these are various tales of some person (which happens to be Scheherazade) entertaining her stern husband with them.

Here is the story that inspired *Scheherazade*:

The Sultan Schahriar, holding the conviction that all women are false and faithless, vowed to put to death each of his wives after the first nuptial night. But the Sultana Scheherazade saved her life by entertaining her lord with fascinating tales which she continued telling him for a thousand and one nights. (Perhaps here we had the forerunner of the modern "serial"! ) The Sultan, consumed with curiosity, postponed from day to day the execution of his wife, and finally repudiated his bloody vow entirely.

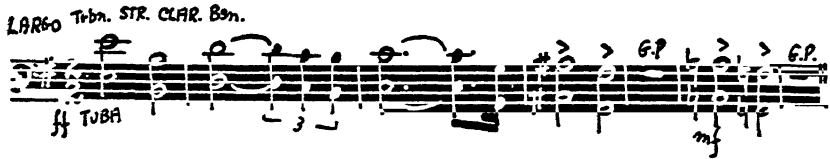
"Many were the wondrous tales recounted for the delectation of Schahriar by the Sultana Scheherazade, for in them she made use of the verses of the poets, folk songs, and stories, and various other tales and adventures."

In consideration of Rimsky-Korsakov's remarks on this suite, we can hardly look for a connected story expressed in the music. Descriptive it is, indeed—but not narrative. However, there are certain motives which, although used somewhat

indiscriminately, have, as a rule, a definite significance. These will be mentioned as they appear.

### *I. The Sea and the Vessel of Sinbad*

As the music begins, we perceive the menacing figure of the stern Sultan,



grimly determined upon his sanguinary method of insuring "fidelity" in his wives. The bold phrase, given in unison by trombone, tuba, horns, and the woodwind and strings in their lower range at the very beginning of the suite, might represent the severe monarch. There is a little interlude, rather tentative in character, and then the violin, trembling and diffident, yet shining clear against rich chords from the harp, utters the lovely little song that typifies Scheherazade, the Narrator.



Now we feel the long swell of the sea, the heaving restless sea; we hear the strange mysterious sounds of water lapping at the smooth sides of the vessel and chuckling in the scuppers; we see the bellying sail and the bending mast, the white-capped blue of deep water, and the brazen sun hanging in a brazen sky. The listlessness of the midday watch settles on the hot decks as Sinbad the Sailor looks along the rail and thrills to the unceasing motion, the ceaseless susurrus of the ocean.

The music has the long rolling motion of a deep-sea comber. Strings maintain the thread of the story of Sinbad, and underneath always moves the sea rhythm.



Presently we hear the string motive transferred to the dreamy voice of the horn, and decorated with polished tones of the flute as glittering as a dash of sea spray in sunlight. There is a recurring phrase in woodwind that is almost articulate, almost says, "Once upon a time . . ." and it is by no means difficult to feel toward the music precisely the attitude the composer wished to create. A fabulous story is being told; "a painted ship upon a painted ocean" . . . and not only the story, but the storyteller and the listener are suggested to us. Strange birds fly overhead; awful

shapes move dimly in the green deeps; a shadow runs swiftly across the sunlit decks though there is no shape between ship and sun; a short, fierce storm rages invisibly in the infinite blue depths of the tropic sky; the sea heaves up like a weary giant. Suddenly it is not a picture but a story; the stern voice of the Sultan is heard again (the same theme as at the opening of the movement) and the tremulous accents of Scheherazade go bravely on. In the calm that closes the movement we have assurance that for one day, at least, she has postponed her terrible fate.

## II. *The Tale of the Prince Kalender* \*

The motive of Scheherazade, a little more confident, a little more certain, opens the second movement of the suite. A tenuous shining thread of tone, changing in expressiveness as the dainty Sultana's face must have altered to meet the smile or frown of her lord. Ending in a cadenza of extreme brilliance and difficulty, it leads us into the main theme of the movement, assigned to the bassoon. Here is a golden opportunity for "the clown of the orchestra" (the bassoon). In turn pathetic, awkward, grave, jocose, this strange and amusing subject might well be taken as significant of the Prince Kalender himself . . . dignity in rage, pompousness in poverty, clowning in a courtier. We have no means of knowing what story the fakir-prince told in word and gesture, but we cannot escape the conclusion that it fascinated the interest of his hearers.

After a space the tearful voice of the oboe takes up a little song derived from that of the bassoon, and a brightness comes over the music. The violins join in a livelier rhythm, and toward the close of the first section of the music we hear what might be the accompaniment to a wild exotic dance.

The placid opening of the second section is deceptive, for suddenly we are in the midst of a scene of wild barbaric splendor. Fanfares of the brass, flying phrases of string and woodwind are combined in a whirling, glowing flux of tone; incandescent masses of color are thrown out like bright jewels from the garments of some dancer of the Orient. Commanding phrases are uttered boldly by the trombones, and echoed in the mysterious distance by a muted trumpet; secretive sentences come from plucked and muted strings; that tragicomedian, the bassoon, mutters strangely to itself.

Here, as nowhere else in the suite, Rimsky-Korsakov develops the themes almost in conventional symphonic style. This is particularly noticeable in the third part of the "Kalender Prince" yet not the slightest degree of novelty, or of vitality, or of sustained interest is lost in the process. Incidentally, the hearer will note in this final section an occasional resemblance, in the harmonic treatment, to a composition by another modern Russian—Stravinsky's ballet music *Petrouchka*.

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\* A Kalender was a member of a cult of wandering mendicant dervishes, or friars, vowed to poverty, chastity, and humility. They were also fakirs and it is to this variety that Rimsky-Korsakov probably refers here.

### III. *The Young Prince and the Young Princess*

What a delightful contrast in these naïve melodies! Here the significance of the music is not Oriental, but simply human. It sings of love—love of the idyllic kind; not without passion, but without the fierce selfish hunger of passion; not without ecstasy, but with the ecstasy of love fulfilled and not satiated.

The Prince speaks first, and to him is assigned the tender melody of the violins at the very beginning of the movement. We might picture him singing to his love "on a terrace above a dark pool, while behind them 'a carven moon, without faintest aureole, a voluptuous moon, mysteriously marked, holds her hand upon the circle of her breast.'"

Presently the Young Princess herself speaks, in the reedy sweetness of the clarinet—a tender little song, with rapturous flights of tone and arch phrases. Later we hear her accompanied in her song by snare drum, tambourine, cymbals, and the tinkling triangle. The Young Prince sings again his amorous lay . . . and then, near the end, we remember once more that it is a story, as the shy Scheherazade appears.

### IV. *Festival at Bagdad. The Sea*

#### *The Vessel Is Wrecked*

#### *Conclusion*

Once again the stern-voiced Sultan is heard in his dreadful resolution . . . but Scheherazade hastens on with her stories, diverting him with a glowing description of a Bagdad festival. A brief but brilliant violin cadenza leads us to this lively and colorful scene. Wild dancers weave sinuously in strange arabesque figures, gayly colored draperies stiffen in the breeze, the hubbub of the market place runs like a powerful undercurrent beneath the more assertive sounds of the festival. Snake charmers pipe magic tunes to their hooded and venomous charges . . . fakirs cry their wares and perform strange feats of thaumaturgy before a thousand curious eyes . . . ivory-skinned girls peer seductively from shadowy shelters of richest rugs and rare fabrics . . . imperious camels carry some lordly satrap and his train through the scurrying, chattering crowds . . . rare perfumes, mingled with the penetrating odors of spices and the unforgettable scent of the streets and crowds . . . it is the Orient, the Orient with all its brilliantly glowing life and sound and color.

Once again the ominous accents of the Sultan are heard, but briefly now and with less determination, while Scheherazade bravely continues with her tale, desperately achieving new climaxes, more bewildering pictures of beauty. Suddenly we are once more on the sea, on the broad decks of Sinbad's ship.

But it is not the quiet ocean we have known. Rather its gigantic surges heave themselves up to terrifying heights, the vessel trembles to its very keel; the sails crack like giant pistols under the impact of sudden fierce gusts from the empty skies.

Masts bend and strain . . . the sailors turn ashen faces toward a great rock, surmounted by a warrior of bronze . . . and toward the rock the ship turns too, drawn irresistibly by some occult force.

A heaven-splitting crash . . . and the ship is gone, her proud hull splintering and grinding against the refractory rock . . . and only the wandering winds to mourn for her. Now Scheherazade rehearses the little, almost articulate, phrase (woodwind) with which she prefaced her stories, and presently we hear her own lovely motive, as before, in the voice of the violin.

The Sultan finally speaks—but now gently, amorously, and the violin rises to an incredible, triumphant height against the glowing harmonies that end the movement.



## Capriccio espagnol

IT IS a curious fact that, before Ravel and certain contemporary Spanish composers, the musical spirit of Spain was more vividly expressed by Slavic composers than by Spaniards. The many dance and song forms, the captivating and sensuous rhythms, the folk and gypsy melodies, have exercised a fascination upon all the great musicians who have heard them at first hand, and many have adopted them to their own musical purposes.

Rimsky-Korsakov had planned this work as a fantasy for violin upon Spanish themes, but before he had done more than to sketch the work, he decided that the glamor and glitter he wished this music to express could be conveyed with more effect through the orchestra. He was singularly proud of this music, and with reason; there is little to compare with it in dazzling brilliance of orchestration, its fantastic and glowing sound pictures. The composer resented, however, the fact that everyone congratulated him on the *orchestration*, which he could not or would not consider apart from the work as a whole. Nevertheless it is the opulence of its instrumental *habit* that makes this music most interesting.

The first performance of the work was at St. Petersburg, October 31, 1887, under the direction of the composer. At rehearsal the musicians had been so impressed that they stopped and applauded; warmed by their enthusiasm, the composer dedicated the *Caprice* to the men of the orchestra, and the name of each one appears on the flyleaf of the score.

The music is in five sections, played without pause. The first;

### *Alborada*

A morning song, and one to which the deepest sleeper should awaken, for it bursts into vigorous life with a theme powerfully projected in full orchestra. Later,

plucked strings, with woodwind and horn in accompaniment, supply a background against which the solo clarinet repeats the opening theme. A fragment which must have been drawn from the original sketches for the violin fantasy—a cadenza technically exacting and musically beautiful—ends this section of the music.

### *Variations*

The basis of the variations is a subject issued by the horns at the beginning. Upon it the composer constructs five ingenious elaborations, each presented in different tone colors. The first begins in the strings, gracefully rising directly out of the subject matter. The second combines the round, full tone of the horn with the melancholy reediness of the *cor anglais*. The third is boldly put forth by practically the entire orchestra. The fourth is sounded in a delicious combination of paired horns and cellos, against accompaniment by clarinet and violins. The last again calls forth the full color range of the orchestra, and is succeeded by one of the brilliant display passages originally written for violin, now played by flute.

### *Alborada*

This section, in its musical material, is practically the same as the opening part of the work, but its orchestration is ingeniously arranged so that it almost sounds new. The most noticeable feature is the exchange of parts between violin and clarinet. You will observe that the solo previously given to clarinet is now played by violin, and vice versa.

### *Scene and Gypsy Song*

It is somewhat difficult to connect this music with "Scene"—if we are looking for details; for the first part is no more than a series of display passages, dramatic enough, to be sure, but certainly not translatable from the language of music into any other. There is a long roll on the snare drum, and a brilliant, syncopated passage for a sharp-edged combination of horn and trumpet. The rattling of the drum fades, and the solo violin traces a delicate figure, imitated by the clarinet and the flute. The bright tones of flute dance over a heavy sounding of the timpani; the rapidly beaten cymbal makes a brilliant foil for the full richness of the solo clarinet. The "Scene" is ended by the iridescent glitter of harp and triangle.

An ecstatic glissando on the harp ushers in the passionate gypsy song, sung with fierce emphasis by the violins with a brassy accompaniment from trombone, tuba, and cymbals. The orchestra remembers the violin solo from the preceding section and puts it forward with vehemence. The music grows more complicated, warmer, and more lustrous as the gypsy song, the previous theme of the violin, a solo for cello, and certain intimations of the finale that is still to come are all woven



together with incredible richness and brilliance of orchestration. The resources of the orchestra seem endless as they are summoned forth, one by one; the tempo increases to furious speed, and rushes the orchestra into the

### *Fandango of the Asturias*

The fandango is a gracefully seductive dance, probably of Moorish origin, certainly very ancient. Its seductiveness is Spanish, which is to say that it is subtle, full of delicate and tempting maneuvers, its flaming passion concealed—for the most part—beneath a mask of suavity. But here the dance rises to a fury, to an overpowering degree of madness and abandon. Occasionally a single instrument speaks, but for the most part the orchestra is enslaved to the intoxicating rhythm. At the peak of intensity, the trombones speak as they spoke at the beginning of the movement; the dance suddenly changes to the music of the first movement, and in concluding passages of incandescent warmth and terrific power, the *Capriccio* is ended.

## ALBERT ROUSSEL

[1869-1937]

**A**LBERT ROUSSEL was born at Turcoing, April 5, 1869. He was orphaned when a little boy, and was reared by his grandfather, mayor of his native town. Throughout his youth and his school years, Roussel exhibited marked interest in and talent for music; but he was educated as a naval officer, and eventually accepted a commission in the French navy. His vocation gave him time for what was, in his youth, little more than a hobby; and his travels brought him to strange and distant scenes, whose life and color eventually made themselves felt in his music.

Curiously enough, it was a brother of the opera singer, the late Emma Calvé, who was responsible for bringing Roussel to the attention of Colonne. The attitude of this distinguished musician, and later, of others, convinced Roussel that he should make music his lifework, and he resigned his commission to become a student under Gigout and d'Indy.

It has been said of Roussel that he possessed every desirable characteristic of a great composer excepting the power of invention; which perhaps is a somewhat euphemistic manner of saying that he was uninspired. This is too harsh a dictum; and while unquestionably certain of his contemporaries were more gifted in this respect, the sane quality of his music, its freshness, its shrewd adaptation of new and growing ideas, its meticulous craftsmanship, its color and poetry—these are qualities decidedly worthy of consideration, and their possessor must be and is worthy of a hearing. The fact is Roussel has had a generous hearing, in America and elsewhere; and while the circle of his audience has not progressed very far beyond the more or less esoteric groups, it is still a growing circle. Roussel was perhaps the last of that group of French composers who brought French music to an exceedingly high degree of development, and his departure was a lamentable event in the eyes of those who knew him and his work.



### Sinfonietta

THOSE who have urged the assertion that this composer lacked spontaneity and originality sometimes add that he was greatly influenced by his contemporaries. It is true that he never hesitated to adapt to his own purposes any new device that seemed sound and rational and valid and effective; and he was influenced by others exactly as every artist is influenced by his predecessors. But he was a distinct and forceful

personality in his own right, and, as Arthur Hoérée commenting upon the performance of what was probably Roussel's last work (*Rapsodie flamande*) wrote, "He possesses that kind of honesty which forbids circumventing obstacles by trickery of workmanship, for his thoughts are of a higher order. This directness has provided us with a score different from that of the symphonies with their familiar structures, but no less representative of the personal style of the composer." Of other characteristics of Roussel's music, we have the criticism of M. Jean-Aubry, who writes, "The ingenious orchestration nowhere reveals the obstinate desire to attract attention that has too often lessened the merit of modern works." (Certainly the orchestration of this Sinfonietta is anything but ostentatious!) "The employment of the instruments . . . is governed by no desire to master a theorem but by the play of their colors and nuances, for the awakening of the imagination or the feelings of the listener."

These remarks were written in referring to another work (*Evocations*) but are apt in their application to the Sinfonietta. We shall find little that is strange, nothing that is overpowering, in this exquisitely finished music; none of the exotic colors of *Padmavati*, the fantasy of *Poem of the Forest*; but sincerely conceived and charming music, asking only for the limited yet subtly variable colors of the string orchestra, and for no intemperate dynamics, no startling denouements, no vulgar sensations.

The music is written with that fastidious craftsmanship which was one of the composer's most conspicuous characteristics. In its three brief sections—*allegro molto*, andante, *allegro*—it traverses with well-bred charm the limits of the territory available to an orchestra of strings.

# CHARLES CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

[1835-1921]

**C**HARLES CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS was born in Paris, October 9, 1835. When scarcely more than an infant, he exhibited a love of music and a certain aptness for it. His mother and her great-aunt were quick to perceive this, and saw to it that he was given the beginnings of a thorough musical education. They were careful, however, not to force his talent, but his attainments as a child were nevertheless astonishing. His First Symphony was performed when he was but eighteen years old. A few years later he was capably filling the post of organist at the Church of the Madeleine. For a term he was professor of piano at a conservatory, and during his tenure had as pupils such famous musicians as Fauré, Gigout, and Messager.

His activities were many and varied; he appeared in public as pianist, organist, and conductor; he soon became famous as one of the leading spirits in French music. He wrote a book of poems, essays on musical subjects, several short plays, and papers on scientific subjects, as well as music in almost every form. He visited the United States on two different occasions, the second being the Panama-Pacific Exposition, to which he was a representative of France.

As a composer, Saint-Saëns is distinguished by the formal and technical finish of his work, and his extraordinary talent for orchestration. He is seldom profound, but he is never obscure; and the occasional lack of depth in his music is more than compensated by its grace and frequently acute, though kindly, sense of humor. Romain Rolland, the sympathetic biographer of so many great musicians, says of Saint-Saëns, "He is tormented by no passions, and nothing perturbs the lucidity of his mind. He brings into the midst of our present restlessness something of the sweetness and clarity of past periods, something that seems like fragments of a vanished world."



## Concerto in A minor for Violoncello and Orchestra

THE number of concertos for cello is pitifully few. It is strange that this beautiful, expressive, masculine voice should have been so neglected. One would expect that with its wonderful tone—its "singing" power, its strength and relative agility—the cello would be a favorite with the great composers who wrote concertos for string instruments. The more superficial, thin, and feminine beauty of the violin seems to have blinded most composers to the resources of the cello as a solo instrument.

Dvořák and Saint-Saëns have each contributed to the literature of the cello,

and their works are in the repertoire of every prominent cellist today. Saint-Saëns wrote two concertos for the violoncello, this one, Opus 33, being a favorite with performers and audiences alike. It was first performed at Paris, January 19, 1873.

The music is not divided into three or four movements, as is the conventional work of this type. It is played in one movement, but with various sections in differing rhythm and tempo. The concerto as a whole is unified by a basic theme which appears at intervals throughout its length. This theme is stated at the outset by the solo cello, with accompaniment by violins and violas. It is exploited thoroughly by the soloist, then by woodwind, and again by strings. With great canniness the composer opposes the tone of the cello with either contrasting or richly blending timbres in the orchestra; meanwhile, he asks of the soloist considerable dexterity in handling the instrument, flawless intonation, and a flexible bow arm.

There is a second theme, not quite so animated as the first, again in the solo cello with accompaniment by its orchestral relatives. As the music proceeds, the solo part becomes more and more exacting in its technical requirements; yet it lies always within the most effective range of the instrument, and rarely displays mechanical dexterity merely for showy effect.

After thoroughly working out the thematic material, the music proceeds to what, in effect, is a new movement. The rhythm, the tempo, and the tonality (key) change; the chief musical idea is produced by the violins, *con sordino* and pianissimo. The solo instrument disagrees to the extent of pouring forth a melody of its own, posed beautifully against that of its soft-spoken companions in the orchestra. Tiring of this diversion, the cello engages in a brilliant display of its technicomusical possibilities, ending upon a vibrant trill; this is contrasted with the penetrating voices of the woodwind section in the orchestra, and there is a lovely play of instrumental color.

In a new section of the concerto, the solo instrument, after giving out its theme, is required to execute a series of difficulties against brilliant comment by the orchestral instruments. Complicated rhythms, swift scales, and the projection of its largest and most noble tones exact the utmost skill from the performer; and the growing sonority of the orchestra, as it approaches the climax and conclusion of the work, overcomes any but the most powerful bowing of the solo cello.



## The Carnival of the Animals

THIS charming music was composed for a Mardi-gras concert, and was played for the first time in the United States on August 28, 1922, under the direction of Louis Hasselmans, a conductor of the Metropolitan Opera Company, at Chicago. Almost

everyone knows at least one section of the work—*The Swan*, which alone escaped the prohibition the composer issued shortly after the first performance in Europe, against public performance of the suite as a whole, until after his death. There are other familiar melodies interpolated in this music, among them a theme from Saint-Saëns' own symphonic poem, *Danse macabre*; two phrases from Offenbach's *Orpheus in Hades*; a theme from the *Ballet des sylphes* from Berlioz' *La Damnation de Faust*; a motive from the scherzo of Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* music; a phrase from Rosina's air in *The Barber of Seville*; and a number of French folk songs.

### *Introduction and Royal March of the Lion*

Quivers of anticipation are given out by piano, and after a fanfare, mighty Leo himself approaches, accompanied first by a rather Oriental theme, and then chromatic roars in the bass. The King of Beasts is presently dismissed, and in a moment we are listening to

### *Hens and Cocks*

Would that barnyard sounds were even as musical as this cacophony! Hens cackle with the aid of clarinet and strings; whereas the lordly rooster projects his morning call through the medium of the piano.

### *Wild Asses*

In the original score this section bears the title, "*Animaux véloces.*" Later versions give the title, "*Hémiones,*" which can be translated as "Wild Asses." These fleet-footed beasts trip lightly through rapid passages assigned exclusively to the pianos. Curiously, these passages are played without change of rhythm or dynamic effect, and it is not improbable that the sarcastic Saint-Saëns here made a mock of those technically dazzling performers upon the piano who, if their musicianship were equal to their digital dexterity, would be musicians.

### *Tortoises*

The sluggish fellows go their lumbering way with a curious, stubborn independence, while pianos supply a pulsating background and a theme from *Orpheus*, usually played at dazzling speed, moves with grotesque deliberation through the lower ranges of the strings.

### *The Elephant*

Again the pianos establish the rhythm—now in waltztime—and then basses and cellos add a melody essentially gay enough, but in this curious and awkward

projection, amusingly cumbersome and ungainly. A phrase from Berlioz' *Waltz of the Sylphs* is deftly interpolated—a mischievous touch that must have delighted everyone but Berlioz . . . if he heard it!

### *Kangaroos*

The curiously sudden yet hesitant movements of these quaint marsupials are suggested by the alternately sounded pianos.

### *The Aquarium*

There is pale green, translucent water in the lovely sounds that flow together to make this interesting section. Flute and violin sustain a purling melody, rippling arpeggios from the pianos suggest the movement of waters; a *flic* of celesta might be the flirt of a goldfish's tail. . . .

### *Personages with Long Ears—Cuckoo in the Woods*

Probably anyone who hears this music can identify the creatures depicted here by the braying first and second violins—without departing his own circle of acquaintances! We are referring to the Personages, not to the Cuckoo! As to the latter, his voice—imitated by clarinet against pianos—is ingratiating enough, even though his morals aren't!

### *Birds*

The flute imitates a dozen birds at once; piano tones flicker and chirp imitatively, and a tremolo like the rushing of a thousand little wings sweeps through the orchestra. From this picture of brilliant and active vitality we come suddenly upon

### *Fossils*

where the ironical composer burlesques and ridicules himself and others. Against pizzicato chords, the familiar clattering bones of *Danse macabre* are suggested in the dry, bright notes of the xylophone. Mingled with this theme of desiccated skeletons are fragments from several old popular French songs, and even a bit (played by clarinet) from Rossini's *Barber of Seville*. Were all these tunes fossilized so soon? Or perhaps they were merely too popular for Saint-Saëns.

### *The Swan*

Had this lovely melody been written prior to the *Carnival*, it is probable that it would have been included under "Fossils," for it has been played almost to death. Yet the cool purity of the music still has charm, in spite of the cellists,

good and bad, who have so often played it and the foolish sentimentality of the dancers who have attempted to mime it.

### *Pianists*

We all know pianists who should be confined with other zoological specimens, and of all pianists, certainly students given to practicing the endless exercises of the great teacher Czerny are the most dangerous species. The composer pokes fun at them here, as they do the same musical problem over and over—the orchestra discreetly limiting itself to a few modulating chords, and a sly remark near the end of this number. Then, without interruption, the music proceeds through a brilliant finale, in which all the characters of the *Carnival* are passed in review, with the Personages with Long Ears bringing up the rear—and having the last word.



## Le Rouet d'Omphale

[*Omphale's Spinning-Wheel*]

BRIEF as this charming work is, it nevertheless can be classified as a symphonic poem. It is based on the story of Hercules, who once disguised himself as a woman to avoid becoming involved in certain unpleasant circumstances, and who was put to work at spinning by Omphale, Queen of Lydia. There is no detailed story, but it requires little imagination to discover in the strings' whirring figure the sound of the busy wheel; and in the lugubrious theme in the bass, the discomfiture of mighty Hercules. Saint-Saëns here gives us a charming proof of his extraordinary taste and skill in the difficult art of orchestration.



## Danse macabre

THIS weird waltz was inspired by a poem of Henri Cazalis, which in turn is based on an old myth regarding the revels of ghosts on the night of All Souls' Day. Like much of the music of Saint-Saëns, the music is not without irony—here a bitter and grisly irony.

As the poem goes, Death is a fiddler who summons the white skeletons from their graves at midnight, to dance with him a measure, to join in wild indescribable



celebrations until the dawn. The harp announces "the witching hour" with twelve soft clear notes, and immediately the necropolis opens its stony walls, and into the night troops a ghastly grinning company of skeletons. Death the Fiddler leads, and we hear him wryly tuning his violin. With horrid flourishes Death seems to encourage the orchestra, and after a few notes plucked furtively from the lower strings, the obscene revels begin.

The rhythm is that of the waltz, but more rapid, rigid, and mechanical. The dancers' bony heels make clacking sounds against the tombstones (xylophone), snatches of the *Dies Irae*—a part of the requiem in the Roman Catholic Church—are adapted to macabre purpose. We can imagine horrid yells and laughter, and the wagging of empty skulls, the slapping of fleshless feet upon cold stones. There is a pause; the oboe crows like a cock; the orchestra sighs a little, and is silent. The fantasy dissolves in the light of coming day.

# ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG

[Born 1874]

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG, one of the most individual and important of modern composers, was born September 13, 1874, at Vienna. The poverty in early life which seems to be almost a conventional requirement for the development of a musician was his, and even as a child he found solace for his woes in music. At the age of twelve he was a good violinist, and had composed a number of little pieces for that instrument. As a schoolboy, he consorted with other youths of sympathetic tastes, and before long was a member of a little chamber-music ensemble, for which he composed trios and quartets. It is perhaps significant that much of the important music he was to compose, later in life, is influenced by Schönberg's early interest in music for small groups.

When Schönberg was twenty years old, he became a pupil of Alexander Zemlinsky, who was later to become related to him through marriage. This noted teacher recognized the young man's talent for composition, and assisted him not only by his intelligent instruction, but by bringing Schönberg into a circle of young musicians of similar tastes and inclinations. This group was strongly under the influence of Wagner, and Schönberg absorbed much of this atmosphere. In two of his most important compositions—*Gurre-Lieder* and *Verklärte Nacht*—the Wagnerian flavor is distinctly marked, both works revealing that *Tristan* was a definite influence in their creation. Later and contemporary works of Schönberg reveal a highly individual, a radically modern style not always agreeable to unaccustomed ears. *Pierrot Lunaire*, a recent work of importance, is fairly representative of Schönberg's mature style.

At present (1940) Schönberg is living in America, teaching in schools of music at Boston and New York. His accomplishments and prestige have given him enormous influence with younger American composers, and his development of a musical philosophy of his own has won him, among students, a following more devoted than discriminating. Schönberg himself frowns upon anyone who deliberately seeks to imitate his style, rightly believing that the student should develop his own ideas in his own way, from a basis of thorough fundamental knowledge and artistic sincerity.



## Verklärte Nacht

[*The Night Transfigured*]

THIS marvelous exhibition of the power, range, and expressiveness of the string orchestra was originally composed as a sextet for strings. It is very early Schönberg

—and sometimes one cannot avoid being grateful on that account. It is numbered Opus 4, and was completed during a period of three weeks in the summer of 1899. Inspired by a poem of Richard Dehmel, it translates into music the power and the beauty of love and forgiveness under the divine influences of nature.

The music, in its original form, is one of the most beautiful things in the literature of chamber music. It is more frequently presented, and has become known to a much larger circle, in its revised and transcribed version for string orchestra, which materially differs from the original only in the doubling of the cello parts by the basses. Thereby it gains not only in sonority, but, through the deeply expressive quality of the contrabass, in emotional suggestiveness also.

The poem which inspired this music also has the title, *Verklärte Nacht*, and is one of a collection entitled, *Weib und Welt* (Woman and the World). The poem, necessary to a complete appreciation of the music, is as follows:

### VERKLÄRTE NACHT

*Gedicht von Richard Dehmel*

*Zwei Menschen gehn durch kahlen,  
kalteln Hain;  
der Mond läuft mit, sie schauen  
hinein.*

*Der Mond läuft über hohe Eichen  
kein Wölkchen trübt das Himmels-  
licht,  
in das die schwarzen Zacken reichen.  
Die Stimme eines Weibes spricht:*

*Ich trag ein Kind, und nicht von Dir  
Ich geh in Sünde neben Dir.  
Ich hab mich schwer an mir ver gangen.  
Ich glaubte nicht mehr an ein Glück  
und hatte doch ein schwer Verlangen  
nach Lebensinhalt, nach Mutterglück  
und Pflicht; da hab ich mich erfrecht,  
da liess ich schaudernnd mein Geschlecht  
von einem fremden Mann umfassen,  
und hab mich noch dafür gesegnet.*

*Nun hat das Leben sich gerächt:  
nun bin ich Dir, o Dir begegnet.*

*Sie geht mit ungelenktem Schritt.  
Sie schaut empor; der Mond läuft mit.  
Ihr dunkler Blick ertrinkt in Licht.  
Die Stimme eines Mannes spricht:*

*Das Kind, das Du empfangen hast,  
sei Deiner Seele keine Last,  
o sieh, wie klar das Weltall schim-  
mert!*

*Es ist ein Glanz um Alles her,  
Du treibst mit mir auf kaltem Meer,  
doch eine eigne Wärme flimmert  
von Dir in mich, von mir in Dich.  
Die wird das fremde Kind verklären  
Du wirst es mir, von mir Gebären:  
Du hast den Glanz in mich gebracht,  
Du hast mich selbst zum Kind  
gemacht,*

*Er fasst sie um die starken Hüften.  
Ihr Atem küsst sich in den Lüften.  
Zwei Menschen gehn durch hohe, helle  
Nacht.*

The author of this book accepts full responsibility for the following prose version:

*The Night Transfigured*

These two wander through chill and lonely and desolate meadows. Against the distant and impersonal moon, tall oaks raise their arms, naked and black. No cloud masks the moon's full white light, but in the woman's heart are shadows deep and terrible. She speaks:

"Beloved, we walk together now, but never can we go side by side along the paths of life. For I walk in sin; my soul and my body are heavy with a child that is not yours! My sin is mortal; the white flame that I cherished for you is extinguished. No longer can I believe in love, nor in the happy destiny that seemed to be ours.

"I sought to know Life, and Life has deceived me. I craved the ecstasy our love had promised and, seeing only you, gave my shuddering body to a stranger. I thought of woman's high destiny and duty of motherhood; I dreamed not of mothering another child than yours. Now Life has taken bitter vengeance upon me."

Heavily she walks, and turns her face into shadow, and away from the cold pure moon that walks along with them. And then her lover speaks:

"My heart's love, fear not and hate not the child that moves within you. Think of my love—our love, that has surrounded us even as this lovely gleam that lies now upon the world. Still it will surround and warm us, even in the face of this, even through the coldest and stormiest stretches of life's unfriendly sea. Though you lay in the arms of another, the child that lives within you is mine, and by me you shall bear him. Even in the reckless ecstasy that begot him, I was within your thought and I am his father. For you have brought the light and the wonder of love to me; you have made me, myself, a child, with a child's unquestioning love, and blind acceptance of those he loves."

His arms are about her once lovely, now distorted body. Their souls are joined in a kiss. These two walk again through the moonlit and transfigured night.

Employing only the strings, Schönberg's musical version of the touching poem is singularly eloquent. The variety of expression, the really tremendous climaxes, the warmth and vigor and tenderness, the wonder of the transfiguration of love and forgiveness combine to provide an unforgettable musical experience. With rigid economy of means, he interprets musically the pain of guilt, the agony of confession, and the terror of punishment; the ageless mystery of gestation, the magnificence of self-denial, and the serene loveliness of understanding and forgiveness.

The music is Wagnerian in concept and often in detail. To make this asser-

tion is certainly not to disparage it. On the contrary, it is interesting to observe that Schönberg, a youth of twenty-five when this music was written, rigorously avoids certain faults of his idol, and where his music is derivative, it derives from the most moving pages that Wagner left us. The work is roughly divided into sections similar to those indicated in the original poem. It seeks to create, and does create, a succession of moods, concluding with some of the loveliest and most subtle and sensitive music for strings ever written by anyone. A detailed analysis would profit little, for the outlines of the structure are at all times perfectly lucid, and the effect of the music itself apart from its strictly technical beauty, though comprehensible, defies analysis.



## The Song of the Wood Dove

[From *Gurre-Lieder*]

SCHÖNBERG's gigantic cantata, *Gurre-Lieder*, is without doubt his greatest work to date, though it is probable that the composer, whose progress in the more remote provinces of modern harmony has taken him far from this music, would violently disagree. This is an early work. It was written in 1901, but the necessities of existence compelled the composer to lay it aside for ten years. Meanwhile Schönberg had developed along very definite musical lines, and so the later pages of this work, as well as the orchestration in frequent instances, reveal more clearly the contemporary Schönberg, while the main body of the cantata shows the younger man, still under the influence of Wagner.

The score calls for a gigantic orchestra, five solo singers, three four-part male choruses, an eight-part chorus of mixed voices, and a narrator. The instrumentation is extraordinary. The usual string choirs are employed, but augmented. For the rest of the orchestra, Schönberg asks for four flutes, four piccolos, three oboes, two English horns, three B-flat clarinets and two in E-flat, two bass clarinets, three bassoons and two contrabassoons, ten horns, four Bayreuth tubas, six trumpets and one bass trumpet, one alto trombone, one contrabass tuba, six timpani, tenor and side drums, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, triangle, xylophone, tam-tam, rattle, four harps, celesta, and, finally, some heavy iron chains.

The music is a setting for a cycle of poems by Jens Peter Jacobsen, a Danish poet. They deal with the legendary tale of the love of King Waldemar IV for the princess Tove—a love that was hopeless and unconsummated by marriage because of the enforced union, for diplomatic reasons, of Waldemar and Helvig of

Schleswig. The King, nevertheless, remained faithful in his heart to Tove, and maintained her in a castle the site of which is said to have been within a few miles of Elsinore.

Queen Helvig was not of the type that humbly accepts the amorous vagaries of a husband. Enraged and frantic with jealousy, she caused the death of Tove. Waldemar was nearly mad with fury and grief. In his distress he blasphemed horribly. Divine punishment was not long withheld. He was condemned to ride the skies nightly, after his death, with his troops of ghostly retainers, never resting from dusk until dawn. Waldemar's love for Tove persists even after death, and comforts him, so that, when the terrors of the night are past, he sees in the dawn and the loveliness of youthful day the beauty and sweetness of his adored princess.

*Gurre-Lieder* was first performed in Vienna, February 23, 1913, under Franz Schreker. It was received with enthusiasm, as was a radio presentation in England, January 27, 1928, under the direction of the composer. The first American performances were given at Philadelphia and New York, by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski, April 8, 9, 11, and 12, 1931. During the next season excerpts were given by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Frederick Stock, and a radio broadcast of the "Song of the Wood Dove" was presented as the last of a notable series of concerts put on the air by a commercial organization during the season 1933-34. Schönberg conducted, and was so fortunate as to have in the part of the Wood Dove the beautiful and divinely gifted contralto of the Metropolitan Opera Company, Rose Bampton. It was her performance of this role in the first American presentation that focused public attention upon Miss Bampton as a singer of extraordinary attributes; her recording of the Wood Dove's song, and her subsequent broadcast of it under the direction of Schönberg himself, established her finally as the authoritative and supreme interpreter of this lovely lament.

The infrequent performances of *Gurre-Lieder* in the past and the remote possibility of frequent presentations in the future hardly justify a detailed analysis of the work within the confines of a book such as this. The Wood Dove's song, however, appears to be the one excerpt which can be and is given public performance, detached from the main body of the cantata. For that reason, and because it exhibits so beautifully certain phases of Schönberg's art, it must be included here.

The wonderful orchestral passages that precede the voice of the *Waldtaube* (Wood Dove) constitute some of the most dramatic and touchingly beautiful episodes in the entire work. There is mystery, and a deathly suggestion, and terror in this music; and, as it finally hangs suspended from the fragile note of the oboe, the warm but troubled voice of the Wood Dove enters. "Come," she cries to the doves of Gurre, "come, and listen to my woeful tidings." And she sings:



Tauben von Gurre! Sorge quält mich, vom Weg über die Insel her! Kommet! Lauschet! Tot ist Tove. Nacht auf ihrem Auge, das der Tag des Königs war! Still ist ihr Herz doch des Königs Herz schlägt wild, tot und doch wild! Seltsam gleichend einem Boot auf der Woge, wenn der, zu des Empfang die Planken huldigend sich gekrümmt, des Schiffes Steurer tot—liegt, verstrickt in der Tiefe Tang. Keiner bringt ihnen Botschaft, unwegsam der Weg. Wie zwei Ströme waren ihre Gedanken, Ströme gleitend Seit' an Seite. Wo strömen nun Toves Gedanken? Die des Königs winden, sich seltsam dahin, suchen nach denen Toves, finden sie nicht. Weit flog ich, Klag sucht' ich, fand gar viel! Den Sarg sah ich auf Königs Schultern, Henning stützt' ihn; finster war die Nacht, eine einzige Fackel brannte am Weg; die Königin hielt sie, hoch auf dem Söller, rachebegierigen Sinns. Thränen die sie nicht weinen wollte, funkelten im Auge. Weit flog ich, Klage sucht, ich, fand gar viel! Den König sah ich, mit dem Sarge fuhr er, im Bauernwams. Sein Streitross, das oft zum Sieg ihn getragen, zog den Sarg. Wild starrte des Königs Auge, suchte nach einem Blick! Seltsam lauschte des Königs Herz nach einem Wort. Henning sprach zum König, aber noch immer suchte er Wort und Blick. Der König öffnet Toves Sarg, starrt und lauscht mit bebendem Lippen, Tove ist stumm. Weit flog ich, Klage sucht' ich, fand gar viel! Wollt' ein Mönch am Seile ziehn, Abendsegen läuten; doch er sah den Wagenlenker und vernahm die Trauerbotschaft.

Sonne sank, indes die Glocke Grab-geläute tönte. Weit flog ich, Klage sucht' ich, und den Tod! Helwigs Falke war's, der grausam Gurre's Taube zerriss!

A free translation follows:

Wood doves of Gurre, come! Listen to the dread tidings I bear! The light that shone from Tove's eyes, the light that was day for Tove's king, is darkened by night forever. Tove is dead and her heart is still; the King's heart beats strongly yet but he is dead. For he is like a storm-driven and rudderless boat, twined with dead weeds of the sea and without a steersman. Alone he lies, and no man dares speak to him.

Like two meeting streams their thoughts flowed together. Whither now flow the thoughts of Tove? Whither course those of the King, seeking and finding not their sweet companion?

I have flown far, and I have seen the griefs of the world, but no sorrow

like this which has come to pass. I saw a bier uplifted on the shoulders of a King; I saw a Queen with vengeance flaming in her heart; a torch in her hand against the blackness of the night, and tears that filmed her eyes, that men might not see and read. O far I have flown, griefs I have seen, but no sorrow like unto this!

There was the King, standing motionless in his sackcloth, standing beside the bier of his love. The great horse that had borne him in battle waited to draw the precious burden. And ever the King's wild glance rested upon the shadowed dead eyes of his beloved; ever and vainly he pleaded for a word, a glance. But Tove lies mute! Over far places of the earth have I flown, and griefs I have seen, but no dolor such as this!

At evensong I heard the monk ringing the great bell, as he saw the bier of Tove borne along and heard the dread tidings. The sun went down, the bell rang in solemn mourning. These wings have carried me far, these eyes have seen mighty woes, and now have I found Death! And it was thy falcon, cruel Helvig, that hath slain the dove of Gurre!

As the *Waldtaube* sings of the monk and the tolling bell, there begins in the orchestra a music of appalling beauty. It advances, swaying dreadfully, like a drunken figure of Death, over a heavily persistent rhythm of plucked strings and harp. A climax of gigantic proportions is erected upon this theme; *subito* projections of brass and woodwinds and strings are thrust from the straining orchestra, and the music finally ends, with mighty strokes upon timpani, in an atmosphere of grief and terror.

One of the vital requirements of any valid art is the quality of universality. An art or an artistic philosophy that needs propaganda, that is so esoteric as to restrict its significance to the few, cannot survive, nor is it important. Here is music which, regardless of its derivations, its technical plan, its perfect craftsmanship, is important chiefly and perhaps only because it stirs and moves something deep within all of us. However advanced and ingenious may be the later, the contemporary Schönberg, this writer can say, without just accusation of reactionary tendencies, that nothing in his *Pierrot Lunaire*, nothing in the music of the present Schönberg, approaches this deathless moment of *Gurre-Lieder* in its gripping beauty, its sanity, and its strength.



# FRANZ SCHUBERT

[1797-1828]

ENTANGLED by circumstance, betrayed by fate, Franz Schubert lived and died with no more consciousness of his true greatness than had his contemporaries. Some few there were who dimly saw his worth and rendered him the meed of praise, yet among most men of his time, and indeed among many who came after him, his was the proud if unhappy privilege of speaking in a language they could not understand.

And with a final ironical gesture, fate again has pursued him even beyond the grave. To his work many a modern composer of popular music has gone for inspiration and sometimes for material, with rewards in money that poor Schubert, dogged by poverty, could scarcely have conceived.

Old Michael Holzer, the local choirmaster, who instructed and adored the boy Schubert, outlived him. Yet, departing life at the age of thirty-one, the composer left a treasury of music rarely excelled by any composer either in quantity or quality. The number of his matchless songs reached the hundreds, and in larger musical forms he worked with a fluency and facility seldom equaled before or since his time. His music is a faithful reflection of the warm, genial, lovable, guileless nature that was his, and it is no wonder that its peculiarly direct and intimate appeal touches instantly all who hear it.

Inadequately taught in several important branches of the art of composition, Schubert left his mark upon practically every established musical form. That his was a rare genius, a congenital gift of song far richer than many great composers possessed, cannot be denied. Cultivated, as it was, in a more or less haphazard fashion, it flowed into some of the loveliest music ever heard by mortal ears. What might have been, had not the world permitted him to starve, is indicated in the breath-taking beauty of his later works. Ranking though he does with the greatest musicians of all time, he nevertheless was taken off long before his powers had achieved their full maturity.

Sir George Grove says of him: "The spectacle of so insatiable a desire to produce has never before been seen; of a genius thrown naked into the world and compelled to explore for himself all the paths and channels in order to discover by exhaustion which was the best—and then to die."

This starved immortal left an estate of less than ten dollars. His loved Viennese have erected over his grave (a step from Beethoven's) a tablet with the inscription:

*Music Has Here Entombed a Rich Treasure  
But Much Fewer Hopes  
Franz Schubert Lies Here*



## Symphony No. 4 in C minor ("Tragic")

*First Movement*

THIS symphony dates from 1816, Schubert's nineteenth, and a year which saw the creation of more than one hundred different works, and following a year during which Schubert had written one hundred and eighty-nine compositions including so incontestable a masterpiece as the *Erkkönig*. But Schubert's musical immaturity was far behind him at the age of nineteen, and indeed it can be asserted that the full flower of his most mature genius revealed itself here in this symphony.

As usual, Schubert was at this time in financial difficulties and very eager to gain the appointment as teacher in the Government School at Laibach, which carried with it a munificent salary of approximately \$100 annually. In his application for the job, Schubert wrote of himself in the third person, saying, "In every branch of composition he has acquired such knowledge and ability in the playing of the organ, violin, and in singing, that according to the enclosed certificate he is declared to be the most capable among all the petitioners for this position." (P.S.—He did not get the job.)

There are few moments in the Fourth Symphony which could establish any justification for its subtitle, "Tragic," which Schubert himself appended to the last page of the score. We can only surmise that the music was written at a time when his circumstances were more painfully reduced than usual and when perhaps the neglect of the symphony rather than the music itself was tragic. We owe the revival of this music in this country largely to the superb performances of it by Mr. John Barbirolli and the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York. Happily too, we need not wait upon the exigencies of a conductor's program making for repetitions of the work, for Mr. Barbirolli has wisely put his performance on record.

The introductory section, *adagio*, is serious but hardly tragic in character. It is based on a subject which, after the introductory tonic chord in C minor, is given to the violins, then to the cellos, and finally disintegrated among woodwind and strings. The principal subject of the movement, which runs as follows:



is informed with a nervous vigor—a quality which, however, never eliminates the curiously plaintive suggestion that is almost always noticeable in Schubert's music.

Without attempting a scholarly analysis of the movement, which presents many unconventional points for discussion, one must point out a striking example of Schubert's unique facilities in effecting changes of key. The simplest modula-

tion and the one conventionally required by the sonata form would be to the dominant minor or relative major—in this case either to G minor or to E-flat major. The second subject appears instead in the key of A flat, which so far as formality is concerned has no immediate relationship to the key of the movement.

### *Second Movement*

The second movement is one of those incomparable streams of melody that Schubert alone of all the great composers could generate. If ever a man's essential personal qualities were reflected in his music, certainly Schubert's were, and it is pleasant to believe that this movement, with its gentleness and its sweetness, its soft complaint and its moments of passion, brings us in contact with the spirit of this strange, lonely, weak, lovable, and incomparably gifted man.

The principal theme is one of those almost vocal and articulate melodies that go to a heart as directly as they came from one. It is not without interest, however, to note the curious resemblance between this theme

and the Impromptu in A-flat major, Opus 142, No. 2, which in its opening bars has practically the identical subject, and the feeling of which runs quite parallel to

that of this movement. It is of further notice to observe that the four Impromptus which constitute Opus 142 were originally intended to form a sonata, of which the Impromptu in question would have been the second movement, just as it is the second movement of this symphony. The piano pieces were published in 1838, and the symphony was written twenty-two years before. Could it be that Schubert, faced with some material crisis or the importunities of a publisher, searched in his orchestral works for material easily adapted for piano?

### *Third Movement*

There are many instances in this symphony where not only the later Schubert but composers of a later day and as far removed from Schubert as Richard Wagner are foreshadowed. The curious chromatic line of the melodic elements in the minuet, and particularly in its first section, is neither characteristic of Schubert's day nor of the modified dance form in which this movement appears. Nor is the syncopated rhythm any more typical. By the displacement of the rhythmic emphasis normal to the minuet, Schubert has almost created a new dance rhythm here and one to which only sluggish blood will not respond. The chief melodic element of the movement runs as follows:



### *Fourth Movement*

The fourth movement is somewhat discursive with a plethora of melodies too bright, too long, and too generous for close organization into any strict form. Here again the forward-looking Schubert may be discerned, particularly in the daring (for his period) treatment of the brass, notably the horns, which at moments sound in their fullness and agility and significance almost Wagnerian.



## Symphony No. 7 in C major

HERE is the symphony that is generally looked upon as Schubert's greatest. It is interesting to discover, therefore, that at some of its first performances the musicians of the orchestra regarded it with such contempt as to influence their playing of it! In fact, on one occasion, when Mendelssohn, enthusiastic as he was in bringing the work to the attention of the public, wished to conduct it at a concert in England, the project had to be abandoned because of the attitude of the orchestra players.

The symphony was completed early in Schubert's last year of life, 1828, but like the "Unfinished" B minor, was never heard by the composer. Robert Schumann was responsible for bringing it to light from the vast mass of manuscripts in the hands of Ferdinand, brother of the composer, and eleven years after Schubert's death it was performed in Leipzig under the baton of Felix Mendelssohn. It was this great musician's enthusiasm, aroused by the work itself and the warm reception given it in Germany, which led to his attempt to perform it in England.

This symphony, it should be noted, is often referred to as Schubert's Tenth. It was, in fact, his last, and the tenth in chronological order, but was marked No. 7 in the catalogs of Breitkopf & Härtel, Schubert's publishers; since then it has been more generally known, in Europe at least, as the Seventh.

### *First Movement*

The present symphony, more than any other, perhaps, reveals something of the Schubert that might have been. Somewhere he had found new sources of power. The wondrous flow of lovely melody had never abated, but fortifying this, and supporting it with a compelling vigor and virility; lighting it with a superb grandeur; vitalizing it with new and mighty forces were the beginnings of full maturity in his art. In the Seventh Symphony Schubert is not always the employer of a sweet persuasiveness, the plaintive sufferer, the gently melancholy poet. These elements exist in the symphony, to be sure; it is difficult to find a page from Schubert's hand where they are not present. But now Schubert evoked from some hitherto undiscovered reservoir an influx of driving power, irresistible force, majestic and dominating and compelling utterance that even his most appealing works had not known.

The strange, the prophetic and portentous utterance proclaimed by the horns in the opening measures of the symphony is one of the unforgettable things in music. Here in this single phrase are intimations of grandeur and of glory, of agonies and triumphs, and of limitless solemn joys, projected with all the eloquence and insight and mystical understanding of "thanatopsis." The solemn pronouncement grows in boldness and is answered more gently in the voices of woodwind. Trombones presently take up the bolder part of this dialogue in a figure derived directly from the opening sentence of the horns. Now the strings, in an agitated figure, climb upward from the broad melodic foundation laid down by horns and trombones; a swift crescendo develops and after perhaps four minutes of music we hear the bold and brilliant theme that ushers in the movement proper.



This theme, divided between strings and woodwind, takes the form of a vigorous dialogue, the three-bar phrase of the strings answered by two bars in the woodwind. Now it is expanded into a mighty paean, joyous and triumphant, vital and vigorous to a degree suggestive of Beethoven in his most assertively jovial



moments. The second theme follows closely and, in spite of its milder character, is by no means of secondary importance in the movement, as its rhythm provides the motive power for many measures of this part of the symphony. It is assigned to the oboes and bassoons which, together with other members of the woodwind family, Schubert uses with singular felicity.



Now begins the development section of the movement, extensive, exhaustive as only the melodic facility and ingenuity of Schubert could have made it. Yet there is never a suggestion of straining for effect, never the artificial device of the pedant, but always the inevitable logic and coherence and intelligible speech of the truly great composer.

Even when the two principal themes, as different as they are, become welded together and developed simultaneously, the clearness of the melodic line is never clouded. Meanwhile there is a steady growth in emotional intensity and dynamic effect . . . suggestive reminiscences, in the woodwind, of the important second theme . . . violent bursts of tone punctuating the steady advance toward a climax, and at the end, a movement toward and finally an explicit statement of the powerful theme that opened the introduction.

### *Second Movement*

A few measures of introduction, intimating what is to come, precede the main theme of the movement, in which Schubert once more employs the woodwind—the oboe now, accompanied by strings, in a pensive but vital and moving little theme that in its persistent rhythm belies the faint melancholy of its melody. A con-

tinuation of the theme in the clarinet's reedy voice and the parallel major key of A



. . . a few violent interjections of a new phrase in full orchestra . . . another of those unexpected and delightful modulations of Schubert, and we come upon the second theme of the movement. It sings in the passionate voices of the strings, and songlike it is in every smooth phrase. This theme, too, is developed and extended. There is a period of hesitation, of tentative suggestions of the first and chief theme, and we enter upon the further development of the thematic material given out in the first part of the movement.

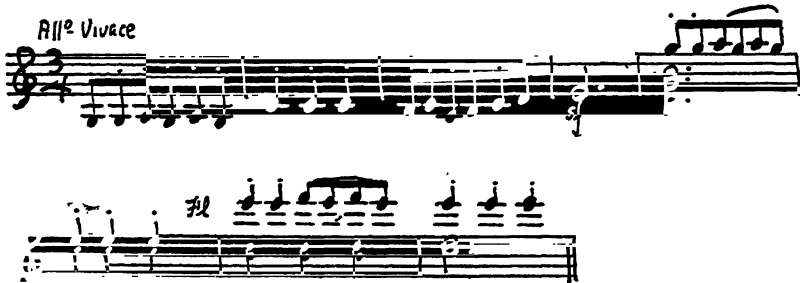
It is worthy of reflection that, contrary to his habit, Schubert revised more carefully than usual the score of this great symphony. Gifted with facility in creating melody as was no man before or since his time, and lacking certain technical elements considered necessary to the composer, it was not unnatural that he should sometimes have failed of clarity and conciseness. Even his friends, who were by no means hypercritical, remonstrated with him on this score. The gentle Schubert, amenable as always to their persuasion, studied with pathetic earnestness the much-revised and, as a rule, starkly simple scores of his adored Beethoven . . . and finally, impatient, gave up and despaired of ever following a method so painstaking and laborious.

Perhaps, nevertheless, he had some inkling of the greatness and immortality of the present work, for he corrected and revised it most carefully. The results are obvious and perhaps particularly so in this movement. Intricately entangled melodies remain exquisitely clear, nor can the charge of what sometimes seems unnecessary and almost absent-minded repetition be leveled at Schubert with respect to this symphony. One follows the smooth and clear line of melody like a guiding hand.

A melody of almost agonizing loveliness sings in the expressive voice of the cello, immediately following a powerful utterance by full orchestra and a pregnant pause. And presently the oboe, in its pensive penetrating tone, joins in a countertheme. This marks the end of a new thematic material, and, as the classic Greek dramatists would have it, here is the peripeteia of the movement. Just as Schubert had led us to this point through the unfolding of new musical ideas and their development, so we are led to the emotional and dynamic climax of the movement by a review of those ideas and their logical (musical) consequences.

*Third Movement*

Forthright vigor and energy worthy of Beethoven, and a certain *quasi-playfulness* more delicate and light than we might find even in the writings of that monumental figure, mark the scherzo of the Seventh Symphony. The lively if rugged figure bowed so emphatically upon the strings is instantly contrasted with the delicate voices of the woodwinds, further attenuated by the violins, and presently contrasted in its later developments with a countertheme proceeding from the cello section. Here are the elements upon which Schubert rears the structure of the first half of the movement, exploiting their possibilities to the limit, yet never losing, in the development of the musical figures, the energy of the rhythm or the clearness of the theme.



The trio, or second part of the movement, opens in somewhat chastened mood, but still with a vital and moving rhythm underlying the woodwind subject which forms its important theme. Strings in arpeggios accompany the woodwind. Presently the music sounds vaguely familiar, and almost before we realize it the original vigorous, dancelike theme of the first section of the movement, in somewhat altered form, has returned. And upon great chords springing from this powerful subject the movement ends abruptly.

*Fourth Movement*

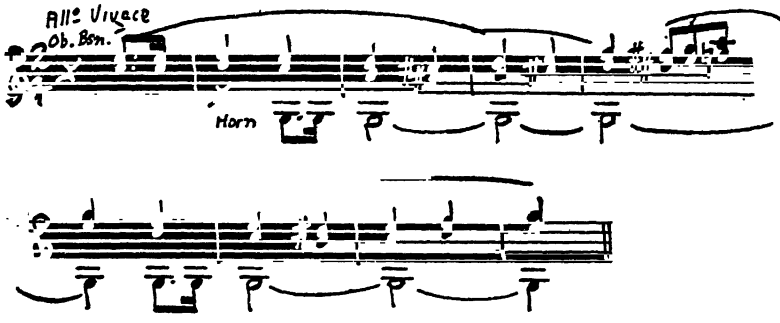
Here is a finale worthy of comparison with that of Beethoven's gigantic "Choral" Symphony. Indeed, in a sense this movement is superior to the closing chapter of the Beethoven Ninth, since it expressed adequately what Schubert wished to express, and did so without reference to resources foreign to the medium in which he was working. In the qualities of grandeur and clarity and pure musical delight, in its magnificent virility and invincible vigor, it is in no way inferior to Beethoven's "last word in symphonic music."

But comparison should not be the basis for judging it. One's own mind and senses, after all, constitute the final criterion for the evaluation of any artwork,



and Schubert will not suffer if that standard, and none other, be applied to this or any of his music.

The triplet figure which appears in the opening measures has a curious part in much of the movement. It was the extraordinary use of this device that aroused the uncomprehending contempt of the musicians who made it impossible for Mendelssohn to conduct the symphony in England, though why the simple, if unusual, figure should arouse their ire is not quite clear. Extensively used though it is, the triplet figure is not the chief theme of the movement. That appears later, with scarcely a hesitant moment between it and the introduction, but with the triplet rhythm still distinctly in evidence. And never during the subsequent working out of the chief theme is the vigorous figure absent from the music. In fact, even when a third theme, ushered in by four notes upon the horn, appears in a prominent position in the scheme of the movement, the interrogative triplet still can be perceived.



There is extensive thematic development, a return to the four notes of the horn, which in turn give impetus to gigantic forces engaged in the superb elaboration of the horn motive itself. And as always in Schubert, the movement rarely if ever digresses from a path leading straight to its climax, and though at times it seems, from the overpowering splendor of the music, that that climax has been reached, new and dazzling heights of magnificence are achieved. Pelion is piled upon Ossa—and there is not a moment's release from the thrall of this music until the last mighty chords die into silence.



## Symphony No. 8 in B minor

[*“Unfinished”*]

THE “Unfinished” Symphony dates from 1822, in the latter part of which year it was begun by Schubert. It was destined never to be completed, and to lie, ignored

or forgotten, until 1865. From that year, when, long after the death of the composer, it was first performed, it has never ceased to enthrall every listener. Few symphonies in the concert repertoire now approach it in the universality of its appeal; no other, perhaps, has the singular directness of contact with the innermost places of the human soul invariably achieved by this exquisitely beautiful music.

To call it the "Unfinished" Symphony is, in a sense, to apply a very misleading name to it. It is, as a symphony in conventional form, *incomplete*; for there are but two movements instead of the usual four. In this sense only is it "unfinished." But in a larger sense, it is utterly perfect in finish. It leaves nothing unsaid. It explores the most mysterious regions of the human soul and heart. In language of inexpressible beauty it communicates from composer to hearer an intensity of passionate emotion, a degree of spiritual exaltation, a completely satisfying and wholly expressive message. Music can go no further; Schubert himself, having said in these two movements all that even he, with his almost inexhaustible flow of melodious expression, could say, gave over the task of writing two more sections. And when you have heard the "Unfinished" several times, you will not wonder that even genius could add nothing to them.

Schubert never heard this symphony. His work on it was not, however, interrupted by death, for he lived several years after having laid it aside, convinced, perhaps (in spite of his sketches for a third movement), that there was nothing to add to it. It is amazing to realize that all the vast wealth of new and distinctly original tonal colors, melodies, and style in the "Unfinished" was conceived wholly in the imagination of the composer; his external senses never experienced them! Consider, then, their perfection, their beauty, their completely satisfying expressiveness, their utter rightness and finality—and you can never think of this deathless music as "unfinished."

### *First Movement*

Melody sings through the symphony from the very first note. The opening phrase is a somber legend in the vibrant voices of the cellos and basses, and high above the shimmering tones of the lighter strings that respond to the first prophetic utterance, a second song, piercing sweet, flows onward in the pensive notes of the oboe, with the more robust voice of the clarinet heard underneath. You will not have to *listen* for these lovely streams of melody; they come forth, urged by the insistent rhythm beneath them, to surround you and envelop you in a gentle tide of glowing tone.



On the repetition of the woodwind melody, another figure, stronger, more solid, as if it were a substance compounded of the ethereal melodies that have gone before, appears. It is well to mark these chords, for later in the movement they are to become, temporarily, of first importance. Now they give an intimation of a thought that is to be developed more fully as a contrast with the chief theme of the movement—yet that is still withheld from us—the antithesis appearing before the thesis!

Suddenly the horn and bassoon speak as one voice; one note that lingers, changing color as it fades into a short phrase that ushers in again the iridescent accompaniment of the violins. Now comes what is technically known as the "second theme" of the movement. Yet this, the lovely, languishing song of the cellos is certainly the most well-remembered theme in the entire symphony; certainly one of the most beautiful melodies ever written by mortal hand; certainly a living, moving, vital song that lingers ever in the echoing chambers of the soul, once it has penetrated there.



Now the movement is launched; now we behold the marvelous succession of melodies, and the infinitely varied versions of them that flow in a smooth and uninterrupted stream from Schubert's inspired hand. But there are passionate outbursts, too, and intense dramatic utterances, sometimes taking force from their very faintness, sometimes from their vehemence, as they are shouted forth in the orchestra's fullest and most powerful voice. There are moments of spiritual sadness and exquisite pain, but they are balanced by utterances of such tremulous ecstasy as to obliterate, in a phrase, what memories of haunting melancholy appear, as they always do appear, in Schubert's music.

There is gentleness—a gentle persistence—in the constant recurrence of the chief song of the movement; a reiteration that will not be denied, a "pious stubbornness" that will not, cannot, be thrust aside except in the mighty chords, given in full orchestra, that close the movement.

### *Second Movement*

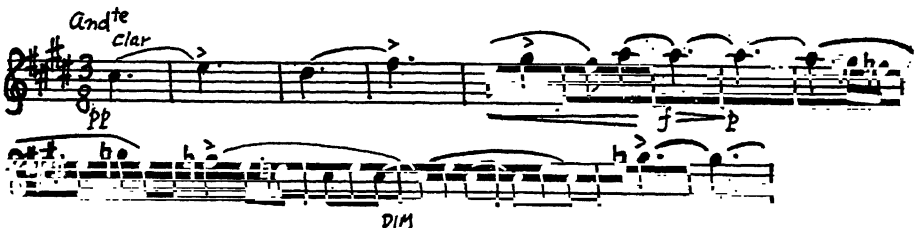
The essentially lyric quality of Schubert's genius is exemplified most beautifully in the first movement of the symphony. We have heard there a succession of exquisite melodies, contrasted strikingly with dramatic episode as well as with derived forms of the melodies themselves. Here in the second movement, the essential beauty and contrast is achieved more particularly by another characteristic of Schubert's inspired musicianship—namely, modulations; modulations mysterious,

unexpected, unconventional, and always superlatively beautiful. Modulation is, in simple terms, a radical change of musical effect, caused by a change of tonality, or "key." To select the key to which the modulation is to be made, then to make it by logical musical processes, requires skill of no mean order. The simplest and most obvious and easiest modulation is from the key of the tonic, which is the note "do," to the key of the dominant, which is the note "sol," for example, from the key of C to the key of G. Recall, for the moment, the first few measures of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Suppose it to be written in the key of C. The notes to which you sing "O say can you see, by the dawn's . . ." are in the key of C, but on the next phrase, "early light," there is a perfectly simple and natural modulation to the dominant key, G, ending on the major chord of the dominant.

The most difficult modulations are those from the tonic key to one lying close to it in the scale; for example, from C to D flat. It is impossible to illustrate the difficulties of such a mutation without involving a highly technical discussion; it is sufficient to say that Schubert makes such difficult modulations so deftly, so naturally, that one is scarcely conscious of the means by which the entire character and significance of the music are so suddenly and so subtly altered.

But do not dwell on the technical skill and perfection in this second movement. Abandon yourself to beauty, and this music will surge about you and hold you suspended in an imponderable substance of such beauty as snatches away the breath, and arrests momentarily the incessant pulsings of life. To give to it all one's soul is to enjoy from it in return a term of such exquisite spiritual joy and solace and deep satisfaction as words cannot express. Give yourself, then, to this music, and it will give to you something above and beyond yourself; some brief fleeting sight of that unquenchable flame by virtue of which man thinks himself immortal.

The mood of the symphony is changed as the second movement begins. The bass strings intone a descending passage in pizzicato, portentous like the footsteps of an advancing fate. This melancholy figure persists, and then gives way to a pensive dialogue in the woodwind, the violins singing softly in the background. Later the heavy footfalls of destiny draw closer and closer, stronger and more positive; the gentle plaint uttered by flutes and violins and clarinets appears again



and again—yet we begin to feel in the music a certain attitude of resignation, of acquiescence, that is typically Schubertian. Toward the close of the movement the

final version of the early woodwind melody appears, mightily augmented, and again comes that ominous progression of bass notes, like the restless pacing of some giant creature, underlying all, and shadowing the bright orchestral colors that tint every measure of the symphony.

There follows what Schumann names as the best discourse upon music—*silence*.



### Entr'acte and Ballet Music from "Rosamunde"

SCHUBERT wrote this music for a play which ran to only two performances, and, according to all accounts, dramatically it deserved not even one. The music certainly did not deserve oblivion with the play, but came perilously close to it. After the second unhappy performance, the music disappeared, and was not heard again until it was discovered in a closet at the house of a Viennese, by Sir George Grove, the great musicologist, and Sir Arthur Sullivan—he of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

There are eleven pieces in the music Schubert wrote for *Rosamunde*. Of the several entr'actes, the one which occurs between Acts III and IV is often selected for concert programs, and usually associated with the delightful ballet music from the last act. It is hardly necessary to discuss this music in detail; nothing in it could be more important than its lovely, expressive, and sometimes wistful melodies. Pianists will associate the first songlike strain of the entr'acte with one of the Impromptus; scholars will trace down other borrowings from previously published music of Schubert. Listeners will listen, and be delighted.

# ROBERT SCHUMANN

[1810-1856]

THOSE WHO HOLD that environment and heredity are the two determinants of human characteristics would be at some pains to account for the musical genius of Robert Schumann. He was born in the year 1810 in the small provincial town of Zwickau, in Saxony. His father was a bookseller, his mother the daughter of a surgeon. Neither had musical ability to transmit to Robert, and while the father recognized and encouraged the talent of the boy when it appeared, the mother, widowed when her son, at the age of seventeen, had to choose a career, was able to exert so much influence upon him that he matriculated at the University of Leipzig as a student of law, instead of devoting himself to music, as he wished to do.

The Schumanns were middle-class people in fairly comfortable circumstances. It is pleasant to relate that the composer never experienced the woes of poverty that made the lives of so many great artists tales of heartbreaking misery. Robert Schumann was sent to school with the other little boys of the town and, though a very quiet child, was in every respect, except his precocious aptitude for music, a normal lad of his years.

Schumann began to compose at the age of seven years; he soon was busy with musical young friends organizing informal chamber-music concerts, for which he wrote most of the music himself. He appeared in public, too, as a pianist. His formal musical education, however, was interrupted for a period of many years. In fact, his interest in music seems to have been less keen during his adolescent years, perhaps because of the pressure of his duties as a scholar in the Academy at Zwickau. But if music suffered during these years and the later period spent at the University of Leipzig, there was some compensation in Schumann's avidity for books and literature, for which his father's bookstore furnished a plentiful supply of the best material. This period had without a doubt a tremendous influence on Schumann's later activities as a music critic, and even made itself felt in his music. The presence of strong literary and musical tastes in his personality resulted in a strange but happy union of those two natural enemies, the musician and the critic of music, in this single and singular nature.

Schumann's law-student days were of inactivity, unless dreaming and gloomy introspection may be called activity. They may, if we agree with Rossetti:

*Unto the man of yearning thought  
And aspiration, to do nought  
Is in itself almost an act,—  
Being chasm-fire and cataract  
Of the soul's utter depths unsealed.*

Gentle and retiring, he could not partake of the boisterous student life with any degree of pleasure; dissatisfied with his position, he found refuge in the writings of poets whose philosophies coincided too nicely with his own.

In 1829 Schumann left Leipzig for the University of Heidelberg. He and another music-loving student were wont to gather at the house of a professor in the university, and it was here that Schumann first met Wieck, the father of the girl who was to be his wife and the most devoted and accomplished interpreter of his works for the pianoforte. About this time eight works for the piano, a quartet, and a number of songs came from Schumann's pen.

After three years of study of the law, Schumann, finding quite intolerable the prospect of still more years within university walls, decided to abandon all else for music. His mother, after much persuasion, agreed to permit him to do so if the consent of his former instructor, Wieck, could be obtained. This worthy man advised the youth—Schumann was but twenty years old—that if, after serious self-examination, he felt that music was truly his *métier*, there was nothing to do but devote himself to it wholeheartedly. This Schumann did.

After leaving Heidelberg, he resumed his study of the piano with Wieck, but unfortunately after a year's work was forced to give up his playing. Eager to attain a perfect technique in the shortest time, he had devised a mechanical arrangement which he expected would aid him in developing digital dexterity. By means of this device one of the fingers was held back while the others practiced exercises. The result of using it was that the tendons of the right hand were strained and for some time the member was powerless. Eventually Schumann recovered the use of the hand, but his ambition to become a great concert pianist was made forever impossible. The happier effect of this unfortunate occurrence was that Schumann was practically forced to rely entirely upon his ability as a composer if he was to continue a musical career.

It was during this period of his life Schumann became interested in Clara Wieck, then a child of only thirteen years, but already giving evidence of pronounced talent as a pianist. The composer in his writings betrays even at this early time feelings which he did not himself recognize until some years later; Clara Wieck was one day to be Clara Schumann, and the composer's devoted partner in the task of presenting his work to the world.

At this time, although Weber, Beethoven, and Schubert had been dead but a few years, and Mendelssohn's star was high in its orbit, music was not in its happiest state. The compositions of the day were trivial, or superficially brilliant, or hopelessly mediocre, yet the public taste tolerated them; they were received with complacency. Such a condition of affairs was irritating to Schumann and certain friends, who, not confident of their ability to effect a reformation through their own musical productions, decided on a journal of criticism as the best means of gaining their end—the purification and elevation of musical composition. So, in

1834, the *New Journal of Music* made its appearance, and for ten years thereafter, under the editorial guidance and with the energetic participation of Schumann, the *Journal* carried on its mission, with notable results.

In 1840 the marriage of Robert Alexander Schumann and Clara Wieck was celebrated at a little church near Leipzig. This event marked a sudden and radical change in the life of the composer. He devoted himself to composition, withdrew more and more from the world, his affections and his interests centering in his wife and in the beloved children who were the delight of his later days. Clara Schumann dedicated herself to the noble task of standing between her sensitive, retiring, and sometimes irritable husband and the world without; of interpreting to the world the works of his hand and heart and intelligence. Never did her devotion falter; never did she grow weary of her task, and the deep joy of his married life must have had a profound effect upon Schumann's artistic career.

Schumann's compositions were evolved with ease and frequency now for a number of years. The composer seemed to have opened up new springs of thought and imagination, and a wealth of musical ideas flowed from him in full volume and with startling rapidity. The mental strain of producing in such voluminous quantity soon began to tell on him. He had never been robust, and now signs of breakdown gradually appeared. A change of scene was found necessary, and the Schumanns moved from Leipzig to Dresden. Several important works, notably the C major Symphony, were produced, and Schumann's health improved to such a degree that during the year 1849 alone he wrote thirty compositions. His manner of living became less circumscribed; he did some teaching, occupied a chair in the Conservatory of Leipzig, and later held the position of *Kapellmeister* at Düsseldorf, where he was very happy and active for a time.

It was not long before the nervous troubles that had beset him at intervals throughout his life reappeared, manifesting themselves among other ways in a marked desire for seclusion, and certain eccentricities of conduct in public. Schumann was himself conscious of his infirmity, which indeed closely bordered on insanity; and he expressed the wish that he be placed in an asylum. One day in February, 1854, he left his home, quietly and unobserved, and threw himself from a bridge into the Rhine. Some boatmen rescued him, and he was carried home. A period of perfect mental clearness followed this unhappy incident, and the composer finished the variations which had been begun just before his attempted suicide. But the end was not far off. The last two years were spent in a private asylum near Bonn, where, as Sir George Grove writes, "gradually the pinions of his soul drooped and fell," and in the arms of his loved wife he died on July 29, 1856. He was buried at Bonn, where a monument was erected over his grave in 1880.





## Symphony No. 1 in B-flat major

THE title, "Spring" Symphony, so often attached to this music, has more justification than the usual fanciful names that somehow become associated with musical works. Schumann wrote the symphony in the springtime of his life, during that marvelously productive period immediately following his marriage. He wrote to a friend that it was inspired, in part, by "that vernal longing which influences men until they grow aged, an emotion which surprises them every year." On another occasion he declared that, in the conception of the idea for the symphony, he had been influenced by a poem, of Adolph Böttger, upon a vernal theme. Finally, Schumann himself temporarily entitled the work "Spring" Symphony, and added subtitles of appropriate character. These facts must not, however, lead us into assuming that this is a "program" symphony, for the composer finally abandoned the titles, and wrote, "I do not wish to portray, to paint, but I believe firmly that the period at which the symphony was created influenced its form and character, and shaped it as it is."

The symphony was first performed, under the direction of Mendelssohn, on March 31, 1841, at Leipzig. It was an immediate, almost a sensational, success. The first American performance was given at Boston, by the Musical Fund Society, on January 15, 1853.

### *First Movement*

Schumann, the critic, was responsible for the most apt of musical epigrams: "The best discourse upon music is silence." He must have meant that one should not, in clinical fashion, dissect music to discover its meaning. Surely he was not wrong in this. The ultimate end of music is the creation of beauty. A symphony, a flower, a sculpture is not beautiful with its anatomy laid bare. It is not detail of form and structure that normally stimulates our imagination and emotion, but the effect of the whole, wrought directly upon the heart through the senses. It matters little, except to the musicologist, that this movement is in sonata form, that it is preceded by a short introduction, out of which grows the principal theme; or that the subsidiary theme is given to woodwinds (clarinet and bassoon).

What does matter is this: here a sensitive, intelligent, and articulate man communicates to us the joys and longings and mysteries of a manhood realized and fulfilled; and he communicates through the one most sure and most expressive, direct, implicit medium . . . music. The Cloud Spirit, "dark and pregnant with storms," of which the poet Böttger sang, appears but briefly upon the bright horizon outlined here, and it is by no means difficult to observe Schumann's instructions to "read between the lines, how everywhere it begins to grow green, and how a butterfly takes wing."

The mysterious, pale light of springtime illumines many a passage in the

movement, and many are briefly darkened by swift-flying clouds, laden not with savage storms but with sweet rains. There are indeed touches of sadness, the sadness and nameless pain that must accompany birth and growth; but the music is always exalted, always filled with vitality, and there are climaxes of magnificent impetuosity. The movement is graceful and symmetrical as a young tree—and, at the final climax, touched with a glitter like the early morning sun upon quivering, dew-wet leaves.

If the details interest you:

The second theme begins in a strange key, but ends in the conventional tone of the dominant. Woodwinds presently fortify it, and the strings, richly figured, add contrasting color and movement. Development and exposition bring constant transformation of both first and second themes, with wonderful play of light and shade and interesting transfers of the thematic material from one section of the orchestra to another. The tempo relaxes from the vigorous allegro from time to time, but ultimately returns to it toward the close of the coda. Here the brass projects brilliant missiles of tone, and a series of bold chords, edged with the hard glitter of the triangle, ends the movement.

### *Second Movement*

Youth is not ended by union with the perfect mate, nor is maturity thereby accomplished. The "long, long thoughts" of a boy must return now and again to the young man, to make his new burdens momentarily heavy, to make him wistful for boyhood joys. Perhaps it is in this mood that the second movement reveals itself. The single basic theme is a melody for the violins, poignantly sweet and nostalgic, sung against the subdued voices of the other strings. Now the cello's passionate tones repeat it; now the bittersweet tones of the oboe combine with the suave utterance of the horn in the same pensive utterance, while wandering strings trace around it an intricate figuration. Presently it dies away, and trombones give forth a more determined thought, repeated by the strings, and leading to the

### *Third Movement*

The last melodic idea of the second movement becomes the inspiration of the third. It is as if the man suddenly asserted himself, putting away the things of youth with a bold assertion of vigor and purpose. The theme is delivered with great boldness.

It is interesting, historically, to note here the combination of the old-fashioned minuet-style third movement, *à la* Haydn, with certain elements of the Beethoven scherzo. The first part of this section is rather stylized and formal, the short divisions repeating and returning in quite the classical manner. By comparison, the latter section of the movement is light and free and playful. It moves with great

rapidity; instead of the stately one-two-three of the minuet we find a busy agitation, crisp staccato scales, a romantic interlude, and finally, almost as if Beethoven had written it, a whimsical and mischievous return of the scherzo spirit that chases romance and formality off into the distance.

*Fourth Movement*

*"Yet ah! that Spring should vanish with the rose,  
—That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close."*

Schumann felt that the last movement is "the farewell of spring." Such a farewell is wistful and sad, as the passing of youth must always be. Yet spring's frivolities are soon forgotten, unregretted, in the blazing noonday of summer. The earth grows big with life, as life grows great with living; the year's full stature, like that of man, is a thing for proud rejoicing, not for tears.

The music here suggests both the passing of the springtime and lusty joy and thanksgiving for summer's coming. Bold chords in full orchestra inaugurate a term of jubilation, involving a brisk tune tossed back and forth between first and second violins, a jaunty air for bassoons and oboes, and swift syncopated scales for the nimble strings. At moments there is a kind of hasty piety in the air, and again, a sweetly sad utterance of woodwinds that sigh briefly for departed youth and vernal joys. Schumann's "farewell of spring," if the closing measures of the movement may be taken as an indication of its temper, is also a warm, a buoyant, and exalted welcoming to summer.



Symphony No. 2 in C major

IF THE period at which it was composed influenced the character of the First Symphony of Schumann, the converse is true in the case of the Second. The composer himself has written down the fact that while he worked on this music, he was suffering greatly from physical disorders, and indeed, he says that he deliberately occupied himself with the exacting labors of composition that he might be distracted from his pain.

Surely there is no reflection of the invalid's petulance or weakness in this deep and sturdy music. Apart from the slow movement, there is perhaps a degree less of the feeling of romance which we associate so often with Schumann's music; but there is power and muscularity; there is vigor and assertiveness; there is, on the whole, such aptness and such pointed expression that the music, regardless of the circumstances surrounding its creation, ranks with any that Schumann wrote.

The symphony as played today is not in the form that was presented, at a concert in Leipzig under the baton of Felix Mendelssohn, November 5, 1846. Schumann was not satisfied with the work, and extensively revised it, particularly as regards orchestration; and it was not played in its present form until some years after the performance of the original version.

### *First Movement*

There is a firmness and unity in the texture of the whole work, which arises in part from the fact that Schumann sought to integrate the four movements by thematic and structural relationship and continuity. Some persistent thought or image must have been deep in his mind, for the opening theme of the introduction to the first movement can be discerned as a vital element in each of the movements; and it has within it the germ from which springs the chief motive of the first movement.

Schumann himself reported, not long before the completion of this work, that he continually imagined the sound of trumpets in the key of C. We cannot conjecture what that strange signal meant, but as the introduction begins, we hear the "trumpets in C" themselves, sounding with other brasses, sounding with serious voices a noble proclamation. A more sentimental, a gentler utterance is the answer of the woodwinds, and it is wise to note both these ideas, for we shall encounter them again as the music progresses. The introduction leads swiftly to the main body of the movement, and quickly two themes are presented for development. The first is assertive and dynamic and strong; the second, touched with a certain gentleness. Since Schumann declared that the first movement reflects the struggle between his aching body and his active mind, perhaps it is not unreasonable to regard these two themes, and their development in contrast, as indicative of the composer's pain and his battle with it.

A long-held note in the basses (to be technical, a "pedal point") leads to a return of the principal theme of the movement, and, in the concluding section, once again the trumpets are sounded in C as at the beginning, but with a new and curious force and directness.

### *Second Movement*

The gaiety of Schumann is rarely reckless, and never abandoned; but in this delightful and rhythmically fascinating movement he makes one of his closest approaches to a complete outpouring of playful happiness. Yet even here there is a remembrance of conflict and of opposing ideas, expressed both by contrary rhythms and by opposing melodic lines. Again, there are two sections, differing in character much as the two themes of the first movement, in the trio, or middle part of the

scherzo. Yet, toward the close, the ringing assertion of horns and trumpets again reminds us of the underlying and unifying thought of the symphony.

### *Third Movement*

Here is the Schumann that we know and love best—the dreamer, the romanticist, the lover. If this lovely music does not speak of passionate devotion, of sentiment exposed in the inmost recesses of the heart, then no music ever has so spoken. And, though the music is touched with melancholy, it is never *too* sweet, never *too* sad; but simply expressive and beautiful. Here is a glowing web, woven of melodies. The first comes in the tremulous and eager voices of the strings; the oboe penetrates with its peculiarly pointed tone, and presently comes the bassoon, whose sad utterance at this point paradoxically gave Schumann much pleasure. The upper string voices continue in accompaniment, and another melody moves through the basses.

A second theme is entrusted to strings and trumpet and horn, and, after its close, the loving melody that disengaged itself from the orchestra at the beginning returns to haunt us again.

### *Fourth Movement*

We should not always think of Schumann as gentle and romantic—as almost a sentimentalist, restrained by artistic politeness and convention. The fact is, he often is exactly so; but there are times, and this movement is one of them, when his music certainly lacks nothing of vigor, of virility and aggressiveness. The cycle of fashion and of public taste has but lately returned his symphonies, with any degree of frequency, to the concert hall. In certain respects—in his decorum and restraint and poise, in grace and suavity—he resembles (musically if not chronologically) the “gay ’90’s,” yet as a profound and intelligent artist he undertook, and sometimes betrayed, wrestlings with the spirit which provoke stirring music. Perhaps we were not in the mood for Schumann a few years ago; and perhaps the more recent and more difficult days have made us turn more strongly toward his music, and welcome it because it can lay hold of and move us, without frenzies and without hysteria.

A swift scale passage, which is to be used now and again during the movement, brings us quickly to the bold emphatic utterance of the principal subject. The lower strings, viola and cello, together with clarinet and bassoon, present another thematic idea in the idiom of the slow movement. The scale passage that introduced the movement is again employed as a kind of connective tissue between the two chief subjects, and the first subject is heard again, and for the last time in the movement. There is a climax of great power and enthusiasm, succeeded by the “still small voice” of the oboe in a new musical thought, which the late

Lawrence Gilman, eminent critic of the *New York Herald Tribune*, traced back to a string quartet composed by Schumann some years previous to the completion of the present work. The oboe's theme is the concluding thought of the movement but Schumann will not have done with it until it is broadened and expanded into a magnificently triumphant utterance, bringing to us, finally, the noble pronouncement of the brass which is the keynote of this symphony.



## Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major

[*"Rhenish" Symphony*]

IF THE historians do not err, Schumann, like many composers, was a poor conductor; and this fact, combined with the thin and often inept orchestration of the Third Symphony, would doubtless account for the fact that the work was unenthusiastically received (except by the loyal Clara Schumann) when it was first presented, Robert Schumann conducting, at Düsseldorf, February 6, 1851. Its popularity on concert programs today is not to be accounted for by any increase in powers of discernment on the part of modern audiences, but by the fact that the work has been reorchestrated; almost, in places, rewritten, by intelligent and sympathetic musicians. They perceived the latent beauty of the work, and have done their best to discover it to us. By far the most successful version of the symphony is that arranged by Frederick Stock, conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; and it is this version which we usually hear in public performances.

The name "Rhenish" is implicitly authorized by the composer, who said that he wished to convey through it some of the spiritual atmosphere of the Rhineland, and who, it is recorded, was inspired in the writing of the fourth movement after witnessing the installation of a cardinal in the cathedral of Cologne.

### *First Movement*

The rhythmic figure in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time which underlies the first statement of the opening theme (full orchestra, at the beginning of the movement) is essentially the vitalizing principle of this section of the work, and can be felt almost always through the elaborations of the thematic material. After the first bold proclamation, the lower strings take to themselves the melodic line of the opening subject, while above them the violins weave a melody of their own. The nobility and vigor in which the movement began is somewhat modified presently, with the introduction of a new subject, reflective and sad, by clarinet and oboe, with responses by strings and woodwind. With these two ideas in mind, the composer builds before

our eyes and ears a beautifully articulated structure, full of contrast yet almost perfectly balanced, inclining slightly but happily in the direction of the proud and powerful motive with which the music began. Yet at the very moment when it would seem this noble expression is to dominate and triumph, there are fascinating anticipations and suspensions and delays, until with all their jubilant sonority the horns put forth a brilliant version, conclusively establishing the brighter spirits in a position to conquer. The concluding passages rise to a climax of tremendous power.

### *Second Movement*

The second movement approaches the form and character of the conventional scherzo more closely than any other section of the symphony. Aside from its lightness and engaging rhythms it has several features of musical interest. It employs, as its basic theme, a version of an old German drinking song; in the modern orchestration by Mr. Stock, we hear at least two instruments which were not in the original score—*cor anglais* and triangle. The *Rheinweinlied* is sung by cellos and violas, and is answered by a gay tune in counterpoint.

The middle section of the movement modifies the prevailing jollity somewhat. It begins with the theme in *cor anglais* (in the original score, clarinet). The first part of the scherzo is repeated, but in much more colorful instrumental apparel, accented with fiery sparks from the triangle and the tinkling of the tambourine.

### *Third Movement*

Schumann is definitely himself in this movement—quiet, romantic, full of tenderness and restrained passion. Yet the Stock version of the symphony takes as great liberties with this movement as with any of the five; not only in orchestration, but in certain alterations of the melodic line. Mr. Stock's version certainly improves the music as regards fullness of tone.

A melody of notable smoothness and lovely contour opens the movement, in woodwind voices, clarinet predominating. The *cor anglais* is employed in the modern orchestration to present, with strings, the second theme—another flowing melody. Upon these two little songs Schumann develops a sentimental interlude of appealing tenderness.

### *Fourth Movement*

This music has often been called "the cathedral scene"; and not without some justification, for Schumann originally labeled it, "In the character of an accompaniment to a solemn ceremony." The rites attendant upon the elevation of a cardinal, which took place in the magnificent cathedral at Cologne, and which Schumann witnessed, impressed him deeply and inspired this sonorous and dignified music.

Trombones and horns announce the organlike motive; it becomes the firm basis upon which the composer erects an edifice of tone, as elaborated, lofty, and dignified as a Gothic arch. Powerful utterances of trombones are faintly echoed in woodwind and strings. The movement is intimately connected, thematically and otherwise, with the

### *Fifth Movement*

into which the music passes without pause. This section may represent the festivals of the people in honor of the installation of their exalted ecclesiastic. It is swift and joyous and brilliant. In the original version there are suggestions of folk music of the Rhineland, which Mr. Stock has somewhat emphasized in his rearrangement; there are also references to the preceding movement and its ecclesiastical motive. A climax of great brilliance and majesty is developed, the movement ending in a festive mood.



## Symphony No. 4 in D minor

IN THE version in which it is usually presented today, this is the last as well as the greatest of Schumann's symphonies. Chronologically, it is the second of his works in this form. Schumann himself was dissatisfied with it, especially on the ground that the orchestration lacked sonority and color, and for this reason, he withdrew it after its first performance in 1841. Ten years later he reorchestrated it, and it was played, under the composer's direction, at Düsseldorf, March 3, 1853. Meanwhile he had completed the two works now known as the Second and Third ("Rhenish") Symphonies, and the one which we are considering now was published as his Fourth.

The Fourth is the least "polite" and most passionate utterance of Schumann in the symphonic form. By no means lacking in those romantic and melodious qualities which have endeared his music to generations of audiences, the Fourth often exhibits a vehemence, an intensity, and power for which we look in vain to the other symphonies. It is not spectacular, but it is strong and sane and sweet. It is not an ideal vehicle for the virtuoso conductor, but for one who possesses insight and sincerity, it is eminently satisfying.

### *First Movement*

By the device of thematic relationship, the composer sought to achieve in this music a coherence and unity more intimate than usual in the conventional sym-

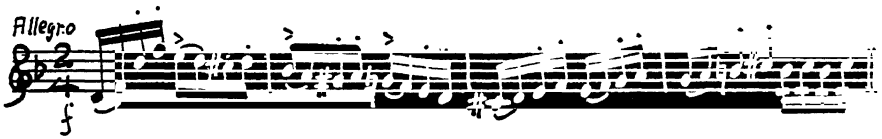


phony of four movements. It is intended that the movements shall be played without pause; indeed, Schumann himself, in the title to the work, mentioned that it is "in one movement." Various editions nevertheless divide the work into three, four, and even five sections, using the composer's subtitles: introduction, allegro, romanze, scherzo, and finale. Since the introduction and allegro are logically indivisible they shall be considered here as one movement.

The somberness and restraint of the introduction are expressed through the important first theme, which is heard at once in the strings against a coldly perfect



octave. Almost from the first note there is a continuous accession of power and emphasis, growing to passionate utterance as all the strings are involved, searching the upper and lower registers for tones sufficiently expressive for their message. A quickened pace, and still more exigent evocations of the orchestra's powers, bring about a brief but tense moment of anticipation, and the movement proper—the allegro—begins.



The basic idea of the movement is expressed through a theme given at once to the violins—a flashing figure that darts swiftly about amidst the emphatic chords of the full orchestra; chords which seem to give it impetus, and from which it rebounds continually with undiminished force and with clearer accent. There is no formal treatment of the thematic material, nor is there any other subject in the movement, so conspicuously placed or developed, as to entitle it to the importance of a conventional second theme. The first subject alone seems to contain within itself possibilities of development and variation which are quite satisfying, and to the free exploitation of these possibilities the movement is devoted. The driving rhythm rests, now and again, on strong octaves delivered forte by wind instruments; then, after a moment's pause, it is again in fierce and restless motion. There is, presently, a brief lyric passage, against which the nervous fluctuations of the first subject are presented—but it is merely an episode, quickly overcome by the impetuous leaping and swift rhythms of the original theme and its developments.

*Second Movement*[*Romanze*]

The grave sentiment, the romantic melancholy so often disclosed in Schumann's music, are beautifully evident in the second movement. There is a sad little melody, sung by oboe and cello, against a string accompaniment, pizzicato.



Here are both resignation and complaint, and, as if to nullify both, there appears, suddenly and surprisingly, the more passionate theme of the introduction; richly harmonized, and put forward in the string choir's warmest tones. A solo violin presently wanders with feminine grace through a curved and descending figure of more cheerful emotional content; but the plaintive song of the oboe and cello return at the end.

*Third Movement*[*Scherzo*]

The scherzo is the only movement of this symphony which is in conventional form. Its spirit, however, is not precisely as playful as the title scherzo would imply. Though the rhythm is strong and lively, the gaiety seems calculated and forced. But neither is there morbidity or cynicism. The downright and forceful accents maintained by timpani seem to keep the music moving away from reflectiveness, or seriousness, or cryptic meanings. The trio, the contrasting section of the movement, brings a definitely cheerful spirit to the music, and a bright touch of lyric grace in contrast to the heavy humor of the first part. After the formal re-presentation of the main portion of the movement, there is a long passage of declining power, which leads without pause into the

*Fourth Movement*[*Finale*]

The final movement recalls the fact that Schumann first conceived this music as a kind of fantasia, unified and coherent. The extensive use in the concluding section of the work of themes and material from the first movement is significant. Here they are transformed and even glorified; the former restraints are joyously cast aside, and we have in this movement a powerful, a virile, and optimistic ex-

pression. In rhythm and in dynamics, Schumann here exacts a great measure of the orchestra's resources, and accomplishes a revelation of his own powers quite unique in his symphonic music.

After the diminuendo in which the previous movement ended, there are surprising recollections, in the violins, of the main theme of the first movement. The brass, too, projects powerfully a phrase derived from the opening section of the symphony, and it is upon this phrase that the present movement is largely founded. There is a quickening of the tempo, a stubbornly held chord in full orchestra, and the main section of the movement begins with further reference to the first part of the symphony and the introduction of new thematic ideas, partly in strings, partly in woodwind. These are magnificently developed in a broad and free style; strong and often syncopated rhythms urge always onward; fierce outbursts of the full orchestra punctuate long and eloquent and vehement musical sentences. The concluding passages have a vitality and abandon that leave no question of the joy and exaltation that brought forth this music.



## Concerto in A minor for Piano and Orchestra

THIS concerto was not written as a complete entity. The first movement was finished at Leipzig during the summer of 1841, and was called "Phantasie in A minor." Not until 1845 were the second and third movements written. Clara Wieck Schumann, as the foremost exponent and ardent champion of her husband's work, had the honor of first playing the concerto as a whole in public. She played it from manuscript at a concert in Dresden in the winter of 1845, the composer having been unsuccessful in his efforts to get the work published at that time. It is worthy of note that the movements of the concerto then bore the directions *allegro affetuoso*, *andantino*, and *rondo*. At present the movements are designated by the words *allegro*, *intermezzo-andantino grazioso*, and *allegro vivace*.

Perhaps the first really notable performance of the work was given at Vienna, on New Year's Day, 1847, when Mme Schumann undertook the solo part and the composer himself conducted the orchestra.

Although the orchestral part of the concerto cannot be said to be heavily scored, you will find beautiful tonal contrasts, impressive volume and sonority, and accurate balance between the piano and the orchestra.

### *First Movement*

In the distant days when Rome was the artistic as well as the political capital of the world, the art of the orator was looked upon as one of the noblest, and from

the assiduous study given it by the patrician youth under the tutelage of masters, the formula for a good oration has come down to us. That is, to speak so as to render the audience "*attentos, benevolos, et dociles*"; first, to gain their interest and attention; second, to engender in them a disposition favorable to the orator and his cause, and finally, to make them "teachable," open-minded to the substance of the argument.

Here in Schumann's great concerto we have two remarkable musical analogies to the classical oration. One appears in the concerto as a whole; another in the first movement considered as a complete entity. So nearly perfect is the parallel that the terms descriptive of the parts of the oration might be applied with almost equal descriptiveness to this music of Schumann. Surely the formal yet forceful and compelling prelude, delivered emphatically by piano and orchestra, is a skillful exordium that instantly commands attention and in the same moment begets an attitude of anticipation. Then, cleverly articulated with the last chord of the prelude—indeed, growing directly out of it as the gentle woodwind separates itself from the rest of the orchestra—comes the thesis of the movement. It is recognized by every German as the "*Leben Sie wohl*" (fare you well), a touching phrase in Schubert's *Wanderer's Nightsong*; it was used with similar significance by Mendelssohn in his overture, *A Calm Sea and a Prosperous Voyage*; Beethoven introduced it in the sonata, *Farewell, Absence, and Return*, and Wagner employed it, first as the "Salvation" motive in *The Flying Dutchman*, and later, with such dramatic force, as a motive of the knightly Lohengrin himself. The solo piano speaks the antithesis, which is almost an exact duplication of the first thematic phrase, and immediately orchestra and solo instrument move on in sweeping passages to the development and exposition of the melodious subject. So would a Cicero, perhaps, carry his audience on the pinions of his first flight of eloquence into his high plane of thought.



With piano and orchestra alternately to the forefront, the music sweeps onward now. The solo instrument has some exquisite passages. Presently, in slightly changed form, the first subject of the movement reappears in the relative major key of C, and a new development, in swiftly altering modulations, unfolds under the leadership of the piano like a bud opening in the morning sun.

Gradually the bright orchestral colors fade, and presently piano and clarinet

become engaged in a brief and pensive dialogue. Upon this slender thread of sound the orchestra rears a bulk of varicolored tone, growing more massive and gaining impetus from its own increasing weight as it moves toward its completion. At the end of this part of the movement a gentler phrase appears—not the final word, but a promise of further adumbration of the composer's idea.

A lyric mood was vaguely suggested in the first portion of the movement, yet the songlike melody that flows so sweetly from the piano as the second part begins appears rather surprisingly. At first hearing, it seems wholly foreign to the subject matter of the movement as given out in the first section; nevertheless, if you listen closely, you will find it but a new version of the first thesis of this part of the concerto. Even its rhythm, disguised though it may be by the arpeggio figure in the left hand, differs but little from that of the first pensive phrase pronounced by the woodwind immediately following the prelude. It is as if one looked at a finely faceted jewel, wondering at the many-colored refractions of light within its marvelous structure; though it is touched by but a single white ray, it showers forth color rich and varied. So with the basic theme as it is touched by genius; it reveals itself in almost infinitely varied lights and colors.

It is largely by means of such variety, and such contrast, that the A minor Concerto maintains its hold upon the interest of both audiences and great performers. The concerto form is a temptation to the composer to be mathematical, scholarly, pedantic—and therefore dull. In its beauty, form and structure play so large a part that it is difficult for anyone of less artistic stature than a genius to remember that the appeal of music is first of all to the senses and the emotions. But in Schumann we find a true master composer, to whom music is at once a sensuous and an intellectual pleasure; the happy result is that his music pleases even the determinedly intellectual while it delights the less thoroughly tutored music lover.

The final section presents a portion of the first movement which corresponds to the peripeteia of a Greek drama. The basic scheme of the movement has been unfolded; its elements have reached their fullest development and each has been allotted its logical degree of prominence; opposing figures have been weighed and balanced; the denouement of this part of the concerto is imminent. Nor is it long delayed. A contemplative moment, with the piano giving out a melodious subject, and repeating it with rich ornaments in arpeggio form, gradually attracts various sections of the orchestra until the full ensemble rises to the most powerful measures of the entire movement. Timpani and piano vigorously maintain the rhythm of these closing measures, while wind and strings speak with a swiftly rising inflection. A glittering arpeggio, touching the silvery upper register of the piano and descending again into emphatic octaves in the bass, ends this section of the first movement.

The elaborate cadenza written by Schumann for the final section of this movement is not the conventional display of musical fireworks but rather partakes

of the more serious, more intellectual, and not less beautiful character of thematic exposition and variation. Nevertheless, there is an exigent demand for manual dexterity. The piano, solo, very deliberately plays with a dainty figure, turning it this way and that, with right hand and left engaging in a kind of duet; presently a trill, as bright and live as quicksilver, spurts from the upper section of the instrument. Against the flickering iridescences of this brilliant figure, the first subject of the movement is introduced in the left hand, but only for a moment is this reminiscence allowed us. There is a rapid succession of scales and arpeggios from the piano, and at length a final trill which in a moment engages the orchestra in the full swing of the concluding passages of the movement.

An analogy between the concerto and the classical oration was suggested at the opening of the work; it applies quite as accurately to the concluding part of the movement. Here we have a masterly peroration, a recapitulation of preceding ideas so ingeniously constructed as to have all the interest of new and different thoughts; we have even a final fillip to our interest in the new figure introduced very near the end. The four concluding chords rouse nerves and intellect to even higher pitch, and unequivocally mark the consummation of the composer's plan for the first movement.

### *Second Movement*

#### [*Intermezzo*]

It is interesting in connection with Schumann's use of an intermezzo as the second movement of the A minor Concerto to inquire into the origin of this charming form; it is surprising to find that it was in its earliest stages of development, not a musical, but a dramatic device. It was an entertainment, of cheerful and amusing character, introduced between the acts of a serious drama or grand opera, either to give the persons of the drama an opportunity to relax after intense emotional activity, or to allow the same respite to the wrought-up nerves of the audience; usually it accomplished both purposes, and sometimes served merely as a distraction while large scenic or dramatic effects were being prepared. Its presence can be detected in every dramatic form from the Roman comedy and the medieval miracle play to early Italian drama, the Passion Play of Oberammergau, and such comparatively modern works as Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and grand opera. Music soon won its place in the intermezzo, and in fact that place became a dominating one; from the simple hymn or madrigal introduced into the miracle play, the intermezzo developed into a more or less elaborate instrumental composition.

Schumann, and other composers who introduced the intermezzo into their works, did so for a reason analogous to that which brought the device into the structure of the ancient drama—to allow both musicians and audience a period of relaxation after the tense emotional pitch reached in the preceding, and to prepare

for it in succeeding, movements. Here in the concerto, the first movement ends rather suddenly after intellect and emotions have been spurred to intense activity and sensitiveness; there is a distinct "shock" in the final chords. To continue in the same strain would be to fatigue the sensibilities to the point of exhaustion; therefore, in order to relax the nerves of the audience, and prepare them for the final movement; to enable the musicians to recoup their energy and restore their emotional capacity, this intermezzo, suave, dainty, almost playful, comes gratefully as a cool breeze on a fevered brow.

It opens with a fragment of dialogue between the piano and the string section of the orchestra, gentle, with swelling interjections from the orchestra as a whole. A wistful phrase in strings and woodwind interrupts this colloquy at intervals, but it appears again, the solo instrument and orchestra repeating the phrase and making of it a miniature fugue. There is an interlude, with exclamatory phrases from the orchestra and a leisurely scale clambering up from the lower section of the keyboard. A distinct melody appears in the strings, and it becomes the theme of the larger portion of the movement, with the piano supplying ornamental accompaniment. Close to the end the opening figures of the intermezzo, with a lingering on delicious chords from the piano, are resumed and maintained to the final measures.

### *Third Movement*

In the music of the preceding movements, Schumann has given to the piano a variety of utterance. It has been a lyrical, a melancholy, even a prophetic voice, but it has not as yet—with the exception of a few chords in the very introduction—spoken with the commanding sonority of which it is capable. The electric brilliance and agility of the instrument, its potent and sometimes brassy lower and middle registers—these have been reserved, cannily enough, for the final movement. And here at the very beginning the composer imperiously calls them forth. The vigorous, the elastically rhythmic chords that appear at the beginning of the movement are but the first response to his command; mightier pronouncements, brilliant ringing clusters of notes, and dexterous passages are to follow. The thematic phrase from which they proceed is this:



These chords in turn become the first important subject of the movement. Piano and orchestra swing into a lively and vigorous rhythm, suggesting a hunting

song. Succeeding passages give the pianist an uncommon opportunity for display, with pearly scales and decorative figures of ravishing tonal beauty. Shifting rhythms and tone colors come now in swift procession; tones whose clarity and color seem to float on the air like iridescent vapors, drifting and shining in sunlight.

The beauty of the music of Robert Schumann is invariably dependent in a great degree upon tone color. He was not a great master of counterpoint; Schubert surpassed him in melody; other composers wrote more effectively for the orchestra and for the instrumental quartet or trio; still others knew better than did Schumann how to exact from the performer the last measure of technical ability. But he was a master of the pure style and of form, and his music, in the hands of artists whose perceptions and abilities enable them to lay over the perfection of structure a richness and variety of tone color, becomes a thing of inexhaustible beauty and deep delight. Most of all, Schumann was the romanticist; the sensitive, poetic, and sometimes even sentimental artist, who made form and style his servants, not his masters; who made his mastery of technique a means of profound expression, not an end in itself.

Excepting some details of orchestration, the major part of the concluding section of the movement is, in the orchestra, but a repetition of matter that has gone before. There are, however, added difficulties for the pianist, and his mastery of them is a delight to perceive. Careful listening to the piano part will disclose almost hidden, but nevertheless intricate, passages in which the technique of the solo artist is subjected to imperative and exacting demands. There are groups of six notes, played at flashing speed, with an even more rapid mordent ornamenting the first note of the group; there are whole measures of trilling in the right hand against melody or chord in the left; there are crashing chords that must be dominant over the orchestra's forte; there are imposed upon the pianist those tests of his skill which only the master composer can devise.

Finally, there is the atmosphere of joyous abandon which permeates the entire coda. Heretofore the composer has written, as it were, under restraints, with devotion to formal perfection and grace, with passion, though present, subordinated to the more intellectual qualities. Now, as the work approaches its end, the feelings which so carefully have been kept in check burst forth almost unrestrained. Yet, though they come to the fore, Schumann does not permit them to shake the firm outlines of structure which he had so carefully erected and followed throughout the building of the concerto; so to the end he pursues the ideal of beautiful form while laying on the more superficial, yet necessary, beauty of color.





## Concerto in D minor for Violin and Orchestra

THE history of this important work is clouded by time and confused by contradictions. Claims and counterclaims, assertions and denials, by almost everyone who has ever had anything to do with the work, have mounted to such a mass of bewildering detail that it may require years to collate and estimate all the facts in the case. Regardless of the welter of information and misinformation, however, it is reasonable to accept two conclusions: first, that a major work by a great composer should have been repressed by a great executant and his heirs is a strange thing and of dubious propriety, regardless of the reasons for it; second, the music lovers of the world should have an opportunity to hear and judge such a work for themselves.

The more romantic commentators and the press generally have referred to this work as the "lost" concerto. It has never been lost. Upon its completion by the composer, October 3, 1853, it was dispatched at once to the violinist Joachim, in the form of violin part and piano score, and ten days later the completed orchestral score was in the hands of the violinist, together with a letter, from which we quote:

"Here is something new. It will give you a picture of a sincere earnestness behind which often reigns a happy mood. Often I saw you in my imagination when I wrote the concerto. Tell me everything, of the parts that are '*unausführbarkeit schmekt*' (seem unplayable)." . . .

Schumann wished nothing more than an early performance of the concerto, but, through circumstances never entirely explained, he was denied this final reward of the creative musician. Joachim, though he frequently referred to the work with words of praise, procrastinated so far as a public performance was concerned; but he frequently played it in private. Later he would not play it at all, and finally refused even to discuss it. But in a letter to his biographer, Moser, he wrote "certain pages (how could it be otherwise?) testify to the deep sensibility of the composer, this by contrast unhappily makes the weaker parts more evident." And again, he spoke of the second movement as "rich, beautiful in sentiment, truly typical of Schumann"; again referred to the concerto as "deep, characteristic, and full of feeling," "spirited," and "not lacking in interesting details." Finally he wrote, nevertheless, that in worshipful memory of Schumann, he "could not allow the publication of the work, however much desired by the public." It is interesting to compare his attitude with that of Brahms, who wrote to Clara Schumann on the question of posthumous publication of her husband's works, "All that we do is but the work of human hands. The world likes to see the weaknesses of its great men, and sooner or later it is bound to discover them. . . ." As one commentator adds, "The world demands likewise to know each particular of their strength, and in the leisurely course of time that discovery too is bound to come."

On the death of Joachim in 1907, the Berlin State Library acquired the

manuscript of the Schumann violin concerto, under an agreement that it should not be published until one hundred years should have elapsed after the death of the composer (1956). The manuscript never "disappeared," never was "lost"; its existence was known, and known familiarly, to Herr Georg Schünemann, head of the music department of the Berlin State Library, ever since its acquisition. He, acquainted with the prohibitions that had been imposed by the Joachim family, naturally did not promote the idea of performance or publication. But Herr Wilhelm Strecker, head of the publishing firm of B. Schott's Söhne, at Mainz, became interested, and in April, 1937, submitted to Yehudi Menuhin, photostatic copies of the manuscript. Menuhin expressed tremendous enthusiasm for the score and his eagerness to perform it, but insisted that the *Urtext* (original edition) be used. Permission for publication and performance was obtained, and a definitive performance was the ultimate result. At this point it might be well to interpolate the following facts: The first public performance of the work was given by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Georg Kulenkampf as soloist, under the direction of Karl Boehm, November 26, 1937. Yehudi Menuhin gave the first American performance with piano rather than orchestra, in New York, December 6, 1937. The first performance with orchestra in America was on December 23, 1937, with Yehudi Menuhin as soloist, and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Vladimir Golschmann; and other performances followed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy conducting, January 21, 1938, and the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York, Georges Enesco conducting, January 27. The work was played by Mr. Menuhin with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky conducting, February 4.

This brief history of the concerto should not be completed without reference to the "spirit messages" supposed to have been received by Yelli d'Aaranyi and her sister Adile Fachiri, both players of the violin, and grandnieces of Joachim. These messages purport to come directly from Robert Schumann, and, according to report, urge the "exhumation of a Schumann work for violin." Another message, ostensibly from Joachim, testified to a radical change of opinion no doubt brought about by association with Robert Schumann in another world, and reports him as admitting that "he had been intolerant, and that it would make him happy were you able to correct a mistake he has committed by refusing to publish such a work." It is asserted that these messages led to the "discovery" of the Schumann concerto, but nothing is said relative to the strange fact that a grandniece of Joachim was apparently unconscious of the existence of an important Schumann manuscript often mentioned in the letters of both Schumann and Joachim and of definite importance to the Joachim family—which letters were entirely accessible to, and probably well known to, the entire group of Joachim descendants.

It must be mentioned here also that the first public performance of the work by Herr Kulenkampf involved modifications in the solo part entirely unauthorized

by the composer; and that the version played by Mr. Menuhin was exactly in accordance with the Schumann manuscript—including all the “unplayable” details; *not* unplayable to a Menuhin!

*First Movement*

*In kräftigem, nicht zu schnellem Tempo*

Schumann was a pianist, wrote for and loved the piano as few composers have done—and composed the concerto first with a piano, rather than an orchestral accompaniment. He thought in terms of the piano, largely; and perhaps here we can point to the source of many of the shortcomings of the violin concerto. It would be ridiculous for anyone to assert that it is without shortcomings; and it would be equally absurd to deny that its genuine merit fails to overbalance these. To begin with, Schumann did not understand the violin thoroughly, as has often been pointed out. He was not able to detach it, in his mind, from the orchestra; and undoubtedly he had no clear and comprehensive idea of its technicalities. When he wrote the great piano concerto, he was on familiar ground, so far as the solo instrument was concerned—and he exploited the tonal and technical resources of the piano with complete understanding. But with the violin, he exacted both too much and too little; and if his concerto for that instrument is not of the stature of the Brahms, the Beethoven, or the Tchaikovsky, it is because in it he asked so often for the impossible, and failed to ask for the practicable.

On the ground of its orchestration one can find fault with the concerto, also; but why must we seek the flaws instead of the undeniable loveliness of this work? Suppose Schumann does pose the solo instrument against a group of strings in the same key and with the same texture; with a great player the importance of such matters disappears, and the great artist “allows for these difficulties and overcomes the technical problems through sheer inspiration and a great desire to carry out the deeper meanings and lofty purposes of Schumann’s music.”

The orchestra produces and projects a strong and aggressive idea, formed mostly of broadly fashioned chords quite definite in rhythm. There is a change to the relative key of F major, in which appears a melody full of tender sentiment and of undulating grace. Presently the violin enters with a difficult section of passage work against the orchestral strings, directed ultimately to a more complete adumbration of the F major subject. The orchestra with the first subject, and the solo violin with the second, elaborate their ideas, but there is little real development—nothing of the complete and elaborate exploration of the thematic material that one would expect of a Beethoven or a Brahms. There is some interesting treatment of woodwinds, notably clarinet and oboe, and—to run ahead of the music a bit—one wishes that here and later Schumann had pursued his ideas in this direction, for too often the orchestra seems so definitely subordinate to his scheme of things that it ceases even to provide contrast with the solo instrument.

*Second Movement**Langsam*

Unquestionably the second movement is not only great music, but Schumann at his romantic and most engaging best. Here is a great song that flows like a river, and an opportunity for the violinist to display his most luscious and warmest tones—an opportunity which the able and sympathetic artist seizes unflinchingly. It would be easy for a violinist of lesser stature to make the movement a sickly outpouring of sentimentality; its phrases, long and broad, tempt the soloist to the lush delights of the G string, with its depth and warmth and richness; but the true interpretation of the movement is to be found, as Menuhin has unerringly perceived, in subtlety of phrase and nice adjustment of shading. Full and voluptuous tone is, indeed, required here, but only as one element in the lovely texture, woven of rhythm, of color, of tone, and of dynamics which an observant soloist perceives in Schumann's exquisitely designed pattern.

*Third Movement**Lebhaft doch nicht schnell*

Joachim referred to his pleasure in this movement in a letter written to Schumann on November 17, 1854: "Oh, those were glorious days when you laughed so heartily when we all thought that the last movement sounded as if Kosciusko with Sobiesky opened a polonaise . . ." and again to Clara Schumann: "Your Robert's violin concerto we must play often together in Dresden. The last movement is so difficult for the violin, but I begin to master it in my fingers."

There is a curious element of unity suddenly brought to our attention in this movement; and this is a little episode based upon a phrase occurring early in the movement, and in turn remotely derived from a fragment of the preceding movement. It is not to be supposed, however, that this is more than coincidence, for in the development of the movement there is no relationship established between it and either of its predecessors. The spirit is entirely different. Here is a vigorous and bouncing rhythm, *alla polacca* (but hardly a polonaise!) in  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm, during which the solo violin engages in rhapsodic flights against the orchestra's urgent propulsion. There is a quieter section in which the figurations of the violin resolve into more flowing and melodious phrases, and there are references to the serenity of the preceding slow movement.

# ALEXANDER NIKOLAIEVICH SCRIBIN

[1872-1915]

SCRIBIN was the child of parents who met, fell in love, and were married while both were students—the father at the law school of the Moscow University, the mother studying piano with the renowned Leschetizky. Between them their years did not number forty. When the young husband completed his course at the university he began the practice of law; and the wife continued her musical studies preparing herself for a concert career. Young Alexander was but six months of age when his mother developed an ominous cough which necessitated removal to warmer climes. In sunny Italy under the most favorable climatic conditions the illness was arrested . . . but only for a time. She died there in 1873.

The motherless child was taken to the home of his paternal grandmother and given into the care of a maiden aunt, Lubov Alexandrovna Scriabin, who attended his physical needs during his babyhood, directed his education during his youth, and gave him the sympathetic companionship his sensitive nature required. His unusual musical endowments showed themselves at an early age in a remarkable ability to reproduce with absolute correctness music which he had heard but once. In addition he had an independence which led him to express himself individually rather than to use his musical means exclusively in expressing the ideas of others. For study he needed no incentive, being happiest always when engaged in some creative play. By the time he was eight he had composed a few simple pieces and had even written some short poems.

It is singular that, although the musical fare in Moscow was made up largely of opera, which young Scriabin attended often, his interest was centered more in the magical sounds of the orchestra than in the happenings on the stage. This may account for the fact that he left no operatic works; indeed no vocal music to speak of save the "Choral Epilogue" to his First Symphony and the chorus to *Prometheus* in which the singers merely vocalize.

In his tenth year Scriabin was placed in the Moscow Army Cadet Corps where he remained for nearly nine years, during which time his musical talents were developing rapidly. When he abandoned military life, he went to the Conservatory at Moscow, where he studied composition under Taneiev, piano under Safonov, and won a gold medal in 1892. A tour on the Continent included concerts in Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, and other cities where the young Russian won fame as a composer and pianist. From 1898 to 1904 he was professor of piano-forte at the Moscow Conservatory; subsequently he devoted himself almost exclusively to composition, winning a reputation as one of the most gifted of contemporary Russian composers.

## Symphony No. 3 in C minor

[*Le Divin Poème*]

SCRIABIN presents a curious and unique problem to the interpreter and to the listener as well. In his maturer years, his music became imbued with his rather remarkable religiophilosophical ideas, and finally was made the vehicle for their expression. These ideas were in themselves vague and formless, clouded in an abstruse mysticism that approached—as nearly as it approached any system of thought—the tenets of theosophy. Naturally a music designed to embody the composer's philosophical ideas would likewise be vague and mystical.

But Scriabin went further. His music was designed neither as an intellectual nor as a sensuous pleasure, but rather as a rite; an act of connection with the Divine Power in which performers and hearers took part. It is hardly necessary to suggest that, commonly, neither musicians nor audiences so regard this music, and unless one is an advanced student of either music or obscure philosophies or both, it is wiser, and far more agreeable, to be concerned primarily with the purely musical and sensory delights of Scriabin's music.

These pleasures are many and various. Indeed, for a philosophical point of departure, we might reasonably assume that this music is a sublimation of the delights of the senses. Scriabin himself was by no means insensible to these. *Prometheus*, another of this series of mystical tone poems, requires not only the full resources of the symphony orchestra, but a "color organ" as well, by which abstract forms in colored light were to be projected with the music. At the time of his death the composer was engaged upon still another work in this manner, in which not only light, but perfumes and dances were to be integrated with the music.

*The Divine Poem* itself is perfumed and lighted with rare harmonies and exotic orchestral color. Minute analysis of the orchestration and thematic material can add little to the mystical significance of this music or to the pleasure of hearing it. The wife of the composer has, however, given us with his permission a broad outline of the work.

The first movement proper begins at the fourteenth bar, and portrays the struggle between the concept of man as a creature dominated by a personal God, and that of man, himself a part of the supreme being, and therefore free. The pantheistic idea is triumphant, but not so decisively that man dares proclaim his own divinity. The second section presents a kind of psychological reaction; man, victorious but yet weak and uncertain, abandons himself to sensuous delights. Yet (third movement) the godhood in him ultimately asserts itself, and by degrees he is raised from the abyss of sensual pleasures to heights of untrammelled freedom and "divine activity." The three movements are entitled "*Luttes*" (Struggles),

"*Voluptés*" (Sensuous Delights), and "*Jeu divin*" (The Exercise of Divine Powers).

The first performance of the work was given in New York by the Russian Symphony Society, under the direction of Modest Altschuler, March 14, 1907.



## The Poem of Ecstasy

[Opus 54, in C]

SCRIBIN wrote five symphonies. Of these the Fourth, *The Poem of Ecstasy*, and the Fifth, *Prometheus*, are often called tone poems.

*The Poem of Ecstasy* sets forth as its fundamental message the "Joy of Creative Activity." The composer has sought to express the emotional side of his philosophy of life. There is a Prologue which has two motives. The first, assigned to the flute, symbolizes "Strife After the Ideal." The second, played by the clarinet, is the theme of the Ego, representing the gradual "Awakening of the Soul." These two motives, exquisitely blended and interwoven, lead to another subject introduced by the flute. This subject marks the beginning of the sonata form, which establishes the work as symphonic in treatment. It immediately includes the two motives of the Prologue, and conveys the idea of the spirit in flight, soaring ever higher and higher in an effort to find itself. A second subject is in two parts; the upper, a violin solo of exquisite tenderness, typical of "Human Love," the lower, in serious character, stated by the English horn. Suddenly a commanding trumpet theme (third subject) summons the Will to rise . . . and the creative force climbs in a series of ascending fourths to vertiginous heights. There follow expressions of dreamy charm; climaxes of frenzied passion; moments full of tragic implications and of deepest despair, with only a hint at previous happiness. The three subjects are repeated and richly developed. They culminate in an ecstatic swift flight. The trumpet theme grows triumphantly majestic, resolving itself finally into an Epilogue of immensity and grandeur. Here is music of wondrous beauty, full of lovely themes, artfully entangled in sound and symbolism, and colored with a harmony which, up to the time of the first performance at Moscow in 1909, had not yet been heard. The simplicities and the complexities of the work are still susceptible of various interpretations, and sometimes its validity is debatable; but there is no question of its inexplicable charm and mysterious loveliness.



## Prometheus: The Poem of Fire

[Opus 60, in F sharp]

THIS tone poem is Scriabin's last orchestral work. He began it in Brussels in 1909 and completed it after his final return to Moscow in April, 1910. The poetic inspiration of the music is one of the oldest stories of Greek mythology. Scriabin's application of the myth portrays not the Titan chained to the rock with a vulture tearing at his vitals, but a later Greek Prometheus . . . one of the "Sons of the Flame of Wisdom" who was interested in the spiritual development of mankind, and who in the dim ages gave to man the sacred spark which eventually grew into human personality and intelligence. In the embryonic stage mankind, without the Promethean spark, lacked self-consciousness. On receiving it they became possessed of creative power and human consciousness. Those more advanced in the scale of evolution understood the gift and used it properly; those more ignorant turned the gift to gross purposes and so brought evil to the world. Thus it was that the Promethean gift of fire proved both a blessing and a curse, since it resulted in good and evil.

Prometheus is scored for a large orchestra in which the solo piano is prominent. The piano, incidentally, is intended to represent Man, as distinct from the Cosmos—the orchestra—in which he has his being. A chorus of mixed voices is heard in a vocalise near the end of the composition. Scriabin's addition of a color keyboard, a *tastiera per luce*, an instrument by which colors thrown on a screen were intended to induce the mood of the music, was a new and to some extent an effective device.

Here we have the elements of a psychological program . . . the crepuscular, shapeless, lacking-in-consciousness stage of humanity; the awakening of the Will to create, and its development in two phases . . . one good and the other evil; the moods of bliss and anguish as the two conflict; and the final union of the human and the divine.

A characteristic Scriabin chord opens the composition . . . one that creates a nebulous, mystical, chaotic atmosphere. This is followed by a theme gently intoned by the horns. Presently a trumpet call is heard signifying the creative Will. At first incomplete, it is followed by an arresting theme in thoughtful mood symbolizing dawning consciousness. Once again the trumpet call rings out vividly and the "Joy of Life" enters with the piano figure. The stirrings of self-consciousness, a desire for more intense life . . . "Human Love" springs forth as a result of the Promethean spark. The influence of the two phases of the gift and the conflict between them are expressed in passages of dissonance and beautiful harmony. Humanity is merged in the Cosmos, and the work ends in a triumphant blaze.



# DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

[Born 1906]

AT FIRST glance it might seem curious that two different surveys of Russian music made a few years ago omitted mention of Dmitri Shostakovich—yet within the past few years several of his works have been played by leading American orchestras, and almost overnight he has been recognized as one of the most important, if not the most important, of composers living within the Soviet Union.

Shostakovich was born at St. Petersburg (Leningrad) and now lives there. He studied under Glazunov at the Conservatory, Leningrad, and some of his earlier scores distinctly show the influence of his teacher. Doubtless in the belief that art should, in a proletarian state, mirror the life of the proletariat, some of his symphonies attempt to be political in purpose and flavor, but it is significant that neither of these has been successful outside of Russia. He has written in many forms, and has had performed a satiric opera, several ballets, incidental music for the drama, and music for the sound film. There is also some chamber music, and we know of many smaller pieces for the piano.

Shostakovich aroused vigorous comment both in Russia and the United States with his second opera, *Lady Macbeth of the District of Mzensk*. The official newspaper, *Pravda*, ran an article against it, and for a while it seemed as if government displeasure would fall upon the composer. At the New York production, on February 5, 1935, many members of the audience were shocked by the unblushing realism of the orchestral noises that accompanied the love scene.



## Symphony No. 1

THE composition bears the simple title, "Symphony for Orchestra, Opus 10." The score requires a large modern orchestra, including a piano. There are no polemics in this music, so far as a capitalist can discover—in which respect the music differs from the composer's "May" and "October" Symphonies.

### *First Movement*

Highly original as this music is, there are definite traces of the later romantic composers—particularly of Strauss and Wagner—discernible in it. The second divi-

sion of the theme of the introduction, sounded in the dry tones of the bassoon, is not very unlike a theme from Strauss' *Heldenleben*, and is similarly treated; it forms a starting point for the development section of the movement.

This is a singularly lucid yet compact score. Its harmony, while quite definitely modern, is not shocking, and long before the symphony is played through it ceases to sound harmonically unusual. While strict form is certainly not observed in the movement, the texture of the music is firm, the direction of its movement always logical, its contours satisfying.

The main thought of the movement is proposed, after some measures of introduction, in a melody given to the clarinet, with the string section supplying a forthright and vigorous rhythm. In spite of the vitality of the music, there is a certain cold detachment, a surgical exactness about it which, while highly interesting, is not, in the present movement at least, exciting emotionally.

A few measures in which the strings, pizzicato, inaugurate a change of mood, precede the introduction of a theme somewhat more sentimental, and heard variously from woodwinds and horn. Periods of agitation and vehemence alternate with gentler expressions, and the movement concludes with recollections of its opening theme.

### *Second Movement*

There is a wry, sardonic humor in the second, the scherzo movement of the symphony. Gaiety is at a premium in Russia these days; everyone is so busy. Here the orchestra seems very busy, too, and almost quarrelsome in the struggle for possession of the theme, a swift descending scale passage, given out by piano after a short introduction by woodwind and string bass. There are wonderful pianissimo effects, and a charming, rather naïve little theme first sounding in flutes, clarinets, and then oboe, and finally made into a climax of great force by blaring brasses. There is a further climax, and a period of great agitation; then fortissimo chords punctuate the end of this mood.

### *Third Movement*

The tearful voice of the oboe projects a sad strain, over an accompaniment of tremulous strings, as the central thought of this movement. Again, a solo cello phrases the melancholy thought, giving to it a touch of warmth and sentiment such as has occurred but rarely in the symphony up to this point. There is an interlude of brooding, expressed through strings and brass, and a second theme for oboe. This, instead of subsiding under the pervading gloom, is developed into a powerful utterance of the brass, bold and sinister. The opening ideas of the movement return, and then, with a crescendo roll of the military drum the music passes directly into the

*Fourth Movement*

Here is the most interesting movement in the symphony—chiefly because of the waywardness of its moods, the almost freakish variations of color and tempo, and the skillful, often unusual use of the orchestral instruments. A curious and effective quality of tone is produced by the violins, playing *sul ponticello* (near the bridge) in strange harmonies; a solo for timpani, with abrupt yet delicately shaded variations from forte to piano, and a gigantic climax, involving the enormous orchestra with all its powers and its swiftest pace, are striking features of the movement.

## JEAN SIBELIUS

[Born 1865]

**S**IBELIUS, the son of a medical officer in military service, was born at Tavastehus, Finland, December 8, 1865; he now lives at Järvenpää. He was left an orphan at an early age, and was educated by his grandparents, who intended for him a classical training with the ultimate aim of the boy's becoming a lawyer. Even as a child, however, Sibelius determined to become a musician, and though he obediently went to school and later to the University of Helsingfors, from which he was graduated, he began, immediately he was his own master, to study the violin. But from boyhood he had, informally but intensely, studied music, and was in some degree prepared for the strenuous work which he now began.

In 1889 Sibelius left Finland for Berlin, to study composition; two years later, he went to Vienna, where he was a pupil of Karl Goldmark. He remembers that the first performance of any of his works was given at Helsingfors, in 1887; it was a series of variations for string quartet.

The composer soon developed a highly individual style, founded, it is true, upon the music of the classical masters, yet so informed with Sibelius' own unique spirit and character as to seem very far removed from the compositions of the nineteenth century. His is a music which, fortunately, cannot be at once assimilated; yet even regarded superficially, it has a strange charm which deepens to fascination the more the music is heard. Sibelius' music has been the dubious beneficiary of a powerful propaganda, both in America and England. This has brought about more frequent playing of his works, but has also aroused the skepticism of a considerable section of the discriminating public—a skepticism, let it be added hastily, which is only in rare instances justified. He has suffered, too, from quasi-authoritative interpretations by completely unskilled and inferior conductors, both in Europe and America—a circumstance which contributes little to the impression his enthusiastic but misguided propagandists seek to create for his music.

Sibelius has visited America. In 1914 he came to the United States to conduct several of his works at a music festival at Litchfield, Conn.; he visited Boston and several other centers of musical interest. It was during this visit that Yale University conferred upon the composer the degree doctor of music; several of his works were played during the commencement program.

The Finnish master now lives in a small village, not distant, yet by its character infinitely remote from the capital city of Helsingfors, Finland. He prefers seclusion and simplicity, yet is gracious and hospitable to those who find the difficult way to his threshold. He has written seven symphonies, as well as numerous other works; and it is reported that he is at work upon an eighth symphony. The

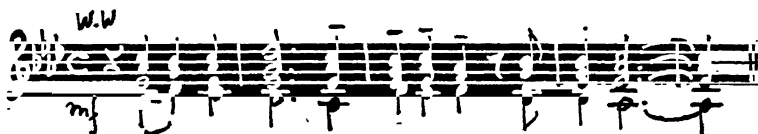
first, second, fourth, fifth, and sixth of the seven are included here, because it is for these that conductors and public have expressed their preference.



## Finlandia

SMALL, but with nobility and power in the rugged beauty of her countryside and in the hearts and bodies of her stalwart children, Finland is honored and aptly represented in this brief music, the work of her favored and most famous son. So remarkably has Sibelius captured here the essential spirit of his native land that it has often been assumed that the melodies used in the tone poem are folk tunes. The fact is, according to the composer's own word, that there is not a note here except what is original with Sibelius himself.

There is sullen menace in the powerful chords, in brass, that introduce the music, but the antithetical phrase in prayerful woodwind and strings is contradictory. It is sad, yet soothing, and persists even against growing agitation and vehemence in the bass (strings and brass). Now follows a subject of blazing brilliance, with powerful, strangely accented, and persistent rhythms, leading to a superb climax. Here is conflict; here too is a certain feeling of assurance and victory.



Presently a hymnlike subject that might almost suggest mourning for the fallen in battle takes prominence in the music. In its reiteration, it reveals a growing feeling of triumph, and its final cadence is the basis for the conclusion of the music in a climax of terrific power and eloquence.

It has been said that the Finns would become so aroused on hearing this music that its public performance had to be prohibited. Certainly it has every attribute that would make it exciting; certainly it touches the limits of the emotions, from timid prayerfulness to blazing triumph. If the natives of Finland saw in it the reflection of their own national characteristics, their agitation can be understood and forgiven.



## Rakastava: The Lover

[Opus 14]

As is apparent from the opus number, this short symphonic poem is fairly early Sibelius. As one might expect, it does not reveal the markedly individual characteristics to be noted in the great symphonies, *En Saga*, and similar advanced works; but curiously enough, compounded with its more or less derivative elements we find a prophecy of things to come, and a relationship, not with the more obvious of Sibelius' symphonies, but with the cryptic and mystical Fourth Symphony.

There is no explicit program for this work; while it speaks in the national idiom that the composer used so powerfully in such works as *Pohjola's Daughter*, *The Origin of Fire*, and other works based upon national mythology, it does not attempt to give us a detailed story. The first section, "The Lover," reveals some extraordinary contrasts and conflicts in color, harmony, and rhythm, remarkably accomplished with the economy of tonal resources within which the orchestra is confined. In this movement particularly, specifically when the lower strings in their agitation disturb the sweet tranquillity established in the first part of the symphony, one can detect suggestions of certain episodes in the Fourth Symphony.

The second section of the work—"The Lover's Path"—contradicts the old adage, for it does run smooth. There are breathless agitations, but from the music one can deduce only that the lover's cares must have been small and few. An endless and bright rhythm leads the upper strings through a path that goes straight to its goal, without material deviation, complication, or interference. Those who think that Sibelius is always dour and forbidding should hear this music!

The "Goodnight" and "Farewell" naturally alter the emotional texture of the music. There are poignant cries, and strange reminders of the pathway that has been so merrily trod; but there seems to be no tragedy. The ending is properly melancholy, but one does not associate with it a feeling of despair. We should hesitate to add that this is the most important music of Sibelius; but it can be asserted without fear of successful contradiction that it is characteristic of a Sibelius "period"; that it is filled with a strange and captivating charm; that it is beautifully and understandingly performed, and that everyone who loves the music of this great master should listen to it.



## Pohjola's Daughter

[Opus 49]

SIBELIUS has often been concerned, in his music, with the rich mythology of his country, and in the great Finnish epic *Kalevala*, he found frequent and profound inspiration. The present work is one for which the literary background is extracted from that epic—to be precise, from the eighth and ninth cantos of the poem. The music, like any music from the hand of this master, is exciting and enjoyable as absolute music; but since it has a kind of program, some association of the poem with the music certainly will lend added interest and pleasure to the latter.

The score dates from 1906, during a period when the composer was more interested in “program” music than he has since been. *Daughter of the North*, as this work is sometimes called, deals with the strange happenings that befell Väinämöinen, described as “a great culture hero, patriarch, and minstrel,” and a “vigorous old man,” during his courtship of a *féesque* maiden—the *Daughter of the North*.

Väinämöinen is journeying “from the gloomy land of Pojha,” and has not proceeded far before he hears above his head a strange whizzing sound; as he gazes upward he beholds a rainbow arching across the dark skies, and, seated upon it, a lovely maiden engaged in weaving a golden tapestry; it is the sound of her weaving that first attracts his attention. Bearing in mind that Väinämöinen is “always described as a vigorous old man,” we are not entirely surprised to discover that “he stays his horse and asks the maiden to seat herself beside him in the sledge and return with him.” She is rather coquettish, and while not absolutely refusing, archly replies that a maiden at home is happier than a matron in a husband’s house, where her state would be like that of a “house dog, tightly fettered.” And she adds,

*To a slave comes rarely pleasure,  
To a wedded damsel never.*

Väinämöinen, old and wise in the ways of women, refuses to be deterred by this apparent cynicism, and persists in his wooing. To try him, the maiden proposes various impossible demonstrations of his powers, such as splitting a hair with a blunt knife, tying an egg in knots, and hewing to pieces a lump of ice without making any splinters. Nothing daunted, Väinämöinen accomplishes these fantastic tasks, yet the maiden is not satisfied, and insists on one more test. She demands that the old man carve out from the fragments of her spindle and shuttle a boat, which shall sail and steer itself upon the waters without human hand upon spar or helm or sweep. His eyes filled with her beauty and his heart with an old desire, Väinämöinen undertakes even this task, and is making good progress with it until upon the third day evil spirits beset him, and an accident occurs.

*Hüsi turned the edge against him  
 And an evil stroke delivered.  
 On the rocks the axe-blade glistened,  
 On the hill the blade rang loudly,  
 From the rock the axe rebounded,  
 In the flesh the steel was buried,  
 In the victim's knee 'twas buried,  
 In the toes of Väinämöinen;  
 In the flesh did Lempo drive it,  
 To the veins did Hüsi guide it,  
 From the wound the blood flowed freely,  
 Bursting forth in streaming torrents.*

(Translation by W. F. Kirby)

The wound will not heal, and for days the old hero tries his spells and what remedies he and others can devise; but at length he finds an ancient man who succeeds in halting the blood flow, and who binds and heals the wound. Then the old hero, reflecting upon all that has transpired, concludes, with grateful outpourings for his recovery, that our fates are shaped not by "the foresight of the heroes, Nor the might of all the great ones," but by an all-wise and protective Providence.

There is not in the score a single instance of authentic association of a theme with any given person, situation, or thing; yet with the story in mind no one will miss the significance of various passages. The grave opening, with its somber chords, certainly suggests Väinämöinen, the old, wise, and vigorous, setting out upon his journey; and apparently his strength and liveliness increase with each succeeding league, for the music grows more agitated and purposeful as it progresses, with the lively figure in the strings hurrying along with developments of the cello figure heard shortly near the beginning.

The picture of the maiden seated on the rainbow is not hard to find, and impossible to mistake—muted strings and harp paint it in softly glowing colors. Woodwinds (oboe, *cor anglais*, flutes) engage in conversations that might well be the talk of lovers. After a while the hero sets about his labors, and the maiden, occasionally spinning a few strands of golden thread to show her indifference, laughs at the old man's struggles. His efforts become more and more desperate with each succeeding task, and the music becomes frenzied. Finally, his wound troubling him deeply, Väinämöinen leaves in search of a cure, and we hear again a suggestion of his journey. He reflects upon the happier beginnings, and, too, the tragic events of this journey, and, after finally being healed, accomplishes a philosophical serenity and peace.

*Pohjola's Daughter* is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, *cor anglais*,



two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, harp, timpani, and strings.



## Symphony No. 1 in E minor

THE First Symphony of Sibelius was written in 1899, when the composer was to a certain extent under the influence of Tchaikovsky; and this influence, at brief intervals, is quite marked in this work. Sibelius is one of the most distinctly individual and original of composers, but as a young man, naturally he was conscious of the heritage left by the preceding great masters. The later symphonies depart almost entirely from any "influence"; the first—and it is not said in disparagement—is the most derivative and least individual of the seven that Sibelius has so far written. It is not less interesting for that reason; on the contrary, as the last great symphony of its type, it has a very special interest.

The first performance of this music was at a concert devoted to Finnish music, given in Berlin, under Robert Kajanus, July 18, 1900. The first performance in America was by the orchestra which, more than any other, has devoted itself to the works of the Finnish master: the Boston Symphony Orchestra—January 5, 1907.

### *First Movement*

The symphony opens with an introduction in which the clarinet sings a wandering melody of singular appeal—a lonely voice moving in solitary loveliness over the ominous rumblings of drums. The song of the clarinet is like a thesis for the symphony; abandoned presently, it nevertheless reappears later with new significance and importance.



The chief subject of the movement proper is suggested by the strings—violins first, with derivations of the theme presented by cellos and violas. The contrasting and subordinate thematic material is divided rather definitely between strings and wind, but there is always a close relationship between the items assigned to either group. Once we have observed the principal and the subordinate thematic matter, there is a short period of development, ending in a climax of great intensity; with full orchestra thrusting out savagely in great masses of tone, and a terrific thunder-

ing of timpani. The second chief theme, closely following this outburst, is sung by the flute against a transparent screen woven of the tones of violin, viola, and harp.

The development and conclusion of the movement are broad and free, and are built mainly upon a titanic struggle for dominance, carried on between the various thematic elements that have been introduced. There are references, both rhythmic and melodic, to the principal themes, and even a suggestion, in the incontinent cries of the woodwind, of the melody of the introduction. Rhythmically, the movement from this point onward is for the most part developed out of the second of the two principal subjects, but the subject itself, imminent from time to time, is never permitted another explicit statement of itself and is abandoned with finality when the brass so mightily asserts itself near the end.

### *Second Movement*

The second movement is filled with a nostalgic loveliness. There is nothing here of Tchaïkovsky's passionate yearnings, nor even of the more reticent and perhaps deeper *Sehnsucht* of a Brahms slow movement; but we feel a gentle and pathetic desire for some remembered and intangible joy, as of a dream that, on awakening, seems both ephemeral and real.

Violins and cellos sing of this sweet and pathetic desire; then the earnest voices of bassoons and other woodwinds emphasize it with a new melody. The music broods upon these subjects for a while, and presently a third theme, now in horns accompanied by harp, intrudes. But it is a remembrance of the first theme that brings about the most vigorous development of the movement.

### *Third Movement*

The basis of the entire movement is the almost brutally violent figure given out by three timpani at the beginning. With all its power, this figure somehow suggests a heavy-handed humor; the humor, perhaps, of the northern peasant, whose sense of the absurd is his chief stimulus to mirth. The second theme, though contrastingly lighter, is clearly influenced by the rhythm of the first, and only in the trio, which is much more restrained and gentle, do we escape from the fierce assertive gesture that lies in the first thunderous utterance of the timpani. At the end, there is a swift accelerando, a growth in power, and the great drums, with the whole orchestra, thunder once again and for the last time.

### *Fourth Movement*

The finale is like a series of three mountainous waves, rising to terrifying heights of power, subsiding to simple, if not precisely placid, fluxes of orchestral tone. The opening subject is developed clearly from the song of the clarinet in the

introduction to the first movement; but its character has undergone a marked change. Where it once sang of loneliness and contemplation, it now assumes a dark and tragic significance. As if it had provoked them, suggestions of the imminent chief theme of this movement are heard deep in the strings; the theme itself appears, against ominous beatings of drums, in the woodwind. With this impetus, the first great wave of the movement takes form, and rushes out from the orchestra in powerful and resistless surgings, moving toward a mighty crashing climax.

The second theme is in marked contrast with the first. It appears, presently, in the violins and, a little later, is compared with the original theme. Now the second great wave form of the movement gathers itself for another climax. It is not long in developing, and at its peak demands almost the ultimate of the orchestral resources. A presentation of the second theme in clarinet is the interrupting idea which begets the formation of the third, and final, wave of tone which sweeps the orchestra like a storm.



## Symphony No. 2 in D major

IN THE Second Symphony, Sibelius makes a definite break with the influences and derivations that can be marked in the First; he establishes himself here as a composer of distinct individuality, with a style and idiom uniquely his own. Here also we can observe the two most characteristic features of Sibelius' music—its strongly national character and the amazing economy and effectiveness of its orchestration. This is the real Sibelius, terse, powerful, and convincing; devoid of the factitious and the unnecessary, naked and pulsating and enormously vital.

This may be, as some commentators assert, Sibelius' "pastoral" symphony, but it is scarcely more descriptive of his native land than others of his musical works. The spirit of Finnish folk music is always strong in Sibelius; images and atmosphere of fiord and crag and gray unfriendly seas, of sparsely covered meadows and acrid salt marshes, are always evoked by it. In this particular work, however, we can feel something more powerful; something of the aroused patriotism of *Finlandia*, as well as the laconic finality exhibited so wonderfully in the Fourth Symphony.

### *First Movement*

The uncanny certainty with which the composer selects the one most effective voice through which his melodies shall be projected is beautifully revealed throughout this music. It has been said that Sibelius conceives a melody and its instrumental expression simultaneously; that he is incapable of dissociating melody and

instrument. If so, he has developed this valuable faculty to the point of papal infallibility, for when a melody sings out from the orchestra of Sibelius, we somehow feel that *that* is the one inevitable voice through which the given melody could be proclaimed.

The first movement is filled with the subdued light of a Finnish landscape. At once the foundation of the movement is laid—a markedly rhythmic figure in the strings which is at once an intimation of a musical thought presently to be expressed and a dominating idea in the symphony. The first theme itself is given out, briefly, by oboes and clarinets; the accompaniment of the throbbing strings continues. Both ideas are developed freely and at some length, but the orchestration remains superbly simple. An atmosphere of severity rather than of gloom, of a harsh relentless vitality asserting itself with quiet strength rather than with bombastic proclamations, colors the whole movement. New thematic material, presented by woodwind in octaves, above the pulsing figure heard from the first in strings, reveals the picture in another aspect and in new colors, but does not alter its outlines. At the end the mesmerizing throbbing of the strings, having wrought its charm and created its mood, sounds less assertively.

### *Second Movement*

The stubborn and sometimes gloomy patriotism of his fellow countrymen seems to be the moving spirit of this strange music. In it are outlined grim forebodings, and the realization of them; sturdy opposition, tragic defeats, and a kind of wild and suppressed nobility. The timpani, pregnant with thunders, give out threatening rumblings; then the low strings, pizzicato, sketch the melodic line of the movement. The weirdest voice in the orchestra—that of the bassoon—sings sadly of sorrows and tears and terrors, and there is menace in the dull roar of the great drums that sound below. Such an atmosphere rarely endures for long in the music of Sibelius; presently it is dissipated in a stormy climax that evokes the orchestra's fullest powers.

The folk-song influence is distinctly felt in the presentation of the second principal theme. It must be remembered here, as always in the music of Sibelius, that the composer does not borrow his melodies from the folk music of Finland; but so intensely feels and loves the native music that his own melodies quite naturally adopt its characteristic outlines.

The strings, divided, present the poignant melody, and at the same time accompany themselves; later added color is given by woodwinds. The palette is reversed, after a few moments, with the theme in the woodwind and accompaniment by strings. There is a distinct lightening of the gloom that has heretofore pervaded the movement, and with each succeeding climactic wave the feeling of strength and assertiveness and hope grows stronger. Though there are frequent

disjointed remembrances of thematic fragments scattered throughout the movement, its unity and power and vitality are maintained, even though its dynamics are, temporarily, held in restraint. The final climax is of crushing power and vehemence.

### *Third Movement*

If there were a program for this symphony, the third movement would undoubtedly be regarded as the "call to arms," the "awakening of national pride and spirit," the taking up of a struggle against oppression. The movement springs into agitated life with the very first note. The violins have a lightfooted figure, which not only establishes the mood of the scherzo, but also supplies a rhythmic basis against which other thematic elements are projected. A curious combination of glitter and shadow—flute and bassoon—utters the second chief subject, still animated and nervous like the first.

The trio, or middle section of the scherzo, is in marked contrast to the first. Here the piercing tones of the oboe are arranged in a simple and appealing melody, its thinness and sharpness relieved by the warm and softly sonorous accompaniment of bassoon and horn. The strings are momentarily invoked, but during its brief moments this part of the movement maintains a calm and pastoral atmosphere. The elastic rhythms of the opening section return, and after a final reference to the quiet melody of the trio, a long crescendo begins, and leads with ever-developing power directly into the

### *Fourth Movement*

Here the blazing and imperious proclamations of this music sound a mighty song of triumph. This is the Sibelius of *Finlandia*; this is boldness and spaciousness and powerful uncomplicated assertiveness. The main theme is brief, strong, and simple. The strings, down to and including cellos, pronounce it with vigor.



Woodwinds present a second, and strongly rhythmical, idea, and the two are developed in a series of climaxes piled upon one another like mountains. Yet



there is here, as in most of Sibelius' moments of excitement or grandeur, something of godlike passionless detachment; as if some remote being handled mighty in-

tractable forces with unerring firm hands, and, inexorable and unperturbed, molded them to his will. It is curious that this music, that can be so moving and so mighty, can at the same moment be so cold. It has the beat and the breath of life, but its life stream moves deliberately, inevitably, fatefully, and never passionately. That the music of this composer rarely has in it the quality we call sensuousness is one of the many apparent contradictions we find in it, for though it seems to omit this quality, it is the very character of the sounds Sibelius makes the orchestra produce that most fascinates our ears and most powerfully calls forth our response to this music.



### Symphony No. 4 in A minor

THE Fourth Symphony of Sibelius is incomparably his finest. Here is music as compact, as ungracious, as refractory and fantastic as a rock carven by the beating of timeless oceans. Indeed, it *is* music of stony caverns and of dark northern seas. Sibelius, the confessed devotee of nature, here casts his deep and austerely loving glance across the bare landscapes of his native land, and, perhaps unconsciously, paints them in their strong dark color and rugged outline. Only a pale and chill sunlight shines here; only in strange piercing harmonies, like the distant cries of wild sea birds, does brilliance come to this music. Yet it is not gloomy. It is thoughtful and strong and gaunt, as a man grows who lives a long life in the winters of rugged Finland; its melancholy is contemplative and contained, rather than doleful and abandoned. It is like a play, a story without a heroine, for it has no trace of sensuousness or passionate yearning; yet, far from being sexless, it is music that is definitely masculine.

The assertion that the music of Sibelius contains no padding is, like most dogmatic assertions, untrue. The rocky and rough-hewn structures which he has erected frequently contain, in their interstices, some very plastic and adhesive material, sometimes made of fine particles of the basic structure, sometimes of foreign matter. But it would be difficult to find any such in this stark and rawboned symphony. Through its lean and firm and compact flesh one sees the very skeleton, yet it is strangely complete and highly finished music.

#### *First Movement*

The power, achieved by rare economy of means, that Sibelius exhibits in this movement is almost terrifying—almost like the elemental strivings of the brute forces of nature. The savage bowing of the low strings on their monotonous and

limited phrase is as pitiless as the grinding of great stones in some subterranean cavern; the solo cello that presently suggests a theme is not the romantic voice we know, but a grimly regretful one without passion and almost without emphasis. There is no brilliance, but only wildness and keenness even when the upper strings, bowed with ever-growing force, begin an advance toward a discordant and unresolved climax. Brasses vehemently thrust out threatening lances of tone, bright and deadly; again strings shriek like wild winter winds. From a few phrases the composer builds a brief but mighty movement, free in form, yet tremendously restrained and laconic and stern. He dwells upon his thought until it is clear, in the simplest and strongest terms; he proceeds, with merciless logic, to the next. There is no lingering upon a lovely phrase—though there are phrases of strange harsh beauty; there is no sweeping and brilliant and persuasive peroration; only a swift dissolution of the music into pale harmonies immaterial and distant as Northern mists.

### *Second Movement*

Perhaps the uncommunicative Finn has humor like this—terse and rough and wry. The man who wrests his living from nature's grudging hands has little time for laughter. But here is laughter, harsh and unaccustomed, bold and sardonic. The peasant's cruelly acute sense of the ridiculous is almost his only stimulus to mirth, and here, perhaps, is an illustration of it. The curious cry of the oboe is almost pathetic, and it is roughly elbowed aside by rude interjections of the strings. In contrast comes an almost waltzlike passage, definitely reminiscent of Tchaikovsky. Contrabassoon and, later, after a swift descent of strings, an almost painfully vehement protestation from the brass banish temporarily the mood of labored humor and recall the fierce brazen interruptions of the first movement. Woodwinds in a graceful descending figure achieve gaiety once more, but that sullen remembrance of the preceding movement has vitiated the spirit of this one, and it dies, abruptly and unexpectedly, in a feeble flicker of tone.

### *Third Movement*

In this truly beautiful and affecting movement Sibelius makes the closest approach to sustained melody that can be found in the symphony. Flute informs us of a lovely theme, of pastoral simplicity, clarinet continues it; both are supported by soft harmonies in the strings. A solemn chorus of brass warms and weights the orchestra's tone, and, later, a bassoon suggests a more serious thought. It is the cello, however, which holds forth upon the basic theme, against a tremulous string accompaniment. And the elements of this theme, as well as of others, are strangely dissipated through the movement, though often there are brief passages of very moving melody. The string orchestra, for a space, has almost complete possession of the composer's thought, rising to a climax that is all but

passionate, and then resigning once more in favor of flute and clarinet, which present their respective phrases much as at the beginning.

The strange insolvent harmony of Sibelius is, paradoxically, occasionally resolved here into even such usual things as chords built upon tonic and dominant. Yet at the end, where the unsatisfying harmony gradually attenuates to a unison C sharp in muted horns and violas, against which a succession of thematic fragments are thrown by woodwind and strings, there is no relaxation of the rigors of this music. It closes in a kind of hypnotized weariness, wan and without color, given life and motion only by the ominous and inconclusive notes plucked from the basses.

#### *Fourth Movement*

It is curious that Sibelius can convey an effect of richness and color and fantasy, entirely without any feeling of warmth. He accomplishes this notably in the fourth movement, with a hard brilliance of orchestration, and with imaginative resourcefulness not easily surpassed in symphonic music. It is with difficulty that one defines the mood of the music, or its significance, if it has any particular significance, for it encompasses every emotional state except sentimentality.

There is merriment, and grotesquerie, and arresting, forbidding passages of ominous portent. There are bright jinglings in the icy tone of the glockenspiel; wild bells and powerful ring out, further on; an oddly syncopated figure in the strings suggests awkward dancing; eventually the trumpet, beginning pianissimo and gradually forcing out a flaming tongue of tone, recalls the ominous brazen utterance of the first movement. But the harmonies are dry and hard and unrelenting, even to the end.



### Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major

[Opus 82]

THE Fifth Symphony of Sibelius is certainly the most popular of his works in this form; and very possibly the greatest. There is evidence to indicate that the composer himself regarded it as one of his most important works, for upon it he lavished his labor, and revised, altered, corrected, and rewrote it with a passionate determination to make it say, finally, what he wished it to say. That he has accomplished this may possibly be established by the public's present estimate of the work.

This music was written during the distressful period of the great war—mostly during 1915. Between the Fourth (1911) and the Fifth, Sibelius had been concerned with "program" music to a considerable extent (*The Dryad*, *Scènes historiques*, *The Bard*, *Les Océanides*) and had considered the writing of a ballet



to be called *King Fjalax*—an idea which he ultimately rejected. It is clear from his conversation and correspondence, at this time, that he wanted to write purely symphonic music again, and that ideas for it were taking form in his head. The necessity for income, and the importunings of publishers, alike pressed upon him and alike were distasteful. He wrote, "I cannot become a prolific writer. It would mean killing all my reputation and my art. I have made my name in the world by straightforward means. I must go on in the same way. Perhaps I am too much of a hypochondriac. But to waste on a few *pas* a motif that would be excellently suited to symphonic composition!"

Sibelius has always been reluctant to discuss his own work, though voluble enough about other music and other musicians. It is evident, however, that he made for himself a definite decision to devote all his life and energies to the composition of the music he felt nascent within him, and to turn from the immediate and profitable demands to the necessities of sincere self-expression. He adopted a mode of living in which solitude played a vital part; he withdrew from the turmoil of warring Europe and immersed himself in the flood of his own inspiration that now seemed to release itself. He wrote in his diary (1915) about "this life that I love so infinitely, a feeling that must stamp everything I compose." And again, in September, 1915: "In a deep dell again. But I begin already dimly to see the mountain that I shall certainly ascend. . . . God opens His door for a moment and His orchestra plays the Fifth Symphony."

The first mundane performance of the work was given at Helsingfors, under the direction of the late Robert Kajanus, on December 8, 1915—the birthday of the composer. It is evident that the version heard on this occasion differed materially from what we now know as the Fifth. Less than a year after the first performance, Sibelius decided upon a revision, and rewrote the symphony in a greatly condensed form. This new edition of the work was performed on December 14, 1916, at Helsingfors, the composer conducting. He was still unsatisfied with the music, and planned further revision. In early 1918 he was busily engaged upon this, and it can safely be said that the final version of the work represents a really radical rewriting. Sibelius himself, in a letter dated May 20, 1918, comments upon it. He writes: "The Fifth Symphony in a new form, practically composed anew, I work at daily. The first movement is entirely new, the second movement is reminiscent of the old, the third movement reminiscent of the end of the first movement of the old. The fourth movement the old motifs, but stronger in revision. The whole, if I may say so, a vital climax to the end. Triumphal."

The final revision of the Fifth Symphony was completed late in 1919, and performed, at Helsingfors, with Sibelius conducting, on November 24. The first performance in America was given by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Mr. Stokowski conducting, October 21, 1921. The Boston Symphony programmed the work during the same season, and played it on April 7, 1922.

Some reference must be made to the divisions of the symphony into movements. Cecil Gray, whose admiration of Sibelius is idolatrous and whose knowledge is encyclopedic, regards the *tempo molto moderato* and the *allegro moderato, ma poco a poco stretto* as one movement (the first); and he justifies this by two pertinent facts—the recurrence of thematic material, and the fact that in the score Sibelius did not number the movements. Of course the letter quoted above clearly establishes the fact that Sibelius regarded the work as in four movements. The point is of little moment certainly—except to the type of mind that attaches more importance to such details than to the nature and effect of the music itself. The symphony is scored for a quite conventional orchestra—woodwinds in pairs, three trumpets, three trombones, four horns, timpani, and strings.

### *First Movement*

#### *Molto moderato*

Seekers after occult meanings, revelations of personal griefs and joys, and similar matters would be hard put to it to find in this music any reflections of the troubled world in which Sibelius lived when it was written. The truth is that, while his music is utterly individual, it is not personal; it is cosmic and universal, as any great art work must be. The storms that sometimes sweep across his pages are never the secret and morbid paroxysms that gripped a Tchaikovsky, nor even the earthy passions that Wagner sometimes sang. Rather they are born of earth and sky and water; of solitudes and reflections; of a consciousness of the littleness of man and the magnificence of nature. This is not to imply that, at least in his symphonies, Sibelius is describing anything of the material world; quite the contrary. This work happened to come into existence not long after the composer had been concerned with certain descriptive works; and when questioned about it, he replied with both diffidence and asperity, "I do not wish to give a reasoned exposition of the essence of symphony. I have expressed my opinion in my works. I should like, however, to emphasize a point that I consider essential: the directly symphonic is the compelling vein that goes through the whole. This in contrast to the depicting."

In his sturdy assertion that his music speaks for itself, and the implication that any music which needs to be, or can be, explained needs not to have been written, Sibelius comes nearest to justifying Ernest Newman's daring but penetrating dictum associating Sibelius and Wagner in the same company. "The truest analogue to him" (Sibelius), writes Newman, "is to be found in a rather unsuspected quarter. Sibelius has never been influenced by Wagner, or, indeed, been particularly attracted to him. Nevertheless he is, in a way, of the company of Wagner—not in virtue of the contents of his music, for no two mental worlds could well be (more) different, but in virtue of the artistic type of which, at bottom, they both conform.

. . . With Wagner, music was not music unless it was the expression of something—not necessarily the expression of a poetic or pictorial concept, but still *expression*; that is to say, the musician must come to his job full of something that on the one hand cannot be said in any other way but that of music, while on the other hand it must say itself according to the inexorable laws of its own inner being, making its own form as it goes along, not keeping anxiously before it, all the time, a derived formula to which, at all costs, it must for propriety's sake conform." Certainly this statement is as true of Sibelius as it is of Wagner; certainly no one has been more indifferent to form for the sake of form than Sibelius; no one has done more violence to accepted forms, and with such irrefragable logic; no one has made music which so infallibly created and justified its own inevitable forms.

While Sibelius himself has testified that in the revisions of this symphony it became considerably condensed, one cannot find the extraordinary compactness, density, and tension that mark the unique Fourth. The thematic basis of the first movement is simple—first, the horn melody heard at the beginning, developed in wind instruments and timpani; second, a brief clear utterance, of quite contrasting character, in the woodwind. Strings are used with extraordinary, though subdued effect, particularly where used in harmonics of ghostly quality; they are brought forward very little in the first part of the movement.

There is a melancholy figure given to the bassoons—and at this the mood of the music reaches its not very profound nadir—and the second subject is extensively developed. Always there is remarkable integration of thematic material—especially remarkable in Sibelius, who is often discursive and episodic; and the unified, the almost cyclic character of the movement is emphasized by occasional references to the principal subject, especially in its presentation, triumphantly, at the end of the *allegro moderato*.

The second section of the movement, because of the dancelike rhythm and much-quickenened pace, is regarded by many as a true scherzo, and by some, including Sibelius, as a movement in itself; though there is no break between it and the preceding section. The mood becomes lighter; the texture of the music less weighty; the sentences contracted and more crisply uttered, and there is new thematic material. A solo trumpet in rather brisk  $\frac{3}{4}$  emphasizes the more vigorous rhythm in contrast to the previously prevailing  $\frac{12}{8}$ , with a figure which is brilliantly developed toward the conclusion, where once more the orchestra shouts bravely out the triumphal version of the opening theme.

### *Second Movement*

*Andante mosso, quasi allegretto*

This is a rather placid movement, devoted for the most part to the exposition of a simple theme and a set of variations. The theme appears after a series of

introductory chords given out by the winds, and a few tentative pizzicati from the lower strings. It comes first in the flutes—a simple, charming melody in thirds, now ascending, now descending, always shifting in outline but always borne by the same rhythmic impulse. The entire movement is devoted to the exploitation of this theme in variations that pose no problem for anyone, though the dissonant seconds that appear occasionally are a little surprising in view of the generally sweet and tranquil character of the movement.

### *Third Movement*

#### *Allegro molto*

There are frequently moments in the music of Sibelius when one hears almost inevitably the beat and whirl of wings invisible, and this strange and characteristic effect almost always presages something magnificently portentous. We have it here. The strings create it and, by gradually drawing in the woodwind, intensify it; the inevitable burst comes then in the horns, with a vigorous presentation of a strong passage in thirds, in sustained, forte half-notes. This theme is the very heartbeat of the movement; and in fact, as noted by Cecil Gray, it has animated foregoing portions of the symphony as well as this one—notably in an accompaniment figure in the slow movement. There is a subsidiary, but important, thematic role assigned to woodwind and cellos, against horns and the upper strings; and there are unexpected mutations to other tonalities. That which occurs just before the coda, to G-flat major, is rather startling in method and effective in achieving the required *misterioso* atmosphere; and it leads to the magnificent proclamation at the end which, as Lawrence Gilman has written, “is the crown of the work, and is in many ways the most nobly imagined and nobly eloquent page that Sibelius has given us.”



## Symphony No. 6 in D minor

[Opus 104]

It is significant that when the terrifying news of the attack upon Finland startled the radio listeners of the United States, the first thought in a million minds was for the safety of Sibelius. Few composers have in their own time commanded the attention, the reverence, and the affection with which the world has paid tribute to the great Finnish master. There are those, and their numbers are not inconsiderable, who hold that Sibelius is vastly overrated as a composer, but there seem

to be none who would temper the world's estimate of him as a man, or the affection in which the musical world holds him. That the specter, if not the spectacle, of war should approach him, a man so sensitive and so full of love for his fellow men, seems a ghastly crime on our so-called civilization.

It is fortunate that there exists on records a performance of the Sixth Symphony of Sibelius, and one which some day may be regarded as a priceless historical document. The performance is as authentic as we could expect, for it is done by Sibelius' own countrymen with an enthusiasm and possibly with a penetration hardly to be found elsewhere.

### *First Movement*

#### *Allegro molto moderato*

There are a number of curious features in this symphony which set it apart from all others of Sibelius. Though loosely integrated, as most of his symphonies are, there is a unity of spirit and a similarity of thematic material running through all four movements that are really remarkable. Again, rather paradoxically, while the music represents Sibelius in his most mature period, it has passages that could quite logically have been written by a Wagner or a Debussy. This is particularly noticeable in the opening phrases; and while they are in no sense imitative, it is rather difficult to listen and not recall the wonderful music that accompanies young Siegfried's miraculous contacts with the speaking birds. The harmonies are clear and open as those of Debussy, the spirit is mystical and full of melodious charm, but the hand is that of Sibelius nevertheless. As the opening phrases grow in intensity, and especially upon the dissonant entry of basses, we finally make up our minds that though Sibelius certainly knew the music of Wagner and Debussy, no one but himself could have written this particular passage.

The mystery and cold dark beauty of the northland make themselves felt in this music, as almost invariably they do in the music of this composer. One cannot divorce the idea of great sea birds planing among dark rocks and narrow fiords. A remembrance of that incomparable tone poem *The Swan of Tuonela* comes again and again, and it is not difficult to hear the fluttering of wings and the wild harsh cries in the figures which the composer assigns to strings and woodwind.

Thematically the movement is loosely articulated, but its rhapsodic spirit is consistent and continuous until toward the end, when the low brasses, with some violence in tone, give somber pronouncements and quiet the rushing evolutions of imaginary birds and half-imagined spirits. The use of chromatic and diatonic scales is characteristic, and some interesting harmonic clashes are developed. The movement as a whole, however, is quietly rhapsodic rather than formal, and we find in it no release of those mighty powers which Sibelius alone of moderns can summon from the orchestra.

*Second Movement**Allegro moderato*

But for some change the rhythm of the second movement might almost be a continuation of the first. The strange dissonant cries of the woodwinds and the quiet conflict of rhythms as well as of tones suggest a more intense emotional atmosphere however. The occasional passing of unrelated tonalities produces an atmosphere of restlessness, of struggle, almost of bewilderment, and the acidulous comment of the oboe is a protesting voice rising sharply from a soul that seems to be in turmoil and confusion.

*Third Movement**Poco vivace*

The third movement is probably the shortest of Sibelius' symphonic movements. The composer has often asserted that he does not use in his music the folk song of Finland. Granting the accuracy of this, it is nevertheless true that the spirit of Finnish folk song is often present in his music, and occasionally even authentic details of folk music are noticeable. The constantly reiterated notes which we observe in this and other movements of the symphony represent a common characteristic of Finnish folk song, and the use of  $5/4$  rhythm is very frequent in Sibelius' and almost invariable in Finnish folk music. As this brief movement develops we feel the unleashing of orchestral forces and the composer begins to call with more insistence for the orchestra's mightiest utterances.

*Fourth Movement**Allegro molto*

The fourth movement is marked by a much brighter melodic line than the composer has heretofore employed in the symphony. The beautiful thematic strain introduced at the beginning is very possibly of folk-song origin, or if it is not, certainly it is modeled very precisely along the lines of many native Finnish melodies. Later we observe a marvelous effect of distance and mystery, accomplished by deft orchestration involving woodwind and horns. Still later an organ point in the brasses against a long descending figure provides a source of interesting harmonics and dissonances. The movement is almost like a succession of songs, but as so often happens in the music of Sibelius, it is distinctly episodic, and accomplishes unity of mood not only within itself but with the other movements of the work without having to labor for structural or formal unity. The music fades and dies on a long-held minor chord in the strings, bringing the symphony to a close.



## Concerto in D minor for Violin and Orchestra

SIBELIUS would naturally look with speculative eye upon the possibilities of the violin, for it is, as musicians say, "his instrument"; he specialized in it as a student. Yet in another sense, the violin in its usual manifestations is not Sibelius' instrument at all. We are accustomed to warmth and sensuousness and brilliance from the violin, and Sibelius makes it utter speech of a quite different, though not less interesting, character. If it is "his instrument," it is his in a peculiarly individual way, for, whether it sings solo or happens to be in intimate union with the orchestra, the violin utters things here which it has spoken for no other composer.

It is unfortunately unusual—unfortunate that it is unusual—to note that a concerto by a great European composer had its first American performance by an American artist. This work was presented for the first time in the United States by the late Maude Powell, with the New York Philharmonic Society, November 30, 1906. The first performance anywhere was by Karl Halir, at Berlin, October 19, 1905. Recent notable interpretations have been given, in the United States and elsewhere, by the incomparable Heifetz.

### *First Movement*

Sibelius' romanticism, here as always, suggests the reflections of a remote and detached mind; instead of the gypsylike ardors of the usual violin showpiece, we have a somewhat aloof and serious utterance. The first movement is broad and free, its material more quasi fantasia than in anything resembling strict form. Its basis is the subject announced by the solo violin, against the muted tones of its orchestral companions. After some development of this theme, the orchestra has an interlude, which is followed by the second important theme, also in the solo instrument.

Development by the orchestra is rather extensive, and produces a climax of considerable intensity; then passages for the solo violin progress toward the unaccompanied cadenza. These fireworks are cold and lambent as the firefly, yet their brilliance is engaging, and reveals the composer as capable of extracting all that the violin has to give.

The bassoon, with the soloist above it, returns to the chief theme of the movement; there is also a representation of the second theme in somewhat altered form. The coda is brilliant for both solo instrument and orchestra, the former recalling the first theme at the end.

### *Second Movement*

Here is one of the most ingratiating passages in all the music of Sibelius; one in which he comes almost to the point of becoming sentimental; one that is richly

colored and lyrically emotional. There is a short introduction; then the solo violin sings its lovely song—a free and rich and expressive melody, delivered against the darkly glowing background provided by horn and bassoon. The solo theme continues against a shifting orchestral accompaniment, and later, when the ensemble is attracted to the main theme, the violin gracefully moves above it in rounded shapes of tone.

### *Third Movement*

Sibelius often achieves in his music a curious dark brightness; a fire without warmth, emotion without passion, and mysterious implications attached to clear and simple devices. He accomplishes such effects here—for example, in the stubborn reiterations of the timpani and strings, in the strangely rhythmmed figures for the solo violin, and, near the end of the movement, the glassy octaves assigned to that instrument. There is little here that violinists have not been asked to do before, yet one feels that new possibilities of the instrument have been revealed. The coincidence of Sibelius' inscrutable harmony and peculiar melodic line, applied to the violin and orchestra, extend to the solo instrument the singular quality of this composer's music, and, in so doing, provide the solo violinist with a unique opportunity for the exploitation of his instrument.



## The Swan of Tuonela

AFTER considering the symphonies, one might expect Tuonela, the Hell of Finnish mythology, to be painted grim and dark upon Sibelius' musical canvas. But it is not so; in this sad and wistful music there is no bitterness, no glowering of the fateful gods, but only a tender and brooding melancholy. The music is drawn from a suite entitled *Kalevala*, based upon the mythology of Finland. It pictures the ultimate passage of the disembodied soul to the caverns of Tuonela, before reaching which nine seas and a river must be crossed. Upon the darkly shining bosom of the river moves the sacred Swan in majesty, now singing her strange wild song, now floating with almost imperceptible motion among the gloomy crags, now slowly flapping her great white wings above the silent and deadly whirlpool.

The Swan sings her song, a song of terrible loneliness and passionate melancholy, in the dark voice of the *cor anglais*; strings, *con sordino*, and the remote rumblings of bass drum, suggest mists and shadows through which great stony portals loom like giants. The strings reach soaring and soul-searching climaxes of passion, and sigh again, through viola, through cello, as if in brief lament for some



passing soul on its journey to Tuonela. The great climax is one of incredible intensity and beauty, the strings taking on, in place of their misty and diaphanous quality, a fierce brilliance like lightning over a sunless, subterranean sea. Then comes an exquisite pianissimo, the strings achieving a curious and effective tone by playing *col legno*. The snow-white pinions of the Swan are drooping as she sings once again the lovely and distant and melancholy close.



### Valse triste

THIS is the music by which—unfortunately—Sibelius is best known in America. Unfortunately—not because the music is unworthy, for it is full of poetry and melody and a shadowy, macabre beauty—but because it seems necessary to cultivate very cautiously and carefully the taste of the American public for the larger and more important works that are essentially Sibelius. It seems to be the fate of more than one composer to be known and respected for the little things that he does. Witness the C-sharp minor Prelude of Rachmaninoff—fundamentally an interesting and valid piece of music, reduced by overpopularity to inanity. Witness the vapid and meretricious “Negro spiritual” by a kind of musical miscegeny derived out of the slow movement of Dvořák’s Fifth Symphony—or *Humoresque*; but why go on?

*Valse triste* is extracted from incidental music to a drama *Kuolema*, written by the brother-in-law of Sibelius, Arvid Järnefelt. The scene is pathetic, and mystical, and ghostly—but not grisly. A young man has been watching at the bedside of his dying mother, and he is weary of his watching. He sleeps. A glowing light materializes in the room; there is a sound of distant and hesitating music that comes nearer and nearer. Presently we are conscious of the rhythm and the melody of a waltz, strongly and sadly flowing from stringed instruments.

The woman rises out of the coma of death. At first halting, then with sweeping and flowing rhythm, with her long white garment flaring like a ball gown, she moves to and fro; she dances, she waltzes like a wraith in the strange light that pervades the room. She summons unseen partners; she mingles with an invisible throng, but not one of them will look into her face. She sinks back on the bed, breathless and spent; rises up again to dance with even more energy. There is a loud knock at the door, as if bony fists assaulted it. Suddenly the spectral dancers are gone, the music dies, and turning to the opened door, the woman utters a dreadful cry as she looks into the face of Death.

# BEDŘICH SMETANA

[1824-1884]

THE COMPOSER was born in Bohemia. As a child he revealed conspicuous talent, and became a virtuoso of the piano. Later he became conductor of the Philharmonic Society of Gothenburg (Sweden) and spent some years of his life in that country. When opportunity offered, however, he returned to Bohemia and accepted the post of chief conductor at the National Theater at Prague. Meanwhile he found time for composition, and his works, though not very numerous, are important musically both for their inherent charm and for their exploitation of Bohemian musical characteristics. Not the least of Smetana's contributions to music was his interest in Antonín Dvořák, who played under him in the orchestra of the National Theater.

Smetana wrote several operas in the Bohemian idiom, the most important of which is *Die verkaufte Braut*—The Bartered Bride—a comic opera of exceeding grace and musical attractiveness. *Mein Vaterland*, a symphonic poem conceived along extremely broad yet definitely nationalistic lines, is his chief work in symphonic form. A quartet, *Aus meinem Leben*, a remarkably beautiful work, is unusual in the fact that it attempts, with some success, to be autobiographical.

Smetana was afflicted with deafness in his later years, and was further troubled by the failure of some of his work. His physical and mental health were impaired, and he died in an asylum for the insane.



## Overture to "The Bartered Bride"

SMETANA's opera, as opera, has never been an unqualified success outside of the composer's native land, but the overture is one of the choicest little morsels in the symphonic repertoire. The good-humored simplicity of the opera is reflected in the delightful melodies of the overture, which, however, are not simple in their ingenious working out. Strings and woodwind propose the first theme, against sonorous brass and accented kettledrums. A vigorous and lively fugue is developed from the first melody; it ends with a sturdy assertion of the theme in unison, as at the opening of the overture. The swiftly paced fugal treatment is characteristic of the whole overture, though other themes, some quite fragmentary but all delightfully melodious, are introduced from time to time. The closing passages are exceedingly brilliant and merry; they are derived from, and occasionally interrupted by, the main theme of the overture.

The charm of the music lies in its melody, and particularly in the vivacity and clarity with which the themes are handled. The natural sprightliness of the music makes it a temptation to the superficial type of conductor, and it is sometimes played at a speed which obscures its clean and fine-drawn lines. Reasonable restraint in tempo and clear marking of the melodic lines will usually bring about a good performance from any symphony orchestra.



## The Moldau

[*Vltava*]

THE symphonic cycle *Má Vlast* (Mein Vaterland: My Fatherland) is a series of six symphonic poems composed by Smetana to depict various phases and scenes of Bohemian life. The second of the series, entitled *Vltava*—The Moldau—is the most popular and the best known, because of its extraordinary wealth of beautiful melody and the lovely pastoral scenes it so vividly suggests.

The music is frankly programmatic. In a preface to the score, the composer indicates the scenes through which the great river passes in Bohemia. The river itself, he tells us, is a union of two streams that meet in the forest—one cool and calm, the other warm and vivacious. It rushes through the woods, where sounds the wild call of the hunter's horn; it flows through groves, where happy peasants celebrate a wedding feast with dancing and with song. It falls in mighty rapids; it hides within its depths the revelry of sprites at nighttime; it comes, finally, to the great city of Prague, where its channel broadens, and where it flows in calm majesty on its way to the sea.

The transparency and ceaseless motion of the woodland brooks are vividly suggested in woodwind and violin and harp. Flowing melodies, as clear and smooth as sylvan stream, are discoursed by violin and woodwind, harp supplying a rippled accompaniment. "The horn of the hunter is heard on the hill," as the composer promised, and dancers on the green celebrate alfresco nuptials in a gay and vigorous rhythm. The flute, like Pan with his pipes, dallies with a dainty melody to suggest the playings of water nymphs. "In these waves are reflected many a fortress and castle—witnesses of the bygone splendor of chivalry, and the vanished martial fame of days that are no more." (Brass sounds portentously, with tuba.) The waters rush over rocks and through gorges as they approach the rapids, and the orchestra attains a mighty power. Then as the channel widens, the peace and majesty of the river are again dominant, and, as in a dream, the shining stream fades from sight.

# JOHN CHRISTOPHER SMITH

[1712-1795]

JOHN CHRISTOPHER SMITH was probably born Johann Christian Schmidt, named after his father, Johann Christian Schmidt of Anspach, who was a college friend of Handel and who in later years acted as Handel's secretary, treasurer, manager, and agent. Schmidt and Handel quarreled, we understand, over some inconsequential matter four years before Handel's death and the two were not reconciled until within a few weeks of Handel's passing, and then through the intervention of John Christopher, the son.

Handel was much interested in the younger Smith. He educated the boy at his own expense at Mr. Clare's Academy, and much to Handel's delight and admiration, the lad exhibited musical talents of no mean order. Upon discovering this, Handel took John Christopher into his own house, taught him music, and regarded him almost as a son. When eventually Handel became blind, Smith devoted himself entirely to his master, acting as his secretary, copyist, and amanuensis. Many of Handel's compositions were dictated to Smith, and to him Handel bequeathed his manuscripts, his harpsichord, and many other items of value. Upon the death of Handel, Smith's prestige had, through his association with the master, mounted to such heights and his popularity had become so great that it seemed he had won a permanent place among the great names of English music, but with the passing years his compositions were heard less and less frequently and today he is scarcely known outside the esoteric circles of musicologists.



## Miniature Suite

AMONG Smith's most important works was an opera based on Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* entitled *The Fairies*. He wrote another opera based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and several songs extracted from this score became popular favorites in England. Smith wrote extensively for the harpsichord, and among the most interesting of his writings for this instrument were volumes of short works published annually, which he called *My Hand and Musick Book*, a title derived from his music-publishing shop in Coventry Street which bore the same name.

The *Miniature Suite*, freely transcribed for orchestra by Harl McDonald, is based on material taken from Smith's *My Hand and Musick Book*, published in London in 1784. Only an examination of the original manuscript, which Dr. McDonald studied in the British Museum, can reveal with what loving care and

consummate skill the transcriber has brought to life the mere sketch left to us in Smith's manuscript. The truth is that this music is more Dr. McDonald's than Smith's, and yet had Dr. McDonald's name not been associated with this work it is unlikely anyone would question that it was completely original, definitely eighteenth century, and probably Handelian. As a matter of fact, so far as the influence of Handel is concerned, this work might well have been written in its original form by Handel himself, for researchers have found more than a little evidence that Smith, like many other composers, did not hesitate to borrow from his fellow artists, and Smith of course had excellent opportunity for doing so.

This suite consists of a prelude, air, and *allemande*. The prelude, with its well-marked rhythm, suggests a not too dignified dance form. It is developed with the simplicity that often conceals a very sophisticated art, with a clear and strong melodic line of singular charm and grace.

The second movement is an unforgettable melody reminiscent of both Bach and Handel and, indeed, comparable in its charm to some of the best melodies left us by those masters. This simple song is prodigiously moving, poignant, and memorable, and in Dr. McDonald's transcription sings for itself with a minimum of embellishment.

The third movement, which is in a dance rhythm, is delightfully vigorous and gay and yet possesses a certain dignity which is seldom dissociated from the best music of the period.\*

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\* Dr. McDonald wrote this suite originally as a model of eighteenth-century composition for his classes at the University of Pennsylvania. After its playing and recording by the Boston "Pops" under Arthur Fiedler, the work became so generally popular and so aroused the curiosity of the musicologists that Dr. McDonald made the whole story clear and revealed the fact that the contribution of Smith to this suite consisted only of a few bars.

## LEO SOWERBY

[Born 1895]

LEO SOWERBY was born at Grand Rapids, Michigan; at present he lives in Chicago, where he has been a notable figure, musically, almost from the time he moved with his family to that city in 1909. He studied piano with Calvin Lambert and with Percy Grainger; composition and theory with Arthur O. Anderson. In 1917 he enlisted in the United States army, and saw service overseas. His musical talents were, miraculously perhaps, discovered in the army, and he had considerable activity as bandmaster, directing the regimental band of the 332d Field Artillery. He was honorably discharged from the army in 1919.

Mr. Sowerby is the first American composer to have won the American Prix de Rome. In consequence of his capture of this prize, he spent several years in Europe, particularly in Rome. He is an organist and pianist of conspicuous gifts; he has appeared with leading orchestras both here and abroad; he holds the post of professor of theory and composition in the American Conservatory of Music at Chicago, and is organist and choirmaster at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. James in that city.

His works have been numerous, effective, and characterized in the main by a sturdy and highly individual, possibly "American" quality. His music has a certain masculine and forthright strength entirely consonant with Mr. Sowerby's own career as man and musician. Certain of his works, in which no attempt is made to devise or incorporate an American idiom, are nevertheless of great interest. He has investigated the great field that lies open to the man who can compose for organ and orchestra, and, as a finished organist himself, as well as an intelligent fabricator of music, he has written distinguished works for these two greatest of instruments (organ and orchestra). Mr. Sowerby was one of the first composers to introduce the jazz spirit and idiom into serious music in the larger forms, and in this he has been at least as successful as anybody else, and more so than some of the over-publicized and overrated Broadway maestros. In much of his music he exhibits a rare and priceless quality—a sense of humor, something which musicians as a class, and especially organists, generally and sadly lack; he gives considerable play to this happy quality in such works as *Monotony*; in his modern piano arrangements, and orchestrations like that of *The Irish Washerwoman*.

## Prairie

### *A Poem for Orchestra*

THIS interesting and very American work was performed for the first time by an orchestra of amateurs—the orchestra of the National High School Association. It is probable that it has never had a better or, at least, a more enthusiastic performance, for this group of talented and disciplined boys and girls, with their vigor and unjaded musical curiosity, is the equal, technically, of many a professional band, and in spirit the superior of some. *Prairie* was conducted on this occasion by the composer. The first professional performance was by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Howard Hanson.

The piece is based on a characteristic poem by Carl Sandburg, the famous biographer, bard, and ballad singer of Chicago. From the poem, also entitled *Prairie*, the following lines are selected and prefixed to Mr. Sowerby's score:

*Have you seen a red sunset drip over one of my cornfields, the shore of night stars, the wave-lines of dawn up a wheat-valley?*

*Have you heard my threshing crews yelling in the chaff of a strawpile, and the running wheat of the wagon-boards, my corn-huskers, my harvest hands hauling crops, singing dreams of women, worlds, horizons?*

This Whitmanesque expression is the germ of the idea which Sowerby so beautifully develops in his poem. The composer says, in notes appearing in the program of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, that he "prefers to make no detailed analysis of the purely musical contents of the score, as he feels this scarcely right or necessary in the case of a symphonic poem. Though he desires to make clear that he has not wished to write program music, he asks only of the listener that he imagine himself alone in an Illinois cornfield, far enough away from railways, motorcars, telephones, and radios to feel himself at peace and at one with the beauty that is about him. If the situation has something of the 'homely' about it, so much the better for the situation."

The "situation," at the beginning, is one of terrible and complete isolation and loneliness. The composer's injunction to imagine oneself alone is easily obeyed when this music sounds. Vast and sunny spaces, still and hot and monotoned, stretch endlessly and without horizon. This is the Midwest, the great heart of America. Imposed upon this broad canvas are the scenes suggested in the excerpt from the poem, the stars and the still dawn, the sunset, the boisterous workmen, the brawny and inarticulate fellows who dream dreams and sing ribald verses to hide an easy and ashamed and tender sentimentality.

It is the wish of the composer that hearers be not concerned with the technical

and internal musical details of this music. He prefers to create—and succeeds in creating—an atmosphere and a mood, against which he projects moving and very vital figures to stir the imagination. And at the end, again the silent and empty reaches of the plains; silent only with the almost audible silence of growing things, empty, yet teeming with hidden life and the seeds of life.



# RICHARD STRAUSS

[Born 1864]

ONE OF THE most extraordinary musical personages of today is Richard Strauss. Born in 1864; informed with the classical musical traditions of Haydn, Mozart, Bach, and Beethoven; regarding, at twenty-one years of age, such composers of the *fin de siècle* as Chopin, Schumann, and Brahms as not quite conservative, Strauss stands today, though full of years and prolific of accomplishments, one of the most modern, most radical of composers.

Daring, insistence upon individuality of expression, radicalism—call it what you will—is supposed to be the prerogative of the young. Strauss outdoes the younger generation of composers in daring—but with this difference; there is a rationale in his music that places it in a class quite apart from the often meaningless, deliberately strident, and ugly manifestations of the musical impulses of certain modern composers. Strauss is, indeed, modern—but his music is never freakish, never novel for the sake of novelty, never daring for the sake of self-advertisement.

Strauss was born, not into the family of Johann Strauss, the “Waltz King”—to whom he bears no relationship—but the son of Franz Strauss, leading horn-player of the Munich Opera Orchestra, who recognized and fostered the musical talent of his child. The boy’s training was rigidly classical, and his precocious gifts fed upon the works of the musical giants exclusively. Not until he was a young man of twenty-one did he become familiar with the more recent of the great composers.

When but a child he wrote his first composition. He was only twenty when Theodore Thomas, beloved founder and conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, played a symphony of Strauss’ at a concert in New York. One year later the composer attained to a position of eminence in the music world, by succeeding to the conductorship previously held by von Bülow.

The career of Strauss presently took a curious turn. Acclaimed, twenty years ago or more, as unquestionably the most modern as well as the most gifted of living composers, he had the musical world at his feet. His concerts were crowded to the doors; enthusiasm was tremendous. A few years later, the same Strauss found almost more musical enemies than friends. Critics attacked him savagely; his new ideas, definite and reasonable as they seem now in contrast to the nebulous fancies and impossible theories of some musical poetasters, were scorned, or discounted, contradicted, and angrily denied. The audiences that had practically worshiped him had almost disappeared. He had become a “radical.”

Today, though Strauss, like every man of eminence, has his antagonistic critics, he is accepted as one of the greatest living composers, if not the greatest. Though the processes of time have not yet caused his so-called radicalism to seem conservative, the essential soundness and sanity, and the strange and compelling beauty of

his music, are strikingly in contrast with both classical and ultramodern music. He has developed and perfected the tone poem, the possibilities of which Liszt first perceived. He has elaborated the leitmotiv, or musical phrase attached to a definite person, place, thing, or situation. He has projected a new conception of counterpoint, in which simultaneous melodies are considered separately as melodies, without regarding their mutual harmony or dissonance.

His music is alive with vigor and vitality . . . full of conflict, as indeed it must be to express the subjects which Strauss sets forth to illustrate. It is music of immense vigor and vitality. It is music of glowing color—for Strauss is a master among masters of the art of orchestration.

And—what will be of interest to the great bulk of music lovers to whom music is a stimulant of imaginative pictures—Strauss above all present-day composers depicts in tone the phenomena of the material world. To call his music merely “programmatic” is to slander it. For he seldom descends to mere imitation of familiar sounds or stereotyped musical idioms for the suggestion of “falling waters” or “galloping horses,” or similar picturesque incidents of ordinary “program music.” With Strauss, a fanfare of brass may mean not merely a call to arms, but the causes of an empire’s downfall; a fluttering of strings may signify not a springtime zephyr, but a storm within the soul. Though it may revolve about material beings and objects, the music of Strauss is nevertheless powerfully subjective and symbolic.



## Ein Heldenleben

*A Hero's Life* is not a musical biography of some actual or mythical human being. It is, rather, the depiction of the life of an ideal man—a hero only in the sense that he meets his problems, victories, and defeats, the forces of evil and of destruction, the supreme experience of love, the demands upon his physical and spiritual powers, and the autumnal peace of his closing years, with all the nobility and vitality of his manhood.

The Hero is, then, an ideal, a subjective personage. We must not therefore look to the music for too well-defined incidents. The underlying idea is treated broadly, subjectively, and with symbolism. Yet the Hero is human; he lives and loves; knows victory and defeat, tears and laughter. He wields a sword, and achieves even more powerfully in fields of peace . . . and at length, himself knows the great peace of fulfillment.

Whether or not he wishes to be so considered, Richard Strauss is generally regarded as being the hero of *Ein Heldenleben*—not, as has been implied above, as

a singular and well-defined personality, but as experiencing, in his own career, much of the antagonism and much of the superb defiance of his adversaries that distinguishes the Hero of the tone poem. He created this musical epic, certainly not in any mood of self-glorification, but perhaps with much the attitude which begot Wagner's *Meistersinger*. Wagner lampooned his enemies, burned them with bitter irony. Strauss has perhaps a broader viewpoint in the matter, and shows, not only the struggle and the immediate triumph over his antagonists, but the gentleness and complacency that come with years and fulfillment.

While Richard Strauss, in the score of *A Hero's Life*, sets forth no argument, no program, no clue to the story which lies implicit in the music, the following may be accepted as a broad outline of the Hero's life:

At the opening of the music, the Hero is in the full powers of young manhood. His personal, spiritual characteristics are distinguished and noble. He is proud, sensitive, imaginative, sympathetic, and powerful of will. When such a personality comes in contact with meanness, there is conflict. The conflict of the Hero with his adversaries, who are pictured as stupid, envious, malicious, together with the Hero's disquietude, make up the second section of the work.

The third section introduces the Hero's Beloved, in her various engaging moods. She is playful, seductive, angry, scornful, and demure by turns. He woos her with a quiet passion that one feels must eventuate in his triumph in the lists of love, as indeed it does. The fourth section sees the Hero torn from his Beloved to face the heat and strife of battle. The military note is unmistakable. The Hero departs for the battle front, and there are marvelous pictures of flashing swords, of uproar and of slaughter; and we hear the conflict of the Hero's theme with that of his adversaries. Occasionally there are recollections of the theme of his Beloved that urge him on, supporting him until at last the victory is won.

The fifth section of *Ein Heldenleben* depicts the Hero's victories in the fields of peaceful endeavor. These are victories of the mind and spirit, and it is this section of the work that implies most strongly that Strauss himself is the Hero. At least, important events in his own musical career would qualify him for the part!

Now we hear musical allusions to and quotations from his previous works . . . works which achieved success only after the most vitriolic criticism and unrelenting attack.

The final section of the tone poem is perhaps the most subtle. Here we discover that, though the Hero has triumphed, his achievements are belittled by his stupid adversaries, and his reward is envy and contempt. At first he rebels; then gradually he realizes that his true triumph lies in the inward satisfaction of his own spirit and conscience, and though there are occasional distressing memories of scenes of strife and bitterness, peace finally broods gently over the Hero's soul. It is the peace of fulfillment and of contentment. His work is achieved—and nobly. He knows that in the depths of his soul. Thereafter nothing can disturb his tranquillity.

*First Section*

There is no prelude. The mighty theme of the Hero himself springs from the darkness of low horns and strings, striding magnificently across three octaves. At once the superlative skill of Strauss in the art of orchestration is evident. This compelling phrase, the most important figure of the whole tone poem, is given an unforgettable orchestral color; bold, incisive, yet with a certain wild beauty that is most ingratiating. Here in its first presentation, the theme depicts a youth, full of youthful fire and of the first full surge of his natural powers.

Here are the opening few bars of the theme:

## THE HERO



The development of the Hero theme is intended to suggest the character of the Hero in its many aspects. His intelligence, his ambition, his sensitiveness, his power of will are implied in the material growing out of the phrases quoted above. It must be remembered that a mere succession of musical ideas, of themes and phrases, cannot constitute an integrated musical work. There must be rational musical development; adherence to the form within which the composer has cast his work; and coherence of its essential parts. The wonder of *Ein Heldenleben* is not only the wealth of musical ideas set forth in it, or the marvelous invention, but the skill and logic with which the ideas are presented, combined, and developed. Thus the bare structure of the Hero theme, presented as the music begins, is mightily developed as the tone poem progresses; as the many varying qualities of the Hero's spirit reveal themselves as outgrowths of his essential nature.

You will feel this growth as you listen, and you cannot but perceive, as the first section of the work ends in a mighty projection of sound, that here is a full-length portrait of the Hero in all the pride and glowing power of his young manhood.

*Second Section*

The Hero's adversaries, petty, snarling, cynical, and small beside his own spiritual bulk, are depicted, caricatured, and scorned as the second section of the tone poem opens. Here again, Strauss' uncanny perception of the color possibilities of the orchestral instruments, and their infallible expressiveness, is signally demonstrated. Listen, two or three times, to the crackling, spiteful phrases of the woodwind that open this section of the work. They constitute the motive of the Hero's opponents:

## THE HERO'S ENEMIES



The whole woodwind section—flutes, oboes, clarinets, English horn, and piccolo—utter these acid, penetrating phrases, so significant of mockery, of pettiness, of niggling natures and nagging criticism. And the Hero, though by no means lacking in strength or aggressiveness, is taken aback. He is at first surprised and wounded, and in the sweetly melancholy phrase of cellos and double basses, we hear his protest—gentle, but growing in strength and deep with passion. Presently, the music communicates unmistakably the thought that the Hero has resolved to “take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them.” A warlike fanfare in the brass introduces passages of more forceful and assertive character. We feel that the Hero is about to plunge into a warfare with his adversaries—but suddenly a new voice is heard. A violin solo sweetly gives forth the lovely little song that portrays the Hero’s Beloved:

## THE HERO'S BELOVED



The introduction of the Beloved brings us to the

*Third Section*

of the tone poem, covering the period of the Hero’s life during which he woos and wins his lady.

In answer to the maidenly salutation of the Beloved comes again the voice of the Hero, deep and manly, incisive and strong in accent; we hear it in the plangent tones of cellos and basses, their strings briskly plucked rather than bowed. Again the voice of the Beloved, in the solo violin . . . a bit coquettish for a moment, but ending presently on a dreamy and ethereal harmonic.

Now opens a marvelous duet between solo violin and orchestra—the one a figure of the coy, demure, petulant, tender, coquettish, naïve, angry, gentle, scolding, and loving Beloved; the other suggesting the deliberate, determined, quietly passionate spirit of the Hero himself. Now you will know the expressiveness of the violin in the hands of a master. Every characteristic with which Strauss informed the Hero’s lady is portrayed with incredible accuracy and absolute conviction by

the solo violin. And in the long dialogue with the orchestra it seems that every device of violin technique is called upon by the composer, and put to use by the soloist. Chords, arpeggios (harplike figures), simultaneous melodies are but the more obvious demands made upon the concertmeister; an examination of the score reveals further and more subtle exigencies which he must meet with a superb indifference to their difficulties.

It is by no means difficult to imagine here the sprightly girl, cajoling her lover . . . mocking him gently . . . scolding him for his deliberateness . . . evading him when she seems within his grasp . . . coquetting when he feigns indifference . . . and finally arousing him to more and more vehement protestations of his love. Almost immediately we can perceive the shyly yielding note in the curving melody of the violin; a passionate but gentle utterance in the orchestra that can signify nothing but love's ultimate triumph.

The closing parts of this section are as tonally lovely, as touching in sentiment, as exquisitely conceived and unified, as anything in modern music. Passion glows in them, but there is a sweetness, too, that tempers the flaming vehemence of preceding passages of the work. A final subtle touch appears in the closing bars, where the almost hypnotic calm is faintly disturbed now and then by a fleeting ripple of quiet ecstasy.

#### *Fourth Section*

The first fierce flame of love has steadied into a lambent glow. Yet hardly has serenity established its calm sway when the Hero is troubled by memories of his bitter adversaries, whose mocking cries and poisonous sneers once more intrude upon his consciousness. Again he feels the old pain, the old hurt surprise; and we hear in the strings an expression of his distress; a fragment of melody, gradually disappearing in a most exquisite pianissimo.

But a new force, a new urge and impulse, have come into the Hero's life; he has a mate, a *helpmate*, an inspiration in the person of his Beloved. And, before the loveliness of the phrase just mentioned has quite faded into silence, the Hero feels the infusion of new vigor and assertiveness. Instead of nursing the spiritual wounds his enemies have inflicted, he determines to go forth and fight. A thrilling fanfare of the trumpet; two trumpets . . . and now three. The battle is on.

#### THE BATTLEFIELD



Now Strauss, through the orchestra, pictures the tumult and shouting, the clashing of swords, the headlong rush of massed warriors, the downfall of battle-

ments, the clang of steel upon steel. The battle rages at its height. Ever and anon the trumpet cries its wild alarum . . . now a clear imperative summons, now muted as by the clouds of smoke that sweep across the battlefields. Violins rage up and down the scale with incredible rapidity; strange cries and shouts arise from brass and woodwind; drums rattle and boom, and punctuate the music with sounds like those of machine-gun fire and of cannon. Once the motive of the Hero, brief and broken, appears for an instant in the sonorous voices of the string bass, as if the smoke of conflict had lifted for a moment to reveal him in Olympian rage dashing up and down the opposed battle lines.

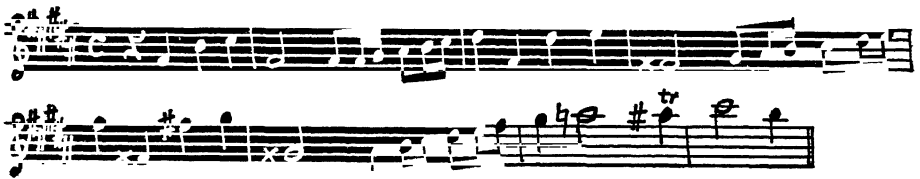
What has gone before is but a whisper of the storm of tone now projected by the gigantic orchestra as it reaches toward the limits of its dynamic powers. Yet in all this wild confusion there is the most marvelous welding together of the central musical thoughts that give the music its essential meanings. It is entirely possible to withdraw oneself from the emotional aspects of the work, and concentrate upon its technical and academic characteristics—and the soundest and most reasonable structure will be found underlying and supporting the Gargantuan edifice of sound which Strauss rears skyward in this magnificent scene.

There is a steady growth from climax to vertiginous climax, and we feel in an imminent place the presence of a dominant and compelling thought. The trumpet climbs to incredible heights. Twice it reaches the high C; its penetrating tone ushering in the grand climax of the scene. Now we hear, in triumphant mood, the noble theme of the Hero, a certain suavity informing its broad and rugged lines as it is projected in the massed voices of the entire string section. From time to time a thought of his Beloved has strengthened the Hero in the fight; now his own great theme is finally re-created in the fullness of its strength and beauty. Above there is the chanting of a victory paean . . . but still the Hero rejoices alone; the world as yet neglects him.

### *Fifth Section*

Echoes of the preceding section of the tone poem persist for a moment, but we enter into the fifth section, announced by the chief theme typifying the Hero's works of peace, his intellectual and spiritual accomplishments. This is a bright and cheerful utterance, occurring after the brief interlude in strings that follows the heroic sentences at the beginning of this section. The "works of peace" motive is assigned to the clear and golden voice of the trumpet. We quote the subject:

#### THE HERO'S WORKS OF PEACE



It is this section of the tone poem that gives rise to the belief that Strauss himself is largely the Hero. For here, if we listen with closest attention, we will presently discover musical thoughts, themes, actual quotations from several other compositions of Strauss mostly from the tone poems, though it is possible to find motives from other works as well. Indeed, this section of the work is not far in progress before we discover a bold theme from Strauss' tone poem *Don Juan*—a forceful pronouncement in the horns, doubled with cello. Here is the motive:

### DON JUAN



And there are others. The mood is a serene and contemplative one, sometimes richly and elaborately colored, sometimes filled with a pale translucent mist. The symbolism of the musical quotations is unmistakable; the marvel is that they can be and are incorporated with such subtlety, coherence, and aptness. For most of them, one must listen with closest attention, or even examine the elaborate score itself.\* Such phrases as this however, taken from *Tod und Verklärung* and given here to the solo violin, are easily discernible:

### TOD UND VERKLÄRUNG



As well as seeking outstanding subjects from his earlier works, Strauss also combines items from previous sections of *Ein Heldenleben*; making apparently new motives of them. Thus he contributes to the unity and continuity of his work, establishes a connection between foregoing events in the "life," and shows their bearings upon the ultimate denouement.

In this section you will note a curious feature that often occurs in Strauss, and particularly in *Ein Heldenleben*; one which shortsighted and misunderstanding critics viewed with horror and attacked with bitterness. It has been hinted at previously in these notes—the progression of two distinct melodies which in their course follow no established rule of counterpoint but, on the contrary, go along

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\* Strauss introduces, among others, themes from *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Tod und Verklärung*, *Don Juan*, *Don Quixote*, *Traum durch die Dämmerung*, and *Macbeth*—tone poems from his pen, prior to the composition of *Ein Heldenleben*.



their independent ways without regard to harmony or dissonance. So accustomed have our modern ears become to musical incidents of this kind that listening to the melodies, it is often possible to plot their courses in imagination and to anticipate the inevitable clash when they touch unconventional intervals. And we are not shocked!

Toward the close of the fifth section of the tone poem you will come upon an extraordinary tour de force of orchestral writing. Here is a broad, serene theme, nobly spoken by the tenor tuba, viola, and bass clarinet, and taken from Strauss' *Traum durch die Dämmerung* (Dream at Twilight). And it is marvelously combined in counterpoint with still another motive from a previous Strauss work—*Don Quixote*, which moves underneath in voices of horn, cello, and *cor anglais*. The wonder is not so much the introduction of the themes or yet their ingenious combination, but the subtle fluency and aptness with which, even in combination, they fit into the scheme of *Ein Heldenleben*. They appear so logically and smoothly that for a moment they seem, not quoted from the composer's earlier works, but integral with the present.

### Sixth Section

The sixth section of the tone poem follows closely upon the passage mentioned above. The Hero has recited his "works of peace" . . . and still his triumph is known only to himself—and perhaps to his Beloved. Motives from the preceding section appear; there is a thick-voiced grumbling, a projection of turgid harmonies from the low brass, as thoughts of his uncomprehending critics again beset the Hero and move him once more to heroic rage.

Presently a mood of tranquillity succeeds the frenzy of the orchestra; the Hero's anger cools as he contemplates the fact that spiritual triumph is, after all, not a matter of recognition by the world, but rather of peace with one's own conscience. A lovely figure is pronounced by the *cor anglais* with an accompaniment, softly in the strings, flute, and brass, with gentle beatings upon the timpani.

Then, a little later, we hear the chief subject of the final section—the motive that signifies the Hero's detachment from the world. The theme is in the strings, as follows:

### FULFILLMENT OF THE HERO'S LIFE



This theme has interesting connotations. It is compounded of two subjects previously used in the tone poem; one an important and easily recognized phrase signifying the Hero's spiritual achievements or works of peace, the other illustrat-

ing one aspect of the character of the Beloved. What subtlety! Final tranquillity and spiritual calm, compounded of love and spiritual triumph!

We are once more reminded of the presence and influence of the Beloved, through the medium of the solo violin. There is a golden tranquillity—but underneath it a new, a fully developed, deliberate, and certain power. And here appears, in the solo violin, such lovely and moving melody as Strauss has not, throughout the preceding sections of the work, permitted to flow through his music.

Once more the motive of the Hero presents itself, broad, clear, and majestic, the shining point of a gigantic mass of tone that is built up as the poem draws to a close.



## Salomé's Dance

### *The Dance of the Seven Veils*

THIS highly dramatic and frantically voluptuous music is extracted from Strauss' musical setting of the one-act drama *Salomé*, written by Oscar Wilde. It does not necessarily depict the tense situation in which the dramatic action is suspended at the moment when Salomé begins her choreographic undoing of Herod, but it does very powerfully suggest the succeeding waves of voluptuous excitement and exhaustion which marked the dancing of the vengeful and sadistic Salomé.

The cries of John, imprisoned, fill the dancer with sweet torment. She burns with the "fury of the woman scorned"; she pants for revenge, yet at the same agonizing moment she is tortured with love for her intended victim. Upon the bloated Herod she casts a mysterious glance, languishing and submissive, yet determined; promising, yet remote. From the forbidding countenance of her mother, the governor's wife, she turns her face away.

The music begins, and Salomé, as if waiting for a significant phrase, stands motionless, beautiful, and deadly. The mad excitement of the music is restrained as she begins the sinuous weaving and posturing, the fluid rhythms that beguile and seduce the sensual Herod, the half-revealing, half-concealing veils floating like a rosy mist about her. In the orchestra the viola and flute put forth a wickedly innocent phrase, and again, a lovely line of melody is traced by horn and strings and woodwind, with the Oriental accent of the *cor anglais* lending warm dark color. The fainting ecstasies of the dancer, and hard upon them new influxes of power and passion, are reflected in the changing rhythms and intensities of the music, until in a wild and abandoned climax, the orchestra indicates the last convulsive leaps and whirlings of the dancer's white body—and afterward, her quivering prostration at the feet of Herod.

For the sake of preserving precious illusions, it is better to see this dance through the merciful suggestiveness of the music. It is doubtful if in the relatively few productions of *Salomé* on the operatic stage, there has ever been a performance of "The Dance of the Seven Veils" which has not been completely ridiculous.



## Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche

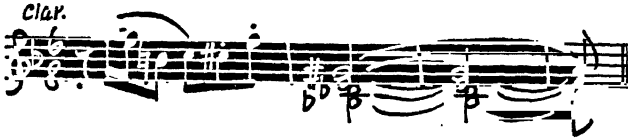
[*Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*]

It is not important whether or not Till Eulenspiegel ever existed in the flesh; certainly he lives now, in this merry, naughty, diabolically ingenious music. In providing this delicious musical entertainment, Strauss indulges, as he has done nowhere else in his scores, a sardonic, a wry, and sometimes macabre humor, none the less apparent because of the extraordinarily complicated orchestration. It is possible, though not at all necessary, to fit this music into a rough form; the thematic treatment lends itself to such a humorless diversion. It is much more pleasant, however, to sit back and listen and laugh, and perhaps sometimes not to laugh—noting, meanwhile, such details as seem to be of indubitable significance.

Here again Strauss indicates, by the title, a theme that is certainly programmatic; yet he has never authorized, though he has tolerated, the publication of a "story" or program for this music. To search painfully through the score, and to detach therefrom every phrase that can be detached without dislocating the whole structure; and to identify every such phrase with some particular activity or characteristic of Till, is a distasteful task that may well be left to the more pedantic of the scholars. There is no authentic story. But we should know this:

Till Eulenspiegel (Till Owlglass) is a wickedly mischievous fellow much given to practical jokes. He rides his horse through a crowded market place, scattering housewives, merchants, and goods in every direction; he disguises himself as a member of the clergy, or a dandy, or an ordinary respectable citizen, and while so disguised perpetrates his most annoying mischiefs—some of them too nasty for description; he makes love to village maidens, playing, so to speak, "touch and go" with them. But eventually he is caught, tried, and (in the musical version) hanged. The last joke is on Till.

The atmosphere of the introduction clearly suggests the folk-tale inspiration of the music. Considerable thematic material is introduced here, and a climax in which most of the orchestra joins brings us to the point at which Till first walks, hops, skips, or jumps upon the scene. He appears in a sly phrase of the clarinet—



one to mark well, for in various guises and mutations this motive will appear often and meaningly. There is some sport with the theme, developing into a climax of considerable power. Then we hear Till again. He is putting on his Sunday best, and presently appears in silken string tone, in viola, and basses; even in the polished tones of the flute.

The first of his naughty pranks is the insolent trampling down of the stalls in the market place, as he spurs his horse through chattering crowds (woodwind). Crashing of household utensils as they are scattered about, and Till's precipitate flight, are clearly indicated in the music.

Now our hero has an inspiration. He adopts the protection of "the cloth," masquerading as a priest of exceptionally unctuous appearance and manner. He doesn't quite know how to handle a cassock, however, and through the quasi-religious atmosphere we can see the rascal (clarinet: Till theme) beneath the priestly robes. And again the theme of Till comes, now bold and somewhat military in suggestion. Till is a plumed knight, a very devil of a fellow, a gay Lothario. How the ladies love him—or do they?

Episode after episode, each delineated in the most ingenious orchestration, keep us wondering "what next?"; wondering too, at the really marvelous mastery of the orchestra's resources the composer displays here. Till gets into and out of trouble time after time, but eventually he is caught. He is arrested; he is brought into court. And terribly the court thunders its accusations. Till answers with customary insouciance (Till theme). The court recalls another of his crimes; Till denies it. He is found guilty anyway, perhaps on the theory that even if he had not done what he was presently charged with, he should be punished anyway for other crimes, unknown to the court. So they hang him, and there is a grisly humor in the squeakings of the orchestra as poor Till does his airy dance.

It is characteristic of Strauss that he is not through with Till until he has forgiven the rascal. The concluding measures at least suggest such an attitude to some listeners. The original themes reappear; Till is seen in the light of distance and legend. The laughs that he caused are remembered; the cruelty and coarseness are forgotten. Yet the concluding bars, presented fortissimo, leave the problem unsolved.



## Tod und Verklärung

[*Death and Transfiguration*]

It is comforting to believe that Death can be, after the struggles and the frustrations of life, the glorious and serene and exalted experience that Strauss makes it in this magnificent apotheosis of man's last and most futile gesture. But unless we are at the moment directly under the spell of this divinely pitying and valiant music, it is difficult to take unto ourselves that belief. For, most of our days, we are in the midst of life, and engrossed with the pleasures and the agonies and the boredom of living; Death seems a dreadful stranger, who visits our neighbors occasionally, never ourselves. When, momentarily, we do reflect that one day that grim visitor will come knocking at *our* door, the thought is too perturbing and too painful; we dismiss it.

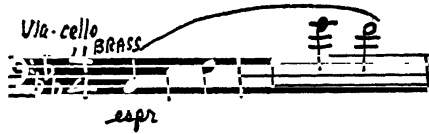
The Death who so implacably stalks and brings down his pitiful quarry, in these pages of wonderful music, is an ugly, a violent, and viciously cruel thing; like a fierce impersonal beast that kills without passion, without feeling, without pleasure or reluctance, simply because its nature is to kill. But in those superlatively beautiful passages that constitute the epilogue of this swift and terrible drama, Strauss makes us see that, though Death is victorious, he had not conquered; that disintegrating flesh does not take with it into nothingness the indissoluble spirit, but only frees it; that man, when he has for the last time turned his eyes backward over the past, can also look forward and, fearlessly returning the cold gaze of Death, can envision a light beyond the world.

This tone poem dates from 1889, at which time it very naturally aroused the ire of the critics, some of whom went so far as to resent the too literal suggestion of a scene of death in the opening pages. The score bears, on the flyleaf, a poem far too stupid and banal to have been the inspiration of the music. What shall we say, then, when we discover that the music actually did inspire the poem? The only possible reply is that fortunately Strauss as musician is rather better than Alexander Ritter as poet!

The first performance of *Tod und Verklärung* was given, under the direction of the composer, at a concert of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein, at Eisenach, June 21, 1890. The Philharmonic Society of New York, under the direction of Anton Seidl, gave the first American performance on January 9, 1892. Two years later Strauss himself conducted the work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in Symphony Hall, Boston.

One must be cold-blooded indeed to be able to dissect this magnificent music while listening to it. An examination of the score in silence, however, reveals interesting details which do contribute to the enjoyment of the music. It is broad but closely articulated in structure, and falls into four general divisions:

1. In slow tempo, the rhythm marked in syncopation by strings. A piteous little melody, first heard in woodwind, and permissibly denoted as the "childhood" theme, and a figure in horn, harp, and woodwind, suggesting a dying man's review of his happy childhood, are conspicuous features.



2. The first onslaught of Death, toward the end of which we hear in brass and strings the first intimations of the "transfiguration" motive.



3. The dreams of the dying. The struggles of life. A new attack by Death. A more powerful "intimation of immortality." The man passes.



4. "Transfiguration."



The room is dank and cold. On the bed lies the wasted figure of a man, exhausted by fever and by struggle. The feeble light of a single candle reveals his wan face, damp with the dew of death, distorted by the memory of past agonies. Now he sleeps, but his fluttering pulse and painful breathing give warning that Death has breached the wall.

There is a grisly suggestion of failing heartbeats in the strange rhythm that begins, pianissimo, in the strings: and of a breath that is half sigh and half groan in the melancholy beauty of a new and strongly bowed phrase for the same in-

struments. But presently, half conscious, the dying man recalls the innocent happiness of his youth. A brief but lovely phrase, in the wistful voice of the oboe, is established as the motive of childhood.

Now Death, catlike, pounces and seizes his victim. This respite has been a deception, an instrument of torture, an ambush. Fiercely he attacks, and the man, filled with that sudden brief energy that is so often the harbinger of his end, fights desperately back. They are quick, hard, irregular blows that Death strikes as he grapples with his prey; and his cold and bony hands are like steel traps.

In the orchestra the struggle sweeps like a storm. Mighty chords are hurled out, and a delirium rages through the fearfully dissonant strings. Climax is piled upon climax, until the music seems to reach the uttermost limits of violence. Even then, new fevers burn in it, new and incredibly brutal and startling climaxes are achieved. Terrifying and intolerable, savage and shrieking and deadly, Death rides powerfully upon the exhausted frame of his victim—when suddenly we hear, so gratefully, so serenely, the first intimations of the great theme of transfiguration.

Death, momentarily abashed, withdraws his forces, and in the brief respite the poor victim dreams. He sees himself as a boy again, filled with a boy's happiness (harp and woodwind); he lives again the long struggle of life, tastes again life's triumphs, hopes again life's hopes. Death is but toying with him, and tiring of the sport, suddenly grasps and fiercely shakes his weakened victim. Past furies are as nothing, compared with the dreadful turmoil that now rages through the orchestra. Hoarse trombones and booming drums announce the dark powers, and now, with final supreme might, Death overcomes all—childhood and the struggles of life, hope and dreams and aspirations. A swift series of ascending harmonies, eerie as the night wind, signal the last feverish and tortured protest of the victim, and the solemn metallic roar of the gong (*tam-tam*) accompanies the departure of the spirit.

To what has the spirit departed? We cannot answer; but listening to the unearthly beauties of the music now, we must believe that it is to something glorious and serene and comforting. Perhaps, as Strauss suggests through the reintroduction of the childhood motive in sweetly vibrant strings, it is to a state of innocent happiness that we have lost with the mounting years. Perhaps, as the glorious theme of transfiguration now takes fully developed form in the majesty and power of the brass, it is to splendors and visions beyond words. At least, the fading light, and the last resolving dissonance of a single golden trumpet against strings, assure us that Death ultimately is beautiful; that in his stern implacable face there is a promise of deliverance; that he is cruel only to be kind.



## Don Juan

*Don Juan* is one of the early tone poems with which Richard Strauss aroused the musical world. As in certain other cases, a literary poem—the *Don Juan* of Nikolaus Lenau, a Hungarian poet—was the inspiration of the work. Notwithstanding certain features of the tone poems which, by their importance and treatment in the score, suggest a cryptic significance, Strauss has, as a rule, coyly refrained from adumbrating them for the benefit of his listeners—not to mention his commentators. Since, however, the score of *Don Juan* bears upon the flyleaf certain extracts from Lenau's poem, it is only reasonable to assume that there is in the music a certain programmatic significance. The intricacy of the score forbids detailed analysis here, nor is such analysis in any case particularly desirable or necessary. As in *Zarathustra*, as in *Tod und Verklärung*, and in certain other works, it is reasonably clear that in this music the composer wishes to create a mood that is the result of a philosophical attitude. Once admitted to his point of departure, it is easy, through the music, to sense this mood.

This work was the first of the tone poems to be published, but another—*Macbeth*—preceded it in the order of composition. The first performance was given at Weimar, under the direction of the composer, court conductor there at the time, in 1888. It was played, probably for the first time in America, at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of the unforgettable Arthur Nikisch, October 31, 1891.

The story of *Don Juan* has been treated by many writers, usually with a great deal of tongue licking over the amorous adventures which seem to have been the chief, if not the sole, occupation of his life. Richard Strauss adopts the *Don Juan* of Lenau, and Lenau would have us regard his hero, not as merely a libertine and debauchee, but as an idealist in endless quest of the one woman who unites in herself all possible perfections of the female. Since the Don's methods were, apparently, strictly empirical, one can readily imagine that his philosophy, as set forth by the poet, was a convenient one.

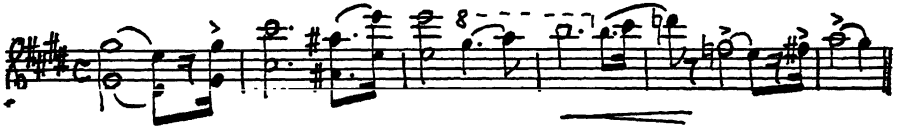
The law of compensation operates, however, even in the case of a legendary prince of sensualists. After each of numerous conquests, *Don Juan* turns from his victim in disgust. Repetition turns disgust into boredom—boredom with women and love and life itself, so that, in indirect and niggardly and certainly not condign satisfaction for his evil-doing, *Don Juan* permits himself to be killed in a duel with the father of a man he himself has slain.

Bearing in mind Strauss' abhorrence of a program where none was intended by the composer, we shall have to be content with the broadest outline of the work. It is perfectly possible to subject the poem, and then the music, to detailed and comparative analysis, and by keeping a sharp lookout for fortuitous repetitions and prominences, and by attaching to them whatever tenuous significance we can



possibly discover in the poem, arrive at a detailed program for the music. Let us rather confine ourselves to the few definite clues the music affords and, once acquainted with them, resign ourselves to what moods the music can itself project and create.

The first theme, with its hot and esurient vehemence, scarcely needs identifi-



cation as a motive of desire. A second, following closely, cannot be definitely assigned any particular significance, but is rather extensively used as the music pro-



gresses. The third, and a brilliant, rather pompous utterance it is, may be taken as suggesting the person of the knightly Don himself. Horizontally developed har-



mony unifies, in a sense, these three ideas, and it may not be unreasonable for us to assume that they represent the Don in three aspects: his unruly desires, the object of them, and his personal appearance.

With each conquest—and they are neither long in appearing nor in enduring—we find the motive of desire glowing with more warmth and luster; yet after each conquest comes the scale figure in woodwind (bassoon, clarinet) that is supposed to indicate the lassitude and physical distaste that follow hard upon satiety. Since on the first appearance of this chromatic theme it is associated with the second of the group of three mentioned in the preceding paragraph, there is some evidence that the second theme of the composition indicates either the object of Don Juan's desires, or the act of seduction. Here it is heard reduced to a ridiculous version of itself, given by the harp. Are we to suppose then, that after seducing her, the gallant Don belittles the lady?

There are many episodes which seem to indicate a similar series of circumstances. It is not to be supposed, however, that all of Don Juan's adventures are

so easily accomplished, or so unsatisfactory, as the first. There is a delightful incident in which violin, solo, suggests the Don's interest in a lady of refinement, and a scene of ardent love-making follows. It is not so abandoned, however, that Strauss cannot indulge in a little classical touch—the introduction of an imitative figure, in canon form, in the second violins; it is derived from a preceding thematic fragment which we have heard in horn and woodwind. The scene reaches a climax of intensity on a violent chord, tutti: and the cellos, their normally rich tone deliberately made stale and colorless, suggest again the theme of desire.

It is not long before our hero finds another victim, and this time he meets with resistance that whets his desire to the point of fury. The oboe sings of passionate longing, and ultimately this woman—this haughty and, we suppose, virtuous maid, surrenders. And hardly has she yielded, hardly have ecstasies become memories when, typically masculine, the Don, disgusted because he has possessed and destroyed what he so passionately desired, rushes away to obliterate his disappointment in new orgies, vinous and venal.

It is the time of carnival. Into the feverish gaiety of the fiesta the drink-maddened knight plunges desperately. Wherever his bleared eyes turn are women, creatures of seductive eyes and rounded bosoms, of deft and delicate and knowing hands, of perfumed hair and slim young bodies. He is surrounded, he is bedeviled, he is mad; and he falls unconscious. Reluctantly he turns to his senses, but never again to sensuality. The fires are cold, the ashes bitter and dry; and Don Juan, the insatiable lover of life, is sated and sick with disgust. What is worse, he is bored. He welcomes a quarrel for the opportunity it offers to die. He purposely drops his sword; he is run through. A violent crash in the whole orchestra, a long and terrible silence, and we know that he is dead. Strings and woodwinds softly mourn even this despicable mortal, but a villainously dissonant lance of trumpet tone pierces their soft utterance. Yet at last, as almost always in the tone poems, there is a note of beautiful complacency.



## Don Quixote

IT CANNOT well be asserted that in Richard Strauss' music humor is generally conspicuous; the tone poems, particularly—the medium through which he seems most completely to express himself—are devoted to sober, somber, heroic, tragic, philosophical things, for the most part. Yet neither can it be asserted that Strauss lacks either humor or an egregious gift for expressing it musically. When he does so express himself as in *Don Quixote*, we find a humor not only rich, pointed, graphic,



knight-errantry itself, the beau ideal which the good Don has absorbed all too well from his wide and varied reading of old romances. The scene is placid in tone, suggesting in mood and in detail the Don, reclining perhaps, and at ease in the midst of the squalor he has brought upon himself by his reckless expenditures for ancient books of chivalrous tales, meditating upon his reading, and conjuring from his active imagination a host of fantastic visions. Presently he envisages the fair Dulcinea, that embodiment of ideal womanhood, that paragon of virtue and beauty, to whom he shall do his devoirs. A lovely song of the oboe, against muted strings and the harp, presents her.



Now the lady is surrounded by giants and hostile warriors; muted brasses in ponderous chords sound boldly and ominously, but a gallant comes to succor Dulcinea. Confusion increases as the music progresses; snatches of incompleting melody, terrifying chords, and rushing incoherent passages indicate the swift crumbling of poor Quixote's mind, and at last it is obvious that the gentleman is quite mad.

## II. Theme

As the orchestral forces reach a point of great intensity, there occurs a pause, and the theme of the knightly Don himself is introduced in the manly voice of the cello: a theme which, it will be immediately observed, is a curious distortion of that



which was presented at the beginning of the introduction. After some reflection upon this theme, Sancho Panza, the knight's fat and faithful squire, is personified in a somewhat ludicrous utterance of the bass clarinet doubled with the tenor tuba . . . a hearty, coarse, and yet somehow ingratiating voice, this! Panza's phrase



forms the latter part of the main theme, and in its mutations we shall hear not only comment on the character of the burly, paunchy squire, but even a suggestion, now



chivalrous thoughts and his rapturous dreams of Dulcinea. The Don finally becomes sufficiently aware of the nature of Sancho's comment to cause the latter to become mute very suddenly.

#### Variation IV

As this strange pair resume their errantry they come upon a band of pilgrims, who are, in the bellicose mind of the knight, not pilgrims at all but banditti and criminals. He sets upon them, and as usual is badly beaten; struck senseless, in fact, while the pilgrims, once more restored to the delights of perambulatory contemplation, resume their way. Whether by sheer force of numbers they overcame the doughty Quixote, or whether they were Christians of the muscular variety, history—nor music—does not relate, yet in the amusing burlesque of an ecclesiastical phrase which indicates the pilgrims' procession there is a downrightness of rhythm that would suggest the more vigorous type of holy man.

#### Variation V

Now the music is given over to a delineation of Don Quixote's ceremonial vigil kept beside his arms throughout the night. Here the music is meditative, for the most part, except where marked *sehnsüchtig* (yearningly) in the score, as Don Quixote thinks of his love for Dulcinea; and where a glittering glissando of the harp and an ecstatic cadenza for the strings overlay the warmer tones of the solo cello with coruscations.

#### Variation VI

Suddenly we are on the road again with Quixote and his squire. They meet three rustic maidens, not according to tradition all "peaches and cream," but somewhat on the heavy side and none too comely. The girls, Sancho informs his master, are riding upon "three pie-bellied belfries," and when the Don corrects him, impressing the greater dignity, not to mention the accuracy, of "three piebald pal-freys," Panza cannot see that there is any great difference. The Don makes bold to gaze into the face of the girl whom he believes to be his darling Dulcinea, but suddenly realizes that she is an unlovely and common wench, and decides in fury that a



magician has transformed his princess into this ugly duckling. Here the music is both ingenious and amusing, with a caricature of the "Ideal Woman" theme, which we heard very early in the work, now in nimble thirds upon the oboe; un-

mistakably the rhythm is that of a trotting ass's little feet . . . yet underneath, in Sancho Panza's viola voice, the suggestion of the lovely Dulcinea herself is insistent.

### *Variation VII*

The seventh variation delineates Don Quixote's imaginary ride through the air, blindfolded, and astride a wooden horse. Fanned by a great bellows, the adventurers fancy themselves blown through the empyrean blue, as their themes become entangled with soaring gusts from the whole orchestra. They are suddenly calmed, however, on a long-held note of the bassoon, which carries us over into the next variation.

### *Variation VIII*

Here our heroes embark—literally—upon a new adventure. Coming to the banks of a river, Don Quixote observes a little boat moored to a tree, and though unfortunately it has no oars, the knight decides that some kindly spirit has left it there for his use in succoring someone in distress. With his companion he gets aboard, and the coracle, perhaps somewhat influenced by the bulk and ungainliness of Sancho, promptly sinks under their feet. They manage to scramble ashore, and piously thank God for their deliverance, in a religious strain assigned, in the orchestra, to flute, clarinet, and horn.

### *Variation IX*

In the ninth variation, once again the doughty knight is involved in combat with innocent, and no doubt, surprised victims; once again ecclesiastics—a pair of Benedictines this time—arouse his ire, for as they on their ambling mounts proceed along the road, the Don mistakes them for villains who are abducting the occupants of the coach which follows behind. For once Quixote is victorious, and the frightened monks pull their cassocks up to their plump knees, and foot it right merrily down the road. The encounter is brief but vigorous; we can find the war cries and imprecations of Quixote in the strings as they rage up and down the scale, and the well-fed clergy can be located in the unctuous voices of the bassoon in solemn duet. The music continues into

### *Variation X*

Now Don Quixote is to meet his Waterloo, if an anachronism may be permitted. One of his townsmen, either out of irritation because of his antics or from a shrewd understanding of the man, undertakes to administer a beating for its possible salutary effect upon the crazy Don. The musical painting of this scene opens with vigorous and low-voiced scale passages in the strings, with interjections and answers from the woodwind. Don Quixote is overcome.

Reflecting on his fate, the vanquished knight falls prey to despair. Under the conditions of the contest, he must return home and remain there for a year, and with the faithful Panza at his heels, he now rides disconsolately homeward. Meanwhile he meditates his lofty but unapproachable ideals with growing resignation; and the ultimate flowing together of the disorganized integers of his intellect is slowly foreshadowed. One of the most beautiful and ingratiating achievements of the composer in this work occurs now, with the gradual clearing of the atmosphere, the clarification of the music's countless incoherencies and half-finished thoughts that have been accumulating almost since the beginning. Weary and battered and bruised, indeed, is Don Quixote; sad, too, but despair gives way to resignation, and bewilderment to understanding; and finally, melancholy to a beautiful and comforting peace.

*Finale*

*The Death of Don Quixote*

Pathos still sounds its touching note here in the grave voice of the cello, yet a



growing calm pervades the music, and the occasional moments of excitement are but echoes of the trying times that have gone before. Don Quixote has regained the powers of his mind, which lately had been "like sweet bells jangled out of tune"; he realizes that he is an old man, but too, that he is a happy and complacent one. The conclusion is simple, but exceedingly lovely, bringing us to a bright major tonic chord as touching, as ineffably bright, as the smile that lingers on the face of the happy dead.



Also sprach Zarathustra

*[Thus Spake Zarathustra]*

It is curious but measurably true that this, the most abstract, and in some of its connotations, the most farfetched of the Strauss tone poems, is as popular, and as appreciatively received, as the more programmatic works in this genre. Perhaps this is because it has been, to the older generation at least, the most familiar. On the other hand, the utter impossibility of intelligently associating it with the philosophy



of Friedrich Nietzsche, upon which it is in a measure based, may have forced listeners to abandon themselves to the music as such, and to forget its philosophical connotations. Such a procedure is certain to make any great music popular.

Strauss himself wrote in a letter: "I did not intend to write philosophical music, or to portray in music Nietzsche's great work. I meant to convey by means of music an idea of the development of the human race from its origin, through the various phases of its development, religious and scientific, up to Nietzsche's idea of the *Übermensch*. The whole symphonic poem is intended as my homage to Nietzsche's genius, which found its greatest exemplification in his book, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*." Perhaps the last sentence of the quotation comes nearest to the mark. The music pays tribute to the great German philosopher by adopting, as the basis for certain more or less illustrative musical developments, passages from the philosophical poem of the same name. Music cannot convey an idea of the development of the human race, except in an historical and evolutionary sense. The test of that statement is this: how much of the history of the race, or its religious and scientific development, would be deduced from this music if it had no title?

The first performance of *Also sprach Zarathustra* was given at Frankfort-am-Main, under the direction of the composer, November 27, 1896.

Dr. Alexander Tille, of the University of Glasgow, made a translation of the Nietzsche philosophical poem in 1896, and in discussing it he gave some clues which will be of use in listening to the music:

The scene of *Zarathustra* is laid, as it were, outside of time and space. . . . This Nowhere and Nowhen, over which Nietzsche's imagination is supreme, is a province of boundless individualism, in which a man of mark has free play, unfettered by the tastes and inclinations of the multitude. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is a kind of summary of the intellectual life of the nineteenth century, and it is on this fact that its principal significance rests. It unites in itself a number of mental movements which, in literature as well as in various sciences, have made themselves felt separately during the last hundred years. . . .

The score is prefaced by a rather lengthy excerpt from the poem, as an introduction but not as a guide, to the music. Definite clues to the music are given in the quotations from the poem, used as headings in various sections of the score. The first of these is "*Von den Hinterwäldlern*" (Of the People of the Hinterland), in which Nietzsche speaks of those who have sought to solve the problems of mankind through religion. There is a solemn introduction, distinguished by a reflective pronouncement in the brazen voice of the trumpet; then begins the first section proper, with a magnificent crescendo involving full orchestra and organ. The horns proclaim a solemn ecclesiastical theme, pointedly significant of the music of the

medieval church. "Then the world seemed to me," says Zarathustra, "the work of a suffering and tortured god . . . alas! that god, whom I created, was man's work and man's madness, like all gods."

And now the poet and the music speak "*Von der grossen Sehnsucht*" (Of the Great Longing). Cellos and bassoons climb from the depths of the orchestra in a theme of urgent, yearning beauty, nor does the other soothing woodwind satisfy the questioning plaint.



The next quotation in the score is "*Von den Freuden und Leidenschaften*" (Of Happiness and Misfortunes). Here the orchestra raises an intense and melancholy song, in a voice compounded of strings and woodwind and horn; here the composer refers to a tender passage in the poem, in which the philosopher reflects upon his passions, once regarded as evil and the source of all misfortune, yet, when directed and controlled, becoming the basis of virtue.



"*Grablied*" (The Song of the City of the Dead). This is not a dirge for dead loved ones, but a sweet and sad reflection upon the lost hours of youth and life, which are personalized and envisioned as sepulchered in a green and distant island, yet, like departed friends, always present in the heart and mind. The song is given to the oboe, and against it we hear the motive of *Sehnsucht* from the second section of the work.



The succeeding passage, treated fugally in the divided lower strings, bears above it in the score the notation "*Von der Wissenschaft*" (Concerning Science). Aptly the composer chooses the most mathematical and restricted of musical forms for the expression of his thought upon this subject, and the strings, like the birds in the poem, "fall into the net of his cunning." There is furious development, and sometimes wickedly dissonant outbursts from the orchestra; and these are always the result of the fugal treatment, as if to imply that the meticulous and close and systematized reasoning of science leads but to confusion and despair.



The succeeding section relieves this feeling. It comes under the caption "*Der Genesende*" (The Convalescent), where the theme can be located in cellos and



violas. There is now an atmosphere of restrained joy, of ease and sanguine reflectiveness. This changes definitely to jubilation in the succeeding section, "*Tanzlied*,"



introduced by not wholly gay figures in the woodwind. The "*Dance Song*" is neither a dance nor a song, but expresses the essential joy and spiritual outgiving of both. It is succeeded by "*Nachtlied*," (Song of Night), and by the intensively dramatic "*Nachtwanderlied*" (Song of the Night-Wanderer). The latter is intro-

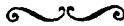


duced by an arresting stroke, fortissimo, on the bell, which, sounding twelve times, indicates with each stroke a sentence in the Wanderer's song. English translations are available, and give in detail the meanings of this strange and somehow beautiful utterance—the essence of which is that human joys desperately want to prolong themselves into eternity.

The strange conclusion of the work has puzzled the commentators more than any other section, and the reasons for its curious treatment have not been disclosed or even imagined. Here Strauss anticipated the polytonalists—or the atonalists!—for the orchestra distinctly and frankly plays in two different and unrelated tonalities—B major and C major. There is a mysterious dissonance, which, it is believed, has some special significance; but no one has ever reasonably explained it. It is

The image shows a musical score snippet for a symphony. It features two staves: a top staff for woodwinds (labeled 'w.w.') and a bottom staff for strings (labeled 'Pizz'). The woodwind staff contains several chords with notes, some marked with 'pp' and 'dim'. The string staff shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with 'Pizz' indicating pizzicato. There are also markings for 'Trb.' (trumpets) and 'ppp' (pianissimo) in the woodwind section.

made of a suspension in the brass, on C, E, and F sharp, stubbornly held against the B major harmonies, high in woodwind, and the tonic and dominant C and G, in C major, pizzicato, of the contrabasses.



## Sinfonia domestica

[Opus 53]

MANY students of the music of Richard Strauss regard the *Sinfonia domestica* as his greatest work—at least in the sense that it exhibits his unique talents and some times strange style of composition more thoroughly than any of his other works in the larger forms. Other critics regard the work lightly and even scornfully, and some have not been able to reconcile the employment of talents like those of Strauss and a great symphony orchestra and the sacred symphony form to depict the trivia of family life. When the work was first performed under the direction of the composer at Carnegie Hall, New York, on March 21, 1904, the attitude of the critics was quite diversified.

The *New York Sun*, in its headlines, was inclined to treat the event facetiously. Some of the headlines were as follows:

“THE SYMPHONY DOMESTICA—HOME SWEET HOME AS WRITTEN BY RICHARD STRAUSS—PAPA AND MOMMA AND BABY CELEBRATED IN A HUGE CONGLOMERATION OF ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.”

Two days after the concert, the *Musical Courier* printed a comment which, although it may have been taken seriously at the time, can now be regarded only as ironical:

“Monday evening, 21 March, 1904, Carnegie Hall was the scene of a musical event so important that, by comparison, everything else pales in significance that has been done here in music, since the first production of the Wagner ‘Nibelungen’ Operas. On Monday evening, 21 March—the date will play a role in history—a vast auditorium full of enthusiastic men and women heard the first public performance on any concert stage of Richard Strauss’ latest and greatest work of orchestra, his *Sinfonia domestica*. The conductor was Richard Strauss and the players were the Wetzler Symphony Orchestra.”

Ernest Newman, certainly one of the most penetrating and profound of present-day critics, has a wholesome respect and regard for this remarkable work. He has written as follows:

“The work made a sensation at the time,” he wrote, “partly because the simplicity of the subject—papa, momma and baby—brought the programme, at any rate, within the scope of the intelligence of the average man. People who were puzzled almost to the point of insanity by *Zarathustra* and its *Übermenschen*, and its *Genesende*, and all the rest of that queer fauna, could recognize at once when the baby was squealing in its bath or the lullaby was being sung over it; and they had a kindly fellow-feeling for the terrible musician who now seemed to be even such a one as themselves.”


Notwithstanding the association of the music with the commonplace events that take place in the typical home every day, Strauss refused, before the first performance, to permit the music to be accepted as program music. “This time,” said Strauss, “I wish my music to be listened to purely as music.” Yet a year later he contradicted himself, as he has done more than once before and since. An official program for the symphony was published prior to its first performance in London, and here were described the domestic details which the music was intended to represent. As has happened so often, once a story or program of any kind is attached to a piece of music, it becomes thereafter inseparable, and since these domestic details have some official sanction, we are perfectly justified in accepting them as being musically described in the symphony.

### *Introduction and Scherzo*


There are three principal themes assigned respectively to the husband, the wife, and the child. The theme of the husband is divided into three sections,

marked respectively *gemächlich* (easygoing), *träumerisch* (dreamy), and *feurig* (fiery), and which, taken together, offer a characterization of the father.


Easy going



dreamy



Fiery



Violin's p cres - - - cen - - - do

The wife's theme is the second theme of the composition, divided into two sections marked *sehr lebhaft* (very lively) and *gefühlvoll* (with feeling):

Very lively



with feeling



Solo Violin, flutes, clarinets.

The child's theme is the third and is described by Strauss as being of "almost Haydnesque simplicity."

Very tender.



It is played on the *oboe d'amore*, an all but obsolete instrument, and its revival in the *Sinfonia domestica* is worth notice. It is built a minor third lower than the ordinary oboe, with a hollow globular bell in place of the customary conical one. The tone compared with that of the ordinary oboe is more veiled, and perhaps, rather more pathetic in character. It is met with considerably in Bach, a famous example of its use occurring in the *Christmas Oratorio*.

Following the entrance of the child theme, there is a passage which has been interpreted as describing the child taking a bath. Toward the end of the introduc-

tion, we have one of the most frequently commented upon examples of the extremeness of Strauss' programmaticism. The child's bath is interrupted by the arrival of relatives, who discuss the important question of whom does the child resemble. In the muted trumpets and clarinets the figure is accompanied on the score by the



written notation: "Aunts: 'Just like his papa.'" Whereupon, an answering figure, given to trombone, horns, and oboes, is noted: "Uncles: 'Just like his mamma.'" "



In the "official" program the scherzo is described as dealing with *Elternglück* (joy of the parents) and *kindliche Spiele* (child playing). The child theme occupies considerable attention in this movement. In the lullaby scene, where the child is being put to sleep, we stumble upon an interesting musical coincidence. Quite by accident, no doubt, the music is identical for a few measures with the very famous "First Venetian Gondola Song" from the first book of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*.

### Sinfonia Domestica



Mendelssohn



### Adagio

The programmatic divisions of the adagio movement are given as *Schaffen und Schauen* (doing and thinking), *Liebescene* (love scene), and *Träume und Sorgen* (dreams and worries).

The family is asleep and their gradual awakening is depicted by a subtle restlessness which creeps into the music. The rhythmic variants of the previous themes are developed with remarkable ingenuity. The movement is an excellent example of the rich palette which Strauss uses for his orchestral coloration and also of his

tremendous ability for polyphonic elaboration. The glockenspiel sounding seven times at the close of the movement indicates that it is 7:00 A.M.

*Finale*

“In this way,” runs the program, “we reach the final fugue. The principal subject of this is also a new version of the child theme. Its subtitle is *lustiger Streit* (Merry Argument), *fröhlicher Beschluss* (Happy Ending), the subject of the dispute between the father and mother being the future of the son. The fugue (the chief subject of which is another variant of the child theme) is carried on with unflagging spirit and humor and great variety of orchestration.”



## IGOR STRAVINSKY

[Born 1882]

STRAVINSKY, one of the most interesting of contemporary composers, was born at Oranienbaum, near St. Petersburg, Russia, June 17, 1882. His father was an opera singer at the Imperial Opera House and naturally hoped for talent in his little son. He found it; and saw to it that it was thoroughly developed. He builded better than he knew, for later, when the father wished Igor to adopt the law as a career, he found that the young man had become so enamored of music that he would not abandon it. Although he entered the University at St. Petersburg for legal studies, love of music eventually tempted him away, and when in 1902 he met Rimsky-Korsakov he made the final decision. Rimsky accepted Stravinsky as a pupil, and from that time onward his development was swift and sensational.

Stravinsky lost little time in producing a number of works of great interest, but nowadays not considered among his most important compositions. In 1910 came *The Firebird*, which though it showed definitely the musical background and the influences which had had their effect on the composer, nevertheless also revealed flashes of the Stravinsky who was to startle and even to captivate, for a time, the whole musical world. *Petrouchka*, dating from the following year, established Stravinsky as a highly individual and even revolutionary composer. Two years later came *Le Sacre du printemps*, and this astonishing work not only fortified Stravinsky as one of the most ingenious and original of composers, but touched off a conflagration of discussion of his music that has not ceased to the present day. The three works mentioned are unquestionably the greatest from the hand of Stravinsky. In them he not only developed, but exhausted, the particular line which he was following. Realizing this, he has shown new methods in subsequent works, such as *Les Noces* (1923), *Oedipus Rex* (1926), and *Apollon Musagètes* (1928). The *Symphony of Psalms* represents still another departure. In these works Stravinsky has almost entirely abandoned his earlier style, and has adopted an attitude of great reserve and, at times, almost ascetic simplicity. None of these later compositions has had anything approaching the success of the earlier three.

Stravinsky has continued composing, not always greatly, in recent seasons, but if he were never to write music again, it seems reasonable to believe that his position among the first of the twentieth-century composers would be absolutely and permanently established.

## Suite from "L'Oiseau de feu"

[*The Firebird*]

*L'Oiseau de feu* ranks with *Petrouchka* and *Le Sacre du printemps* as the most important, the most significant, and the most beautiful of Stravinsky's compositions. *The Firebird*, a ballet or *conte dansé* (a story told in dance and pantomime), is older than either *Petrouchka* or *Le Sacre*. The ballet itself was first performed at the Paris Opéra, in 1910. A magnificent performance it must have been, for it commanded the services of a glittering group of artists. Fokine, peerless ballet master and mime, evolved the scenario; the dancers were under the direction of Diaghilev (who, incidentally, also gave the first performance of *Petrouchka* in this country); the scenery was by Bakst and Golovine, and the orchestra conducted by the famous Pierné. New York first witnessed *The Firebird* ballet in January, 1916.

There are marked differences between *The Firebird* and *Petrouchka* or *Le Sacre du printemps*. *The Firebird* is full of fantasy; *Petrouchka* is starkly realistic, and *Le Sacre* is "of the earth, earthy." Both the later-mentioned are full of arresting dissonances, of converging lines of color counterpoint that produce sounds which the conventional listener has found difficult to assimilate; *The Firebird* has a larger proportion of harmonies agreeable to the radical and conservative alike. Too, there is in *The Firebird* more of sustained melody—of song, let us say—than in either *Petrouchka* or *Le Sacre*. *Petrouchka* is loosely articulated, episodic, purposely confused, and purposely avoiding unity; *Le Sacre* is as deliberately formless.

*The Story of the Ballet**L'Oiseau de feu . . . The Firebird*

The Firebird appears in Russian folklore as a mysterious and wonderfully beautiful creature, whose feathers shine like gold, whose eyes gleam like jewels, and whose glowing body shines like a conflagration in the nighttime.

Kastcheï, another character in the ballet, is one of the many embodiments of the Evil One. He may take any of various forms, but usually appears as a grotesque and horrible being, half serpent and half man. Other characters in the ballet are defined in the following outline of the action, for which we are indebted to Lawrence Gilman and the management of the Philadelphia Orchestra:

Into the domain of the Ogre Kastcheï there wandered one night, after a long day's hunting, the young Prince Ivan Tsarevitch. In the shadows of an orchard he discerned a marvelous golden bird, with plumage that shone

through the darkness as if its wings had been dipped in flame. The wondrous creature was sybaritically engaged in plucking golden apples from a silver tree when Ivan gleefully laid hold of her; but melted by her entreaties, he soon released her, and she flew away, leaving with him, in gratitude, one of her shining plumes.

As the night lifted, Ivan saw that he was in the park of an ancient castle, and as he looked, there issued from it twelve lovely maidens, and then a thirteenth, who, despite her sinister number, seemed to Ivan infinitely desirable. Hiding himself, he watched the damsels, who he knew at once to be princesses because of the easy grace with which, as to the manner born, they played with the golden apples and danced among the silver trees. When he could no longer restrain himself, he went among them; and then, because he was young and comely, they made him a present of some 14-karat fruit, and besought him to depart in haste, warning him that he was in the enchanted realm of the maleficent *Kastcheï*, whose prisoners they were, and whose playful habit it was to turn to stone whatever venturesome travelers he could decoy. But Ivan, with his eyes on the beautiful thirteenth princess, was undismayed, and would not go. So they left him.

Then the Prince, made bold by love, flung open the gates of the castle, when out swarmed a grotesque and motley throng of slaves and buffoons, soldiers and freaks, the *Kikimoras* and the *Bolibochki* and the two-headed monsters—subjects and satellites of the *Ogre*—and finally the terrible *Kastcheï* himself, who sought to work his petrifying spell upon Ivan. But the *Firebird's* golden feather, which Ivan still carried, proved to be a magic talisman, against which the wicked power of the *Ogre* could not prevail.

And now the *Firebird* herself appeared. First she caused the *Ogre* and his crew to begin a frenzied dance, which grew ever wilder and wilder. When they had fallen to the ground exhausted, the *Firebird* disclosed to Ivan the absurdly simple secret of *Kastcheï's* immortality: In a certain casket the *Ogre* preserved an egg. If the egg were broken, *Kastcheï* would die. It did not take Ivan long to find the egg and dash it to the ground, whereupon *Kastcheï* expired, and the castle vanished, and the captive knights who had been turned to stone came to life and joined in the general merry-making, while Ivan and the *Tsarevna*, the most beautiful of the Princesses, gazed expectantly into each other's eyes.

For concert use, the music of *The Firebird* has been condensed in a suite, embodying the following sections: "Introduction"; "Dance of the *Firebird*"; "Dance of the Princesses"; "Dance of King *Kastcheï*"; "Berceuse"; "Finale."

*I. Introduction**II. Dance of the Firebird*

A deep and powerful surging of tone, arising portentously from the low strings, introduces a mood of anticipation and of mystery, and leads us presently into the music accompanying the appearance of the Firebird, and later, into the dance of the glorious creature.

It will be remembered that Prince Ivan, the Tsarevitch, discovered the Bird feeding upon golden apples under the low-hanging branches of dark trees. Here the music pictures the incredible beauty and glow of the Firebird's flaming wings, as, all unconscious of imminent capture, she wanders, like a moving pool of light, from tree to somber tree, plucking daintily at the valuable fruit which Mr. Gilman, in his notes, assayed so accurately. The wayward rhythm, the glittering orchestration, the adroit use of strings, woodwind, and percussion suggest the graceful motion of the Bird . . . suggest, indeed, that glittering coruscations seem to detach themselves from her glowing body and to float impalpable upon scented night airs.

Swift spirals of tone leap from the strings, as, we suppose, Ivan springs to seize her . . . as she turns, this way and that, vainly seeking to hide her betraying brilliance under a giant fern, straining to reach some covert, struggling to be free of tangled flowers and knotted vines. But the Tsarevitch lays hold of a wing; she is captured. Piteously she pleads for freedom . . . kindly, he frees her, and in gratitude she leaves in his hand a single golden feather. Swiftly she takes wing, and with her passing the darkness closes in with an almost audible suddenness and blackness, signified in the sudden chord that ends the first section of the suite.

*III. Dance of the Princesses*

The night passes . . . the eastern sky bends gray over the world, like the shell of a pearl over its nucleus of sand. A rosier light . . . a bird's awakening song . . . a scintillation of myriad dewdrops . . . and it is day.

Emboldened by the light, Ivan Tsarevitch explores the wood in which he finds himself. He discovers that it is the park of a crumbling castle, the gates of which, even as he watches, slowly unfold before a procession of lovely princesses. Quickly he seeks the friendly shelter of a tree, and, from his concealment, watches the princesses dancing and at play. Thirteen there are, and upon the last the Tsarevitch turns adoring eyes, for she is beautiful beyond compare.

The Dance of the Princesses suggests most charmingly the dignity and grace of the royal ladies, the lyrical wonder of dawn, and the poignant if suddenly conceived love of the Tsarevitch for the thirteenth princess. There is an introductory passage for two flutes projecting their pale tones over the warmer sustained note

of the horns . . . and then, in penetrating loveliness, the main theme of the dance is given out by the oboe, with mellow flutterings of the harp in accompaniment. Now the strings sweetly intone a cadence of the melody, muted in ethereal delicacy of tone. Successively, cello, clarinet, and bassoon, *soli*, deliver their versions of the main song, and again, the muted strings draw ghostly filaments of melody, like strands of morning mist, across the lovely picture.

Here is Stravinsky in a mood which, to those who know his music only as it is exemplified in *Petrouchka* or *Le Sacre du printemps*, will be unfamiliar. It is a mood gentle, gracious, and grave . . . expressed in music glowing with sentiment, enchanted, dreamy, warmly emotional. Melody and harmony, highly original though they are, do no violence to musical tradition or convention. Stravinsky finds apt use for established canons of the technique of composition, of the science of harmony, thus proving himself, in the light of this and other works, not a revolutionary but an explorer.

#### IV. *Dance of King Kastcheï*

It will be recalled from the story of the ballet that Ivan the Tsarevitch, after filling his eyes with the beauty of the thirteen princesses and his heart with love for the thirteenth, revealed himself to these sportive maidens. They were terrified . . . not for themselves, for he was princely and handsome, but for him, since he had ventured into the dreadful country of Kastcheï the Ogre King. So they endeavored to persuade him to depart before this monster discovered him, else he would, in all probability, be turned to stone, or suffer some equally uncomfortable fate. Intoxicated with beauty and love, Ivan refused to depart, and the princesses forthwith disappeared.

Now Ivan dares open the gates of the castle, and from them issues a horrid crowd of freaks and monsters, blackamoors and dwarfs, slaves and soldiery, and, bringing up the rear, the dreaded Kastcheï himself. This Evil One immediately projects his most potent charms and spells, purposing the petrification of Ivan, but the latter is left unscathed because of the protection afforded him by the glowing feather of the Firebird. The Bird herself appears, and fills the Ogre King and his company with madness, so that they begin a wild dance which ends in their exhaustion.

Here we have the music which accompanies that furious choreography. A fierce fortissimo chord in full orchestra, edged with the metallic clang of the tubular bell, ushers in the wild dance of Kastcheï and his grotesque court. Here is the familiar Stravinsky . . . here are his impatient rhythms, clashing harmonies and dissonances . . . here is full play for his gift in depicting the bizarre, the weird, the ominous and threatening. The basses mutter of nameless terrors . . . woodwinds snarl and crackle . . . brasses brazenly sneer . . . piercing cries of strings

are answered with ribald shouts of the trombones . . . but presently these same strings in their strongest utterance recall the melodious figure accompanying the play of the Princesses in the preceding section, with an intimation of future freedom from the powers of the King Kastcheï.

The wild dance continues, and ends after final frenetic bursts on a full orchestral chord of crushing force. The hush that succeeds it is prelude to the "Berceuse," which follows without interruption.

#### V. Berceuse

This lovely music accompanies, in the ballet, the sleep charm which is cast upon the thirteenth princess in order to protect her from the base designs of the dread Kastcheï. It is, indeed, almost hypnotic in its mystical dreaminess, its persuasive and gentle rhythm, and the soothing voices to which its appealing melody is assigned. The bassoon broods dreamily over the opening phrases, in a solo accompanied by muted strings, and punctuated by single notes of the harp. The oboe sings a contrasting phrase . . . sudden brief emphasis is lent by *subito* utterances of the orchestra, edged with glittering roulades of the harp. Yet the mesmeric rhythm persists always, and slumber hangs imminent over the head of the Princess. High, thin, and penetrating harmonies suggest the swift coursing of wings through the upper air, darting through twilight shadows. Anon the slumbrous melody of the bassoon, the suggestive intonations of the harp, the thin cries of the oboe return, and the song closes with remembrances of its beginning.

#### VI. Finale

The "Berceuse" flows imperceptibly into the "Finale" . . . the music which, in the ballet, follows the death of the King Kastcheï, and marks the disintegration of the Ogre's evil influence, and the restoration to life of the victims he had petrified. The music, after the lovely horn solo against flutterings of the strings, has an easy, full, and joyous rhythm. Powerful—but not overpowering; jubilant—yet not, precisely, exuberant, the music expresses a deep and glowing joy, a keen vitality and wholesomeness contrasting with the suspended animation and portentous mystery of some preceding parts. Toward the end, thrilling with power and eloquence, the strings in their fullest utterance, against rising scales in the brass, pour forth the sweet paean of joy intimated but a few moments before in the dulcet voice of the horn.



## Le Sacre du printemps

[*The Rite of Spring*]

FEW will quarrel with the dictum that *Le Sacre* is the most significant, the most original, though not necessarily the most ingratiating of Stravinsky's works. There are musicians of rank who do not hesitate to assert that it is *the* most significant work in modern music. No "modern" composition has provoked so much discussion; none—at the time of the *première* of *Le Sacre*—had departed so daringly, so radically, and so finally from the accepted canons of harmony and structure; none since has been received with such a commingled uproar of praise and condemnation.

We need not be concerned with the academic discussions of this work or with the opinions of the critics, the musicians, and the musicologists; but in order to appreciate it, and to form our own intelligent opinion (which certainly is more important to us than any other), it is necessary to recall for a moment, first, the composer's musical development, and second, his intent in evoking this music.

Acquaintance with Stravinsky's two most important earlier works, *L'Oiseau de feu* and *Petrouchka*, establishes definitely the direction of his development as a creative musician. Even in *The Firebird* there are indications that conventional ideas of harmony and rhythm and orchestration did not seem adequate to express his ideas. *Petrouchka* went farther in the direction of freedom, and here musical ideas, melodies, incidents were presented simultaneously and independently—let the dissonances fall where they would. Yet, daring though *Petrouchka* seemed when first heard, there were many passages which were not shocking then and seem quite conventional today. *Petrouchka* was a logical development of the germinal ideas found in *The Firebird*; there were more than vestigial remains of the conventional harmony learned under the great Rimsky-Korsakov; there was evidence that the daring and the originality of certain features rested upon the sure foundation of classical composition. To become familiar with the three greatest works of Stravinsky, therefore, is to discover that his dissonances, or, let us say, his freedom in the use of dissonances, is due neither to insufficient knowledge of or lack of interest in conventional harmony, nor to a vulgar desire to be startlingly different.

Mr. Elmer Olsen, commenting upon this music in the admirable brochure issued with Stokowski's recorded version of the work, makes an interesting and valid point in establishing the logic and sincerity of Stravinsky:

There are musical revolutionaries who would destroy all feeling for any tonality (key) in their compositions. Not so Stravinsky. His music is firmly invested with a feeling for some definite tonality, as firmly as with Bach or

Beethoven. And even in the passages where he writes in more than one key at a time, one of these predominates, the other serving to add a biting, pungent quality to the musical texture. This is but progressing a step farther than Bach, who sometimes writes canons in which the second voice is in reality in a tonality different from that of the first, although both are set to harmonies in the principal key. A close examination of his scores leads many musicians to the conclusion that Stravinsky's dissonances are the product of no mere whim to be shocking, but are a natural expression of the composer's ideas and are based on a sound musical logic.

Stravinsky's originality in rhythm and orchestration are just as striking as his originality in harmony. One has only to listen to the thrilling alternation of measures of the "Conflict of the Rival Tribes" . . . to appreciate that here is a new and vital force in music. And his knowledge and skill in writing for the orchestral instruments is unexcelled. Who would have thought—or dared—to write the opening phrase of *Le Sacre* for bassoon? Yet in so doing he obtains just the tone-quality, eerie and undreamed-of, a plaint that evokes early, vaguely remote times. And so, throughout *Le Sacre*, he makes use of his instruments, sometimes in the most startlingly original manner, but always with a definitely expressive purpose.

One can with difficulty expect a composer to symbolize primitive man—the man who lived thousands of years beyond the dawn of history—with sweetly conventional harmonies. Such a man was not greatly elevated above the animals he hunted or which hunted him; he was direct, harsh, brutal. So is *Le Sacre*, often. Yet it must be remembered that Stravinsky did not, when considering the embryonic idea of this music, regard it as a picture of primitive life. On the contrary, he says, the chief ideas came to him as purely abstract music, rough and vital themes, and they themselves suggested the earth worship of primitive man as a pretext for their existence. The idea of the *Rite*, as choreography, came from the music; not the music from the dance.

The composer has always asserted that the music is, really, "absolute music, without any definite story or program, and that when presented as a ballet, it should be accompanied by a choreographic representation as purely abstract as possible." Though generally presented on the concert stage without the accompaniment of ballet, and fully entitled to its position in the symphonic repertoire as "absolute" music, it is distinctly helpful in listening to associate the music and the action of the ballet. Many a convert to this strange and wonderful music was made during the performance, with ballet, in April 1930, by the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski. In the following notes considerable attention is given to the action of the ballet as a clue to the significance of the music.



*First Tableau**Adoration of the Earth*

A desolate valley lies shadowed between barren hills that crouch above it like great brooding beasts. In the foreground is a mound of earth, and partly surrounding it a semicircle of great stones, and poles surmounted by the heads of wild animals. On one side is a group of young girls and on the other young men; all are quiet in thought.

Now from the orchestra comes a solitary voice, brooding, ageless, immemorial, that sings the call of awakening nature. Now the whole orchestra comes to life, each instrument forceful and distinct, yet all joined in a powerful utterance that signifies the birth of spring. A bearded Sage, bowed under the burden of years, comes forward and approaches the dancers. The girls circle around him as he leads them toward the mound of earth, which he ascends with dignity. There is a pause in the music; the first plaintive phrase returns, and here the men arouse themselves.

The orchestral strings intone a persistent monotonous background, and the adolescents begin their primitive dance. A wavering figure remains conspicuous; above it the woodwinds move with strange twitterings. There is constantly increasing excitement both in the music and among the dancers, and presently comes a momentary and dramatic pause. The horn announces a bright theme, and the orchestra joins in it. Again there is increasing excitement, color, and motion, in which trumpets give a brief but conspicuous moment to a phrase which we will discover later, in more important form, in the Vernal Dance.

Suddenly the girls cease their dance and drop abruptly to the earth as if in fear. With a piercing utterance of the orchestra, the Ritual of Abduction begins. The youths leap to their feet, and with threatening glances and terrifying gestures start toward the women. They, on their part, with mock terror, leap to their feet and simulate a mixture of fear and interested curiosity. The music grows more and more tumultuous as the two groups move relentlessly toward each other. At a sudden crash in the orchestra, there is a pause. For a moment the youths draw apart. The approach and the retreat are repeated again and again, as if youth threw itself repeatedly against an invisible barrier, only to be thrust back into itself by a force it knew not and could not see.

Presently we hear from the clarinets a strange and timeless melody, filled with primitive yearnings, and with warm desire, while above it tremulous flutes give out trills of compounded ecstasy and terror. Now each man chooses a girl and drags her away, but four of each remain on the scene. The four men toss the girls upon their shoulders and with precise and heavy steps begin the Vernal Dance. Heavily accented chords in the orchestra mark their footsteps. As the music grows

more powerful and more strident others join in the dance, and at the climax the penetrating motive of the Ritual of Abduction recurs.

Now comes a mock battle between two opposing groups, and in the ballet we behold here some of the most exhausting gymnastics ever incorporated into choreography. In the orchestra this dancing is accompanied by a conspicuous melody, supported and driven forward by a curious and powerful alternation of rhythm. The dance and the music approach a brilliant climax, and at its peak the Sage reappears, making his way through the maze of dancers. In the pompous and powerful tones of the tuba we hear the theme associated with the Sage. At its appearance there is a pause in the games and a sudden fierce interjection of the horns; then a vague rumbling suggesting the awe of the young people at the sudden appearance of their Sage. In a moment their awe turns to terror as the seer looks frowningly about him, and the orchestra for a space is in a frenzy.

It is curious to note here, as in many other instances in Stravinsky's music, the extraordinary potency and significance of silence as an element in music. It is not only the sudden cessation of sound that by its very suddenness arrests our attention; it is rather the sustained and pulsating absence of utterance that seems pregnant with awful meanings. It is like the momentary blindness that succeeds the flash of lightning, and holds us in agonized and trembling anticipation of the earth-shaking detonation that is to come.

There is such a silence here; then a soft chord and ominous drumbeats; a whisper from the strings, and all lie prostrate in adoration of the earth. Now follows the Dance of the Earth, a curious, rhythmically monotonous, but dynamically and orchestrally varied movement that grows and recedes in power as it gradually approaches its final vehemence. On the last chord the curtain falls on the First Tableau.

### *Second Tableau*

#### *The Sacrifice*

The curtain rises upon a scene lit by the red incandescence of a great fire, built at the foot of the mound of earth. Around it are seated the Sage and the girls, unmoving, lost in deep contemplation of the capital sacrifice in which presently they will be involved; for the girls are to choose from among themselves one, the Elect, a maiden who as a sacrifice to nature is to dance until she dies.

The music here is certainly as eloquent of melancholy as any we know. It is a melancholy that is almost pain; that partakes of the character of the grief, the searing, wrenching, terrible grief that accompanies birth, rather than the spiritual and subjective sorrow with which we look upon the face of death. We are witnessing—and the music symbolizes—the birth pains of a world; a world undeveloped, primitive, and almost purely physical. For here Stravinsky celebrates and propitiates the mystic power, fertility; and his music is powerful and mystical.

Woodwinds move in somber chords; strings give forth clear harmonics. Muted trumpets, incredibly remote, and muted horns succeed in curious harmonies, and presently the young girls rise to begin the Dance of Mysterious Circles.

The dance is contemplative, almost mesmeric, at first, for an invisible and mysterious force is directing the dancers in their movements. At the incidence of a curious swaying figure, the dancers move more freely, swaying their bodies and bending low toward the earth. Presently the young men grotesquely garbed in the rough hides of animals re-enter, and the girls quickly withdraw to one side—all save one. As an urgent, a compelling, figure arises from the brass, the girls extend their arms toward Her, the Chosen One; and with a mad surge of the orchestra they rush toward and surround Her.

Now begins the dance of the Glorification of the Chosen Virgin. The crassly brilliant light of early morning falls upon a scene of wild animation as the young women dance furiously about Her, and, at the end, flee and leave Her, doomed and lonely in the center of the scene. She stands as one bewitched, motionless and silent. The men rush forward, and to softly reiterated chords signify by their weird dance the transfer to the soil of their own energy. They join their arms over and around the Chosen One; thus they effect unity with Her. There arise from the basses muffled and monotonous tones, like the sounding of ceaseless primordial drums, changeless in rhythm, wearying yet unwearied. There comes from the English horn a rude song, a primitive incantation—the Ritual of the Ancestors. All on the scene are shaken by a great terror, quivering with the unutterable dread of the Unknown that motivated the occult ceremonies of primitive man, and is the basis of much in the religions of civilized people. Now the music takes on new and lurid colors; fragments of melody appear and are snatched away; drums sound again, and cease; and presently the Chosen One is left alone to begin the Sacrificial Dance.

From this point onward, the music suggests a tenseness of anticipation, and a feverish excitement that are utterly beyond description. Nor are these feelings begotten by force alone; indeed, the passages of secretive mutterings and of suspended animation which alternate with those of flaming brilliance and relentless violence are the more exciting. The choreography faithfully reflects the music. The Chosen One alternately stands, rigid, yet trembling, her face an abstraction of all the faces of all the women of all the ages; then suddenly she starts, she leaps, she sinks again to the earth in rapt contemplation.

Presently the mood of the music becomes one of dreadful foreboding, and the Chosen One seems seized with a divine rage. A spirit is upon Her; and long past the point of natural exhaustion, she dances in a fierce and relentless frenzy. She falters for a moment, and at this her fellows rush toward and follow her like rapacious animals. She recovers herself; she leaps madly about in renewed frenzy—and suddenly falls dead. Quickly the men seize her and carry her to the foot of

the mound. There, during the last shuddering dissonance of the violins, she is held aloft—a maiden undefiled, offered to the brooding, breeding earth. A final orchestral crash and the Rite of Spring is fulfilled.



### Suite from "Petrouchka"

*Petrouchka* was originally a ballet; from the music to the ballet the present suite was arranged by Serge Koussevitzky, eminent conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in collaboration with the composer himself. It is generally agreed that, while the art of Stravinsky has progressed toward its goal, while his musical philosophy is deepening and broadening, he has never surpassed the music of *Petrouchka*. It was published in 1911, and the ballet has been performed in all the great musical centers of the world. One particularly beautiful, and memorable, performance of the work was that presented by the Metropolitan Opera Company, some years ago, with the finest of talent on the stage and in the orchestra, and a magnificent scenic setting painted especially for the occasion by the world-famous Serge Soudeikine.

#### *The Story of the Ballet Petrouchka*

The action of the ballet takes place in a great public square in St. Petersburg; the time, a hundred years ago. The central characters are a Showman who exhibits animated puppets, his three principal characters being a Ballerina, or dancing girl; a Blackamoor, informed with a wild and fiery nature, and Petrouchka, a clown.

The music represents not only the action of the puppet show, but that of the entire carnival which is taking place in the public square. The first episode of the ballet depicts in music and dance and scene the hurry and bustle and merriment of the carnival crowd; the excited cries of children, the tipsy shouts of drunken revelers, the sound of a hand organ and of a music box . . . in a word, all the color and life and sound that such a scene would in actuality present.

Presently the Showman plays upon his flute, the effect being that the crowd's attention is attracted, and the puppets are suddenly animated. To the delight of the crowd, they perform a characteristic Russian dance . . . incidentally, one of the most delightful and boisterous sections of the ballet action and of the orchestral music.

The puppet drama now begins in earnest. Poor Petrouchka, misshapen, ugly, suffering, is kicked into his room, an unhappy creature created against his will, and

haplessly made aware of desires and feelings which he cannot possibly satisfy or assuage. After a time, the Ballerina is introduced, and the uncouth Petrouchka, amazed and enthralled by her beauty, loves and makes love to her. She, half amused and half frightened, repulses him. The Blackamoor is more successful.

We are again permitted to watch the carnival scene, toward evening, when revelry is at its height, and the peasant crowd, enlivened by holiday and other spirits, is gay and noisy. There is dancing by various groups of servants and countrymen . . . confusion when a man approaches, leading a bear that walks on its hind legs . . . and a shriek of terror from the crowd when across the stage of the puppet theater Petrouchka is wildly pursued by the Moor who, with one vicious stroke of his sword, crushes the poor clown's head. Petrouchka dies as the crowd gathers about, muttering threateningly against the Showman, who has disappeared. Someone goes to find a policeman (elusive as always!) and the Showman is finally brought back and made to explain that the actors on his stage are but straw men, incapable of real feeling. The crowd, mollified, disperses . . . but the ghost of Petrouchka appears above the Showman's booth and terrifies the latter with grimaces. The curtain falls.

The suite from *Petrouchka* omits various portions considered by Stravinsky as not essential to a concert performance of the work. A scene with the Ballerina and the Moor, and the slaying of Petrouchka, as well as the apparition of Petrouchka at the close of the ballet, are usually omitted. A special concert ending is substituted for the conclusion of the ballet version.

### *Part I*

Rimsky-Korsakov, master of modern orchestration, had an apt and eager pupil in Igor Stravinsky. In the works of Stravinsky's period of full development—*Petrouchka* is one of these—there is no trace of Rimsky the composer, but there is concrete evidence of the flowering of Stravinsky's latent gift for orchestration under the tutelage of the older master. Orchestration—the assignment of instrumental color to his melodic material—is perhaps more important to Stravinsky than any other detail of composition. His gift of melodic invention is prodigious, and in addition to the variety, ingenuity, and volume of his melodies, they possess an aptness, a finality of orchestral color, that is emphatically the outstanding feature of Stravinsky's music. He seems to conceive, simultaneously, a melody and its inevitable instrumental expression. Nor does he stop with assigning one melody to one instrument or choir of instruments. Sometimes the same theme is given at once to instruments of sharply contrasting timbre; sometimes, contrasting instruments are given contrasting themes. Related instruments, instruments somewhat akin or particularly harmonious in timbre, are used more frequently in thematic development by the conventional composer: by Stravinsky, rarely if ever.

Nor is this a mere striving for startling effect; on the contrary, it is directly an expression of Stravinsky's philosophy of music, which in the main might be summed up in this statement: get the precise shade of expression and color that is desired, by any possible means.

So it is that, in *Petrouchka* and other music of Stravinsky, we find not only contrasting musical themes or ideas, but one or more ideas simultaneously depicted in contrasting musical colors. Instead of complicating the music, this construction really simplifies it, for by their sharply, sometimes violently, contrasted colors the themes are the more discernible, their relationship and position in the tonal structure more clear. What someone has described as "color counterpoint" as well as the counterpoint of melodies is thus achieved.

The music begins with the Russian dance from the opening scene of the ballet. A lusty, boisterous, merry dance it is, played first by the full orchestra, and then, in its different rhythm and developments, by a variety of instruments. Through it all, Stravinsky has preserved the bustling and confused atmosphere of the carnival viewed as a whole—yet without sacrificing for a moment the emphatic and definitely marked rhythm of the dance. Such instruments as the piano and xylophone are invoked for the expression of the angular lines of this stiff-legged doll dance . . . and these instruments, unconventional in the symphony orchestra, are but commonplaces of a Stravinsky orchestration.

## *Part II*

Now the door of *Petrouchka's* room is thrown open; he is kicked through it; falls to the floor—and the door is slammed behind him. The music expresses the dismay and pitying remarks of the crowd as the poor clown is so cavalierly treated—but in a moment all are distracted by the entrance of the dainty and beautiful *Ballerina*, and *Petrouchka's* baffled maledictions are forgotten.

Now comes a fortissimo chord, followed by a brief but complete silence. Then the piano, in a dainty little solo which could not possibly have been written for any other instrument, anticipates the appearance of the *Ballerina*. After some play of piano and flute, there is another brief but eloquent piano solo, indicating that the dancing girl has actually appeared on the scene.

*Petrouchka* is love-smitten, but despairing, and his piteous cries, his impotent curses, are symbolized in the welter of tone put forth, after the piano cadenza, by the woodwind, with muted trumpets ejecting cynical phrases. The mournful horns join in a brief expression of pity, and the trumpets and cornets, with mutes removed, give forth a rapid penetrating phrase that accompanies the lowering of the curtain on the puppet stage.

(The following scene of the ballet, between the Moor and *Ballerina*, is omitted in the concert version.)

*Part III*

One of the most brilliant pictures in tone ever painted by the gifted Stravinsky is the carnival scene. We are distracted temporarily from the little drama of the puppets, and the composer asks us to view the festival scene as a whole. It is a scene of confusion and, precisely *as* confusion, is literally presented in the music. With the tremendous concourse of sound in our ears, it requires little effort of the imagination to picture the surging crowd, the gay if heavy-footed peasants in brightly colored shawls, the scurrying children, the happily drunken muzhiks, the cries of hucksters and fakirs, the crude music of carrousel and hand organs . . . every detail of an old-fashioned street fair. Various groups engage in impromptu dances . . . but at the end of the scene the crowd, with frightened cries, scatters as a peasant comes, leading a trained bear.

*Part IV*

The peasant plays a little tune on his pipe, and the huge bear suddenly rises and walks on his hind legs . . . "*Vous marche sur ses pattes de derrière,*" as the composer puts it in the quaint French idiom. Heavy sounds from the basses indicate the ponderous and labored strides of the bear, while the fascinated crowd watches from a safe distance. But the latter is presently distracted by the arrival of a rich merchant, who amuses himself by scattering money among the throng. A band of gypsies surround him, dancing and snatching at the wind-blown bank notes . . . and presently they too disappear. Now merry groups of coachmen and hostlers, powerfully built men with great boots and livery, dance a vigorous but heavy-footed dance to a characteristic Russian rhythm.

*Part V*

The coachmen's dance continues for a space. But it is drawing toward night; the first lights flicker amidst the smoke of campfires and the shadows of hastily erected tents. The masquerade is beginning; grotesque figures in the bass indicate the appearance of weirdly disguised merry-makers. A clown and a devil frolic together in crude buffoonery; men disguised as pigs and she-goats ramble hither and thither, frightening small children and flirting with their mothers.

With this picture the music ends. The drama of *Petrouchka* is but an entertaining incident of the fair, after all . . . the pathos, the acrid satire, the sentiment and sweetness that shyly appear in the suite from time to time are buried and forgotten under the impression of bucolic gaiety with which Stravinsky ends the music.

## DEEMS TAYLOR

[Born 1885]

**D**EEMS TAYLOR, one of the most distinguished and successful of American composers, was born in New York City, and most of his life has been spent in that teeming island. He was educated in the public schools and at New York University. Musically, his training was founded on study of the piano, and his development in the art has been entirely American in background. Mr. Taylor is a writer of force and charm in fields other than musical, but was recognized first as a personage in the musical world by the brilliance and justice of his musical criticisms in the columns of the old *New York World*, where he succeeded the incomparable James Gibbons Huneker as music reviewer. Since 1925, Mr. Taylor has devoted himself mainly to composition, and in that period has contributed significantly to American music.

In the field of opera, Mr. Taylor's work *The King's Henchman*, with libretto by Edna St. Vincent Millay, brought a refreshing new spirit to the repertoire of the Metropolitan, and established him in the very front rank of American musicians. Another opera, *Peter Ibbetson*, while successful perhaps more because of its literary associations than for its musical score, nevertheless revealed original thought and development, and while it is unlikely to remain in the operatic repertoire, it confirmed the recognition of Deems Taylor as definitely the ranking American composer in this field.

Mr. Taylor's charm and wit, and his enormous fund of information regarding music and the theater, have brought a welcome note to otherwise conventional radio programs, and have made him known to countless thousands of Americans. Hollywood beckoned, and Mr. Taylor went there in 1934 to write music for filmed entertainment.



### Suite: Through the Looking Glass

**T**HIS charming music was inspired by Lewis Carroll's immortal story—the sequel to *Alice in Wonderland*—of which five episodes are used as points of departure for the suite. It was originally written for a chamber orchestra, but later Taylor revised it, elaborating the orchestration and adding one section. In the revised version *Through the Looking Glass* was first performed by the New York Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Walter Damrosch. It has since been played by the leading orchestras in America.



For the first performance Mr. Taylor wrote his own program notes; it would be difficult to improve upon them. They are quoted by permission of the composer:

The suite needs no extended analysis. It is based on Lewis Carroll's immortal nonsense fairy tale, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, and the five pictures it presents will, if all goes well, be readily recognizable to lovers of the book. There are four movements, the first being subdivided into two connected parts.

### I. (a) *Dedication*

Carroll precedes the tale with a charming poetical foreword, the first stanza of which the music aims to express. It runs:

*Child of the pure unclouded brow  
And dreaming eyes of wonder!  
Though the time be fleet, and I and thou  
Are half a mile asunder,  
Thy loving smile will surely hail  
The love-gift of a fairy-tale.*

A simple song theme, briefly developed, leads without pause to——

### I. (b) *The Garden of Live Flowers*

Shortly after Alice had entered the looking-glass country she came to a lovely garden in which the flowers were talking:

"O Tiger-Lily," said Alice, addressing herself to one that was waving gracefully about in the wind, "I wish you could talk."

"We can talk," said the Tiger-Lily; "when there's anybody worth talking to."

"And can all the flowers talk?"

"As well as you can," said the Tiger-Lily, "and a great deal louder."

The music reflects the brisk chatter of the swaying, bright-colored denizens of the garden.

## II. *Jabberwocky*

This is the poem that so puzzled Alice, and which Humpty-Dumpty finally explained to her:

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
 All mimsy were the borogoves,  
 And the mome raths outgrabe.

Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
 The jaws that bite, the claws that  
 catch!  
 Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
 The frumious Bandersnatch!

He took his vorpal sword in hand;  
 Long time the maxome foe he  
 sought—  
 So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
 And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
 The Jabberwock, with eyes of  
 flame,  
 Came whiffing through the tulgey  
 wood,  
 And burred as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through  
 and through  
 The vorpal blade went snicker-  
 snack!  
 He left it dead, and with its head  
 He went galumphing back.

And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
 Come to my arms, my beamish  
 boy!  
 O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!  
 He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves,  
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
 All mimsy were the borogoves,  
 And the mome raths outgrabe.

The theme of that fruitful beast, the Jabberwock, is first announced by the full orchestra. The clarinet then begins the tale, recounting how, on a "brillig afternoon, the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe." Muted imprecations by the bassoon warn us to "beware the Jabberwock, my son." A miniature march signals the approach of our hero, taking "his vorpal sword in hand." Trouble starts among the trombones—the Jabberwock is upon us. The battle with the monster is recounted in a short and rather repellent fugue, the double basses bringing up the subject and the hero fighting back in the interludes. Finally his vorpal blade (really a xylophone) goes "snicker-snack," and the monster, impersonated by the solo bassoon, dies a lingering and convulsive death. The hero returns, to the victorious strain of his own theme—"O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!" The whole orchestra rejoices—the church bells are rung—alarums and excursions.

Conclusion. Once more the slithy toves perform their pleasing evolutions, undisturbed by the uneasy ghost of the late Jabberwock.

### III. *Looking-Glass Insects*

The score contains this extract:

This was anything but a regular bee; in fact, it was an elephant—as Alice soon found out, though the idea quite took her breath away at first. . . .

The gnat (for that was the insect she had been talking to) was balancing itself on a twig just over her head, and fanning her with its wings. It certainly was a *very* large gnat: “About the size of a chicken,” Alice thought.

“—then you don’t like *all insects?*” the gnat went on, as quietly as if nothing had happened.

“I like them when they can talk,” Alice said. “None of them ever talk, where I come from. . . .”

“Half-way up that bush, you’ll see a Rocking-horse fly, if you look. Look on the branch above your head . . . and there you’ll find a Snapdragon-fly. . . . Crawling at your feet, you may observe a Bread-and-butter fly.”

“And what does it live on?”

“Weak tea with cream in it.”

“Supposing it couldn’t find any?”

“Then it would die, of course.”

“But that must happen very often,” Alice remarked thoughtfully.

“It always happens,” said the gnat.

Here we find the vociferous *diptera* that made such an impression upon Alice—the Bee-elephant, the Gnat, the Rocking-horse-fly, the Snapdragon-fly, and the Bread-and-butter-fly. There are several themes, but there is no use trying to decide which insect any one of them stands for.

### IV. *The White Knight*

He was a toy Don Quixote, mild, chivalrous, ridiculous, and rather touching. He carried a mousetrap on his saddle-bow, “because, if they *do* come, I don’t choose to have them running about.” He couldn’t ride very well, but he was a gentle soul, with good intentions: There are two themes: the first, a sort of instrumental prance, being the Knight’s own conception of himself as a slashing, daredevil fellow. The second is bland, mellifluous, a little sentimental—much more like the Knight as he really was. The theme starts off bravely, but falls out of the saddle before very long, and has to give way to the second. The two alternate, in various guises, until the end, when the Knight rides off, with Alice waving her handkerchief—he thought it would encourage him if she did.

# PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

[1840-1893]

ANY but the most exhaustive biography of the great Russian composer Tchaikovsky must confine itself to the more salient features of the life and character of the man. Little of his inward life was ever unveiled even to his intimates. Those who were closest to him were not able to penetrate the remoter recesses of his being, at least not beyond discovering that Tchaikovsky himself did not understand his own mind and heart. Thus the composer takes his place in music's hall of fame as one of its most mysterious personalities.

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born on May 7, 1840 (according to the Gregorian, not the Russian calendar), at Votkinsk, in the province of Viatka, Russia. Young Piotr was given the conventional education of the better classes, his training including some study of the piano. He did not in his boyhood exhibit in music the precociousness which distinguished his accomplishments in other fields of learning. He obeyed with docility when at the age of ten he was sent to a school preparatory to study of the law, and at nineteen was graduated, drifting complacently into a government clerkship, and with somewhat more interest into the life of a young man of the world.

It was not long, however, until the aimlessness of his existence became apparent to the always introspective Tchaikovsky, and he discovered that the life of a law clerk was not for him. Music had always been his great pleasure; he had studied, though up to this time he had not, apparently, regarded the art with any great seriousness. Now it dawned upon him that it was for music that his restless soul yearned, and accordingly he set about studying seriously. With this decision came the necessity for giving up his government position and seeking a livelihood from some other source; so, in 1863, he deliberately chose the precarious existence of a musician. He undertook and in 1865 completed a rigorous course of instruction at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, graduating with honors. Here he had come into contact with Anton Rubinstein, whose personality so dominated and stimulated the languid Tchaikovsky that he put forth his best effort if only to please the master for whom he had conceived an affection bordering on adoration—a sentiment, which, by the way, was never reciprocated by Rubinstein.

Not long afterward Tchaikovsky was offered the post of professor of harmony at the newly organized Moscow Conservatory, and while teaching was distasteful to him, and the salary small, here was an honorable position in a musical atmosphere, with the pleasure and benefit of the society of other musicians. His new position gave the composer time to produce several important works, among them his First Symphony.

The next several years were devoted by Tchaikovsky to orienting himself in both his personal life and his position as a musician. He now came in contact

with the group of young national musicians—among them Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov who were then looked upon as musical radicals. Though doubtless influenced by them, Tchaikovsky could not sympathize with them completely, and indeed cannot himself be reckoned as strictly Russian in his music, as they sought to be.

During this period Tchaikovsky's financial resources were, as they had always been, at a low ebb. Information as to his troubles as well as his gifts and aspirations came to the ears of a wealthy widow, Nadejda von Meck. This generous woman was passionately devoted to music, and on learning many of the details of Tchaikovsky's life, she determined to assist him. With the utmost tact she managed to place herself in the position of patron, and established for him an annual income which greatly relieved his anxiety regarding money matters. The optimistic spirit of his Fourth Symphony, published soon after this happy event, must reflect the mental state that resulted from his liberation from material worries. When the income had to be discontinued, after thirteen years, because of Mme von Meck's financial difficulties, there was a misunderstanding which saddened Tchaikovsky for the rest of his life.

The Fifth Symphony was written in a little country house where Tchaikovsky had sought and found peace and quiet. Here he spent the happiest days of his life, albeit they were followed by his gloomiest season. The death of several friends and dear relatives, indifferent success of certain of his works, and homesickness caused by necessary travels outside Russia's frontiers preyed upon his sensitive soul and kept him constantly in mental misery. Success in conducting several of his own works in England brought him some cheer, however, and perhaps encouraged him in his projected journey to America. This was not interrupted even by the death of his beloved sister, and six concerts were given in the United States in the spring of 1891, in New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. All were extraordinarily successful.

In character and temperament Tchaikovsky was typically Russian. His music, however, while it does in truth portray some emotional phases of his personality, is not nationalistic. He was not steeped in the folklore and the folk music of his people as were Glinka and Balakirev and Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Rather, as he tells us himself, his devotion to the music of Mozart and his love for the Italian school dated from his sixth year. His thought is Russian, but its expression is colored with the richer hues of the South. The combination is a happy one, at least to cosmopolitan ears; it may, too, account for Tchaikovsky's more pronounced success in countries other than his own.

If durability is the criterion of the greatness of music, Tchaikovsky will probably always be ranked among the greatest composers of his time. His message has the quality of universality; it is eloquent, and it is beautiful. He expresses a sentiment which is probably felt at one time or another by every human being—the

realization of the impotence of man, the ephemeral quality of his achievements, the certainty of death. While human nature remains unchanged, such feelings will occasionally arise to demand expression, and such music as Tchaikovsky's will express them more eloquently than any other means we now know.



### Capriccio italien

OVERBRILLIANT, shallow, and effective, this music constitutes a case wherein Tchaikovsky's dangerous facility enabled him to achieve a maximum of effect with a minimum of material. This is not Italianate Tchaikovsky, such as we sometimes find elsewhere in this composer's music. This is not Tchaikovsky at all, but music that might have been conceived for an Italian band by an Italian hand. Its brilliant flashing is constant and blinding; its color raw and violent; its thematic matter trivial.

The work was composed during 1880, at which time Tchaikovsky was enjoying a stay in Italy. The first performance was given at Moscow, December 18, 1880; the first in America, under the baton of Walter Damrosch at a concert of the Symphony Society of New York, November 6, 1886.

Italian dance rhythms and melodies are freely used. The prominent figure for the trumpet is said to have been borrowed by the composer from a bugle call he heard from an Italian military post in Rome. The music passes from a somewhat melancholy mood to one of fervid exaltation, from subdued to abandoned outpourings of orchestral sonority, from andante to presto, in quite melodramatic manner. The principal thematic idea is derived from a characteristic Italian popular song, which the composer works until it disappears under the weight of its own elaborations. The climaxes, full of power and brilliance, are obviously inspired by the mad whirling rhythms of the tarantella, and it is in this rushing figure, punctuated by *sforzando* chords in full orchestra, that the music ends.



### Marche slav

PERHAPS the most popular of Tchaikovsky's smaller compositions for orchestra, this stirring music remains in the repertoire in spite of much gross mishandling and too frequent playing. It bears some striking similarities to the "1812" Over-

ture, including the composer's use of the Russian national anthem; but it is much more "Russian" in character, and though brief, a decidedly more interesting composition than the "1812."

Low woodwinds create a somber mood, but flashing interjections of the trumpet dissipate the rather gloomy atmosphere, and the patriotic music, played buoyantly, brings about a new and vigorous spirit. There is a highly dramatic moment in the *sforzando* attack in timpani, diminishing at once to piano, and establishing a sturdy, rhythmic figure on the tonic and dominant that keeps the music moving always. The climax is in Tchaikovsky's gaudier style, but rarely fails of impressiveness.



## Francesca da Rimini

[*Fantasia*]

THIS violently dynamic and brilliantly descriptive music was inspired by the composer's reading of Dante's *Inferno*; more particularly by the affecting lines which describe Dante's meeting with Francesca, and her relation of the story of her love.

Francesca da Rimini was the daughter of an aristocratic Italian family, whose parents married her off to a brave and noble courtier, unfortunately deformed and older than his bride. He had, however, a young and handsome brother Paolo, who fell in love with Francesca and she with him. The illicit affair was discovered by the husband, who forthwith attempted to kill Paolo; but Francesca came between, and the dagger plunged into her breast. The husband thereupon killed the lover and went his way.

Dante encounters Francesca in that terrible domain of Hell reserved especially for those condemned because of sins of the flesh. This is the Second Circle of *Inferno*; here the damned are ceaselessly driven about and assaulted by fierce tempests.

The music is broadly divided into three sections. The first depicts the Second Circle, with its frightful blasts of black winds, the screaming and wailing of the damned, the dark and nameless terrors that haunt the place. The middle section suggests Francesca's pathetic story, and the final section again presents the horrors of *Inferno*.

The music is loud and long. It is usually played with many cuts, for its series of climaxes and its almost constant evocation of the orchestra's ultimate powers grow exceedingly wearisome. There is little relaxation in it, except in the middle section, where the lovely melody of the clarinet, against an accompaniment by

plucked strings, tenderly suggests Francesca's narrative. The final delineation of the horrors of Hell is presented with terrific violence.



## Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor for Piano and Orchestra

[Opus 23]

THIS great work has a history of rather unusual interest. It occupied the composer during the autumn and winter of 1874-75, having been completed in February of the latter year. When the last note had been set down Tchaikovsky inscribed on the title page the name of Nikolai Rubinstein, a pianist of eminent standing and brother of the composer, Anton.

Instead of being complimented, Rubinstein was offended that the composer should have completed his maiden work in this form without consulting him on matters of piano technique; he bitterly criticized the work. It is not unreasonable to suppose that his criticism was merited, to some degree. Tchaikovsky, unlike most great composers and particularly those among his own countrymen, had displayed no great facility in writing for the piano, and possibly the free flow of musical ideas was impeded by his unfamiliarity with the requirements of that instrument.

He was deeply offended at Rubinstein's attitude, and substituted the name of Hans von Bülow in the dedication. This great artist praised the work highly, and took it on a concert tour to America, where it was a great success. Rubinstein eventually became enamored of the concerto, and was regarded as one of its greatest interpreters. Tchaikovsky, too, adopted a changed attitude, and in 1889 revised the concerto completely. The version used today is the final result of that revision.

### *First Movement*

For sheer brilliance and grandeur; for variety and intensity of color; for commanding breadth of conception, it would not be easy to find in any music of this type a rival to the first movement of the concerto. Particularly is this true of the introduction with the tremendous chords from the piano ringing clear and powerful even against the concerted might of the orchestra. Presently a broad singing melody appears, chiefly in the strings, and accompanied in sweeping chords and sonorous voice by the piano. Throughout the introduction this melody is the underlying subject of the music of both piano and orchestra.

Now we come to the main body of the movement, inaugurated by a distinct



change from the sweeping rhythm of the introduction to a more angular and abrupt motion, which the piano introduces. There is some interesting development of this motive, and after a series of ponderous bass harmonies for the piano, we come upon a second important theme—and one of the loveliest in the entire work—given forth by the woodwind and tenderly repeated by the solo instrument. Upon these two subjects the entire first movement is constructed; Tchaikovsky turns them, as it were, this way and that, and extracts from them the last measure of beauty. Tonal colors of exceeding richness flow from orchestra and solo instrument; strings, bright and keen or mellow and muted, contrast with the piano's varied tone; woodwind sweetly sighs its comment on the theme.

Toward the end of the movement appears one of the most interesting items, from the piano lover's viewpoint, in the concerto—a gigantic cadenza, or display passage, for the solo instrument. Built up of the thematic material already presented, it leads to the finale which in its superb brilliance and vigor recapitulates the entire movement.

### *Second Movement*

Tchaikovsky shared the typical Russian's love of color and of contrast. The first is exemplified in the foregoing music; the second in the utter grace and the almost pastoral simplicity of the present movement as opposed to the grandiloquence of the first. Here is music that pleases the ears of the most unsophisticated and the initiate as well—for there is sometimes a more subtle art in straightforwardness than in magnificence.

The theme appears, after a few gently plucked notes from the strings, like the clear soft call of a shepherd's pipe, in the loveliest register of the flute. Now the bassoons and muted strings erect a shimmering background of tone while the silvery clear notes of the piano form themselves into the simple design of the theme; again, the pleading voice of the cello takes up the song, with the solo instrument ornamenting it with a sparkling design of the loveliest tone texture. Even when a new voice—the oboe—is interwoven, the atmosphere of clarity is maintained.

The second part of the movement presents a change in both rhythm and emotional significance. Here Tchaikovsky made use of an old French chansonette, "*Il faut s'amuser, danser et rire.*" (We must amuse ourselves, and dance and be gay.) You will hear this merry tune in the strings while the piano disports in brilliant, playful figuration above it.

A brief interlude and cadenza for the piano bring about a return to the first theme, and on it the movement ends.

### *Third Movement*

The rondo, into which form the third movement is cast, is the musical parallel of the verse form of the same name but different spelling—the *rondeau*. It has a

principal theme and incidental themes, but returns at intervals to the original subject in the original key. In verse the analogy is completed by the recurrence of the same line, with commentary upon it between each repetition of the dominant thought.

A brief orchestral introduction precedes the first appearance of the theme, which is given out by the piano alone. The rhythm suggests some wild and vigorous Russian dance; it leaps into flashing life under a master hand at the keyboard, and springs from the orchestra almost like some animated being. Both orchestra and piano are sportively engaged with the theme for the greater part of the first section of the movement.

There is no piano passage which could definitely be pointed out as the cadenza which usually occurs toward the close of the final movement, and did appear in each of the preceding parts of the concerto. There are, however, some amazingly brilliant feats of execution for the solo instrument, notably the scale passages in the first section of the movement. These ripple and glow as iridescent as a shower of pearls when a great artist plays.

Despite the brilliance that has gone before; despite the vigor and animation of the first movement and the opening of the third, new climaxes are reached in the concluding bars of the concerto. There is a certain emotional tenseness heretofore absent. There is a sweep of power in both orchestra and piano surpassing anything we have yet heard, growing in every measure as the final crisis is approached and achieved.



## Romeo and Juliet

[*Overture Fantasia*]

THIS lovely music, so rich in the best that Tchaikovsky ever gave to his world-wide audience, was written when the composer was young, vigorous, and romantic. It was inspired, of course, by Shakespeare's deathless tragedy—but at the suggestion of that other great Russian composer, Mili Balakirev. The latter proposed to Tchaikovsky that he undertake the work, and indeed gave to Piotr Ilyich ideas as to the character of the themes.

*Romeo and Juliet* was written in 1869, when Tchaikovsky was filled with tragic memories of his unsuccessful wooing of Désirée Artôt, the beautiful French singer who jilted him. Although the composer married another, this was, as far as we know, the only serious love affair of his life, and its unhappy conclusion left a definite mark upon him and his character as a musician.

An overture is, in the general modern sense, the instrumental introduction to an opera, outlining musically the characters and themes to be developed during the action. The word is used also to describe an independent concert piece for orchestra, often free but sometimes in strict sonata form, and usually of descriptive or dramatic significance. The *Romeo and Juliet* overture contains and develops descriptive themes and ideas—but in itself embodies also complete dramatic action in the arrangement, sequence, conflict, and triumph of these ideas. Therefore, it is an “overture,” but not a “prelude” to anything. The word “fantasia” is added to emphasize the freedom of form in which the composer chose to work.

While there is no detailed “program,” or story, outlined in the music, there are unmistakable intimations of the high dramatic moments, the clashings of purpose, the idyllic and passionate love, the grim catharsis, that appear in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Indeed, Tchaikovsky frankly appended to his title the deferential and perhaps dangerous note, “after Shakespeare.”

The quasi-ecclesiastical harmonies with which the overture opens are accepted as symbolic of the sympathetic Friar Laurence, whose ministrations, though rightly planned and executed, result indirectly in the destruction of the lovers. We hear this solemnly lovely music in the woodwind section (clarinets); it takes the form of an introduction to the overture. But it is more; it is a basic thought in the first section of the overture. Against its calm and serious tones, swift scales in plucked strings, now bold and menacing, now furtive and dark, spring upward and then seek lower and darker shadows—as though, under cover of pious protestations and desperately maintained restraints, the feud of Montagu and Capulet pursued its dark and sinister ways. There are fragmentary melodies in the strings’ most lovely voices yet they are disturbed and foiled by ominous rumblings of the kettledrums and conflict seems imminent.

As the next section begins, the conflict is even more powerfully intimated, and after a brief interval of comparative calm, it bursts out into open conflagration. From opposing sections of the orchestra crushing masses of tone are hurled; the picture of armed men is boldly painted across the scene. Yet as suddenly as they came, they disappear into the shelter of deep shadows.

Now comes one of the most poignant passages ever to flow from under Tchaikovsky’s gifted hand. It is the love scene . . . a scene which any composer would delight in creating under any circumstances, and one to which Tchaikovsky, with his own love experiences fresh in heart, and the divine inspiration of Shakespeare powerfully exciting his skill, would naturally give most lavishly of his art. The scene is a strange duet of two poignantly beautiful melodies. The first melody is woven of a tonal fabric composed of the voices of *cor anglais* (English horn), violas (muted), and an accompaniment, softly, in the horns. The indescribable eloquence of this phrase, with its trembling ardor, its faint suggestion of melancholy, its eagerness and gentleness, is utterly unforgettable.

In answer comes the other member of the duet—in strings, divided into more than the usual four sections, and muted; playing in lovely chords. But the embraces of Romeo and Juliet, like their lives, are brief though sweet, and once again a scene of strife and confusion is spread upon Tchaikovsky's musical canvas.

Here is the "development section" of the piece. Obsessed though he was with the romantic story that inspired this poem in tone, Tchaikovsky was, nevertheless, always the musician, the meticulous craftsman, the student of form. He therefore bends the form to his purpose and, while with characteristic skill developing musical material heretofore introduced, gives us, as well, a thrilling and almost terrifying picture of the bitterness, the fierceness, and ugliness of armed strife. The intervention of Friar Laurence in the shape of the thematic material introduced at the beginning of the overture is without effect.

Presently we are reminded, more and more powerfully, of the lovers themselves, their music taking on a vehemence, a tension, that it has not known before. And the beauty of the themes is correspondingly magnified.

The growing force and passion of the music develop it into such proportions that we scarcely notice the transition to the gigantic play of musical forces which constitutes the scene of struggle and violence—once more returning with even mightier effect than before. At its climax it breaks off, and after a suggestive pause a shadowed scene is laid in the somber colors of the low strings, with palpitations of the timpani below. Now, once again, come echoes of the cloister, but sad and dirgelike, as in mourning for the slain lovers. There are sad recollections of Romeo's song—a song of mourning now, as it is subtly transmuted by the composer's skill. Cellos and violins and bassoon give voice to this lovely threnody. Romeo is dead, and Juliet lies dead beside him. There is a little mourning, too sad for long duration—and the music is done.



### Overture solennelle "1812"

THIS extraordinarily powerful and melodramatic music has been called the "world's worst and noisiest overture." It hardly deserves such a damning estimate; others, since the melancholy Tchaikovsky, have written much worse and even noisier music. That it is bizarre, that it depends more upon sonority than on any other quality for its impressiveness, that it is rather cheaply programmatic and illustrative, cannot be denied; neither can the fact that it is extremely effective.

The overture was written to dramatize and commemorate the withdrawal of the French troops under Napoleon in 1812, a strategic retreat which the Russians had always regarded as a victory. As originally planned, the music was to

be performed by a gigantic orchestra assembled in a public square in Moscow, and arrangements were made for the inclusion of cannon as members of the percussion section, or *batterie* (!) Fortunately for the musicians, the guns were to be located at quite some distance from the orchestra, and were to be fired at proper intervals by an electric connection from the conductor's stand. There is no record of a first performance with the scheduled elaborations, but Sousa's Band and other musical organizations have played the overture with bombs or giant firecrackers taking the place of cannon.

The music begins with a solemn introduction of the old Russian hymn *God, Preserve Thy People*; in woodwind and strings. The greater part of the overture is devoted to an all too realistic musical description of the Battle of Borodino, in which the progress of the encounter is indicated by the relative prominence given to the *Marseillaise* and the Czarist Russian national anthem, *God Save the Czar*. (Neither was in use by the respective countries at the time of the famous battle.) The Russian hymn is eventually triumphant, above an orchestral clamor that can with difficulty be matched for sonority in all orchestral literature. To cap the climax, the tubular chimes are thoroughly pounded during the closing measures, as if all the bells of Moscow rang in triumph. It is all quite breathlessly thrilling.



## Nutcracker Suite

A LITTLE poor girl dreams on Christmas night . . . her queer, hopelessly unromantic gift of an ordinary household nutcracker comes to life . . . commands the lead soldiers in battle against the Mouse King and his lively cohorts, who would have triumphed had not Claire slain their furry commander with her slipper; whereupon the nutcracker becomes a handsome prince, who flies with Claire to the fascinating domain of the Sugarplum Fairy, somewhere in Araby, where toys and sweetmeats join in one great frolic to celebrate the romance of the little girl and her Prince Charming.

Out of this fantastic little story comes this lovely ballet music—music which only a Russian could delineate in the dance. The story of the ballet derives from a French interpretation (by Dumas *père*) of E. T. A. Hoffman's fairy tale, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. The concert version of the music differs appreciably from the ballet suite only in the titles assigned to the various numbers. You will find it possessed of brilliance, vitality, and barbaric richness of tonal color and exotic rhythm that are really captivating. Not a note, not a whisper of Tchaikovsky's characteristic melancholy can be found in it.

### 1. *Overture Miniature*

The "Overture Miniature" is precisely what the name implies. It is not strictly choreographic in character, though nervously alive with sprightly charm. The orchestration is interesting, basses and cellos having been omitted entirely, with the theme and its elaborations preponderantly in the violins. The result is an astonishing brightness of tone quality, a penetrating sweetness—and withal a daintiness not at all marred by the very distinctly marked climaxes.

The characteristic device of Tchaikovsky—drawing of bright scales across the principal subjects—is noted here as well as elsewhere in the suite. Underneath and again above the chief motive, flying notes flutter like wings; the flute spurts a glittering rivulet of tone that flashes as in sunlight over the gracious, almost Mozartian theme—and too soon the quick chords, pizzicati, joined with the soft clang of the celesta, end the overture.

### 2. *Marche*

The shining brasses intone a pompous little phrase that opens the first of the characteristic dances. Horns and trumpets, later with the clarinet, give forth this brave sentence, and presently the somber basses come to life in hurrying scales plucked from their deep-voiced strings. Crashing cymbals emphasize the bold cadence of the march; more sonorous brass takes it up again, and in a final rush of tone the "Marche" rises to a swift vigorous climax at the end.

### 3. *Danse de la fée dragée*

[*Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy*]

Shortly before the completion of the *Nutcracker Suite*, Tchaikovsky heard for the first time, in Paris, the celesta which had just been invented by Mustel. He was utterly fascinated by its lovely tone, and lost no time in writing a special piece for it. Here we have that music; and it is interesting to note also that the first performance of the *Nutcracker Suite* was also the first occasion on which the celesta was used in the orchestra.

It is not unfair to assume that the Sugarplum Fairy was somewhat hampered in her movements by the gelatinous nature of her constitution; the rhythm is now somewhat "lazy"; the adhesive sweetness of the celesta is therefore probably the best possible instrument here! Tchaikovsky was too much the artist, however, to permit sweetness to become cloying, and since the Fairy was, supposedly, of the (so to speak) gentler sex, we find the characteristic and compensating acerbity in the tuneful snapping of plucked strings; and short-lived soft blandishments in the mellow clarinet.

4. *Trepak*[*Russian Dance*]

Here is the most distinctly Russian music in the *Suite*—and incidentally, the number in which the composer is least like himself, as we would judge him from his major instrumental works. The chief characteristics of these, it will be remembered, are their lack of nationalistic quality, and the abysmal melancholy that pervades them.

But here—here are blood-freezing breezes, flying boots encasing feet that must be warmed; here are the vigor, the naïveté, the simple delight of the Russian peasant, all set to magnificent music. Here for the first time the full power of the orchestra is felt. A wild dance, mightily accented with tambourine and sounding drum; fiercely vehement strings have the chief utterance, trombones sound in mocking laughter, the pace quickens, breath comes short and sharp and hurried—and suddenly the full might of the orchestra is released in a thrilling rush of power.

5. *Danse arabe*[*Arab Dance*]

Exotic, languorous, dreamy with the mystical dreams of the East is the Arab dance in the *Suite*. Scored for muted strings and woodwind only, it is filled with the mellow richness inseparable from these instruments, yet it is not without poignancy. A drone bass is made the foundation of a fascinating rhythmic and harmonic structure, with a languishing melody in the lighter strings answered contrastingly by the woodwind. Furtive insinuations of the tambourine punctuate and point the rounded phrases; bewitching fragments of melody sigh from the oboe, the *cor anglais*, and the bass clarinet, and the dance drifts off into silence and nothingness almost as imperceptibly as the Oriental mind reaches by degrees the mysterious delights of nirvana.

6. *Danse chinoise*[*Chinese Dance*]

“Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar!” Sometimes we of the western world do not fully realize the intimacy of the kinship between the Russian and the Mongolian. Geographically, they are actually neighbors (remembering the gigantic reaches of Russia, Siberia, and China); ethnically, the relation is closer. It was apparently easy for Tchaikovsky to work in a pseudo-Chinese musical idiom, as this part of the ballet will disclose; perhaps some ancient barbarian brought the theme through Gobi’s sand devils across the steppes from Tartary and left it as a seed to blossom in the music of the West.

The dance opens with droning bassoons, snapping notes plucked from the violins, and shrill, excited cries in the flute's keenest voice; swift flights in the woodwind, crystalline flashes of the triangle, silvery showers from the glockenspiel—and always the droning comment of the bassoons underneath the growing tumult. The end comes quickly on one brief chord.

### 7. *Danse des mirlitons*

[*Dance of the Flutes*]

A mirliton is something similar to our kazoo—a toy instrument, simple as a comb with tissue paper wrapped around it, and with a tone quality much the same as is produced by that most eloquent instrument of the American schoolboy. The mirlitons were actually used in the ballet, but not in the concert arrangement of the suite. Flutes are naturally the most conspicuous instruments here.

A little introduction indicating the rhythm of the dance, and the flutes appear in a figure of exquisite, fairylike delicacy—not without a note of pensiveness, yet gay nevertheless. Contrasted with this delicate rhythm and tone color is the more robust dance motive given the trumpets against a background of heavier brass which presently is taken up by all the orchestra, excepting the flutes. The *féesque* flute dance of the opening comes again, more strongly supported now and rising to a very definite climax at the end.

### 8. *Valse des fleurs*

[*Waltz of the Flowers*]

The final number of the *Suite* is the garland of flowers that crowns it. In the universality of its appeal, in its intrinsic loveliness, it stands as one of Tchaikovsky's most felicitous utterances. Instinct with life, with grace, with color, and moving in that most graceful of dance rhythms, the waltz—it is not difficult to see why the "Waltz of the Flowers" is one of the most widely known and best-liked of the great Russian's musical expressions.

Woodwind delivers an introduction containing the seeds from which the chief waltz theme, to be heard presently, is developed. The harp glitters in a most ingratiating cadenza, and then in the horns we find the captivating waltz theme upon which the whole piece is founded. The brilliant strings have the contrasting subject and elaborations of both, the first part of the waltz ending upon this secondary idea.

Halfway through the piece, a new melodic idea is introduced in the violin section; ever the accompaniment maintains the flowing waltz rhythm. The climax is reached in a development of the original waltz theme of the horns, the phrase



just preceding the final tremendous chords being a rhythmic mutation of this subject.



## Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra

DURING the winter and spring of 1877 and '78 Tchaikovsky resided in cities in Italy and Switzerland. During the month of March he played a great deal of violin music with the violinist, Kotek. He started work on a pianoforte sonata, a violin concerto, and other smaller pieces. He soon became so interested in the concerto that the other compositions were forced to wait. Regarding the first movement of the concerto, he wrote Mme von Meck, "The plan of this movement sprang suddenly in my head, and quickly ran into its mold." Several of the themes in the concerto are of a Russian character, and so it is interesting to note that about this time he wrote, also to Mme von Meck, that sometimes he introduced Russian themes intentionally; at other times unintentionally. He continues:

My melodies and harmonies of folk-song character come from the fact that I grew up in the country, and in my earliest childhood was impressed by the indescribable beauty of the characteristic features of Russian folk music; also from this, that I love passionately the Russian character in all its expression; in short, I am a *Russian* in the fullest meaning of the word.

The concerto was at first dedicated to the late Leopold Auer, then professor of violin at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He declared the technical difficulties of the work insurmountable. So it remained neglected until another violinist, Adolf Brodsky, happened to see the music, took it up of his own accord, and played it in Vienna, December 4, 1881. As has happened with many another famous work, the concerto was at first received with bitter antagonism by the critics. Auer, who has taught many a violinist to do the impossible, moderated his first opinion, and other violinists began to include the composition in their repertoires. At the present time the concerto ranks in popularity with the masterpieces in this form by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms.

### *First Movement*

The orchestra begins with an introductory passage that is at first quiet and contemplative, then increases in volume and animation as it briefly foreshadows the first theme. After a short cadenza, the solo violin announces the theme, which is

notable for its songlike character and fascinating rhythm. The solo instrument proceeds with brilliant ornamentation that leads into the second theme. This melody is also flowing in style, and rather arresting because of its insistence upon a coyly hesitant little melodic figure. The violin carries the theme into its upper brilliant register; then while the orchestra continues the melody, it supplies a background of rapid figuration. The tempo quickens and the soloist introduces a brilliant staccato passage against light orchestral chords. The exposition ends as the orchestra recalls the first theme, fortissimo.

Instead of any elaborately evolved symphonic development, the solo instrument brings forth a brilliantly conceived variation on the first theme, in which rapid legato scales are effectively contrasted with staccato double-stops. An orchestral tutti is the signal for a long cadenza for the violin, unaccompanied. In the cadenza are notable: arpeggios of wide range; effective—and difficult—passages in sixths; a brief reminiscence of the second theme; rapid, descending scales; and a final trill. While the violin continues the trill, the orchestra enters softly with the first theme. The melody appears in a modified form, and is led into the second subject, now more intensely songful, and developed into a brilliant climax. Rapid scales by the solo violin, against a series of strongly accented chords in the orchestra, serve as a coda to bring the movement to a vigorous conclusion.

### *Second Movement*

#### *Canzonetta*

Woodwind instruments play introductory measures, quaintly harmonized, and somewhat Russian in character. The violin sings the principal theme, charming for its veiled melancholy, and typical of Tchaikovsky. This is the *canzonetta*, the "little song," Tchaikovsky mentions in the title of the movement. Flute and clarinet follow with imitations of the first phrase of the theme, and the violin continues with another melody of somewhat more vehement accent. It soars to the upper regions of the instrument, then quietly descends, a clarinet continuing downward with the phrase. The first theme returns, a flute entering in brief dialogue with the violin. The movement is brought to a close with the same charmingly quaint measures with which it opened. Now, however, they are led into a short transition that continues without interruption into the

### *Third Movement*

After an orchestral introduction, and an unaccompanied cadenza, the violin proposes the principal theme of the movement. Suddenly the whole atmosphere of the music is changed, and we are in the midst of the vivacious rhythm and unrestrained gaiety of a Russian peasants' dance. As a contrast the second theme is

slower, almost languorous, in style; yet like the first, it has an unmistakably Russian character, particularly in the constant repetition of a single striking motive. The second subject is played first by the solo instrument, then by the orchestra while the violin indulges in rapid scale passages mounting to a fortissimo climax. The oboe, clarinet, and bassoon unassertively suggest a new idea. The violin continues this for a time, then returns to the first theme in a more brilliant form. The second theme reappears, and is again followed by the graceful oboe melody. When the principal subject returns for a last time, its impetuous dancelike character is further accentuated, and, as the excitement increases, violin and orchestra answer one another with sudden exclamations. The dance reaches its violent climax. A fragment of the second theme is loudly insisted upon by the orchestra, and the violin dashes headlong into precipitous and scintillating scales. At the end there is a rush of wild and carefree merriment.



### Symphony No. 4 in F minor

THE Tchaikovsky F minor Symphony is the first of what might be considered a cycle of symphonies—the composer's Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth—in which three differing aspects of his dark and mysterious personality are presented. Piotr Ilyich was a man of morbid sensitiveness, with pronounced leanings toward melancholy and a habit of introspection which carried to excess—as it was—contributed heavily to his gloomy and pessimistic outlook upon life.

Tchaikovsky's melancholia is exhibited in its most abject depths, its abysmal despair, its intolerable sadness, in his Sixth ("*Pathétique*") Symphony. In the Fifth, there are indeed moments of poignant grief; there are passages shadowed by the dark wings of melancholy. But we find in the music a note of defiance, as well; a willingness to do battle against unfriendly fortune; and occasional moments of spiritual repose. In the present symphony, however, there is no overpowering gloom, no pervading melancholy, no despair or desolation. Its superb vitality leaves no room for morbid speculation and introspections. What gestures of an unkind fate are evident, now and again, are overpowered, crushed down, thrust aside, and treated with a vehement contempt and an outpouring of vigorous and virile utterance, and even with humor.

The symphony has fully come into its own only during recent years. The sentimentality of the Sixth, and the impressiveness of the Fifth brought them the more swiftly and forcibly to public attention; and their more obvious charms at once established them in the concert repertoire. The Fourth, however, by its wholesomeness, its soundness, its magnificent power and brilliance, its flashes of humor,

and its marvelous orchestral coloring, has won its way to a point in the favor of concert audiences which places it on an equal footing with its successors. Present indications suggest that it may soon be even more popular than the Fifth and Sixth.

The symphony is dedicated, in Tchaikovsky's words, "to my best friend"—who could be no other than Mme von Meck.

### *First Movement*

There is an introduction, in which the spirit of the movement as a whole is rather definitely forecast. Horns and bassoons give out a bold figure, somewhat military in character, somewhat ominous in significance, and treated with syncopation, a device of which Tchaikovsky makes conspicuous use throughout the symphony. The brazen call of the horns is answered, at intervals, by a vigorous chord in full orchestra, and toward the end of the introduction, as the warning note becomes less insistent, suave utterances of the strings lead us gently to the presentation of the first theme of the movement.

Here Tchaikovsky sighs. It is not the suspiration of discouragement, defeat, and unutterable woe that breathes so unhappily in the long-drawn agonies of the "*Pathétique*" . . . nor yet the sign of weariness that comes, now and again, in the loveliest music of the Fifth. Here the theme seems to be relief, rather than resignation; peace, rather than pathos. The delicate motive appears at first in the violins and cellos, accompanied by the other strings and, faintly and occasionally, by the horn. Its progress upward to brighter planes of emotion is significant . . . and its subtly syncopated rhythm gives it vitality, motion, and grace. When it is presented, after a little, in the woodwind, it grows in emphasis, and a rather strong and insistent accompaniment in the strings gives it still more assertiveness. Its character changes, gradually but completely until we can scarcely recognize it as the underlying thought in the swelling torrent of tone to which it has given the initial impetus. There are fierce thrusts of sound from one section of the orchestra and another, driven along by an irregular, syncopated, but powerful rhythm. In this marked syncopation, and in the flying scales which the composer draws across and through the main texture of the orchestral utterance, we note two striking characteristics of Tchaikovsky's music which are frequently and most strikingly exhibited in this symphony.

Another thought, a bit pensive, yet hopeful, detaches itself from the main body of the music toward the end of the first division of the movement. The clarinet utters it . . . the dryly humorous, half-pathetic, half-sardonic bassoon repeats it imitatively. More definite, as the second section begins, this idea takes shape as it is molded in tone once more by bassoon and clarinet. New fragments of loveliest melody mysteriously materialize from the nebulous and plastic material the composer puts before us. The clarinet diffidently intrudes with a gentle little song,

strings supplying a diaphanous accompaniment in the background, and flutes, above, showering little cascades of glittering notes upon the curving outlines of the woodwind's song.

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Violin (VIOL), Woodwind (w.w.), Timpani (Timp), and Bass. The Violin part is in the upper staff, marked *pp*. The Woodwind part is in the upper staff, marked *pp*. The Timpani part is in the lower staff, marked *pp*. The Bass part is in the lower staff, marked *pp*. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The music features a complex, rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a shimmering, cascading effect. The woodwind part has a more melodic line, while the timpani and bass provide a steady, rhythmic accompaniment.

Two, and sometimes three, melodies are created, move, and have their being simultaneously; and so deftly the composer writes, that while these lovely songs progress, while they are perfectly blended, one with the other, they nevertheless can be followed as certainly through the wondrous fabric of the music as one traces a bright thread through the warp and woof of a colorful tapestry.

Presently the composer abandons the somewhat elaborated counterpoint in order to demonstrate its antithesis. Now he permits us to hear one of the loveliest, and strangest, episodes in the symphony—a solo for strings, with contrasting woodwind, and accompaniment solely by timpani. Here is one of the most charming, and the most striking, examples in all music of the subtlety, the versatility, and the eloquence of that frequently underestimated instrument, the kettledrum. The velvety quality of tone, the definite pitch, the inimitable rhythmic effect of this instrument, under the hands of an artist, are things to delight in and to wonder at.

The almost mesmeric calm invited by the preceding passage endures but briefly. Succeeding it after a space comes one of the thrilling climaxes of the symphony—a climax compounded of all the rhythmic and melodic elements that have been introduced; a climax that reaches its zenith in an awe-inspiring remembrance of the warning call that introduced the symphony. The trumpets put forth bright tongues of tone; the horns, somewhat veiled and ominous, repeat the figure in harmony. And the swift rhythm goes on once more.

Now thunderous basses urge the orchestra onward . . . fragments of melody are reviewed . . . impatiently discarded . . . discovered once more. Emotional intensity reaches a new degree of stringency. Striking through the whirling masses of tone, the warning of horn and trumpet leaps defiantly out from and above the combined might of a hundred instruments . . . yet finally the unbidden thought of terror and strife is thrust aside, and the peaceful if pensive song of the woodwind returns.

As the final section of the movement begins, the duet of strings and timpani, with the contrasting song in woodwind, appears again, but with a more agitated spirit than before, with the suggestion of disturbances to come, with the full mighty

force of the orchestra lingering on the brink of utterance. Nor does this imminent utterance wait long. It bursts suddenly in a flood of tone, vigorous, strongly syncopated, compelling. There is a brief rehearsal of old thematic material, and the final climax slowly unfolds.

### *Second Movement*

The task of the symphonic composer is a gigantic one, and one beset with countless difficulties. The symphony that is conceived in his heart, that lives its gestative period in his intelligence, that is born under his hand, must not only communicate to his audience a sequence of emotional states. It must either be brought within the range of existing means of expression, or those means must be expanded to such dimensions as to render them adequate to make clear his meanings. Again, the discipline that is the soul of art must be observed. Principles of structure are as necessary to music as to architecture, and by them the musical, as well as the material, edifice stands or falls.

No matter what storms of the spirit assail him, the composer must coolly calculate to a nicety the degree of response he can exact from his hearers. He must make his meanings clear if he wishes to create in his audience the emotional state they have begotten in his own soul; he must bring *this* idea into relief, subdue *that* one. And he must never ask of his listeners the utmost of excitement for a period longer than they can sustain it. It is natural, then, that the second movement of the symphony, after the prolonged and exigent spiritual demands of the first, should be pitched on a lower and contrasting plane of emotion.

If the first movement represents, as it might, a temporary triumph over, or a putting aside of, a troubled mood, the second may be considered as derived from a feeling of relief. Emotional tension is relaxed; there is weariness, almost lethargy, but yet a keen consciousness of terrors held in abeyance. The pulse of the music, underlying the larmoyant voice of the oboe as the movement begins, is measured and slow . . . and yet of such vitality that the strings presently themselves take up the oboe's sweet lament. There comes a more cheerful, upward inflection of



the violins, stronger as they are doubled with the other strings; there is a growth in power and emphasis and sonority. And, when the violas presently take up the suave opening strain, there are gay little decorative figures in violin and woodwind.

The optimistic spirit grows in power until presently it is quite dominating. A more lively figure, like a grotesque sort of dance, appears toward the end of the first half of the movement, its low-pitched but lilting strain assigned to bassoon and

clarinet, its rhythm to strings. Presently the strings themselves sing the tune in smoother accent, and the brighter woodwinds suggest even gayer spirits. Like spreading light the melody and rhythm color all the orchestra, and a magnificent growth in sonority accompanies the gradual addition of instrumental forces until a splendid climax is reached.

The outburst of gay spirit is brief. The opening theme, weary but not too sad, returns again, with flashes of brightness from the flute illuminating its otherwise shadowy colors. The movement closes in serenity.

### *Third Movement*

Tchaikovsky's marvelous dexterity in the use of scales, in the invention of syncopated rhythms, and his love for the tone of the plucked string are given full play in the present symphony, and nowhere more than in the present movement. Here is one of the most charming, bright, and ingenious passages in all his music. There is scarcely a shadow in it; all is life, and brilliance, and humor.

The pizzicato string gives forth, or can give forth, a variety of emotional suggestions. In the third movement of the monumental Fifth Symphony of Beethoven, the string orchestra speaks ominously . . . suggests the restless pacing of some giant, incredible beast lurking in impenetrable shadows. In the second movement of the Schubert "Unfinished" it touches the depths of sadness and longing. In Tchaikovsky's own Fifth (at the close of the first movement) a progression of notes plucked, as if from reluctant strings, seems to mark the departure of loved ones into cavernous gloom. And here, Tchaikovsky uses the *same* device to mirror gaiety that is nothing less than exuberant.



Incidentally, here is a temptation that the merely virtuoso conductor rarely can resist, for the movement, if taken at a tempo much faster than that justified by judgment and good taste, is regarded by the uninitiate as an astounding tour de force. Indeed, to whip the rhythm and tempo to breathless speed does require technical facility of no mean order on the part of the orchestra—but consequent distortion of melodic line and burlesquing of the composer's intention constitute a price much too dear to pay for mere display. A properly tempered, restrained, and subtly molded playing of this movement is a joy to hear. The rhythm is quick, vital, and distinctly marked; impeccable intonation from the strings, beautifully rounded phrasing, and full justice to the subtle modifications of rhythm of which the movement is capable are all elements which can combine in one of the most delightful passages in symphonic music.

The opening theme is tossed about like a bubble in the hands of woodland sprites at play . . . dainty bits of melody flicker like will-o'-the-wisps, and are gone . . . and a lightfooted rhythm keeps the plucked notes flying like sparks. Up and down the scale, and up again, to rest for a moment on a shining note of the oboe. And this little pause is but the starting place for another lighthearted little song, such as might accompany children's games in the garden. Other woodwinds join in the merry play and, after a space, the brass gives out a little subject that suggests toy soldiers marching across the grass, with a miniature fanfare of the piccolo to make them "stand up straight."



And in a moment the original pizzicato section returns, with more vigor and sparkle than ever, with even more subtlety of phrasing and nicety of accent. But now the strings invite brass and woodwind to join their own revel . . . and strangely, subtly, ominously almost, there is a sudden fierce climax that we are to encounter later as a striking feature of the final movement. In a moment, the vehement utterance passes; there is a parting flicker of humor as the brasses mimic and burlesque the tiny pompousness of toy soldiers; and the plucked strings end the movement in a lightfooted rush of notes.

#### *Fourth Movement*

Nowhere in symphonic music is there a display of orchestral forces more magnificent than this overpowering movement. Here every instrument in the orchestra is asked for its utmost in dynamic contrast, in agility, in sheer power. Here, too, the outstanding characteristics of Tchaikovsky are exhibited with powerful emphasis and with brilliance of effort not to be found elsewhere in his writings.

Happily, his outstanding spiritual characteristic—melancholy—is not so exhibited. Did this symphony follow the lines of the Fifth and Sixth, we should have the joyous spirits of the preceding movement put to flight by a storm of baffled rage, an agony of melancholy, and an abandonment to despair. The fourth movement is, rather, the final justification and confirmation of the brightening spirits that have moved throughout the symphony ever since the close of the first section. In the first movement, the shadows, the warnings, the menaces that seemed to hang imminent over the music were ignored, thrust aside, forgotten. The second movement suggested rest after conflict; the third, carefree joy; and the fourth is a magnificent affirmation of the fact that triumph is complete, emphatic, and secure.

The entire orchestra bursts into a furious, a vehement utterance at the very opening of the movement. Strings and woodwind rush fiercely down long scales;



brass and drum utter their boldest, and a mighty clashing of the cymbals is like a lancehead that flashes at the head of the great concourse of sound. Again the head-long rush of tone, and, after a tentative utterance of plucked cellos and basses, the first theme is given out in flute, clarinet, and bassoon. This theme is directly derived from an old Russian folk tune that every peasant knows. Its somewhat dark colors



are fiercely denied by an antithetical outburst of the strings, and in sharp altercation the two instrumental groups lead once more to the all-powerful utterance that opened the movement. Now a new thought—a broader, still mightier phrase, rudely altering, by its syncopation, the prevailing rhythm of the music—enters and leads to a climax of stupendous sonority and power.

Stubbornly, yet with no emphasis other than that which a restrained and tempered utterance always carries, the little minor subject so brusquely thrust aside a few moments ago re-enters. The orchestra is held in check, as it were, listening. The contrasting subject presents itself in various guises—in oboe, thin and insinuating; in the pensive flute; in horn, in sonorous trombone, in mighty bass; in tearful woodwind once again; and ever the lighter strings deride, sneer, make sport of it, and at length convert it into a figure leading directly to another overwhelming pronouncement of the triumphant music that began the movement.

But, as the second section of the movement opens, we find that the disturbing thought of sadness, by its very persistence, has engaged the attention of the strings, too. Yet they rob it of melancholy suggestion; they make of it a suave and gracious utterance; they grow lyrical, and severe melodic lines are ornamented with glittering cascades of tone from the flute.

However the sad little theme is treated by the gusty fanfares of the orchestra, it persists . . . persists until, strangely, with a significance that gives pause, the dreadful warning that opened the whole symphony returns. There is a space during which the situation hangs in the balance. Will melancholy triumph . . . have those magnificent outbursts of exuberance been premature, after all? But no . . . the horns subtly inject a recollection of the joyous music that began this movement. A few instruments catch the significance of this utterance . . . it is repeated, and its meaning permeates the whole orchestra. A powerful reminiscence of the mad music that occurred near the close of the third movement, and once more the entire orchestra plunges deliriously into the fury of joy and exaltation in which the final movement was born.



## Symphony No. 5 in E minor

TCHAIKOVSKY'S Symphony No. 5 will probably always share honors with the Sixth, or "*Pathétique*," as his most popular symphonic work, and with his Fourth and Sixth as his greatest. It embodies many of the qualities of the other two, yet is perhaps somewhat less clearly defined in emotional pitch than either of them. Its joy is never exuberant, like the mighty finale of the Fourth; its shadows of gloom are not so darkly painted as those of the "*Pathétique*."

The symphony presents several departures from conventional form, the most notable being the third movement. This part of the work is a waltz, rather than the classical scherzo, and is an interruption of and distraction from the emotional plane of the preceding and following movements. Tchaikovsky never sought bizarre efforts for their intrinsic appeal, nor did he violate accepted canons of form simply as a bold gesture; on the other hand, he did not hesitate to use whatever means his message seemed to require, regardless of convention.

*First Movement*

Melancholy is in some respects the most beautiful of human emotions. Tchaikovsky alone of all the great composers seemed to have fully understood and to have given most eloquent expression to its sad and mystical loveliness. Purified of ugliness and hatefulness in the marvelous alembic of his music, it is not the dull gloom that weighs down a soul by sheer oppressiveness; rather it glows, darkly and richly, as royal metal tried in the flame.

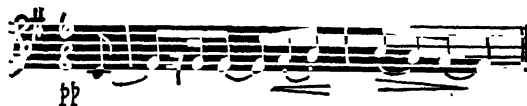
You feel this quality in the very first measures. The first subject, pronounced without prelude in the reedily sweet voice of the clarinets, is sad, yet its continual



gentle but firm movement suggests a driving force, temporarily vitiated, perhaps, but with a promise of a new influx of power. Viola, cello, and double bass accompany the first phrase of the theme, with the addition of the brighter second violin in the responsive sentence. There is something mesmeric in the mysterious association of stirring life and deadly gloom in these passages; it is as if a sleeper moved restlessly under the oppression of a dream of terror, then relapsed again into troubled slumber.

There is a subtle change in rhythm now, with the entire string section softly yet with ponderous weight intoning a swaying figure like the stealthy pacing of

some huge and menacing creature. Against this new rhythm the clarinet appears with a second theme, now reinforced yet shadowed by the somber note of the



bassoon. With delicate syncopation, and an always upward inflection, the new subject proceeds with growing brightness. Presently the flutes are added, doubling with the clarinet for a phrase or two, whereupon the subject is transferred to the strings with bright and pathetic figures of the flute, like coursing tears, playing over it. Now the struggle begins as the somnolent spirit writhes and heaves under the incubus of melancholy. Between crushing masses of tone that seem to strike at each other from different sections of the orchestra the simple syncopated subject persists and cannot be entirely obliterated in the furious duel raging about it. From horns and again from the strings it comes with increasing boldness, to disappear only at the pinnacle of the climax for which preparation is being made.

The vehemence that marks the composer's utterance here is not like the wildness of despair that so often rings out in the almost intolerably sad measures of the "*Pathétique*"; rather we have here a war cry, an expression of resentment and fierce defiance of the powers of darkness almost explosive in its violence. Enfolded in the warm, dark robes of melancholy, the spirit had almost failed, but now, with a heroic effort, it rouses itself in a thrilling, almost frenzied burst of energy as it tears and disentangles itself from the trailing weeds of woe.

Hardly has the orchestra, the full powers of which are required in the first few measures, given forth its message of defiant courage when a moment of pure lyric feeling appears. The first violins, accompanied by the remainder of the string choir, intone a lovely if fragmentary melody, with bassoon and clarinet in the antiphonal phrase against a descending scale on pizzicato strings. There is some development of this idea, with more and more brilliance and then a sudden fading of light as the ghostly voices of the horns come uppermost. But an incisive chord is plucked from the whole string section, ushering in a new figure for the woodwind—a figure that suggests the quick-drawn, panting breath of a desperate warrior struggling for very life. Presently, in clear contrast, there is an answering sentence in the strings, the string and woodwind figures alternating in two-bar passages until at last the violins become uppermost in a beautiful cantabile.

The present portion of the work is one of swiftly moving episodes. Panting weariness, awakening, defiance, travail, and momentary surcease have hitherto been depicted in musical color; presently the struggle is resumed with renewed vigor. It is as if the spirit beat with bruised wings against the impregnable barriers of time and circumstance—vainly, but never entirely without hope. Masses of tone almost

terrible in might and splendor come swiftly, and toward the end there are combinations as well as separate appearances of several subjects already heard in the movement, notably the marchlike rhythm against a figure based on the principal theme, and the short sentence for the horns which has been put forward at intervals.

A return to the principal theme is intimated as the music proceeds, such a return being of course in consistency with the sonata form.

Its statement and the development of figures contingent upon and succeeding it are much the same as in the first section. Yet there is more energy, more decision, as the chief theme is resumed; its elaborations are stated with greater determination than before. Phrases of contrasting color and emotional character—one bold, powerful, vivid, the other gentler and in the pastel tints of the woodwind—are now heard alternately, and then the entire orchestra, as if in impatience, rushes headlong into the swift, marchlike rhythm which has appeared several times in preceding portions of the movement.

The eerie voice of the faintly blown horn utters once more its soft complaint, and again is answered tremulously by the strings. Then from the very hearts of the violins, from first to double bass, is plucked a single chord—the signal for a new burst of life and vigor in the entire orchestra. Pizzicati flutter for a moment like shining wings, and wind and stringed instruments are again engaged in a strange dialogue, the utterances of the former in labored suspirations, the latter sure and smooth and confident in their brief antiphonal.

From this point onward the music rises to a repetition of a climax terrible in its intensity and sheer power. But at the end, the deep and ominous mutterings of the double bass cast a shadow over all.

### *Second Movement*

Seven measures of harmonies deep and rich and solemn in the strings prepare for the utterance, as an important subject of the second movement, of one of music's loveliest melodies—one of the rare songs that pierce the inmost places of the heart; a languishing melody, burdened with nameless longings, poignant with yearning, yet having within itself the element of joy and courage and hope, in the midst of sadness, that is the emotional keynote of the Fifth Symphony. To the



weirdly beautiful voice of the horn the exquisite song is given; ethereally it floats above the gentle intonations of the strings like moonlight over misty waters, with now a flicker of light, now a pale ephemeral glow, and always with life and motion.

We have learned to seek and find in the drama the assuagement of the grief and terror of the protagonist, and the purgation of those emotions as they are produced in the soul of the spectator. Tchaikovsky in the present work, and particularly in the present movement, achieves an analogous effect. The utter longing, the bittersweetness of melancholy, are expressed in eloquent accents, albeit without the astonishing candor of the Sixth Symphony's complete surrender to despair. Here Tchaikovsky is more reticent, more reserved, and therefore even more eloquent—yes, the note of sadness is keener than in the "*Pathétique*," if only because of the contrasting note of hope.

The antithesis of the first theme appears now, after a short transitional passage, in the first violins, with the other strings and the entire woodwind section in



the accompaniment. Presently certain sinister utterances of the bass presage changes in the prevailing sentiment—changes which the following section of the movement will reveal.

That a climax is imminent is suggested in the more powerful movement, the increasing agitation, the more emphatic voices of the orchestra. Woodwind and strings in turn color with their various interpretations a figure much like that first heard in the clarinet and again in the bassoon, and in the midst of this exposition the first violins interrupt with delirious spirals of tone that whirl upward, through and above the heavier masses of sound, hesitating and again circling upward as if seeking a moment's resting place. Nor indeed is that resting place found, for after a few chromatic phrases, the brass, so long restrained, bursts the bonds of silence and speaks suddenly and with fierce emphasis, obliterating the thin voice of the strings in its commanding power and majesty. The full powers of the orchestra are now invoked; the war cry of the powers of darkness, the demoniacal laughter of the spirits of mad despair, ring brazen in defiant finality.

But it is not finality for the irrepressible spirit of hope that can be felt in nearly every measure of the symphony's first two movements. There is a sudden pause, a hesitation in a slow and terrible march of tremendous notes in both lighter strings and double bass, that conjures up again the vision of some Gargantuan creature striding toward its victim. A pause, and the exquisite melody of hopeful longing returns; a melody that sings a "pleasure that is all but pain"—now in the vibrant strings, with the tearful oboe in the answering cadence above. In the background, yet full of menace, comes the heavy pulse of the plucked double bass, the cello, the viola, and the violins of the second section, yet bravely the first violins sing on, carrying their melody against both the threat of the dark utterances in the bass

and the glitter of tears dropped by the woodwind from above. Almost imperceptibly the chief elements of the present portion of the movement are being gradually combined, until of a sudden we are led into passages of most skillful counterpoint into the texture of which the colors of the horn, the bassoon, the oboe, and clarinet, and the violins have been marvelously woven. Here, Tchaikovsky has not only artfully combined the voices of a variety of instruments, but at the same time has presented simultaneously the motives of gently persistent hope, of tears and temptation to despair, and of menace and terror that would crush hope—all engaged in a quietly fierce struggle, the outcome of which for a time remains in doubt.

There is a session of stormy music. Rising to a climax of almost terrifying power the tempest of tone pours out its final violence on a quick succession of chords that hesitate and then are silent; a small voice from the woodwind gives evidence that the brighter theme still survives, and presently we hear, more gentle and more appealing than ever, the last statement of the chief theme of the movement. The string choir divides into three sections, one composed of violins and violas entering into the theme in canon form, with the second section—cellos and second violins—giving back the same figure in their deeper voices, while underneath all, the third section, composed of double basses alone, sends forth deep but plangent notes from its gently plucked strings. The brass is silent in defeat, but the woodwind chants softly in rhythmical triplets.

Like one falling into the sleep of exhaustion, the melody sinks into deeper and deeper tones; its final phrase is sung once by each section of the string choir, violin, second violin, viola, cello, until it reaches the sonorous double bass. Here, after a final flicker of lambent light from the clarinet's mellow reed, it ends in silence.

### *Third Movement*

The emotional exhaustion suggested in the latter part of the preceding movement is something more than a mere figure of speech. The heartstrings, like nerves, become fatigued and unresponsive if too violently or if incessantly played upon. Tchaikovsky, therefore, at the precise moment when he is suggesting exhaustion as well as causing it in sensitive listeners by the sustained intensity of the second movement, now provides a welcome and charming distraction in the third. The use of the waltz rhythm in symphonic writing is not common, chiefly because it does not readily lend itself either to the classical sonata form or to the expression of profound feeling, but these very facts provide reasons for its introduction here in the third movement of the symphony. There is no attempt to invest the waltz—and it is nothing more—with any deep significance, there is no spur to the emotions, already jaded after the soul struggles of the second movement.

Contrarily, the urbanity of the principal theme, introduced without prelude as the movement opens, is soothing to the senses and gently stimulating intellec-

tually. Strings, horns, and bassoons appear in the first presentation of the melody—



the theme itself being assigned to the first violin, with the other strings supplying a pizzicato accompaniment, and woodwind punctuating the measure with gently blown chords. Though always the swaying three-beat rhythm is maintained, the composer brings to it a variety of orchestration and a skillful play of internal movements that are really fascinating.

So it is that the first arrangement of the thematic material and its accompaniment does not endure for long. The viola presently has a fragment, the woodwind answers in countermelodies, and then oboes, with horns, doubled, have a short solo—all these episodes based on the first melody of the movement.

The nervous intensity produced in the first and second movements has now been thoroughly relaxed. Such was the primary purpose of the present portion of the symphony—but there was a further one, and that was to prepare for the final movement, not only by distracting the attention for a moment from the emotional stress of the first movement, but to suggest, without intruding, the somber thought that underlies the whole work.

Just as in the merriest rout it is always possible to detect a hidden note of melancholy; just as in the happiest moments there sometimes come the ghosts of griefs, more anguishing for the contrast, so, near the end of this pleasant space in the symphony, the first important theme of the entire work, taken from the first movement, insinuates itself into the music, the clarinet shrouded in the shadowy tones of the bassoon. For a moment the lilt of the waltz seems distant, faint, unreal, as the sober reminder of the troubled past hangs nebulously above it—now somewhat brighter in rhythm, to be sure, and in the major mode where first it came in the minor, but awful in its significance, nevertheless.

There is but a moment of gloomy retrospection, however. Subtly the intoxicating rhythm of the waltz reasserts itself; a few bars of chords, quaintly syncopated, and then a final fanfare that speaks of determined cheerfulness. So the movement ends.

#### *Fourth Movement*

The final movement of the Fifth Symphony presents a number of interesting features, some of them entirely new, some the resultants of what has gone before. In the first section of the movement at least, there is a complete change in the character of the music, in spite of the fact that the opening theme is nothing but the principal subject of the first movement. It appears disguised somewhat in a

new orchestration, and brightened by transposition from the minor to the major mode. The change from the minor to the major effects a wonderful transformation in the significance of this theme. Where first it spoke of soul desolation and melan-



choly, those emotions now seem in the heat of the struggles which have passed to have been purified, sublimated into a calm religious joy. Even the underlying slow march, that once suggested the irresistible advance of a destroying monster, has now become a solemn ecclesiastical rhythm, marking the slow procession of peaceful thought that moves across the scene.

The orchestration, too, has been subtly altered to lend the appropriate color to the present moment. Where once were crawling shades of gloom, now falls "a dim religious light." Even in the rhythms one feels subtle but significant changes—the development of the latent vitality dimly perceptible in the original theme at its very first appearance.

In its most solemnly joyous moments the music is nevertheless undergoing a continual change. There is a feeling that the relief and joy, after the emotional stress of the first two movements, are too new, too powerful, too exuberant to be contained within the stately measures of the present portion of the work. Even while the brass calls out a summons to thanksgiving and prayerful utterance, a brighter, more thrillingly vital motive is taking form from the elements already introduced into the symphony. The heavy dignity of the dominating religious note keeps down the less serious thought for a while, but after a period filled with alternating long-drawn chords in brass or woodwind, or both, against tripleted figures in the strings, there is a return to the key of E minor. In keeping with the structural laws of symphonic writing, the music has returned to the original tonality of the first movement, but not to the depressed spirit of that portion of the work. On the contrary, the bright, almost dancelike subject introduced with the change in key persists in its exhilaration and vitality.

All the barbaric splendors of Tartary burst forth in blazing color and exotic rhythms, as vivid and irregular in form as a gigantic pyrotechnical display against a midnight sky, as the second section of the final movement unfolds. Little of the orchestra's resources are left unexplored in the first few bars—utterances of seemingly blind and unreasoning jubilation which, notwithstanding their superficial indefiniteness of form and structure, can be found on a closer examination to embody the basic idea of the symphony as it was elucidated in the first important theme of the work and at intervals throughout its exposition. In fact, the electrify-



ing sweep of fiery brilliance here is but the prelude to another pronouncement of this theme in its revised and triumphant form. Soon one hears it blown upon the majestic brass, now in magnificent broad phrases, again quickly and with nervous emphasis. Above it the woodwind delivers itself of ecstatic scales, frenetically joyful.

The essential difference of Tchaikovsky's Fifth from his perhaps more famous Sixth Symphony (*"Pathétique"*) becomes perfectly apparent now. In that paean of pessimism were embodied the cardinal tenets of his gloomy creed that effort is vain, that hope is vain, that all is vain. And at the end despair conquers. But here the composer must have written in one of those rare moments when, after spiritual storms, life seemed brighter and cleared of the clinging mists of melancholy; a moment in which, perhaps, he experienced in regard to his creed, such as it was, the uncertainty that must sometimes come to every introspective mind that subscribes to dogma. There is always the possibility of error, and let us suppose that here Tchaikovsky happily doubted his belief that spiritual courage, hope, and energy cannot prevail against the stern realities of life. Here, certainly, he bears arms bravely against the dark spirits which at moments throughout the symphony have seemed invincible.

The final section of the fourth movement is one of the greatest pieces of bravura writing in the orchestral form which we have from the hand of Tchaikovsky. The atmosphere is distinctly Oriental in the first few bars, with bizarre tonal effects and syncopated rhythms. The music has not progressed far, however, before we come once more upon a derived form of the principal theme of the symphony, following the exploitation of a more joyous subject in strings and woodwind. The brass puts forth tongues of shining tone, illuminating the once somber phrase with golden light. A constantly accelerated fuguelike figure climbs swiftly upward from beneath, and still above the deep mutter of the double bass the aureate tones of the trumpet and trombone ring clearly. There is a reminiscent touch of the religious triumph. Now a figure based on the first short introductory theme of the opening movement is combined with the new form of that movement's principal subject; practically the whole symphony is recapitulated in this closing section of the final movement.

The Fifth Symphony is in many respects the most satisfying of Tchaikovsky's works in the larger forms. Its structure is not so close an approach to the classical, perhaps; the third movement, a simple waltz, is not a detail which commends the work particularly to the pedant and the purist. Its emotional content is not as great, or is it as intense, as that of the Fourth or Sixth Symphonies, yet here the emotion is disciplined, restrained; there is greater artistic reticence. The theme is the eternal struggle between hope and despair, and its development is so reasonable, so logical in its processes, and so definite in its conclusion that those whose belief in the power of the human soul to triumph over the vicissitudes of life has wavered or perhaps has been destroyed, as well as those happier ones who, though knowing human

weakness and fallibility, still bravely face the world's cruel realities, alike should be satisfied.



## Symphony No. 6 in B minor

[*"Pathétique"*]

WHETHER or not he so intended, this is Tchaikovsky's last musical utterance, his farewell to the world. The strange circumstances surrounding its composition and performance, its agonizing melancholy, its inclusion of certain unmistakably significant passages, have given rise to the suspicion that Tchaikovsky wrote it as his "swan song," and committed suicide. It has even been called, rather cruelly, "the suicide symphony." There is much external evidence to disprove the suicide theory. Tchaikovsky, perhaps like every introspective and pessimistic man, meditated suicide at one time or another; but to speculate upon such an act is far from committing it. Tchaikovsky would doubtless have appreciated the melancholy dramatic possibilities of such an act after the first performance of music so intolerably sad—but like most who contemplate self-slaughter, he might have been deterred by the realization that he would not be present to enjoy the drama. The composer was sensitive to adverse criticism, and this symphony was not well received—not even appreciated by the musicians in the orchestra. But he was not so sensitive that the cool reception of his work would have driven him to suicide; if he had been, his career as a musician would have ended long before it did.

The fact remains, however, that this music laments such woes as few have ever suffered, and though there is probably no connection between it and the death of the composer, it could, without too much exercise of the imagination, be regarded as suggesting the bitter griefs of life, an attempt to overcome them by a forced and unreal gaiety, a vigorous and manly struggle against despair, and, finally, surrender and death.

The symphony was completed in October, 1893, and performed for the first time at St. Petersburg, October 28, 1893, under the direction of the composer. It was a *succès d'estime*, and, of course, Tchaikovsky was not satisfied. A few weeks later it was played again—but the composer was not there to witness the enthusiasm. He was dead.

This work is one of the few pieces of absolute music which has been acceptably named by a person other than the composer. Tchaikovsky had thought of calling it a "Program Symphony," but quite reasonably asked himself, "What does 'program symphony' mean when I will give it no program?" His brother Modest sug-

gested "Tragic," but the composer rejected this. Later, as an afterthought, Modest proposed "Pathetic"—and Piotr Ilyich agreed with enthusiasm.

### *First Movement*

A melancholy that is almost gruesome is exposed in the ominous phrases of the solo bassoon that crawl like serpents in shadow from the darkest tonal recesses



of the orchestra. The last section of the bassoon's utterance is taken from it by protesting strings, the violas laying on an intolerant accent in the middle of their phrase, above the sustained and pianissimo background of cellos and basses. The introductory measures are repeated; then the violins, with nervous impatience, hurriedly put forth a contrasted version of the introductory phrase, and the movement proper begins.

The melodic fragment, first introduced in a spirit of unhealthy lethargy, has now become completely transformed. It flickers briefly in strings and woodwinds; appears here and there in the orchestra, now powerful and dominating, now furtive and feeble. The flute disguises it with brilliant and determinedly—and pathetically—gay elaborations, like one who speaks and tries to smile through bright tears. Other woods and strings seize upon this fragment of woe and terror, refusing to let it rest, refusing its melancholy assertions, parrying its persistence, and masking its every appearance with their varying colors and rhythmic mutations—yet this condensed version of the orchestra's first ominous pronouncement tinctures the whole body of the music like a single drop of poison in a cup of rich and heady wine. At length the orchestra grows weary of the struggle to ignore, to hide, to fend off the hateful thought, and with a monotonous repeated figure in the cellos, a weary and tremulous sigh fading in the thinner, upper tones of violas, there comes a pause.

The violins, muted and soft, assure us that "there is balm in Gilead." A soothing, a warm, and comforting melody is drawn from them—and from the cellos, too. Here is one of the saddest and sweetest, one of the most pathetic and consoling,



melodies from the fluent pen of this composer. It is not, at the outset, as passionate as it is resigned; but after the flute inserts a brighter fragment (shadowed by the

mockingly imitative bassoon), there is a growth in intensity of expression, and the smooth melodic contours are troubled by more vehement ejaculations. These, too, pass; and the lovely song of the strings returns, now clear and *senza sordimo*, but still not concealing the restless rhythmic figure that moves through the other sections of the orchestra. Almost imperceptibly the melody seems to lose its element of courage, its strength, and the impetus of its rhythm; transferred to the sweetly sad voice of the clarinet, ever *dolce* and diminuendo, it falls just short of silence. The last four notes hang imminently in the low range of the bassoon—and suddenly we are assaulted by a mighty, a fierce, and incontinent discord, torn violently from the whole orchestra, and instantly crushing down all possible thoughts of complacency and of peace.

There is a resistless outpouring of orchestral power, a forcible seizure of attention, and suddenly, condensed but (as the composer marks it in the score) ferociously, the opening theme returns with its ominous significance magnified by its vehemence. Violent is the fierce discourse that now succeeds. The theme rages through the orchestra; masses of tone are hurled like missiles; woodwinds and strings shriek question and protest; trumpets put out hot and quivering tongues of flaming tone. Sonorous brasses in grisly suggestion intone a fragment of the Russian liturgy for the dead. A climax is reached after a period of passionate agitation that is almost painful. There are sad recollections of past themes, like half-forgotten songs, like words of a departed loved one; and presently we come upon one of the loveliest, most intimately and poignantly touching passages in all Tchaikovsky's music. The strings, pizzicato, move softly and ever downward; above them sounds the brass in a mournful, yet tender and somehow noble phrase.



Again and again it is repeated, with the strings ever descending more deeply, more softly, into the depths and into silence. Who, listening to this music, can escape the recollection of Omar's lines of sweet resignation:

*For some we loved, the loveliest and the best  
That from his vintage rolling Time hath pressed,  
Have drunk their cup a round or two before  
And one by one crept silently to rest.*

### Second Movement

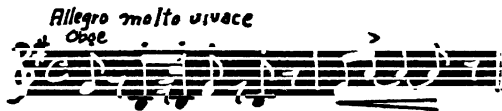
The curious and somewhat unnatural rhythm of this movement is significant. It is as if the conscious gaiety of the movement were under constraint; directed, not by careless joy, but by a determination to be joyful, *quand-même*. It is a waltz that is not a waltz—for it lacks a rhythmic member; it limps and falters. The smooth and gracious, though low-pitched, melody that moves above the 5/4 rhythm, first in cellos, then in woodwind against pizzicato strings, has a ghostly and unreal life; and it is not untouched by accents of pathos that seem to grow directly from its efforts to be gay.

The first theme is succeeded by a second melody, descending toward the persistent beating of the timpani. Happiness is still elusive, and the memory of tragedy persists. Later the two chief ideas of the movement are brought to bear simultaneously, and in brief antiphonal phrases, upon the orchestra. The result is always the same—a pensive and pathetic grieving that will not be comforted.

### Third Movement

Here we may feel that Tchaikovsky has thoroughly aroused himself, for once, from the soul weariness, the lethargy of melancholy, that so persistently beset him. Here he “takes arms against a sea of troubles,” and temporarily at least, “by opposing, ends them.” Here is a fierce and apparently triumphant struggle; the hosts of human courage and vitality march with a quick and ever more determined step toward a blazing and frenetically joyful victory.

There is a busy rustling in the orchestra, a gathering of orchestral forces at the sound of an imperative summons, first proclaimed in the small but penetrating voice of the oboe, then gathering power and authority in the succeeding voices of sonorous brass. It is this trumpetlike call that vitalizes the whole movement, urges it on from its little, secretive beginnings, and drives it to the mighty climax. Always there is a quick and nervous rhythm; always a growth in power, until the entire orchestra, urgently driven along, bursts fortissimo into the bold rhythm. The theme



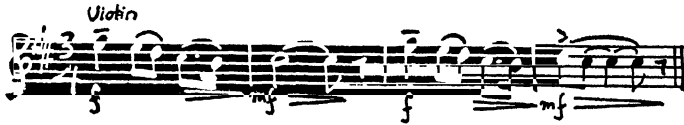
is surrounded, as with a halo of flames, by a blazing fury of scales; splendid clashing of cymbals seem to strike fire from the orchestra, and the drums resound.

### Fourth Movement

So, all triumph is empty, all effort is vain; the end of life is a brief lamentation, a last despairing cry, and oblivion. There, very obviously, is the meaning of this

movement. No one has ever wrenched from the orchestra cries of such complete, such abject, despair; no one, in musical language, has ever said so clearly and so finally, "All is lost." Even Tchaikovsky, never far from morbidity in his preoccupation with melancholy thoughts, has not elsewhere so abandoned himself to woe.

The movement is a succession of pleading, of bitter and tearful lamentations; but they are richly garbed in tone, for this is the very luxury of grief. The massed strings pour out their larmoyant plaint; the bassoon follows with hopeless confirmation. Again, violins and cellos sing of nameless dolors and hearts that break; they rise, finally, through a prolonged access of passion, to a vehement climax.



From this the orchestra descends, with increasing violence and in a headlong rush, into dark depths; there is a sudden burst of tone. It is the end. A single stroke upon the cymbal announces the passing of a soul; and the orchestra's brief requiem fades into silence.

It is this rushing passage which really gives the clue to the movement. It is violent, not valiant; it is surrender, and not a sortie against death and despair. With a gesture that cannot be misunderstood, the composer abandons all—his struggles, his sorrows, and his grieving. He rushes toward death not as toward a powerful enemy that must bravely be met, but rather as to a welcome relief from the necessity for effort and fortitude of soul. The movement is not really the apotheosis of sorrow, but a declamation of despair. If the opulent richness of its presentation suggests insincerity, let us not forget that it was perfectly possible for the neurotic Tchaikovsky to view his woes quite objectively; to appreciate their possibilities as musical inspiration; to separate his artistic from his personal self, without for a moment abandoning either. He was happiest when he was sad.



## The Sleeping Beauty

[*Ballet Suite*]

THIS charming music ranks with Tchaikovsky's most agreeable work. The master himself was particularly pleased with it, and at the time of its completion (1890) regarded it as one of his best compositions. The public, and royalty who also

attended its first performance, were not of the same opinion, much to the author's disappointment. Nevertheless, Tchaikovsky lived to see *The Sleeping Beauty* established as a popular favorite.

It was such music as this, and the same composer's *Nutcracker Suite*, that gave the Russian ballet the impetus that carried it to a degree of perfection which the art had never before attained. It is more than strange, perhaps, that Tchaikovsky, who beyond doubt wrote the gloomiest, the most morbid, and sentimental music the world has ever known, could also write some of the gayest. His ballet music shows little trace of the Tchaikovsky of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies—at least, in emotional significance. Here all is brightness and life—music made for flying toes and gracefully posturing lovely bodies: in a word, dance music in its most authentic and beautiful form.

The suite was laid down by Tchaikovsky as a "prologue and three acts." It is a series of short dance pieces in contrasting style. In it, Tchaikovsky proves again that musical material of no great profundity can, by skillful treatment and by the application of the orchestra's virtually unlimited resources, be developed into music of intense and permanent interest.

### I. *La Fée des lilas*

[*The Lilac Fairy*]

There is a vigorous prologue, brass and strings engaging themselves in assertive phrases and vigorous rhythms. A roll of the timpani and a series of bold chords introduce a lovely, graceful melody in the *cor anglais* against a background of plucked and bowed strings, and woodwind. Presently the violins are given the fragrant, swaying melody, with the trumpets in a more penetrating fragment contrasting with it. Now the music moves on broader lines, and the same gentle melody that has been heard almost from the first is variously colored, assigned to different instrumental voices, returning finally to *cor anglais* and flute, with trembling strings supplying an ethereal accompaniment.

### II. *Adagio*

[*A Slow Dance*]

The "Adagio" opens in a style powerfully suggestive of the "*Valse des fleurs*" from the *Nutcracker Suite* . . . tentative utterances of the woodwind ushering in a series of glittering figures for the harp, followed by the introduction of the chief melody of the dance itself. This we hear in the singing voices of the strings, broad and smooth and suave, although the internal figures are rather lively and crisp.

*Pas d'action*[*A Vigorous Dance*]

Without a break the music flows into the "*Pas d'action*," melodically derived from its predecessor, but altered in rhythm and instrumental color. It, too, broadens in line toward the end, and closes in sweeping but vigorous chords in full orchestra.

III. *Pas de caractère: Le Chat botte et la chatte blanche*[*Characteristic Dance: Puss-in-Boots and the White Cat*]

One can with difficulty escape the significance of the quaint figure occurring at the beginning of this dance; it is the cat's miaow, and nothing else. A dialogue in feline language translated into the accents of the orchestra's woodwind is interspersed with sudden strokes of armed paws, suggested by the sudden brief chords that leap from the full orchestra. You will note that the suggestion of the cats' cries is not an attempted literal reproduction—which would be wholly possible, not only to the jazz but to the symphony orchestra as well. Yet the significance is plain enough, and much pleasanter and more appropriate than a literal reproduction would be. The feline dialogue is continued, with Master Puss cajoling, persuading, advancing, retreating, yet always met and menaced by flashing claws and warning cries of the White Cat. The suggestion of the antics of a pair of household cats is very amusingly carried out, and at the end we are left in doubt as to the outcome—whether the felines overcome their strangeness or compose their differences, or whether a final foray left Puss with a scratched nose and damaged dignity.

*Panorama*

An agitated accompaniment figure appears, shortly followed by a melody of exceeding grace in the violins. The harp tosses off shining figures from its plucked strings . . . the melody soars on, later to take a new form with coruscations of the harp shining even more brightly. A happy scene; a lovely background for dancing figures, colorful and moving as the costumed dancers themselves.

IV. *Valse*

Tchaikovsky's delight in the waltz, and his facility in creating beautiful waltzes, are noticeable characteristics. The "Waltz of the Flowers" is in the repertoire of every orchestra and there is a waltz movement in his great Fifth Symphony. *The Sleeping Beauty* suite, like the *Nutcracker*, ends in a waltz, and surely it is one of the loveliest in all Tchaikovsky's music.

There is a bold and impressive introduction, brass and strings prominent.



Then the rhythm is indicated in an accompaniment figure assigned to the double basses and woodwind. Now the strings take up the sweeping, swaying melody; the violins singing in their richest tone, and later, the violas giving greater depth, if less sonority, to the same figure. The glockenspiel presently adds glittering points of tone to the melody, which in all its mutations retains the smooth fluid rhythm of the waltz.

A quieter passage . . . a return to the original melody . . . and we come upon a broad, impressive climax, full of power, employing the full orchestral resources from the rumble of the kettledrums to the most sonorous tones of the brass.

# ANTONIO VIVALDI

[1675-1743]

CONSIDERING his influence upon Bach and other later composers, it is curious that so little is known of this great seventeenth-century musician. Even the date of his birth is doubtful, and comparatively little of the music he is known to have written is available today.

Vivaldi was born at Venice. He was priest as well as violinist, and probably master of music at St. Mark's. His first musical ventures, however, were outside his native land. It is recorded that he was violinist to a minor German nobleman; and on his return home, he was given a post in a girl's school which kept him in this world's goods until he died, and which also provided him with leisure for composition.

Music by Vivaldi is not the kind that makes audiences stand up and cheer, nor is it noted in this book because it is so often played. However, it is of such historical importance, and so charming, that it is programmed occasionally; and certainly should have some attention if for no other reason than its marked influence on the music of succeeding composers.



## Concerto grosso in D minor

GROUPED under the title, *L'Estro armonico*, Vivaldi composed twelve works in this form, of which this one is the eleventh. The music was for a long time attributed to W. F. Bach, son of Johann Sebastian; it appeared as an organ work. Later it was discovered that the organ version was not the work of W. F., but of Bach the Great; and that he in turn had arranged it for organ from the music of Vivaldi. Nor was this the first time that the gifted musician-priest had furnished not only melodies, but fully developed works, to the musicians who came after him.

A *concerto grosso*, as distinguished from the conventional concerto as we know it, poses a little group of instruments, called the *concertino*, against the rest of the orchestra. Its purpose is not primarily to display the abilities of the solo instruments or group, but to contrast in various ways the individual and collective tone qualities of the *concertino* against those of the larger orchestral mass. This concerto is for string orchestra, with the solo group made up of two violins and cello. In the second of the three movements, a violin is used solo.

The work consists of an allegro, a brisk and sturdy movement; an intermezzo, more sober and romantic, and a concluding allegro. Considering that only the

strings of the orchestra are used, some massive tonal effects are achieved—largely through the canny contrasts brought about between the solo group and the main body of strings. The whole work is full of vitality and strength and elasticity. One does not expect the variety or powerfully clashing colors of the full orchestra, and one hardly can anticipate the subtle but definite color contrasts that are effected with such economy of means.

# RICHARD WAGNER

[1813-1883]

**G**ENIUS is a word rather recklessly used in discussing music and musicians. It has been defined as the "infinite capacity for taking pains"; as composed of "nine-tenths perspiration and one-tenth inspiration"; and as a form of mental abnormality. Perhaps all these definitions are partly true, but none of them wholly. There is no complete definition of or accounting for powers that transcend the normal. The achievements of a Mozart, a Haydn, a Beethoven can be logically rationalized; not so those of Richard Wagner. In his lifelong ideal—the complete synthesis of music and the drama—he failed; yet in that failure he evolved such situations, and so resolved them through music, as to move and shake the human heart as no man has done, before or since.

\*Wilhelm Richard Wagner was the ninth child of Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Wagner, a civil servant of Leipzig, and his wife Johanna Rosina Pätz. The parents were comfortable, middle-class people, with normal interest in the arts, and special fondness for the theater. The father died when Richard was five months old, leaving the family in difficult circumstances. About two years later, Frau Wagner married Ludwig Geyer, an actor, which, an actor's solvency being as uncertain then as now, naturally did not bring much improvement in the family fortunes.

Wagner was a good student only in those subjects which particularly interested him—literature, ancient and contemporary; the drama, and music. Even in youth he attempted to write plays and music, and some of the essential ideas of *Die Meistersinger* occurred to him when he was little more than a child. His early music teachers found him a defiant, a recalcitrant pupil, yet by the time he was eighteen Wagner was reputedly better acquainted with Beethoven's music than any other young musician of the period. His musical and literary studies were erratic until he matriculated at the University of Leipzig, when, just at the time he might have been expected to devote himself to the prescribed course of studies, he decided to concentrate on music. This time he found a sympathetic and competent teacher, Christian Weinlig, to whom Wagner was happy to pay tribute in later life.

Wagner's career as a professional musician began in his twentieth year. He managed to get various small positions, as conductor, chorus master, arranger, and transcriber; one of these places was sufficiently important for him to risk marriage, in 1836. Later, sojourns in London and Paris were unprofitable except in experience and acquaintance with numerous musicians of varying degrees of prominence. On Wagner's return to Germany, however, he began to be recognized as a musician of growing importance, and finally was successful in winning an appointment as general director of the Royal Opera at Dresden.

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\* For a detailed, authoritative yet sympathetic biography of Wagner, the reader is referred to Ernest Newman's magnificent study, published by Alfred Knopf, New York.

From this time onward Wagner's importance in the musical life of his day gradually increased. Though personally liked by most of his associates and acquaintances, he had many enemies among the musical profession, and even managed to antagonize the civil powers to such an extent that he was exiled for some years. His affair with the wife of his friend von Bülow—she was Cosima Liszt, daughter of the composer-pianist—won him few friends, but did give him eventually, as his second wife, a woman who in every way was devoted to him and to his work, and who remained to the day of her death (in 1930) the most ardent and intelligent, though sometimes misguided, proponent of his work.

Wagner composed some of the greatest music ever written—and some of the worst ever left us by a great composer. There are two reasons for this apparent paradox. Because of his position in state-supported theaters, Wagner was compelled by political exigency to perform, and on occasion to write, pieces for which he had little or no respect. His financial situation was generally precarious; loans, which harassed him more by the limitations they imposed on his credit than by any obligation to repay them, made constantly new sources of income imperatively necessary. *Pièces d'occasion*, rarely of great musical worth, provided a relatively easy way of acquiring extra money.

The "bad" music which Wagner wrote, however, is almost entirely the product of his youth, and little of it shows any trace of the mighty genius of the later operas. Few people remember, and still fewer have heard, the *Grosser Festmarsch* which he was commissioned to write for the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. Though written when his powers were fully matured, it added no luster to his name.

An interesting letter published through a newspaper syndicate in 1933 reveals the fact that at one time Wagner was eager to come to live in America. The financial terms on which he was willing to make the transfer of citizenship and residence suggest that even then the United States was looked upon as a source of easy money. Perhaps the composer thought that he could dispose at once of all the creditors who harassed him, and remove himself to surroundings where civil liberty prevailed, a relatively new and eager audience awaited, and comfort was promised for his declining years.

The recession of his powers set in some time before Wagner's death at Venice, February 13, 1883. It is noticeable, at moments, in *Parsifal*—a work which, because of its occasional weakness, and the inconsistency of its motivation with Wagner's agnosticism, and his sometimes sybaritic tendencies, has provoked much bitter controversy. It has even been asserted that he wrote *Parsifal* with his tongue in his cheek. Be that as it may, the fact remains that this product of his sunset and—possibly!—repentant years encompasses some of the most touching and magnificent music we know.

Wagner was distinctly something more than composer. He was poet, librettist,

stage designer and manager, conductor, architect, politician. He designed a theater at Bayreuth particularly for his own music dramas, and the performance of *Parsifal* was forbidden elsewhere. It was not played outside of Bayreuth until 1903, when despite the protest and legal action of the belligerently jealous guardian of his interests—his widow Cosima—the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York gave the first performance of *Parsifal* outside of Bayreuth. It was not performed in Europe, except at Wagner's theater, until the copyright expired in 1913.\*

It must be admitted that the majority of music lovers prefer the music of Wagner in concert form—despite the fact that the consuming ambition of his life was to write music absolutely integrated with stage action. There are various reasons for the public's attitude. The music of these operas—at least a great part of it—can be considered as absolute music, without reference to its dramaturgical significance, and still rank with the greatest compositions ever written. Many listeners, after experience with it in operatic form; after the disillusionment of improbable scenery, childish histrionics, unconvincing and sometimes grotesquely inadequate characterizations by lumpish and unappetizing people, have come to the conclusion that it is better to listen to the music, even in its operatic connection, and allow the imagination to supply the characters and the action of the drama. A further reason is that a listener without musical training—and considerable musical training at that—or without close and devoted study of the score, is not able to disentangle from these extraordinary musical pages the infinite number of leitmotives. These are the particular musical phrases associated with a certain person, place, thing, or idea in the drama. A generation of musical scholars have not been able to agree, always, on the significance of these phrases. Indeed, Wagner himself sometimes applies more than one meaning to a motive, nor did he leave sufficient clues as to their meanings to enable anyone to assert with finality that *this* means *thus-and-so*.

It cannot be expected, then, that the rank and file of music lovers can fully understand or thoroughly appreciate the music dramas as such; on the other hand, it is entirely natural that the same people should enjoy these works as strictly abstract music. We take the liberty of suggesting a compromise position. The Wagnerian orchestra puts out the loveliest sounds that man knows how to make. Enjoy them as such—as music should be enjoyed: sensuously. But to make your pleasure in this music even keener, acquaint yourself with a few of the fundamental, easily identified, most important motives. To observe the poetic justice of their incidence, the dramatic significance of their tempo, color, rhythm, and phrasing will add a hundredfold even to the purely sensuous pleasure this great music can give.

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\* *The Victor Book of the Opera* gives the complete story of *Parsifal*.

The Wagnerian ideal of a complete welding of orchestra and stage action has yet to be achieved; the music dramas have never been given, could not have been given, strictly according to the composer's idea. One day, not far off, we shall see and hear them presented even more beautifully than Wagner could have imagined them. The sound film, with color, with stage effects even more fantastic and incredible than those Wagner desired; with physically beautiful people miming the action, and musically beautiful voices singing; with an invisible orchestra perfectly reproduced; with the unessential and the nonimportant trimmed from book and score, and with dramatic pace quickened to convincing tempo—the sound film, the possibilities of which have never been exploited, will give us this and other delights. How Richard Wagner would have loved it!



## A Faust Overture

WAGNER was one of the many composers who, at one time or another, were attracted to the Faust legend, particularly as set forth in Goethe's dramatic poem. He had intended to write a symphony upon this theme, but completed only one movement. With some revision, this was published as *A Faust Overture*.

The spiritual disturbances, dissatisfactions, and dissolution of Faust would perhaps have a particularly strong appeal for Wagner, whose music was capable of expressing the emotional upheavals even of gods. Certainly here is an eloquent suggestion of them. The introduction recalls the despair and impatience, the desperate dissatisfaction of Faust as he meditates upon his spent youth and declining powers. Deep brasses and woodwind, with timpani, create a gloomy atmosphere. Later, strings leap along a quick and restless melodic line, and still further, a section of the music may suggest a recollection of youthful love. This is Wagner's nearest approach to a formal symphonic movement, and in the succeeding development of his theme he demonstrates that mighty symphonies might have come from his hand had he chosen to devote himself to absolute music.



## Siegfried Idyl

SURELY this music is the loveliest birthday gift anyone ever received. Hearing it, one cannot but believe that its connection with *Siegfried* is more than that of identical names; one senses that it is not only a birthday gift of Wagner to his

wife, but a reward for the son Siegfried she gave to him. The music gestated in Wagner's mind even while his child lived within the body of the mother.

Cosima Wagner was born on Christmas Day, 1837, the daughter of Franz Liszt and the Countess d'Agoult. On Christmas morning, 1870, as she lay with her little son in that mysterious region that lies halfway between sleeping and waking, Cosima, thinking, we may believe, that she was still dreaming, heard such music as might have comforted another Mother, eighteen hundred and seventy years before. On the stairs before her door stood Wagner and his little orchestra, playing with their skill and with all their hearts this beautiful and intolerably poignant serenade.

There is something infinitely pathetic and, at the same time, almost humorous in this situation. Here was Wagner, he who spoke with the thundering speech of gods, he who could evoke the powers of storms and magic; Wagner, who was not a person but a force in the world of music; Wagner the sensualist, the cold agnostic, the politician, the artist—here he was, reduced to the stature of the common man, bringing the precious gift that had sprung from his own soul, even as she had brought to him the flowering of her own soul and body.

But it is in the music even more than in this romantic situation that Wagner reveals himself. It is drawn largely from *Siegfried*, particularly from the love music of the third act; and includes the old German cradle song, *Schlaf, mein Kind*. It is filled with the breathless tenderness and with the infinite pity and fear that so terribly claw at the heart of a young father; with remembrances of the dreadful piercing agonies of childbirth, and with such ineffably sweet sounds as would efface them. The curious unreasoning contrition of a new father, the dumb ecstasy that seizes upon him when first he beholds his child in its mother's arms—these too are of the material from which Wagner the omnipotent wove this simple and tender music. In it are also prophecies and hopes for Siegfried, Son of the Woods; Siegfried, of the heroic race of the Wälsungs; Siegfried, mate of a goddess. That these were realized only in music does not matter, for the music is as surely a part of Wagner's being as ever son could be—and where but in music could so magnificent a creature have grown and lived forever?



## Overture to "Der fliegende Holländer"

[*The Flying Dutchman*]

THE legend of the unfortunate mariner condemned to sail the seas in his spectral ship to the end of time is one of the old and familiar superstitions connected with the sailor's life. Wagner made use of it in this early opera, modifying it to permit



the inclusion of an idea that seems always to have obsessed him—the power and certainty of redemption by love. The story as Wagner used it is related in detail in *The Victor Book of the Opera*.

The music of the overture has found its way into the repertoire of the symphony orchestra primarily because of its superb descriptive quality, and too, because of the remarkable feat of condensation by which Wagner makes it an ideal overture, embodying in embryo not only every vital idea of the opera which follows, but these ideas in their positions of relative importance and contrast.

A curiously wild yet harmonically unsatisfying chord in strings, colorless yet strong and fierce as a stormy wind, opens the overture. The motive of the unfortunate Dutchman immediately follows, projected in tones of horn and bassoon; then begins one of the most brilliant storm pictures in music. The wind whistles through the rigging and tears again at tattered sails. Crested green seas come crashing over the side, and the seamen's hoarse cries sound in the midst of the gale as they rush about the decks and struggle with ice-crusting rope and spar. The storm spent, we hear calm passages, based upon the air known as "Senta's Ballad," the heroine's song extracted from the second act of the opera. There is a jolly sailors' dance, and with daylight and fair weather, we hear more strongly the beautiful phrase from "Senta's Ballad," which is also to be the motive of redemption by love. It is delivered several times, finally by the full orchestra; derivations of it appear



in the fading and peaceful orchestral light in which the overture closes.



## Overture to "Rienzi"

THE long-drawn "A" of the trumpet which begins this music and figures so importantly in it from time to time is perhaps the most interesting feature because it is one of the earliest of Wagner's approaches to the idea of the leitmotiv. The music itself is of a rather superficial brilliance, somewhat Italianate, and almost vulgar. It is, of course, very early Wagner—it was written in 1839—and follows quite closely the models set up by the composer's predecessors.

The opera to which it is the introduction deals with the career of Rienzi, the last of the Roman tribunes, and is based upon Bulwer's novel of the same name.

The story is flamboyantly melodramatic, as is the music. The overture is derived from various episodes in the stage work, notably "Rienzi's prayer for the people," and a battle scene, to which the bold trumpet call summons us near the end.

The opening trumpet leads directly into the solemn music derived from Rienzi's prayer. This we hear in the deep and heavily bowed tones of the strings; another version comes, with pleading accent, in the woodwind. This material, and certain other extracts from the second act of the opera, are extensively developed, with the arresting cry of the trumpet bringing occasional dramatic pauses. A climax of great sonority, its basic material drawn from the battle hymn in the opera, ends the overture.



### Prelude to "Lohengrin" \*

UNEARTHLY harmonies, like pale-blue aromatic vapors ascending, steal to our enchanted ears as this strange music begins. They rise from strings and faintly blown woodwinds; they are warmed and colored more deeply as the string choir presently descends from ethereal harmonics into richer and stronger tones. Almost imperceptibly a crescendo begins, growing to an impassioned climax, drawing upon the sonorities of the mightiest brazen voices, and culminating in one majestic golden phrase—the solemn motive of the Holy Grail.

In the few minutes of this serenely beautiful music Wagner presents to us a miracle, and withdrawing it again, leaves us lost in contemplation. This music was written to suggest the apparition of the Holy Grail, long lost to sinful man, yet again vouchsafed to him in momentary vision as it moved across heaven's illimitable blue. Escorted by crowds of angels, the vision moves closer to the earth, the contours and glowing reflections of the Grail ever more clear and wonderful, until its blazing glory enfolds the enchanted beholder and strikes him blind and numb with worship and with awe.

Away into the vast spaces of the heavens moves the incredible beauty of the vision, followed by its celestial choirs, trailing after them, like disembodied voices, the strange pale harmonies that announced their coming.



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\* For the complete story of the opera *Lohengrin*, you are referred to *The Victor Book of the Opera*.

## Prelude to Act III of "Lohengrin"

HERE is one of Wagner's briefest and most brilliant operatic preludes—a small but intense preparatory utterance preceding the moment in the opera when Lohengrin, the strange and powerful knight whom Elsa has loved and wed, and Elsa herself, are escorted to the nuptial chamber. Here is an epithalamium of riotous exuberance. Strings and woodwind and brass join in highhearted outpourings; the masculine strength of the trombones, the little accents of timidity in the lovely woodwind passage in the middle section, and the exalted concluding measures magnificently portray the moment of supreme happiness which presently is to be revealed in the following scene in the opera.



## Overture to "Die Meistersinger"

*Die Meistersinger* is in many respects the most engaging of Wagner's operas, or music dramas, as he chose to call them. The element of humor, a humor of the lighter kind, enters here, in refreshing contrast to the dreadful irony that often touched his other operatic works. Indeed, Wagner went so far in *Meistersinger* as to write a waltz! Again, there are the lovely lyric melody, the "Prize Song"; the delightful *mise en scène*, the spirited marches, and other details calculated to render the opera light and wholly entertaining.

But Wagner had in mind a more serious purpose than merely to entertain; he wished to lampoon his critics and justify his principles, and sought to show, by the treatment of Walther in the opera, how musical "standpatters" receive the new and original.

The prelude, or overture, contains the chief thematic material used by Wagner throughout the opera. The important items are the two powerful march tunes and three melodies diametrically opposed to them in character. As the music begins we shall see how the composer has woven these melodies together to form a musical digest, so to speak, of the whole opera.

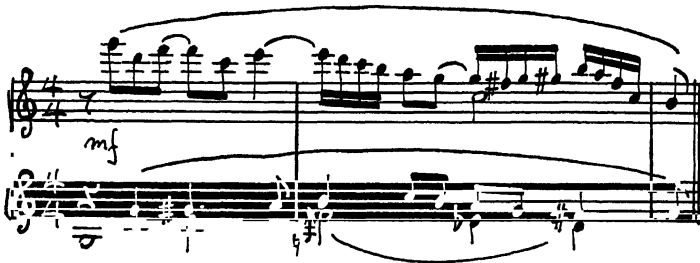
The motive of the *Meistersinger* (mastersingers) themselves is the opening phrase of the prelude. Bold, strong, downright, and inflexible, with a certain burly power and beauty about it, this assertive theme well typifies the character of the *Meistersinger* guild, with their indurated ideas, immovable prejudices—and nevertheless solid worth.

## THE MEISTERSINGER



After a transposition and reassertion of the *Meistersinger* motive in another tonality, there is a very pleasant contrast in the almost pastoral theme (in woodwind) which presently appears—the theme of Awakening Love. Those familiar with the opera will recall that Walther's love for Eva dawned as he sat near her in church, and Wagner very adroitly interwove with the interlude of a hymn the motive of Awakening Love; for it was during this brief period that Walther made an appointment with Eva.

## WAKING LOVE



This sweet little subject endures for but a little . . . presently the motive symbolizing the Banner of the *Meistersinger*, the sign and proud emblem of their craft, is sounded. Here is another sturdy march tune in the brass, pompous and serene, and appearing, always throughout the overture, in a position close to that of the *Meistersinger* themselves, just as in any procession a banner is carried at the head of the group it represents.

## THE BANNER

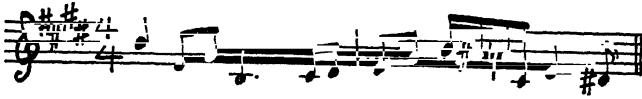


Now the Banner motive is developed and enriched in musical embroidery, just as the figure of King David playing his eloquent harp was embroidered upon the

banner itself in the opera. Derivations of the *Meistersinger* theme, too, appear in the elaboration of this theme.

As the second section of the prelude opens, we hear the fourth of the five important themes of the opera. It is given to the violins; it is brightly lyric, as becomes its character as the symbol of Love Confessed. It is easily recognized as

### LOVE CONFESSED



the essential melody of the famous "Prize Song," the impassioned utterance of Walther in the final competition that wins him his bride. It grows now more and more agitated, and leads in a moment to the final motive of the five which dominate the prelude—the impetuous little subject, again in strings, which signifies Love's Ardor.

### LOVE'S ARDOR



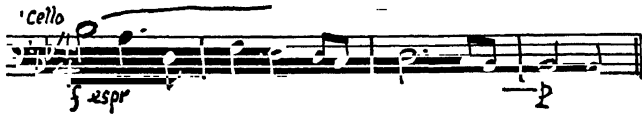
Now the strictly development section of the prelude begins, and we find the five motives opposed, or counterbalanced, or contrasted with all the skill that was Wagner's. The *Meistersinger* theme particularly, in this second section of the prelude, is musically burlesqued, now in mincing tones of the oboe, now in exaggerated pompousness in the more sonorous bass voice of the orchestra. As the third section of the overture begins, we find the *Meistersinger* and Confessed Love motives entangled in most ingenious counterpoint, with the latter dominant, not through mere weight and volume of tone—but through the more penetrating tonal color given it, and its position in the scale.

The motive of the *Meistersinger's* Banner is given much the same treatment, and provides a point from which Wagner builds up the superb climax to the overture, involving all the sonorities and all the lyricisms that have gone before.



### Prelude to Act III, "Die Meistersinger"

IN THIS music Wagner exhibits a tenderness, a meditative and quiet beauty rare even in his music. The brief prelude is built, for the most part, of the theme of Hans Sachs' monologue, wherein, momentarily despairing, he declares that all



things human are but vanity; and there is also development of the sonorous choral—here expressed in the warmest tones of the brass—with which the people greet the famous shoemaker in the last scene of the opera. The first theme is sung with deep intensity by the cellos at the very beginning of the prelude; the second is intoned by the horns and Sachs' philosophical resignation and innate tenderness are suggested in the lovely close of the strings.



### Dance of the Apprentices, "Die Meistersinger"

THE populace has gathered, for the contest of song, in a field outside the city of Nuremberg. They hold high holiday, and crowds come pouring upon the field, in their most colorful costumes, laughing and singing and gesticulating. The tradesmen march in procession according to their crafts—butchers and bakers and tailors, all the local trade-unions are represented, each in a group by itself, each with its own banner and insignia. A crowd of youngsters, apprentices in the various trades, dance with laughing girls; and all is excitement and gaiety.

This is the scene that Wagner presents here—the scene immediately preceding the judging in the content of song, wherein Beckmesser fails with the "Prize Song" and Walther sings it winningly. The music, sometimes referred to as Wagner's only waltz, is light and gay and appealing; it needs no analysis or explanation.



### Prelude to "Parsifal"

THE Wagner of *Parsifal* is a weary Wagner, full of power, yet touched by senility. The gigantic idea underlying the music drama, the idea which had begotten the

*Ring* operas, and *Tristan*, and *Meistersinger*—the complete and perfect union of musical expression with great dramatic ideas and action—seems at times too mighty, too involved, too laborious in its infinite ramifications for the failing physical powers of the Titan of Music. *Parsifal*, the music drama, is often wavering, often unsure, often tedious and redundant. The mighty intellectual force that drove so certainly, so powerfully, so inevitably, and with such matchless skill to its objectives in the *Ring* sometimes falters in *Parsifal*.

Yet *Parsifal* embodies some of the most sublime music ever penned by mortal hand. There are moments in which Wagner reaches infallibly to the most secret, the most remote and unexplored recesses of the human soul. The strange and awful legend which inspired *Parsifal*, the weaving together of ritual and drama and religious mysticism, with music which seems at moments to have had supernatural inspiration, combine to produce what may be, despite its shortcomings, the musical masterpiece of all time.

The Prelude is the epitome of all that made Wagner the figure of singular greatness that he is. Here we behold the act of creation, as that power is given to the musician alone; here the leitmotiv, dominant characteristic of Wagnerian music, is used continuously and with most touching eloquence; here the orchestra's loveliest colors are employed with the deftness, the fitting significance, the artful juxtaposition, the nice emphasis that characterized the ancient Roman orator's use of words, and won for his periods the praiseful tribute, "*callida junctura*." Here, too, we tremble under the orchestra's mightiest thunders . . . and strain to listen lest a single note of its awed whisperings escape us.

Wagner's personal religious beliefs or sentiments are largely a matter of conjecture—with some probability that they were nonexistent. Yet the great motive of *Parsifal* is Faith. Surely there must have been in that mighty intellect some atavistic remnant of the magnificent blind belief of a Clovis, a Charlemagne, a Richard—or of the more cerebral, yet not less sturdy creed of a Luther, that knew the weakness of humankind and urged it only to believe more powerfully than it sinned.

No one can hear this strangely beautiful music without coming under its spell. Exalted, steeped in mysticism and religious fervor though it is, the music of *Parsifal* reaches us because it touches earth as well as heaven. It deals with wrong, as well as with innocence; of earthly passion, and of passionate adoration of what is sacred and sublime. It speaks of the cold pure fire of spiritual emotion, yet reddens the flame with divine touches of humanity. It is the apotheosis of the power and beauty of human faith.

The story of *Parsifal* is too long and involved for detailed description here. It is sufficient for our purpose to identify various items musically illustrated in the Prelude, foremost of which is the Grail. The Grail is the chalice into which flowed the blood of Our Lord when the lance was thrust into His side as He hung upon

Calvary; it is also, in the music drama, the cup from which was drunk the communion of the Last Supper. The Last Supper of Christ and the Apostles, the Lance that pierced the side of the Saviour and also caused the wound of Amfortas, chief of the Knights of the Grail in the music drama; the supreme thought—FAITH; all these elements of the drama are musically symbolized, by definite motives, in the Prelude. The structure of the Prelude is simple, despite the fact that it encompasses the essential meanings of the entire music drama. But it is simple with that sublime simplicity which, extraneous detail having been done away, leaves us to ponder more certainly, more exclusively, and without distraction the central thought of all the music.

The pomp and trappings of religiosity are absent. There is no labored preparation, no hint, no suggestion . . . but out of a mystic silence the motive of the Last Supper—clear, calm, pure, and poignant—materializes in whitely shining tone; unaccompanied, sure of its lonely majestic power, sounded in a voice compounded of the tones of violin, cello, English horn, clarinet, and bassoon. It is the motive of the Last Supper; of sacrifice and self-obliteration, of memory and communion—and therefore, of Love.

### THE LAST SUPPER



On its final note we are permitted to behold the inchoate, nebulous mass of tone into which, it seems, Wagner reaches and lays hands upon solid fragments; and before our very eyes the marvelous synthesis takes place—and again the solemn motive, now in strings, trumpets, oboes, rises clear of the entangling figures that surround it, and soars into the vast mysterious spaces in which it has its being. The evolution of the motive occupies about five minutes, and never once, in those minutes of music, does a great conductor permit a moment's withdrawal of attention from the miracle of phrasing that is taking place. Even the pregnant hiatus that comes toward the close of the first section of the Prelude is as truly an element of Wagner's plan as the use of utter absence of color in a painter's shadow.

There is no transitional phrase between the Last Supper and Grail motives. Only a trembling in the woodwind voices, "breathless in adoration" . . . and the motive of the Grail itself, the mystic cup that contained the Lord of all the world, the cup of communion and memory and love, the precious symbol of human contact with the divine, sheds its lambent light through the music.



## THE GRAIL



This is the famous "Dresden Amen," a cadence which appears in the Saxon liturgy and is probably still sung in the court church at Dresden. Mendelssohn, as well as Wagner, borrowed it; but neither originated it, and its antiquity makes it impossible to say with certainty where or when it came into existence. But its quiet solemnity appealed to Wagner very strongly indeed that he should make it the central theme of the opera. Immediately upon its conclusion comes the motive of Faith, strongly, boldly sung in majestic brazen voices, and twice repeated, each

## FAITH



time with more emphasis, each time on a higher plane. Upon its last note comes again, now in the loveliest tones of the strings, the poignantly beautiful Grail theme.

Now the Faith motive appears again, livelier, more than a simple affirmation—a developing, detailed, all-inclusive declaration wrought from the strongest and loveliest tonal material the orchestra supplies. A portentous beating upon the timpani . . . a tremulous bowing of the bass strings . . . and suddenly the theme of the Last Supper, now surrounded with new and strange harmonies, reappears. From four of its notes Wagner fashioned the motive of the Lance, the Lance that pierced the side of the Saviour. Again and again it appears, insistent, striking in the various tonal colors and tonalities which are assigned to it, powerful and penetrating.

## THE LANCE



Presently the atmosphere of mystery and awe returns, and we are conscious of a passionate questing for some great final utterance . . . some deathless word that will give ultimate and eloquent expression to the mystic meanings of the music. Upward . . . upward . . . seeking always . . . there is an agony of suspense, an almost intolerable emotional tension, a piercing, piteous questioning, and then—the climax of the Prelude bursts in the sublime and final pronouncement of Faith as surcease for all longing and all pain.



## Good Friday Spell

[*Parsifal*]

THE music from *Parsifal* arranged under the title "Good Friday Spell" is spiritually akin to the Prelude, and from it derives certain of its motives, including a suggestion to the theme of Faith, which underlies the whole work. Parsifal, the innocent youth who is to be the salvation of the unhappy knights of the Grail, arrives at Monsalvat on Good Friday. He is recognized by Gurnemanz, who tells him of the sorrows that have come to pass, and the unhappy condition of the knights. Parsifal faints with grief, and when restored by the attentions of Gurnemanz and Kundry, who symbolically bathes his feet and dries them with her hair, the young man looks about him, and murmurs of the peace and loveliness of the fields and hills.

"It is the spell of Good Friday," answers Gurnemanz, recalling the ancient legend that on this day the earth, nourished with sacred dews, puts forth in freshness and unequalled loveliness its tribute of flowers and trees to the Saviour.

The orchestra itself casts a spell of indescribable beauty in this music. The half-remembered winter of suffering and inquietude, the softness and solace and promising of spring—these are of the texture of this music.



## Overture and Venusberg Music from "Tannhäuser"

[*Paris Version*]

THE story of the conditions which resulted in the "Paris version" of this music is generally known. Napoleon III, who had never heard of Richard Wagner and probably was not in the least interested, commanded a performance of *Tannhäuser*,

at the instance of the Princess Metternich, a friend who had heard and admired Wagner's music in Vienna. But no sooner were plans for the production begun than difficulties arose. The invariable rule of the Opéra was that there must be a ballet in every production; for members of the Jockey Club, a powerful, wealthy, and aristocratic organization, were supporters of the Opéra, and were primarily interested in the ballet. Furthermore, since they dined fashionably late, and came even later to the theater, the operatic ballet *must* be in one of the later acts of the entertainment.

Wagner had not planned for anything resembling a ballet in *Tannhäuser*, although the basis of one existed in the revels on the Venusberg. It was suggested that the opera be cut to permit the performance of a ballet afterward—or to insert one in the second act. Wagner obdurately refused either alternative. He agreed, however, that if there must be a ballet, it should occur in the Venusberg scene in the first act, where, as his keen artistic sense informed him, it would add to, rather than detract from, his dramatic purposes. So this plan was adopted, and rehearsals proceeded.

At the performance, March 13, 1861, everything went fairly well until the arrival of the fashionable young men of the Jockey Club—too late for the scene of revelry. They knew that this would happen, and came prepared to express their indignation. This they did so effectively and so noisily that the performance practically collapsed. Nevertheless, a large part of the audience was enthusiastic over what they had heard, and although the opera was withdrawn, its artistic success was unquestioned and remembered. (For details of the plot the reader is referred to *The Victor Book of the Opera*.)

The overture begins with the solemn chant of the pilgrim chorus, distant and soft at first, but swelling powerfully to a climax; then dying away again as the pilgrims pass from sight. Sounds of unholy celebrations follow hard upon the passage of the pious. Brightly palpitant strings weave a shining fabric, against which we hear the swift upward-rushing motive, abandoned and wild, that typifies the bacchanalian revels of the Venusberg—the very shrine and castle of the goddess of profane love.

Then comes what is perhaps the maddest music in the orchestral repertoire; a music so delirious, so powerfully suggestive of forbidden orgies, of insanely drunken exuberance, of fearsome passions turned loose in terrible play, of frenzies and rages and fierce intolerable ecstasies, as to leave the senses reeling and words stopped in the mouth. Yet there are moments when this music is seductive and subtle, as when the clarinet sings the alluring song of Venus, or when cellos sigh of love and other strings compound an almost tangible and rosy and mystical light.

Wagner himself left us a vivid picture of the Venusberg scene as he conceived it:

The scene represents the interior of the Venusberg (Hörselberg) in the neighborhood of Eisenach. A large cave which seems to extend to an invisible distance at a turn to the right. From a cleft through which the pale light of day penetrates, a green waterfall tumbles foaming over rocks the entire length of the cave. From the basin which receives the water a brook flows towards the background, where it spreads into a lake in which naiads are seen bathing and on the banks of which sirens are reclining. On both sides of the grotto rocky projections of irregular form, overgrown with singular, coral-like tropical plants. Before an opening extending upwards on the left, from which a rosy twilight enters, Venus lies upon a rich couch; before her, his head upon her lap, his harp by his side, half kneeling, reclines Tannhäuser. Surrounding the couch in fascinating embrace are the three Graces. Beside and behind the couch innumerable sleeping Amorettes (Cupids), in attitudes of wild disorder, like children who have fallen asleep wearied with the exertions of a combat. The entire foreground is illumined by a magical, ruddy light shining upwards from below, through which the emerald green of the waterfall with its white foam penetrates. This distant background with the shores of the lake seems transfigured by a sort of moonlight. When the curtain rises, youths reclining on the rocky projections answering the beckonings of the nymphs hurry down to them. Beside the basin of the waterfall, the nymphs have begun the dance designed to lure the youths to them. They pair off; flight and chase enliven the dance.

From the distant background a procession of Bacchantes approaches, rushing through the rows of the loving couples and stimulating them to wilder pleasures. With gestures of enthusiastic intoxication they tempt the lovers to growing recklessness. Satyrs and fauns have appeared from the cleft of the rocks and, dancing the while, force their way between the Bacchantes and lovers, increasing the disorder by chasing the nymphs. The tumult reaches its height, whereupon the Graces rise in horror and seek to put a stop to the wild conduct of the dancing rout and drive the mad roisterers from the scene. Fearful that they themselves might be drawn into the whirlpool, they turn to the sleeping Amorettes and drive them aloft. They flutter about, then gather into ranks on high, filling the upper spaces of the cave, whence they send down a hail of arrows upon the wild revelers. These, wounded by the arrows, filled with a mighty love longing, cease their dance and sink down exhausted. The Graces capture the wounded and seek, while separating the intoxicated ones into pairs, to scatter them in the background. Then, still pursued by the flying Amorettes, the Bacchantes, fauns, satyrs, nymphs, and youths depart in various directions. A rosy mist, growing more and more dense, sinks down, hiding first the Amorettes and then the entire background, so that finally only Venus, Tannhäuser, and the Graces remain visible. The Graces now turn their faces

to the foreground; gracefully intertwined they approach Venus, seemingly informing her of the victory they have won over the mad passions of her subjects.

The dense mist in the background is dissipated, and a tableau, a cloud picture, shows the rape of Europa who, sitting on the back of a bull decorated with flowers and led by Tritons and Nereids, sails across the blue lake. (Song of the Siren.) The rosy mist shuts down, the picture disappears, and the Graces suggest by an ingratiating dance the secret significance that it was an achievement of love. Again the mists move about. In the pale moonlight Leda is discovered reclining by the side of the forest lake, the swan swims toward her and caressingly lays his head upon her breast. (Again the Song of the Sirens.) Gradually this picture also disappears and, the mist blown away, discloses the grotto deserted and silent. The Graces curtsy mischievously to Venus and slowly leave the grotto of Love. Deepest silence.



## Tristan und Isolde

“*Vorspiel*” (Prelude); “*Liebesnacht*” (The Night of Love); “*Liebestod*” (Death by Love)

WAGNER made of the music of *Tristan und Isolde* the mightiest paean of love and passion, of suffering and death through love, that mortal ears have ever heard. The legend of the Irish princess, Isolde of the White Hands, and Tristan, knight of ancient Cornwall, antedates the Wagnerian opera by several centuries; stripped of detail and the circumstances of time and place, it is ageless as humanity. The musician does not always know what he means nor what he says, when he writes, for often he is but a channel for a stream of thought and emotion that transcends articulate meanings, and he speaks a mystical language that finds its understanding and responses only in some remote and secret recess of the human soul. *Tristan* is a rather long opera, with most of the faults and virtues inherent in that hybrid form of art. Yet its music, quite apart from the action, and reduced to its mordant and fiery distillate, becomes the mightiest and saddest and fiercest utterance of human passion that music can pronounce.

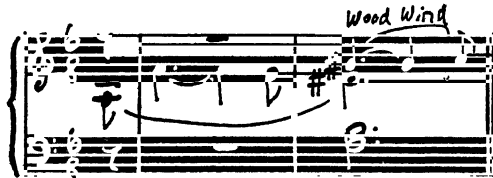
On symphony programs, but two excerpts are commonly played—the Prelude, and Isolde’s “Song of Love and Death.” They are usually given without pause. We prefer to discuss here the “symphonic synthesis” arranged by Leopold Stokowski, because it includes not only the Prelude and the “*Liebestod*,” but the indescribable

love music from the second act, together with passages taken from the first and third acts. In the Stokowski arrangement, though it includes in complete form the Prelude and the "*Liebestod*" of Isolde, the music is presented as a symphonic poem, a single, unified rhapsodic utterance. It is not to be regarded as "excerpts" from the opera, but as a distinct musical work with a climactic scheme of its own, built of the synthesized elements of the music without regard to their sequence in the stage performance. In this form, and according to its mood, the music can be roughly divided into three sections, the Prelude, the "*Liebesmacht*" (Night of Love), and the "*Liebestod*" (Isolde's Death through Love).

### *Prelude*

The Prelude is filled with awe and yearning and dreadful portents. Within the few minutes of its length, it traverses the entire emotional range of the opera—from the cellos' breathless whisper that so swiftly grows into a cry of fiercest longing to climaxes of such unimaginable intensity, and of such tragic implication, that the heart is shaken and the spirit moved and troubled with this potent music. The long slow phrase, that seems at once agonizingly repressed and indescribably eloquent, is but half uttered by the cellos when it is joined by another, briefer sentence of the woodwinds—the avowal of love, and the kindling of desire.

### THE AVOWAL OF LOVE



### DESIRE



Presently comes the poignant motive, powerfully sung by the orchestra, that suggests the burning yet enigmatic glance that the "wild and amorous Irish maid" turns upon Tristan; a little later, deep in the strings, the rich smooth fragment of melody suggesting the sweet and deadly philter—the distillation of love and death

so innocently and so bravely shared by Isolde and Tristan. These eloquent orchestral utterances compound within themselves the elements of the fateful, fatal love of knight and princess, and in their derivations and development through the Prelude foreshadow in climaxes of wordless vehemence the terror and conflict and tragedy by which that love was encompassed—and ended.

It is beautifully significant that, after all the storms of the Prelude, the theme of love's avowal and passion's birth persists to the end, and is the last we hear before the long phrases, disappearing in the darkness of bass strings softly bowed, and the ominous strokes upon the timpani, usher in an atmosphere of dreadful expectancy. Here the conventional concert performance of the Prelude ends, and here, in the opera, the curtain rises.

### *Liebesnacht*

The ultimate, and the only complete meeting and union of man and woman is in the embrace of love. The poet and the sentimentalist sing of united spirits—but they are never, in this world, united; for the thoughts and feelings, the mental processes, the emotions in both kind and degree, the approach to a common decision and the action upon it, the very interpretation of words and significance of deeds are inevitably different between man and woman.

Love is the union of two wills. In it the very differences in mind and heart and body, that in everything else combine to hold man and woman apart as individual beings, compose for once to bring them into intimate and perfect oneness. It is the desire for such unity, and the implacable force with which that desire seeks its fulfillment, that is the basis of the tragedy of Tristan and Isolde.

It is no disembodied love, immaterial, spiritualized, and denatured, that Wagner celebrates here. No such incandescent ecstasies were ever born of meetings of the spirit. Here is love that is fierce and exigent and consuming and insatiable; love which at a look, a word, a touch, races through the blood like flames; love which laughs at barriers, forgets enemies, and knows no loyalty but to itself; love which is normal and carnal and human.

Now through the long night that passes, Tristan, all dour scruples done away, all knightly vows forgotten under magic and the spell of love, holds the white loveliness of Isolde in his arms. Now the young girl, the innocent, the beautiful princess of Ireland, becomes heiress overnight to the ageless stratagems and arts of womankind. Now are celebrated the immemorial rites of love, the lovers heedless, careless, forgetful of all but the night, and their own hearts beating close, one upon the other. Death waits without the door, but Isolde has put out the light, that she may see no face but Tristan's; Death paces close, but hearts beat louder than his pacing; Death comes with the day, but the lovers hear no dreadful warning, only broken words of love.

Now with the esurient senses appeased come interludes of exquisite lethargy, sweet warm magical languors, mystical moments when the heart eases itself of

### LOVE'S LANGUORS



burdens and confidences, of secret hopes and longings. Now as the lovers reflect upon their plight, they despair and long for death; now remembered ecstasy again besieges them. The handmaiden Brangäne warns in vain of approaching day; the henchman Kurvenal bursts into the bower but a step before envious Melot and outraged king. Tristan, his heart in Isolde's body, defends himself without hope or despair or fury, and takes a not unwelcome mortal wound.

Only music, vibrating in the invisible air, could dramatize such a moment. And what shall one say of such music as this? What magic is there, in wood and wind and brass, that can make this deathless song? What man is this who in his music evokes so surely and so terribly the longings and sorrows and passion of all the lovers of all the world? Answer there is none, for music speaks from heart to heart; to reason with it is to slay it. Only listen to the soothing loveliness of the strings as they sing of love's contentment; hear the echoes of rekindled passion, of piteous questioning and wild despair, in the terrible poignancy of the answering woodwind; feel this music, and you will feel heart's ease and heart hunger and heartbreak. Hear it—and "consider, and bow the head."

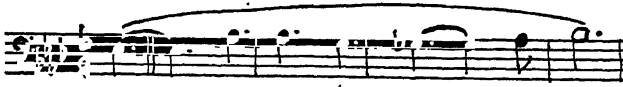
#### *Liebestod*

We love Death, even while we fear it. For Death is the answer to all questions; a negation of all torments and bitter truths, an affirmation of the intolerableness of passion and of life. Self-wrought, it can be a magnificent gesture of contempt or indifference—or of indomitable determination to follow into nothingness the thing that makes life—Life.

Isolde, finally, was not Death's victim. Rather, Death was her servant and her friend. She was not slain by despair; rather, she determined to die. Her spirit was not broken when for the last time the face of Tristan, bloodied and chill, lay upon her breast; but her fierce will drove her to ecstasies of love and grief she knew her frail loveliness would not withstand. Her song, at its outset, is full of

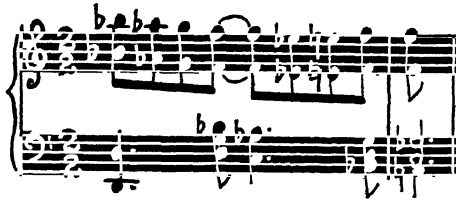


## ISOLDE'S SONG OF DEATH BY LOVE



ominous purpose. The dark orchestral voice (clarinet) which supports Isolde's allows no accent of weakness or of despair. Swiftly she pursues Death with ever wilder passion, and with passion bends Death to her will. Tristan is slain; slain she will be also. But no dagger shall mar the loveliness he loved, nor spill the blood that leaped so joyously for him. She will die, and go to him in ecstasy once more; go to him where he lies in silence and cold impersonal calm.

## ECSTASY



The music grows in terrible beauty as it mounts from Isolde's first quiet words into whirling delirious passion. You feel it forcing itself to new and more powerful utterance . . . never resting, never resolving into perfect and satisfying harmony, mounting again until the awful climax bursts from the straining orchestra.

There is a fading of orchestral glory. Isolde has left the loathed light of day, and has sent her soul to join her lover. Her body sinks down upon his heart, and for the last time, now resolving into peace, the orchestra sings the motive of Desire.



## Ride of the Valkyries

[*Die Walküre*]

THE stormiest music we know, the wildest and fiercest and most vividly picturesque, is this music from the third act of *Die Walküre*. Much has been set down in notes to illustrate the swift rhythm and leavings of ridden horses, but nothing, before or since, has had the superb and detailed suggestiveness, the incredible power of this marvelous tone picture.

The Valkyries, in ancient Scandinavian mythology, were fierce warlike daughters of Odin (Wotan), whose duty it was to snatch up the fallen in battle and to bear them to Valhalla. They were themselves warrior maidens, and rode through the high airs upon great steeds, accompanied by thunderclouds and lightning.

This music is taken from the scene wherein the Valkyries are gathering on the top of a mountain, after having descended to earth to recover the bodies of heroes to be enlisted in the hosts of Wotan. Their wild cry, and the rumor of their steeds' swift hooves, are heard, and closer and closer the thundering band approaches. Now the orchestra's mightiest forces are summoned; now the leaping rhythm of mighty chargers sways and moves and compels the band. There is even the gigantic neigh of these swift steeds in the woodwind; the upward-leaping rhythm roars through the brass and detonates in the timpani. Swiftly the marvelous spectacle courses on, and fades from view along a steep mountain pass, the echoing hoofbeats lingering briefly behind.



## Magic Fire Scene

[*Die Walküre*]

ONE of the most touching and powerful scenes in Wagner's music dramas precedes and continues through this potent music. Brünnhilde, loved daughter of the god, has frustrated his command but not his secret will by surrounding with her protection the sinful union of Siegmund and Sieglinde. Urged on by the termagant Fricka, goddess of the sanctity of marriage, Wotan decrees a strangely beautiful punishment for his daughter. She is to lie in charmed sleep, full panoplied and lovely, in a remote mountain place; leaping flames shall protect her magic slumbers, and she shall know no awakening until a hero, fearing nothing in heaven or on earth, comes to summon her to life with a kiss.

Bringing upon her a charmed sleep, Wotan sorrowfully bids his child a long farewell. He lays her down in a shadowed and mossy place, lowers the visor of

### Strings



her helmet, and covers her with her great warshield. A lovely motive in the strings invites her slumbers. Then Wotan stretches forth his great spear and, summoning

## Brass



the fire god Loge, surrounds the sleeping figure with a barrier of crackling flames. Shrill woodwinds sound the motive of the magic fire, and as the flames leap upward



and enfold the motionless form of Brünnhilde, the brass sounds prophetically the suggestion of the hero who one day shall bring a glorious awakening:



And Wotan "turns his back on that which was more dear to him than anything save pride and power, and disappears slowly down the mountainside."



## The Forging of the Sword

[*Siegfried*]

THERE has been many a song of the forge, and many a stage smithy has roared right manfully to the applause of admiring multitudes; but there is not, elsewhere in music, so vivid and so glowing a picture of one of Vulcan's sons, engaged in so heroic a task, as we have in this music. Now Siegfried demands of Mime the sword of his father, and the dwarf blacksmith is forced to confess that he cannot weld again the broken pieces of the once mighty blade. Siegfried, suddenly inspired, decides that he himself shall forge the sword. He files the fragments to a powder, pours it into a crucible, and puts it on the fire. Then he sings in exuberance and anticipation while he blows the glowing coals into white heat; he sings of "Nothung"—the Needed One—the magical sword that shall be his; and the orchestra paints the picture in incandescent colors.

Now Siegfried pours the molten metal into a mold, and hammers the rough-formed blade on the anvil. (The hammering on the anvil is heard literally in the

orchestra.) When he thrusts the blade into the fire, an extraordinarily realistic hissing escapes from the orchestra like white-hot vapor; and when at last in fierce glee the young hero shakes the finished blade aloft, we hear the wild call of the horn that means "Siegfried," and the shining fanfare, the Sword, that cleaves through the orchestra:



Then Siegfried, swinging the great blade above his head, brings it down with a terrifying crash, and cleaves the anvil from top to bottom.



## Waldweben

### *Forest Murmurings from Siegfried*

NOT only the mysterious communings of the forest within itself, the susurrus of wind-shaken leaves, birdcalls, and shadowed glens and hidden caverns—not only these, but the very thoughts of the young hero Siegfried as he lay beneath the murmurous trees, are captured and translated and made intelligible in this lovely music. Siegfried, defiant of the world, seeking something that may teach him the meaning of the unknowable word "fear," has been led into the woods by the ugly and hateful Mime, who promises him fear in satisfying degree when he shall meet the terrible dragon, Fafner. Tiring of the chatter of the dwarf, Siegfried reclines on the grass to meditate awhile.

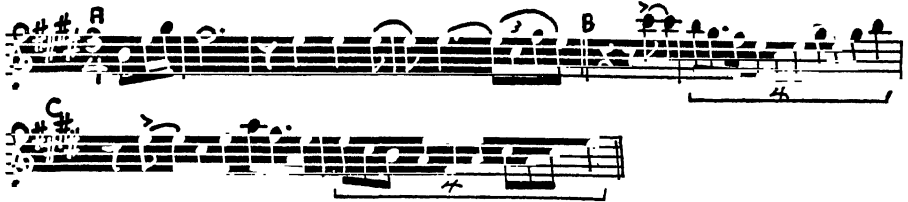
### Strings



The orchestra breathes and murmurs sounds of the wild—at first a low and almost inaudible muttering, then brighter but still veiled and mystical, in muted violins. In this hypnotically beautiful atmosphere Siegfried visions again scenes and moments out of his youthful past. He is convinced that he is not, as he has been led to believe, the son of the ugly Mime, and he speculates upon the character of his father. In the orchestra, the music tactfully recalls that he is, in fact, one of the

heroic race of the Wälsungs. (For a quotation of the Wälsung motive, see the discussion of Siegfried's "Death Music.") Presently his attention is distracted by the singing of the birds, which, in the opera, becomes intelligible to him and gives him information of great importance. The clarinet, then the flute, give out songs of tender beauty:

## Clarinet Flute



After Siegfried's communication with the birds, there follows, on the stage, the battle with and slaying of the dragon, and the death of Mime. There are no references to these in the concert arrangement of this music.

The birds tell Siegfried, among other things, that a wonderful woman, magically asleep, awaits beyond a ring of fire the touch of a hero who is stranger to fear; and in the orchestra we hear faintly the slumber music, remembrances of Loge's magic fire, and prophecy in the shape of Siegfried's own horn-call:

## Horn



And at this Siegfried is overjoyed. Crying aloud for someone to show him the way, he is guided by the talking bird toward Brünnhilde's fire-bound rock.



Prelude—The Rainbow Bridge—Entrance of the Gods  
into Valhalla

[*Das Rheingold*]

THE second and third of the excerpts named above are usually played together on orchestral programs; the Prelude does not, with such great frequency, appear. Yet the Prelude is one of the most extraordinary examples of nature painting in all music, giving within its slow and crawling harmonies a fantastic yet curiously real and convincing image of the river bottom, its unnatural lights and shapes and

shadows, the serpentine movements of primitive creatures half buried in the ooze, and pallid gleams from above. And from the nadir of these strange and awesome depths the music takes us to the heavens' very zenith, in a slow and certain and irresistible progression that is completely fascinating.

The curse that rests upon the stolen gold of the Rhine is, in the closing scene of the opera, made terribly manifest. The giants, Fasolt and Fafner, who had built Valhalla, the home of the gods, have claimed all the world's gold in substitute payment for their work, since happily they prefer this treasure to the goddess Freia, originally promised to them as a reward. They are not content until Wotan, ruler of the gods, throws upon the heap of riches the magic ring which has been made from the stolen Rheingold, and which bears this curse—that it may bring death and destruction to all who possess it. Wotan finally yields, casts the ring upon the piled-up gold. At once Fasolt and Fafner quarrel over it, and the latter kills his brother giant. The gods, horrified by the immediate effect of the cursed ring, stand thunderstruck. In the orchestra there is a tremendous crescendo, blinding brilliance, and a terrific crash. Donner, the thunder god, has summoned a storm to dissipate the pervading gloom. At once the air seems clearer; across a great valley, Valhalla gleams in the light of the setting sun, and between it and the assembled gods, stretches a bridge glowing in the prismatic colors of the rainbow. The procession of the gods forms, and proceeds in majesty across the rainbow bridge toward the already doomed magnificence of Valhalla.



### Siegfried's Rheinfahrt

[*Siegfried's Rhine Journey—A note by Alfred Reginald Allen*]

From *Die Götterdämmerung* (The Twilight of the Gods)

AN ATTEMPT to brief Wagner's famous tetralogy in a few pages would indeed be futile. Nor even would it be feasible to give a thimble sketch of so mighty and complex a music drama as *Die Götterdämmerung*. To those who are genuinely interested in the fascinating mythological narrative portrayed by actors and music alike that constitutes *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, we can recommend the concise sketches of these operas in *The Victor Book of the Opera* or some of the many exhaustive works on Wagner.

*Die Götterdämmerung* commences with a Prologue that is divided into two parts. In the first of these we see the Norns weaving the thread of destiny. They correspond to the Fates of Grecian and Roman myths. Then there is a musical interlude connecting this scene of the Norns with the second half of the Prologue. The music of this interlude depicts the rising of the sun on the morn on which

Siegfried is to say farewell to Brünnhilde as he sets out on fresh conquests. Then follows the scene between Siegfried and Brünnhilde. They bid each other good-by, Siegfried mounts Grane, Brünnhilde's horse, and rides down the mountainside. The singing stops with Siegfried's departure from the stage and Brünnhilde stands silently watching him wind his way down the mountain.

It is at this point that the music known as "Siegfried's Rhine Journey" begins. This selection is full of powerful descriptive melody. It is a great favorite among lovers of Wagner. The succession of leitmotives is readily and logically followed to the end when the curtain rises on Act I of the opera.

As usually arranged for concert performance, a descending passage played by the full orchestra opens the Rhine journey. As this motive appears deeper and deeper in the bass one can imagine the warrior moving lower and lower down the mountainside. But Brünnhilde is watching him, and presently the Decision to Love is heard in the strings and clarinets. In a moment we hear another motive—that of Siegfried, Son of the Woods—clearly sounded on the horn. It is taken up again by the oboe . . . and then suddenly the familiar Fire theme appears with it.

### THE DECISION TO LOVE



With the violins carrying the Fire motive, and the horns still sounding the Son of the Woods in the bass, we have a spirited musical picture of Siegfried descending through the magic fire with which Wotan has surrounded the mountain. Finally the entire orchestra is at work on this vivid portrayal. And then—as though following Siegfried's train of thought—the Decision to Love takes the place of the Son of the Woods motive and is played in the bass, while the Fire motive is still dominant. As he descends through the fire the great Siegfried is disposed to think longingly of the fair Brünnhilde from whom he has just parted.

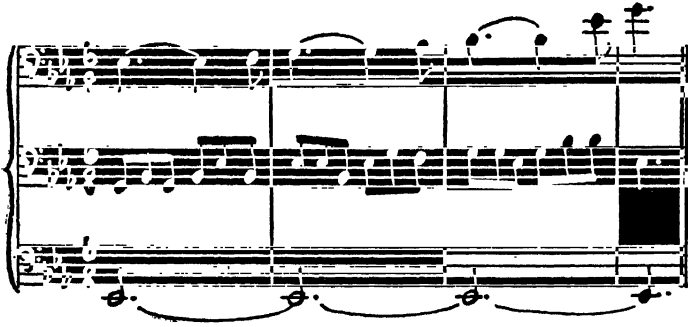
### CALL OF THE SON OF THE WOODS



An entire change of thought now comes, and with it a change of key. The swelling melodious Rhine motive appears in the brass. It is emblematic of Siegfried's

destination, and of the basic background of the entire tetralogy. It is a lovely theme, and grows on the listener even as it grows in majesty in the orchestra. The portentous sound of the motive of the gods' Decline is heard—a prophetic outburst

### THE RHINE



that is swiftly covered by a further development of the Rhine by the brass and violins. This motive—at first soft—gradually swells to mighty proportions and at the climax becomes the sorrowful lamentation of the Rhinemaidens. The Adoration of the Gold is heard, behind which a horn continues a few familiar notes from the Son of the Woods.

### ADORATION OF THE GOLD



The melancholy strains of the Adoration of the Gold dominate the orchestra. In the middle the Rhinegold Fanfare is heard; then the Adoration motive is repeated; gradually dwindling away until—almost before the change is recognizable—the woodwind and strings are sounding the motive of the Ring. It is the baleful ring as well as the gold that caused the intricate plot, and it is the ring that will bring final destruction to the gods in the acts of the following opera, *Die Götterdämmerung*. Hence its soft insistence here at the close of the Rhine journey may be interpreted as either retrospect, or as an ominous prophecy of what is to come. The

### THE POWER OF THE RING



final chords voice a few measures of the motive of Renunciation of Love, which



harks back to Alberich's renunciation when he stole the Rhinegold, and also predicts the reappearance of Alberich in the opera that follows. Twenty-one measures later, Act I of *Die Götterdämmerung* begins. These last measures are composed of musical material that suggests the action of the opera that is about to begin. In them is heard the Nibelung's Cry of Triumph, and then—four measures before the end—the curtain rises on *Die Götterdämmerung*.



## Siegfried's Funeral Music

From *Die Götterdämmerung* (The Twilight of the Gods)

THE "Funeral Music," called improperly but popularly "Siegfried's Death March," if it can be considered without reference to the peculiar significance of the Wagnerian leitmotive, is an heroic symphony of grief; gigantic in its conception, soul shaking in its might, ominous, almost terrifying in its prophetic utterance, yet with a hopeful gleam at the end. Wagner intended a far deeper meaning, a broader significance to be drawn from this tremendous music. It is more than a hero's threnody; it is the peroration, so to speak, of the titanic tetralogy of *The Ring of the Nibelungs*. It reviews, in ten minutes or less of marvelously fashioned and even more marvelously articulated music, the four music dramas—*Rheingold*, *Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*—which not only tell the significant story of a disintegrating godhood and a humanity supplanting it, but which also comprehend a strange and wonderful mythology that is peculiarly Wagnerian.

The "Funeral Music" is built, practically exclusively, of the leitmotives associated with various scenes and characters in the *Ring* operas. Nowhere, perhaps, are the singular gifts of Wagner more strikingly illustrated. Nowhere do these motives appear, combine, contrast, flow one into the other, and arrange themselves with such inevitable finality as here. Nowhere do they, in their respective significance, align themselves with more felicity.

Perfectly to enjoy this music, or any music from the *Ring* operas, an acquaintance with the principal motives is necessary. To review the entire story of the *Ring*, which is easily available in many forms (particularly in *The Victor Book of the Opera*), would be unnecessary as well as impracticable here. We shall indicate, therefore, only the chief motives recalled in the "Funeral Music," in the order of their appearance.

The "Funeral Music" begins immediately after Siegfried, mortally stricken by the treacherous Hagen, nevertheless finishes the story of his life, and falls dead. This is in Scene II of the third act of *Götterdämmerung*. At the outset, after

## THE WÄLSUNGS



portentous strokes upon the timpani, deep and grave in the voices of tuba and horn, we hear the theme of the Wälsungs, the heroic race of which Siegfried is the last representative. More mutterings of the drums, and the theme is repeated in clarinets and bassoons. Now come thunderous crashing chords—Death, and hard upon Death, as if in defiant answer, appears the powerful motive of the Heroism of the Wälsungs.

## DEATH



## THE HEROISM OF THE WÄLSUNGS

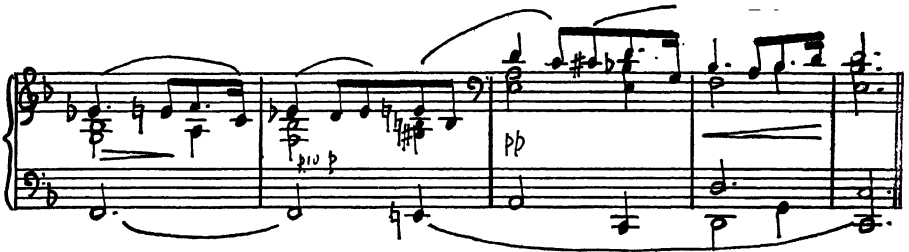


There are running passages in the bass, serving as connective tissue between the motives and sometimes developed from them. Presently, at the conclusion of a short phrase of this kind, the touching theme of Sympathy (referring to the feeling between Sieglinde and Siegmund, who were Siegfried's parents) appears in horn and woodwind, closely and appropriately followed, in the voice of the oboe, by the theme of Love. Here will be noted a striking example of the matchless skill and the extraordinary mind of Wagner—for the bass which supports the motives of Sympathy and Love, both of which contributed to the race of the Wälsungs, is a development of the Wälsung motive itself.

## SYMPATHY

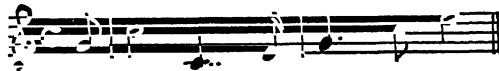


## LOVE



At the close of the first half of the music is that magnificently expressive theme symbolizing Siegfried's Sword . . . bright and shining in the penetrating voice of the trumpet, but, in its final cadence, tempered and softened, for Siegfried and his sword are forever stilled.

## THE SWORD



You will note, as the latter half opens, a recurrence of the Death motive, but now appearing in the full glory of the major key of C, whereas, in its first appearance, the composer cast it in the gloomy tones of C minor. This now is not the theme of Death, but of Glorification in Death. By what subtle and simple means Wagner completely alters not only the peculiar significance of a phrase, but actually its effect as pure music upon the listener!

## GLORIFICATION IN DEATH



The Glorification theme crashes out in all the orchestra's mightiest powers, sharpened in its swordlike thrusts by the metallic clang of the cymbal . . . and yet, in a moment, moderated to the motive of Siegfried himself given in horns and bass trumpet. This is but a prelude to the mightiest theme of all . . . quickly succeeding, in the boldest instrumental voices: Siegfried the Hero—derived from the famous hunting call of Siegfried's horn, long familiar from foregoing parts of the *Ring*.

There is but one musical thought left unexpressed to complete that sympathy with the hero which is an essential of true drama. That is a thought of Brünnhilde, whom Siegfried won through flame and danger and then by magic forgot. And presently that thought comes, expressed somewhat faintly, sadly, in the melancholy voices of clarinet and English horn. The scene closes in a return of the thought of Death, and the drums of death sounding. The Twilight of the Gods has fallen, to be illumined but once more in the final scene of the opera, when Brünnhilde gazes long and sadly and finally upon the dead face of Siegfried, and immolates herself upon his funeral pyre.

### BRÜNNHILDE



### Brünnhilde's Self-Immolation

Closing Scene from *Die Götterdämmerung* (The Twilight of the Gods)

BRÜNNHILDE now stands and gazes inscrutably upon the dead face of Siegfried. The ultimate tragedy, the ultimate punishments have come about—but no; there is one more sacrifice, a gravely joyous and magnificent one, that she alone can make. There is yet one way to circumvent the fate that made her faithful love unfaithful, one way that may lead to him. Her voice, in the concert presentation, sounds in strings and other eloquent instruments as she calls upon Wotan and the other gods to witness her distress and their own disgrace. She orders the vassals to place the body of Siegfried upon its pyre, and, addressing the Rhinemaidens, charges them to take the ring from her ashes and Siegfried's, that the curse might forever be removed. She flings a torch upon the funeral pyre, and, leaping to the back of the great warhorse, spurs him toward the flames.

“Knowest thou whither we go?” she asks the charging beast; “there lies thy

master. Would'st thou follow him in the flames? In my heart, too, flames are glowing, fast to embrace him, with him to be forever made one . . . Siegfried, Brünnhilde greets thee in bliss!"

Sparks of the magic fire dart in the orchestra, and tremendous surges of tone arise like flowing waters—like the waters that now overflow the banks of the Rhine. The song of the Rhinemaïdens sounds, the sky is filled with fire, and through it Valhalla and the gods crash down in flames. A splintering crash in the orchestra signifies the downfall of the powers, and finally, irrepressibly penetrating and sweet, the violins in dying ecstasy sing the song of Redemption by Love.

# CARL MARIA VON WEBER

[1786-1826]

**W**EBER was born into a family which for generations had been actively engaged in making music in one form or another, and which, in the number of musicians which it included, almost rivaled the incomparable Bachs. Weber, unlike most famous composers, showed little talent in his very early years; so little, in fact, that his father, who had high ambitions for little Carl, almost despaired of making a musician of him.

The father was head of a traveling musical company, most of whom were members of the family, and it was perhaps this association with the form of music in which he was to gain his greatest distinction—the opera—that finally aroused the latent talent of young Weber, and caused him to devote himself wholeheartedly, when the opportunity offered, to study of the piano and other branches of the musical art.

It would indeed have been difficult for Weber to avoid musical interests. He was related, indirectly, to Mozart; he knew Beethoven, Josef and Michael Haydn, and studied with the almost legendary Abt Vogler. His life and his studies were irregular for many years, which perhaps accounts for the fact that his music, judged from the standpoint of rigid formality and scholasticism, is often defective; but even his unevenly balanced training could not conceal the great gifts that were his, when finally they were developed, or stand in the way of the radical departures he originated in the field of operatic music.

Perhaps the determining event in Weber's life occurred in 1813, when by a stroke of fortune he won an appointment to the directorship of the opera at Prague, in Bohemia. Here he had a free hand for the practice of his ideas; a sufficient income to eliminate worry, and an opportunity to develop himself and his standing as a musician. Now his years in a "hard-boiled" operatic road company proved their priceless value, and in a short time the composer was not only conducting opera, but supervising every detail of production. When he had accomplished its total regeneration, he bravely gave up his post.

Weber's compositions in purely orchestral form constitute the smallest, and not the most important part of his works. His operas *Euryanthe*, *Oberon*, and *Der Freischütz* would assure him of immortality, and it is mainly from these works that his contributions to the orchestral repertoire are drawn. His music reveals an originality and freedom, a richness and imagination beyond any similar works up to his time, and it has had their influence upon the music of virtually every operatic composer since Weber.

During a visit to London in 1826 Weber, whose health had been for some time seriously impaired, had a premonition of death. Nevertheless he appeared there as conductor in several musical events, and with tremendous success. After

fulfilling his engagements, he prepared to return to his home in Germany, but death overtook him before he could depart. At his funeral services, the Requiem of Mozart, who was always Weber's ideal composer, was played. The body was placed in a crypt in Moorfields Chapel, but some years later was brought to Germany, where it was buried at Dresden with the other distinguished dead of the Weber family.



### Overture to "Der Freischütz"

THE opera *Der Freischütz* dates from 1820, and was the beginning of a development in German opera which culminated in the incomparable music dramas of Richard Wagner. Indeed, Weber's use of the orchestra, particularly in the overture, approaches the unapproachable magnificence of Wagner's, and exacts from the instruments such dramatic utterance as they had seldom, even in the symphonies of Beethoven, been called upon to deliver.

The opera, to satisfy the fashion of its period, deals with love and with magic; and the overture, as a good operatic prelude should, gives us the atmosphere and some of the musical details of the dramatic work which follows it. We need not be concerned with details of the plot, except to remember the sweet and virginal heroine, Agatha, who is represented in the overture by a clarinet solo of appealing loveliness—the more striking because it follows a wild scene in which dark powers are enlarged by incantation and made dangerous by man's villainy; we might recall also the scene, described in colorful tone painting with strings and woodwinds and drums, wherein Caspar, the villain, agrees to deliver his soul to the demon Zamiel. The lovely section for four horns, occurring shortly after the opening of the overture; and the magnificent final climax—these musical episodes, though of no particular significance in the story of the opera, speak nobly for themselves.



### Overture to "Euryanthe"

*Euryanthe*, one of Weber's greatest operatic works, although from the popular point of view a failure, contains some of the loveliest music he wrote; most of it is in the overture, which even at the unfortunate first performance was received with acclaim. It has since been in the orchestral repertoire.

The opera deals, in a libretto sufficiently bad to have been largely responsible for the failure of the work on the stage, with the love of Adolar and Euryanthe, and the difficulties which they finally circumvented. How powerful and richly colored the orchestra sounds in this music; particularly if we recall the period at which it was written (1823) and compare it with other music of the time. Contrast its noble pronouncement of the theme at the beginning, for example, with any operatic overture by Mozart—Weber's ideal composer! Or consider the dreaming of the strings, a little later, with their muted passion almost as intense and warm as any we find in Tchaikovsky.

The overture has a brilliant and highly developed concluding section, based on the more prominent thematic subjects heard in the first part.



### Invitation to the Dance

THIS blithe and colorful music is one of the most popular lighter numbers in the repertoire of the symphony orchestra; and in the piano version, a salon piece of great charm. The *Invitation* is often played today in the orchestration of Felix Weingartner, though such eminent conductors as Toscanini and Stokowski prefer that of Berlioz.

There is a simple little story with which the music is intimately connected. The scene is a gay ball; a young man approaches the lady of his heart, converses briefly with her, asks the honor of a dance; she assents, they dance, converse again for a moment, and go their separate ways.

The first few measures, in the importunate phrases of the cello (Berlioz orchestration), indicate the young man's invitation; archly the woodwind replies. His plea becomes more pressing, and she consents. Contrasting phrases in strings and woodwind are, supposedly, to convey the impression of a preliminary conversation, and finally, with a joyous burst from the whole orchestra, the dance begins. It happens to be in waltz rhythm, which sometimes had led to incorrect titling of this piece as *Invitation to the Waltz*. There are several little waltzes, and there is gay instrumental treatment of them. Through the rhythm of the music we hear bits of the lovers' conversation. There is a whirling and vivacious climax, and the dance is over. To eliminate the closing measures, which is sometimes thoughtlessly done, is to ignore the courtesy with which Weber's young man takes leave of his lady. After the last climax, there are a few measures quite like the opening ones, with the questioning and anxious phrase of the cellos inverted in accents of gratitude and satisfaction.



# JAROMIR WEINBERGER

[Born 1896]

WEINBERGER was born at Prague, and in 1937 went to London to live. His early musical education was received under Hoffmeister and Křička, and later he was a pupil of the famous composer Max Reger at the Leipzig Conservatory. Some years ago Weinberger visited America, and taught composition at Cornell to advanced students during his stay in this country. He has written largely for the stage, and his compositions, in addition to *Schwanda* and another opera, include incidental music for several Shakespearean plays, as well as miscellaneous pieces for orchestra.



## Polka and Fugue from "Schwanda"

*Schwanda der Dudelsackpfeifer*, one of the three Weinberger operas, is a comic musical play, based on Bohemian (Czech) folk music and legend. The opera itself is of secondary interest to American audiences, although it has been produced with enormous success in Europe. It has been admitted to the repertoire of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and given with moderate success. For lovers of orchestra, it is enough that the opera has produced the Polka and the Fugue.

These two pieces are so closely integrated as to be, in reality, one. The jolly if somewhat heavy-footed theme of the Polka, with its peasant flavor and pleasant rhythm, is the source of the material from which the fugue is built. It is curious—and ingenious—that in the same composition we find a simple peasant dance and a highly sophisticated and formal piece, the latter directly inspired by, and growing from, the first.

The reckless conductor will begin the Polka in a tempo altogether too fast. It should have a swinging, not a racing, rhythm and tempo. The first four measures reveal the fundamental idea and melody, not only of the Polka but of the Fugue as well. The first part is a simple country dance elaborated with the handy resources of the symphony orchestra, and, with its obvious tune and straightforward rhythmic dance figure, commends itself to everyone who can feel the motion of a dance. The Fugue, however, is beautifully developed. It begins, pianissimo, in the violins, immediately after the final measure of the Polka, and before he has done, Weinberger employs almost every instrument in the orchestra in exploiting the thematic material used in the Fugue and drawn from the Polka. There is a mountainous climax, involving not only the orchestra's fullest powers but the addition of a pipe organ as well.

## THE MODERN PHONOGRAPH; RADIO

THE importance to music of modern methods of reproducing sound is parallel to that of the printing press to literature, philosophy, and the whole sum of the world's knowledge. There is this vital difference: books preserve in cold type the great thoughts of the ages, priceless even though disembodied, but electrical reproduction actually re-creates the living organism of music, giving it voice and movement and compelling vitality.

Lovers of music are guilty, in the mass, of an appalling and culpable ignorance of the possibilities of modern methods of reproducing music. A few years ago, when to hear great music through either radio or phonograph was to hear it pitifully belittled and grotesquely distorted, there was justification for the upturned nose and the down-turned corners of the mouth when radio and phonograph were mentioned in musical circles. There is no such justification today—though in many cases the scornful manipulations of the features are still in evidence. The very ubiquity of radio music has to a degree delivered it from its former low estate, at least as regards the quality of its performance, if not that of its programs; but the phonograph, which has improved more rapidly, and to a noticeably higher standard of performance, still languishes in “the limbo of forgotten things” in the minds of the very people who would be most enthusiastic about it had they an acquaintance with the instrument as it is today.

Symphony programs via radio are no novelty today, but neither their relative infrequency nor the quality of their transmission disturbs anyone who knows what today's phonograph and records can do, and has become thoroughly converted. The priceless right of exercising one's own discrimination in selecting a program, the possibility of fitting music to a mood, the independence of time, space, and atmosphere, the availability of nearly all the world's great music—these are the more obvious advantages of the phonograph. None of these, however, would persuade anyone to the record-playing instrument unless it offered definite advantages in the matter of musical reproduction—in fidelity, in power, in definition; briefly, in the quality of realism. The phonograph can and does, in every detail of reproduction, give a more realistic and convincing performance.

If asked to prove this statement, a smart advertising man would doubtless reply, “Go hear a modern record on a modern phonograph.” His theory would be correct, but his psychology wrong. The one thing that has damned the phonograph is the fact that it requires a certain effort to place a record on the turntable and play it; it is much easier to turn a dial and take what comes. If the advertising man were free to point out some reasons *why* the phonograph is superior to a radio receiver, he could, one thinks, arouse much more interest. Let us examine some of these reasons.

The modern phonograph and radio set owe their existence to the same device

—the vacuum tube. It is natural, then, that both should be manufactured by the same people. It is logical that a manufacturer will not emphasize the disadvantages of one of his products as compared with another, especially when "public acceptance" of the first is active and easy, and of the second comparatively difficult and involving a process of public education. Consequently, the facts which follow have not been brought to public attention in a general way.

Sound is the result of vibration. The pitch—highness or lowness—of sound is determined by the rate of vibration. The lowest musical sound is produced by a body—a string, a column of air, or anything else—which is vibrating at the rate of sixteen cycles per second. The highest musical sound audible to the average adult ear is produced by a vibration of about fourteen thousand cycles per second. Many adults can hear higher-pitched sounds; dogs and babies can hear as high as twenty-two thousand cycles per second. Sounds produced by more rapid vibrations are inaudible to human ears, though they can be detected by measuring instruments.

The symphony orchestra, through its many instrumental voices, produces sounds which range from about twenty cycles per second (double bass, contra-bassoon) to about thirteen thousand, five hundred cycles per second (cymbal). But these sounds are very complex. If they were not, all instruments sounding the same note would have the same tone quality, and the ear could not distinguish a flute from an oboe, a cello from a viola, a trumpet from a saxophone. The complexity arises from the fact that each instrument sounds a fundamental note, which for the "A" above middle "C" is 440 cycles per second, plus a more or less complicated series of other, weaker tones, which mathematically are functions of the fundamental, and which, by their number and intensity, give each instrument its characteristic timbre, or tone quality. These weaker but important tones are called "harmonics." The harmonics range into the very high frequencies, accordingly as the sonorous body vibrates in sections, corresponding to its aliquot parts. Thus a violin string vibrates not only in its entire length, as a unit (which produces its fundamental tone), but also in segments ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , etc.), each of which produces a tone of its own; and the smaller the vibrating segment, the higher the pitch of the harmonic tone it produces. It is the number of audible harmonics, and their strength in relation to the fundamental, that makes a violin sound like a violin, and not like any other instrument in the orchestra. The same conditions exist in the case of every orchestral instrument.

The reason why these not particularly interesting figures are cited is that the average radio receiver is not responsive to frequencies much above 3500 cycles or below 100 cycles. Furthermore, the average radio station does not transmit frequencies in excess of 5000, though a very few broadcast up to 10,000 cycles. The consequence is that radio transmission and reproduction distort tonal values very considerably by the elimination of harmonics which give orchestral instru-

ments their characteristic tone quality. On the other hand, there are phonographs which exceed by several thousand cycles the frequency response of the average radio set in reproducing higher tones, and which, therefore, give a very much more faithful representation of the orchestral tone quality as it actually is. These same phonographs are responsive also at the low end of the scale, and give a more sonorous and satisfying quality to low tones than radio can. It cannot be urged that the phonograph does not also distort musical values, because commercial instruments of this type do, but their sin in this respect is much less grave than that of the radio. Another consideration is this: that broadcasts of symphonic concerts are usually wired from the concert hall to the broadcasting station, and in this process there is a further element of distortion because of transmission over a telephone line, which is not capable of carrying the full range of musical sound. Therefore, when the sound is delivered at the transmitter, to be put on the air, it has already been very considerably distorted.

There is another, and perhaps even more important, advantage in recorded music. A radio performance, no matter how beautifully given at the concert hall, no matter how carefully worked out by the conductor, is at the mercy of an individual who sits at a control board and does his fiendish best to maintain volume at almost a dead level. He is called a "monitor man" and his job is to emasculate orchestral climaxes, and fatten orchestral pianissimos, so that the million and a half bridge players in the audience of two million may be enveloped in a pleasing musical monotone. Another reason for his existence is the fact that broadcasting, as practiced today, does not lend itself to an expansive range of dynamics, being limited to a range of approximately 25 decibels (a decibel is a unit of transmitted sound). The fact that in some broadcastings the monitor man, to whom music is usually just so much sound, has at his elbow someone who can read an orchestral score and who is expected to assist him musically does not help matters very much. The score-reading assistant usually succeeds not in helping to effect such compromises as may satisfy the weakness of radio and at the same time achieve an artistic performance, but in removing all probability of a musically convincing reproduction by giving periodic warnings to the monitor man, so that the last possibility of a Valhalla's crash into the abyss escaping into the ether is expertly removed by the twist of a dial. Phonograph records, however, are made for people who love music for its own sake, and the interpretation which you hear from them is not that of a mechanic, but of a musician. The dynamic range of modern recording as it is practiced by the leading record manufacturer is 45 decibels, and it has been found possible, by the development of an incredibly sensitive and intricate apparatus, to eliminate 99% of the monitor man's work.

Both radio and phonograph represent compromises with reality, and under present conditions must continue to do so. On every technical basis, however, the

phonograph is the superior, and its advantages of permanence and selectivity are too obvious to require comment.

To hear either radio or phonograph at its best, the instrument should be played at a volume level of at least 50% of its possible loudness. This is recommended not that the neighbors be annoyed, or the lease broken, but because all electrical reproducing instruments perform more efficiently in proportion to the increase in current flowing through the vacuum tubes. Of course, we must stop short of the point at which the speaker becomes overloaded, as inferior speakers will. To turn the volume control at least halfway up is safe and fairly satisfactory. If the music is then too loud in the room, leave the volume control as it is and go into another room. The music will sound even better. With some instruments it would be better if you would go into another county, but we are not discussing that type of radio or phonograph here.

Manufacturers have of recent years included in the equipment of electrical phonographs and radios a device usually called a tone control. This is an electrical filter which strains out a good many of the upper partials or harmonics, and which also emphasizes low frequencies. The effect is much like that of a mute on a violin, and a quality of sound which is quite dull, but which advertisers are pleased to call mellow, is achieved. It is a question whether a tone control should be put on any radio, because any use of it whatever is a distortion of the music and a perversion of the performer's idea. However, in a limited way it has a use. If your room has hard plaster walls and a polished floor, with few draperies and little upholstered furniture, it is better in some cases to turn the control about one quarter of the way back from the full open position. Hard surfaces tend to resonate high frequencies, and in the average room this may give a harsh and unpleasant effect. If your room has a great deal of absorbent surface, such as heavy rugs, curtains of velvet, monks cloth, or similar material, together with overstuffed furniture, it is well to play with the tone control turned full on, because such surfaces as these tend to absorb high frequencies and to diminish the resonant properties of the room.

The science of sound reproduction is not sufficiently exact or stabilized to permit the assertion of anything dogmatic. A reallocation of frequency bands assigned to various stations may result in genuine high-fidelity radio reproduction within the next couple of years. If there were but five or six really first-class radio stations in the United States, each of relatively moderate power, but spreading over a wide frequency band capable of transmitting the full range of audio frequencies, radio would at once come into its own. Such a condition is entirely possible. Meanwhile, from a musical point of view and disregarding for the moment its incomparable convenience and its wonderful quality of universality, radio is a rather primitive thing. Recorded music, also, leaves much room for improvement. Though many of today's records reveal a frequency range of 30 to 10,000 cycles, there is

no instrument for the home capable of reproducing adequately this very satisfying musical quality. Such an instrument will come, and it is very likely that radio and phonograph will proceed, *pari passu*, toward their common goal of perfect musical reproduction, the one with ephemeral timeliness, the other with timeless permanence.

## GLOSSARY

- Accelerando*: A gradual speeding up of tempo.
- Accidental*: A chromatic alteration; a semitone or fractional division of a whole tone in the scale.
- Adagio*: Very slow.
- Ad libitum*: At will as regards tempo and expressiveness.
- Alla marcia*: Like a march.
- Allegro*: A time indication meaning quickly.
- Andante*: A time indication meaning moving at a moderate pace.
- Arpeggio*: Playing the components of a chord individually instead of as a unit of harmony; a characteristic of the harp.
- Bravura*: Showy; calculated to display technical facility and power.
- Cadenza*: A brilliant display passage designed to reveal dexterity and, in some cases, invention.
- Cantabile*: A songlike, or singable, passage.
- Cantilena*: See cantabile.
- Chaconne*: Anciently a dance form in three-beat rhythm, practically identical with *passacaglia*. Developed as a variation form, the *chaconne* usually has the subject in the bass, with variations in the middle and upper voices.
- Coda*: Literally, a tailpiece; the concluding passages of a movement.
- Col legno*: A direction for string players, meaning "with the wood"; to play with the wooden part of the bow.
- Concerto grosso*: A music form in which a group of instruments is used as a unit in contrast with the remainder of the orchestra.
- Con sordino*: With the mute; an attachment for altering the tone of various instruments.
- Counterpoint*: Horizontal harmony; distinguished from chords, which are vertical harmony. In counterpoint two individual melodies are opposed and harmonized, whereas in a chord individual notes are similarly treated.
- Crescendo*: A gradual increase in sonority.
- Diminuendo*: A gradual decrease in sonority.
- Dolce*: Sweetly and tenderly.
- Embouchure*: (1) The mouthpiece of a wind instrument. (2) The arrangement of the mouth and other vocal organs for producing musical tone on a wind instrument.
- Finale*: Concluding section or passage.
- Forte*: Powerfully.
- Fortissimo*: With all possible power.
- Fugato*: In the style of a fugue.
- Fugue*: A musical form in which a given theme in one voice is announced in others and developed in counterpoint.
- Glissando*: A sliding.
- Largo*: In very slow tempo and broad phrase.
- Legato*: Connected; smooth and flowing.
- Leitmotiv*: A musical phrase used to represent a particular person, thing, or situation.
- Motiv*: A significant but abstract phrase, less important than a theme but similar in character.
- Passacaglia*: Virtually the same as *chaconne*, but a somewhat less rapid form, in which the subject may appear not only in the bass, but in any part of the musical structure.
- Pianissimo*: Softly as possible.
- Piano*: Softly.
- Pizzicato*: Plucked; applied to strings.
- Prestissimo*: As rapidly as possible.
- Presto*: Very rapidly.
- Rondo*: A musical form analogous to the *rondeau* in verse, in which the subject matter invariably returns after each introduction of new material.
- Roulades*: Brilliant running passages on piano or harp.
- Saltando*: With bouncing bow.

*Scherzo*: In lively and playful style; a symphonic movement in a lively mood, usually with a middle section more restrained in character.

*Sforzando*: With a sudden outburst of power.

*Solfège*: General musical exercise and study; specifically, voice training by singing certain syllables on various tones.

*Spiccato*: To play sharply and crisply: detached.

*Staccato*: With a short, sharp accent, the notes clearly detached.

*Sul ponticello*: A direction to string players indicating that the passage is to be played close to the bridge. A peculiar tonal effect is produced.

*Tempo*: Time, in the sense of pace, or speed.

*Theme*: The musical sentence or subject on which a movement is constructed.

*Timbre*: Quality of tone.

*Tremolando*: See tremolo.

*Tremolo*: An alternate partial extension and re-enforcement of a tone, producing a trembling or vibrating effect.

*Tutti*: All together.

*Vibrato*: A rapid alternate flattening and sharpening of pitch, by which a trembling effect results.

*Vivace*: Lively and bright.

*Vocalise*: Strictly a melodious and wordless exercise for the voice; a passage or piece of music in similar style.



# A LIST OF MODERN VICTOR RECORDINGS OF SYMPHONIC MUSIC

## BACH, JOHANN SEBASTIAN

- "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 2 in F  
   major ..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 5 in D  
   major ..... *Cortot—École Normale Orchestra*  
 Suite No. 2 in B minor for Flute and  
   Strings ..... *Stock—Chicago Symphony Orchestra*  
 Suite in D—Air—Cello..... *Pablo Casals*

## BACH-STOKOWSKI

- Adagio (from Organ Toccata in C  
   minor) ..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Chaconne ..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
*Choralvorspiel, Christ lag in Todes-*  
*banden* ..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
*Choralvorspiel, Wir glauben all' an*  
*einen Gott* ..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
*Choralvorspiel, Nun komm, der Heiden*  
*Heiland* ..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Fugue in C minor..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Fugue in G minor (The "Little")... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Fugue in G minor (The "Great")... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
*Komm süßer Tod* ..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Passacaglia in C minor..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Prelude in E flat minor..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Saraband (from English Suite No. 2) . *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Toccata and Fugue in D minor..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*

## BALAKIREV, MILI

- Islamey* ..... *Simon Barer*

## BARBER, SAMUEL

- Dover Beach* ..... *Samuel Barber*

## BEETHOVEN, LUDWIG VAN

- Symphony No. 1 in C major..... *Ormandy—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Symphony No. 2 in D major..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
 Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major,  
   *"Eroica"* ..... *Koussevitzky—London Philharmonic Orchestra*  
 Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major..... *Toscanini—BBC Symphony Orchestra*  
 Leonora Overture No. 3..... *Walter—Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra*  
 Symphony No. 5 in C minor..... *Ronald—Royal Albert Hall Orchestra*  
 Symphony No. 6 in F major, "Pastoral" . *Toscanini—BBC Symphony Orchestra*  
 Symphony No. 7 in A major..... *Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
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 Concerto No. 4 in G major for Piano  
   and Orchestra ..... *Schnabel—Sargent—London Philhar. Orchestra*

- Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major for  
Piano and Orchestra.....*Schnabel—Sargent—London Sym. Orchestra*  
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Concerto in D major for Violin and  
Orchestra .....*Kreisler—Barbirolli—London Phil. Orch.*  
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Excerpts from *L'Arlésienne*.....*Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
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Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor*....*Stokowski—Philadelphia Orchestra*  
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Hungarian Dances Nos. 5 and 6.....*Hertz—San Francisco Symphony Orchestra*  
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Piano and Orchestra.....*Schnabel—Boult—BBC Symphony Orchestra*
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Concerto in G minor.....*Menuhin—London Symphony Orchestra*
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*Schwanda* . . . . . *Ormandy—Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Charles O'Connell's phenomenal career began almost twenty years ago as a New England newspaperman. In 1924, he went to Victor Talking Machine Company (now RCA Manufacturing Company, Inc.), and has been with them since in various key positions. He was largely responsible for the comeback of records, his audacity in testing market response with a recording of Schönberg's vast Gurrelieder, with Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, being still pointed to as a pioneering classic. As chief of artist relations for RCA-Victor, Mr. O'Connell supervises the artistic creation, in all its aspects, of that company's vast output of gramophone records. Yet, this is but one side of Mr. O'Connell's activities. A finely trained musician, he has conducted major orchestras the country over. He is also a tireless writer and editor, the wide success of The Victor Book of the Symphony and The Victor Book of the Opera testifying to his literary ability and extensive musical knowledge.*

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*from* THE INNER SANCTUM *of*  
SIMON *and* SCHUSTER  
PUBLISHERS · 1230 SIXTH AVENUE  
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