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THE A B C GUIDE TO MUSIC

BY

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TO

ELLEN AND BILLY

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A GUIDE TO MUSIC

A GUIDE TO MUSIC

FOR BEGINNERS AND OTHERS

CHAPTER I

THE LISTENER'S PART IN MUSIC

I WONDER if you have ever heard the story of the great nature-lover Thoreau and the Indian arrowhead. It was told by a friend of his who went with him on one of those long walks which he so loved to take all about the country near Concord, and in the course of which he saw and heard such wonderful things. The two men fell to talking of those rude arrowheads, chopped from stone, which are almost the only relics now to be found of the Indian tribes that used to hunt in that region; and Thoreau's companion expressed his surprise that anyone could ever see, in those wide fields around them, such mere chips of quartz. "Here is one now," replied Thoreau, stooping and picking one up at his friend's very feet.

Thoreau was justly proud of his keen powers of observation, and used to explain it by saying that he knew what to look for. "Nature," he writes in one of his books, "does not cast pearls before swine. There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate—not a grain more. . . . There is no power to see in the eye itself,"

he insists, "any more than in any other jelly. We cannot see anything until we are possessed with the idea of it, take it into our heads." And later in the same passage he cries: "Why, it takes a sharpshooter to bring down even such trivial game as snipes and woodcocks; he must take very particular aim, and know what he is aiming at. . . . And so is it with him that shoots at beauty; though he wait till the sky falls, he will not bag any, if he does not already know its seasons and haunts, and the color of its wing."

What is here so well said of the eye is equally true of the ear. As there is indeed no power to see in the eye itself, so there is no power to hear in the ear itself; and we have all read of those "that have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not." We cannot see until we know what to look for; we cannot hear until we learn how to listen. Yet how few people realize what care and study, what love and enthusiasm, are needed to make a good listener, especially to that rarest, subtlest form of sound—music! How many go out to shoot that kind of beauty without the vaguest idea of its "seasons and haunts, and the color of its wing," and, naturally, come back empty-handed!

We often hear people say, for example, that they are fond of "popular music," but that what they call "classical music" is too "dry" and "heavy" for them. They say this complacently, as if it were entirely the fault of the music, and their state of mind couldn't possibly have anything to do with it. Yet

the reason for their preference is that while their ears can catch the commonplace swing of the rollicking march-tune or the swaying waltz, they are not yet trained to seize the more delicate beauty of a melody by Schumann or Chopin. Let them cultivate their powers of hearing by listening with their minds as well as their ears, and these rarer, finer beauties will charm them more each day, while the old favorites will in the same proportion grow to seem more and more noisy, meaningless, and stale.

Mind you, I don't say there is anything to be ashamed of in being fond of the "popular" tunes, provided you admit that there may be beauties in the other things that you don't yet see. Indeed, I think that the love of a good vigorous march, or of a graceful waltz-tune or a tender love-song, is an excellent foundation for a fine taste in music. It is genuine and honest, at any rate, and much more promising than the make-believe exquisiteness of those who shudder at a discord and close their ears as if in agony when they hear a hurdy-gurdy. But it is only a foundation, and if we would build on it a love of the best, we must keep open minds and attentive ears. There is no use in refining one's tastes if they are not sincere to begin with; but if they are sincere, it is very desirable that they should be cultivated.

Another way people unconsciously confess themselves poor listeners is in preferring operas and oratorios to symphonies and quartets, as so many of the half-musical do. They are so little trained in listening to music for itself, that they like to have words

to tell them "what it is all about." In opera they have also the scenery and the actors to look at; and these not only help to explain what is going on, but give them something to focus their wandering attention. And so they decide that opera is a higher form of art than instrumental or "pure" music, as it is called, because they cannot follow the latter. But anyone who can follow it knows that the truth is just the other way about. The better one comes to understand music, the more clearly one sees that it has its own meaning, quite independent of words, and that words actually interfere with this meaning by distracting one's attention from it. The true music-lover loves a symphony even better than an opera.

If, now, you find on questioning yourself that you are one of those who care more for "popular" than for "classical" music, or one of those who like an opera better than a good concert, I hope you will begin to realize that you may improve your taste by hearing all the music you can, and by listening to it attentively, as Thoreau looked for arrowheads.

You have your part to do, you see, as well as the musicians. Indeed, music can exist only when three persons work together for it in sympathy. First, there is the composer, who must make his piece as beautiful as he can, no matter how many years of study and hard work that may require. Then there is the performer, who must unselfishly try to give the composer's meaning, resisting the temptation to show himself off or to "interpret" something that isn't

there. And thirdly, and just as important as either of the others, there is the listener, who, instead of sitting there lazily and enjoying what is easiest to understand, must be willing to do his share by really attending, and thinking, and trying to appreciate the best.

This book is intended to help you to listen in this thoughtful, active way, by showing you some of the thousand little differences in pieces of music that, left to yourselves, you might miss. These differences, taken one by one, may seem very slight; but taken altogether, they make up what separates the noble and everlasting works of genius from the trivial and meaningless jingles of the vaudeville theater, the hurdy-gurdy, and the phonograph.

As music appeals to us in a variety of ways, some of it especially in one way and some in another, we shall find it helpful to take up these different kinds of appeal one by one, and study each with some care.

Why is it, to begin with, that we so much prefer a clear, mellow voice to a hoarse, cracked one, or the tone of a fine old Italian violin to that of a cheap fiddle? They may both sing or play the same tune, yet there is a great difference in the pleasure they give us. The sound of a good tone pleases our ear as much as a bit of brightly colored ribbon pleases our eye, or a piece of velvet our sense of touch. Now this pleasure that clear, mellow, rich tones gives our sense of hearing is the first and the simplest appeal that music can make to us. Even animals like to hear

musical sounds, and some of them dislike discords and rough noises. As this appeal of music is to our sense of hearing only, and not to our minds or feelings, we shall call it the "sensuous" appeal of music; and we shall study it in the next chapter.

But you must all have heard, sometimes, melodies sung by poor, thin voices, or played on cracked old pianos, that nevertheless charmed you by their own beauty. With very little of the appeal to the sense of hearing they yet delighted you. What, then, was their fascination, and to what part of you did it appeal? *It was a beauty of shape, and it appealed to your minds* Let me explain.

Here are two vases. One is of finest porcelain, a translucent blue white, with all sorts of delicate reflections of the light playing on its surface; but it is too short for its width, it bulges out in awkward shoulders, and all its outline is graceless and without elegance. The other is of common crockery ware—but how beautifully slender and symmetrical! How the slight flare of the mouth is echoed in the gentle curve of the body! How the outline carries the eye from point to point, never shocking it with a sudden angle or an unwelcome curve! Of the two vases, one of which has beauty of color and the other beauty of form, I should choose the second without a moment's hesitation.

Well, so it is with melodies. One, played on the finest violin, leaves us unmoved because its shape is ugly—its curves are heavy, there is no elastic, constantly changing life in it. Another has such a rare

and delicate shape, each rise and fall harmonizes so perfectly with all the others, and the whole tune, while quite natural and simple, is so individual, so different from any other, that even a burdy-gurdy cannot wholly spoil it.

This value of shapeliness in music cannot be felt by the ear alone, because all the ear can get is single sensations, now one and now another, as moment follows moment. In order to feel all these sensations in relation to each other, making up a melody of definite shape, we have to use our minds; it is not enough merely to hear, we must "perceive" the form or shape of what we hear. The old Greeks had a word for this kind of perceiving, from which we get our word "æsthetic," which means "having to do with beauty, or the perception of beauty," and which we may apply to this second kind of musical value. The æsthetic appeal of music, then, is the appeal it makes to us through its shapeliness or beauty. This appeal, in many ways the most important of all, we shall study in the third and following chapters.

Then, in the third place, there is the appeal which music makes to our feelings or emotions; one piece makes us sad or wistful, another is glad, or merry, or exultant, another is noble or sublime; and so important is this emotional value of music, by which it expresses our inmost feelings, that we often hear the saying: "Music is the language of the emotions." I shall try to show you, as we go on, that this expressive value of music is really due very largely to its beauty, so that the third of our appeals de-

pends largely on the second. We shall also find, however, that there are other ways in which music moves us, and these we shall study in the proper place.

For the present, all I want to show you is that music makes these three different appeals to us: the sensuous appeal to the ear, the æsthetic appeal to the mind or intelligence, and the expressive appeal to the emotions. "There is in music," says the French composer, Saint-Säens, "something which traverses the ear as a door, the mind as a vestibule, and which goes yet farther."

Yet even now that we have our plan of study together mapped out, and are all ready to begin, I am afraid some of you may still be trembling on the brink, and may be saying to yourselves: "After all, what is the need of so much trouble? Isn't music meant to be enjoyed rather than to be worked and worried over? Why shouldn't I enjoy the music I like, and let the rest go?"

This way of looking at music as merely an entertainment is very common, and has brought upon it a great deal of contempt, so that many do not consider it an art at all. I cannot hope to argue you out of it, but I should like to tell you a true story to show you how Mozart, one of the greatest of musicians, regarded his work.

The last ten years of his short life Mozart spent in the great pleasure-loving city of Vienna, in extreme poverty. He had to earn what he could by playing

at concerts and giving piano lessons, and could make hardly anything out of what he wrote, because people didn't understand it and wouldn't buy it. He was so poor that sometimes he could not get food, or even coal in winter, and one cold morning he and his wife were found, by a friend who went to call on them, waltzing together to keep warm. And yet, when his publisher said to him: "Write in a more easy, popular style, or I will not print a note or give you a cent," he replied: "Then, my good sir, I have only to resign myself and die of hunger."

Now if Mozart could willingly face starvation rather than lower his ideal of what good music should be, and if not only he, but Bach, and Beethoven, and Schubert, and Schumann, and Wagner, and scores of others, could even glory to be poor, and unknown, and overworked, for the sake of making music, oughtn't you and I to be glad to take some trouble in order to appreciate it?

And one thing more. It is not only for your own pleasure, nor even for your own improvement, that you are working. In a few years you boys and girls will be the men and women who will help to decide what kind of music we shall have, who will support with your money and your influence our operas and concerts, and the work of our composers. Will you then give the singer who can touch the highest note a fortune, and let the true singer of your joys and sorrows starve? Will you applaud the pianist with the liveliest fingers, and let him who devotes himself to beauty go unheard? Will you encourage the empty

music of the street, rather than the music in which deep feeling and a noble sense of beauty are embodied? Or will you do your part toward making our country as great in music, and in the other arts, too, as it already is in business, science, and invention?

CHAPTER II

WHAT MUSIC IS MADE OF

IT is odd how easily we assume that things must always have been as we are used to them now. Because we can get a drink of water by turning a faucet, and get a light by scratching a match, we are apt to forget how for ages men had to fetch their water from springs or dig wells for it, and to make fire by rubbing sticks together or striking flint with steel.

In the same way, because we hear so much music sung, whistled, or played, and because it is all made out of the same tones, we are apt to think these tones as natural as the everlasting hills. We take it for granted they must always have been as they are now. And so it surprises us when we find that these tones have really been got together and arranged as we know them only after ages of patient work by musicians; that they have been tested, and selected, and combined and recombined, with the utmost pains; and that they are thus a work of art rather than of nature. They are indeed as small, but as perfect, a part of all possible tones, as a carefully made bouquet of wild flowers is a small but perfect part of the fields from which it is culled.

How careful must have been this long process of

selecting the tones, and what exquisite taste and sense of harmony the musicians who carried it on must have had, you will dimly realize when I tell you that out of eleven thousand tones which scientists have found that we can tell apart, only ninety are used in our music. Think of it! Only ninety different tones, out of which Beethoven was able to make his symphonies and Wagner his music dramas, without beginning to exhaust their possibilities.

Practically all of these ninety tones (eighty-eight of them, to be exact, as you can find by counting the keys) can be sounded on the piano; and with the help of a piano we can find out a good many curious things about them. Suppose you begin by pressing, first the key at the extreme left of the keyboard (this is called the *lower* end or *bottom* of the keyboard), and then a key near the middle, and then the key at the extreme right (*upper* end or *top* of the keyboard). Do you notice how different the tones are? The first is heavy, full, thick, the last is light, empty, thin, and the second is betwixt and between. They are just as different as the Big Bear, the Little Bear, and the Middle-sized Bear in the story. But instead of calling them big and little we call them "low" and "high," or we say that they differ in "pitch," the farther toward the right or upper end of the keyboard we go the higher being the "pitch" of the tones.

Looking more closely now at the keyboard you will notice that the black keys are arranged in regular groups, first of two and then of three, all the way up. This regular arrangement makes the white keys look

equally regular, *so that every seventh white key looks the same.* For instance, beginning at the bottom (left) of the keyboard, you will notice that the first white key lies just below the topmost of a group of three white keys (two of which, however, are missing, because the keyboard stops just where it does). Calling that key *one*, count seven white keys to the right. The next white key will then be like the one you started with; that is, it will lie just below the topmost of three black keys. Call it one, count up seven, and the next key will be in a similar position. Taking advantage of this similar appearance of every seventh key, we can name all the white keys after letters of the alphabet, without having to use more than seven —A, B, C, D, E, F, G. If we keep on repeating these over and over again till every white key is named we shall find when we get through that all the A's look alike, all the B's look alike, all the C's look alike, and so on for each letter.

All this will become clear to you if you will look at the picture of the keyboard (Figure I). You will also see there how we tell apart the many keys named after the same letter, by using both capital and small letters and a certain number of strokes at the right of the letters. Notice that the key marked c′, which is the fourth C from the bottom, is called Middle C.

Now comes a curious thing. If you will strike all the different keys named after one letter—all the A's, for instance—you will find that besides looking alike they *sound alike!* Not exactly alike, of course, for


"c'def'gabc"
"f'gabc'def'gabc"
"f'gabc'def'gabc"
"f'gabc

this second tone? What you have added is merely a brighter tint of the same color. But now, keeping the left hand as it is, play G (g′) with the right. Ah! Here is something new, this is no longer only a brighter tint of the same color, it is a different color, and the two colors together now make a color-harmony, or, as musicians, say, a "chord." [1] And how different it sounds from the two C's together, fuller and richer because of the merging of two separate colors in it, yet at the same time pure and clear, because these two colors go together well.

This chord we will call a "fifth," because there are five tones between the C and the G, counting themselves—C, D, E, F, G. In the same way, as there are eight between C and the next C (C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C) we will call the C's together an "octave," a word taken from the Latin for eight.

Now let us try another combination. Can you find a "fourth"? Count four from your left hand C, that gives you F for the right hand. Well, what do you think of that chord? A good deal like the "fifth," isn't it?—pure and clear, the two colors mingling well.

Next, a "third"—C and E. Ah, how pleasant that is! Pure like the fourth and fifth, yet richer, fuller, than they, and without their strange hollowness and emptiness. If you don't feel the difference

[1] "Chord" is commonly used only for combinations of three or more tones, those of two being given the inaccurate and misleading name of "interval." It seems simpler here to use only the one word, "chord."

at once, play the third, fourth, and fifth, over and over again several times. I am sure you can hear how different they are, after a little trying, and it is worth while, for you are getting acquainted with the simple but important facts on which the whole art of music is based.

The next thing to try is the "second" C and D. Ouch! haven't you made a mistake? No, those are the right notes; but what a thick, *burr*-y, harsh chord they make; how different from the mild and smooth third; how the two tones stand separate and refuse to mix. And how restless and uneasy the chord makes us feel: those two notes seem like bitter enemies tied together; they are constantly quarreling, and yet they can't get apart, and it makes us uncomfortable to hear them. They are certainly far from being the good friends that C and E are.

There is another tone that can't seem to get on pleasantly with C, and that is B. Try them together and you will see that they fight almost worse than C and D, in spite of the fact that they are so far apart.

Not so is it with A, which is as friendly with C as E was. Indeed the "sixth" (C—A) has all the pleasant fullness of the third (C—E) without the hollowness of the fourth and fifth.

We have now tried all the tones we can make with white keys, in combination with C (I shall speak of the black keys farther on) and we may as well put down what we have discovered.

The Fifth (C—G) and

The Fourth (C—F) are clear and pure, but a little thin.

The Third (C—E) and

The Sixth (C—A) are clear, rich, full, agreeable.

In all the above four, the two tones mingle and harmonize well, they *sound together*; therefore we will call them "consonances," from the Latin words *con*, together, and *sono*, to sound.

The Second (C—D) and

The Seventh (C—B), on the contrary, are harsh and rasping. Their tones do not merge, but "quarrel," as we say of inharmonious colors. Therefore we will call these "dissonances," because the two tones in them sound *apart*.

If, now, remembering the difference between consonances and dissonances, and how much pleasanter to our ears are the former, you can imagine yourselves in the place of the early musicians, you can understand how they went to work to arrange the tones as we have them to-day. Remember, they could sound with their voices or on their quaint, old-fashioned instruments, not only all the tones we use, but a great many others that lie in between these—for, as I have said, there are no less than eleven thousand tones that we can tell apart, and therefore might use if we wished. Their problem was to throw out all of these possible tones that *would not work well*, and save only those that would. They were pioneers in the forest of music, and they had to clear out the tangled undergrowth, while carefully saving the good trees.

Now, what were the tones that, as I say, would not work well? Why, they were the tones that *would make dissonances* with the first tones chosen. And contrariwise the tones that would work well were those which would make the greatest number of *consonances* with other tones already in use. And so those old musicians simply tried and tested the tones, patiently, day by day and year by year, and very gradually worked out the plan of arranging them in the series of seven that we now use. Of course they couldn't keep out the dissonances altogether. The two tones that go best with C, for example, G and F, make the dissonance of a second when sounded together. But they could choose tones that on the whole agreed more than they disagreed, and the result was that on the whole our seven tones form a fairly happy family.

It was not long, however, before a new difficulty arose to trouble these brave discoverers. The seven tones worked very well so long as they always began with C (this series of tones from one C to the next, going step by step through D, E, F, G, A, and B is called a "scale," from a Latin word meaning a ladder), but it was monotonous always to begin in the same place, and if they began anywhere else they could not get the same kind of a scale.

You can see this for yourselves, if you will begin with G, say, and go along key by key to the next G to the right. Do you notice that the F is not the tone you want? It is not high enough. To remedy this they added a tone a little higher than F, which you

can get by using the black key just to the right of the F, and as this sounded keener or sharper than F they called it F-*sharp*. Try the scale of G again and see how much better it is with F-sharp than with F. Again, if you will play a scale beginning with F, you will find that one tone is wrong there also. Can you tell which it is? Yes, the fourth tone, or "step" as we call it, B, is too high. We must put in its place a tone a little lower or flatter, and you will find that the black key to the left of B will give just the right tone, which we will call B-*flat*. So it was that the black-key tones were gradually added, each black key being able to give us either a "sharper" form of the tone just below it, or a "flatter" form of the tone just above it.

For a long time musicians could not find out the best and simplest way to tune these additional tones, but the great Johann Sebastian Bach showed how practicable was the way that ever since his day has been in use. This way of tuning, called "equal temperament," "tempers" or tunes the tones within any one octave—say from C to C—so that they make twelve exactly equal steps, with the result that we can begin on any tone we wish, and, by using the right "sharps" or "flats," get our scale of seven tones (or eight if we count the upper one, which is like the one we start with) just as they are when we start with C. We shall see later how important it is to be able to do this. If Bach had done nothing else but fix this equal temperament he would deserve our everlasting gratitude.

But you may be asking, how is all this going to help us to appreciate music? That is a sensible question, but I can't give you the entire answer to it until we get a good deal further along. I can now answer it partly, however, by reminding you that all music is made up of consonances and dissonances, and that if you can feel the difference between them when you hear them you will get a more vivid impression of music than before. Music that is mostly "consonant" is sweet, mild, smooth, pleasant to the ear. The old church music of Palestrina is of this kind, and you must realize that it is, in order to appreciate it.

In other kinds of music there is much more dissonance. Why? Because, since Palestrina's day, musicians have gradually found out many new effects which appeal to them strongly. Do you like to eat nothing but sugar, to smell nothing but sweet flowers, to see no colors in a painting but quiet, soft ones, no forms but graceful curves? Not at all; you want some variety, some contrast, some striking impressions. We like some saltness and bitterness in our food (more as we grow older), some pungency in odors, some vivid reds and yellows, and some sharp, bold angles in pictures. Well, just so we like dissonances in music because they keep the consonances from becoming insipid; and all modern music is plentifully seasoned with them. The next time you hear any music, see if you can detect some of the dissonances, and notice how exciting and refreshing they are.

CHAPTER III

METER AND RHYTHM

So far we have been studying nothing but the effect of musical sounds on our physical ears. We have seen how certain combinations of sounds (consonances) differ from others (dissonances) in much the same way that quiet rich greens and blues differ, for the eye, from screaming reds and yellows, or velvet differs, for the touch, from sandpaper. These are all differences for the *senses* alone—ear, eye, or touch—and the mind has nothing to do with them. From now on, however, we are going to study some of the qualities of music which can be appreciated only by the mind, or rather by the mind and the senses together.

The way we can tell whether the mind is concerned or not is by noticing whether the order in which our impressions are received makes any difference in them. Are they just the same backward as forward? If so, they are purely sensuous (that is, of the senses) and do not appeal to the mind. You can play music backward without losing the purely sensuous pleasure of its consonant chords. You can read poetry backward and still enjoy the sounds of its letters—the K's in Coleridge's verses about Kubla

Khan, for example. Or you can look at a picture upside down without marring its color-harmonies. Indeed painters sometimes purposely bend down their heads and look at a landscape upside down, so that they may have all their attention to give to the color, without being distracted by having to notice what is a tree, and what is a hill, and what is a cloud. Try it some day, and you will be amazed to see how vivid the colors look.

But you cannot play music or read poetry backward, or look at a picture upside down, without losing an immensely important part of your pleasure in them, as you can easily see for yourselves by making the experiment; and the seriousness of this loss shows us how important a part the mind plays in all artistic enjoyment. Those who make a study of these matters have found, indeed, that the *relations* between sensations, which can be felt only by the mind, are of far greater importance than the sensations themselves, and that the keenest of all the pleasures connected with art is the mental pleasure of *arranging in order*, according to these relations, the impressions of the senses. The important question that we have next to answer is, then, this: What relations are there between different tones and chords, by perceiving which our minds can arrange them in order?

If you will sing over to yourselves the first part of the tune of "Yankee Doodle," up to the word "macaroni," I think you will notice that you do not make all the tones equally heavy or emphatic, but that you put a special accent on every other tone; so that

if instead of singing the words you sing "One, two, one, two," and so on, the ones will all be heavy, and the twos light; or if you beat time by moving your hand down and up, the down beats will be heavy or accented, and the up beats light or unaccented. Also notice, please, that although most of the tones occupy just one beat, the tones that come on the first syllable of "pony" and on the last two syllables of "macaroni" occupy two beats each. I shall explain why this is in a moment.

This plan of measuring off the music, as it flows along, by means of beats that are equal in length but differently accented gives it at once a kind of orderliness and regularity pleasant to our minds, and all music has some kind of "meter," as it is called from a Greek word meaning "measure." The word "measure" is itself used as the name of the little group of beats that is made by each accented beat and the unaccented beat or beats that follow it. I say "unaccented beat *or beats*" because sometimes there are two light after each heavy beat, in which case we count "Heavy, light, light," or "One, two, three." Try to count to "My Country, 'tis of Thee," and you will find that you have to make *three* beats to each measure in this way.

It will amuse you to sing over several melodies, trying to decide for yourselves whether the accent comes once every two beats (called duple measure) or once every three beats (triple measure). It can't come any other way. It is true that we find in music measures with four, six, nine, or even twelve

beats, but they always consist merely of two or more duple or triple measures thrown into one.

Without meter, music would be vague and formless; our minds would have nothing to take hold of in listening to it, and would end by being thoroughly confused and bored. But on the other hand, if the tones always corresponded exactly to the beats, one to each beat—no more and no less—we should soon become, perhaps not so confused, but equally bored by that relentless *dum, dum, dum.* We should dislike such a rigid mechanical regularity almost as much as utter irregularity. We are evidently critics hard to please; we want balance, order, arrangement, but we want it made freely and elastically; in a word, here as in so many other artistic matters, we want *variety in unity.*

If you are fond of poetry you must have felt this often in your reading. Take these lines from Pope as an example:

> A little learning is a dangerous thing;
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
> There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
> And drinking largely sobers us again.

The general plan of the meter here is to place light and heavy syllables one after the other, until there is a line of five of these groups of one light and one heavy. These groups, corresponding to the measures in music, are called "feet"; but the line is called a "pentameter," which means "five measures." Pope, however, is too good an artist to follow out his scheme

mechanically, well knowing that if he did we should soon tire of his verses. What he does instead is to place his important words in such a way that they shall pull the accents a little away from the places where we expect them, without doing so enough to confuse our idea of the meter. In the second line he weights the first light beat by putting the important word "drink" upon it, he throws out the third accent entirely by placing the unimportant word "the" where we expect it, and he induces us to make up for this by lingering on the E in "Pierian":

Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

Don't you see what a charm of irregular regularity that altering of the meter by the words gives this line, how it avoids the monotony of the Te-dum, Te-dum, Te-dum, Te-dum? If you don't feel it at once you soon will if you will try to notice this kind of effect in all the poetry you read. Pope himself had his little laugh at the poets who do not vary their meters when he wrote of them, mimicking their style:

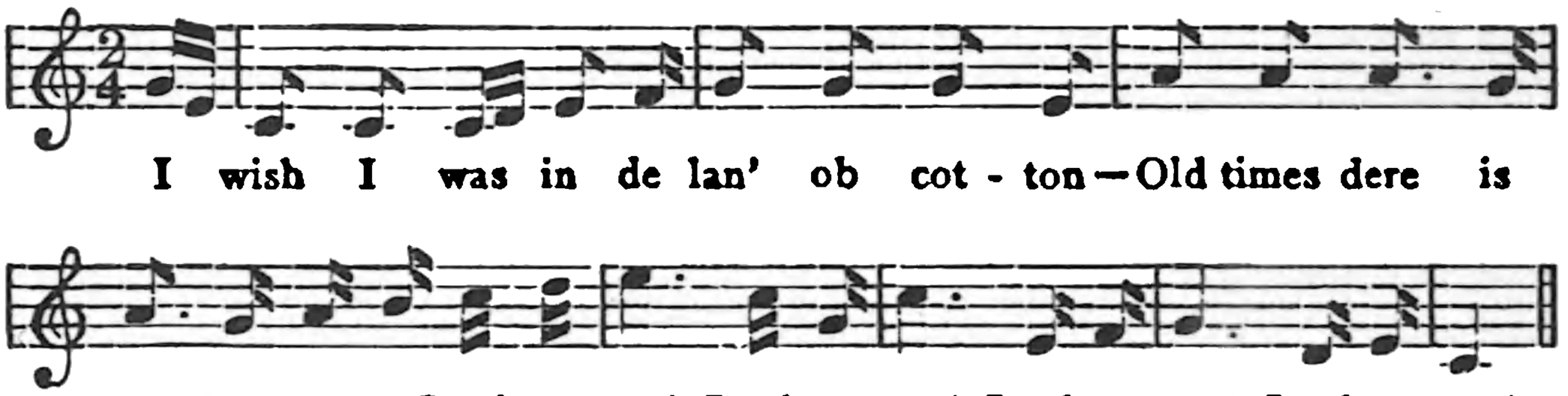
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.

You will now understand how musicians take advantage of the orderliness of meter without letting it lead them into monotony. As the poet, within his regular lines, constantly varies his patterns of words, so the musician, within his regular measures, constantly varies his patterns of tones, sometimes dividing a beat into many short tones, sometimes holding

one tone through many beats. Even in "Yankee Doodle" we saw that some tones occupied two beats; but no amount of patriotism can make us find much variety or charm in that too regular tune. Take another of our national airs—one of the finest in the world, "Dixie"—and see the difference (Figure II).

FIGURE II.

D. Emmett: "Dixie."



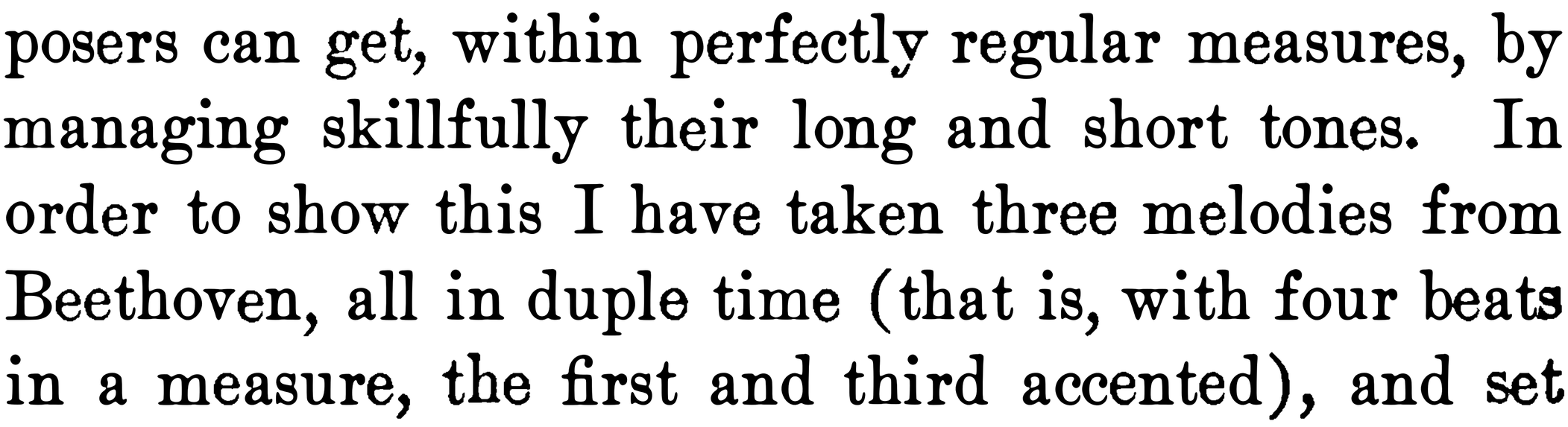
How inspiring are those long notes on "Look away," and what life and movement there is in every note! Yet the beats go "One, two, one, two," just as in "Yankee Doodle."

It is really marvelous what endless variety composers can get, within perfectly regular measures, by managing skillfully their long and short tones. In order to show this I have taken three melodies from Beethoven, all in duple time (that is, with four beats in a measure, the first and third accented), and set
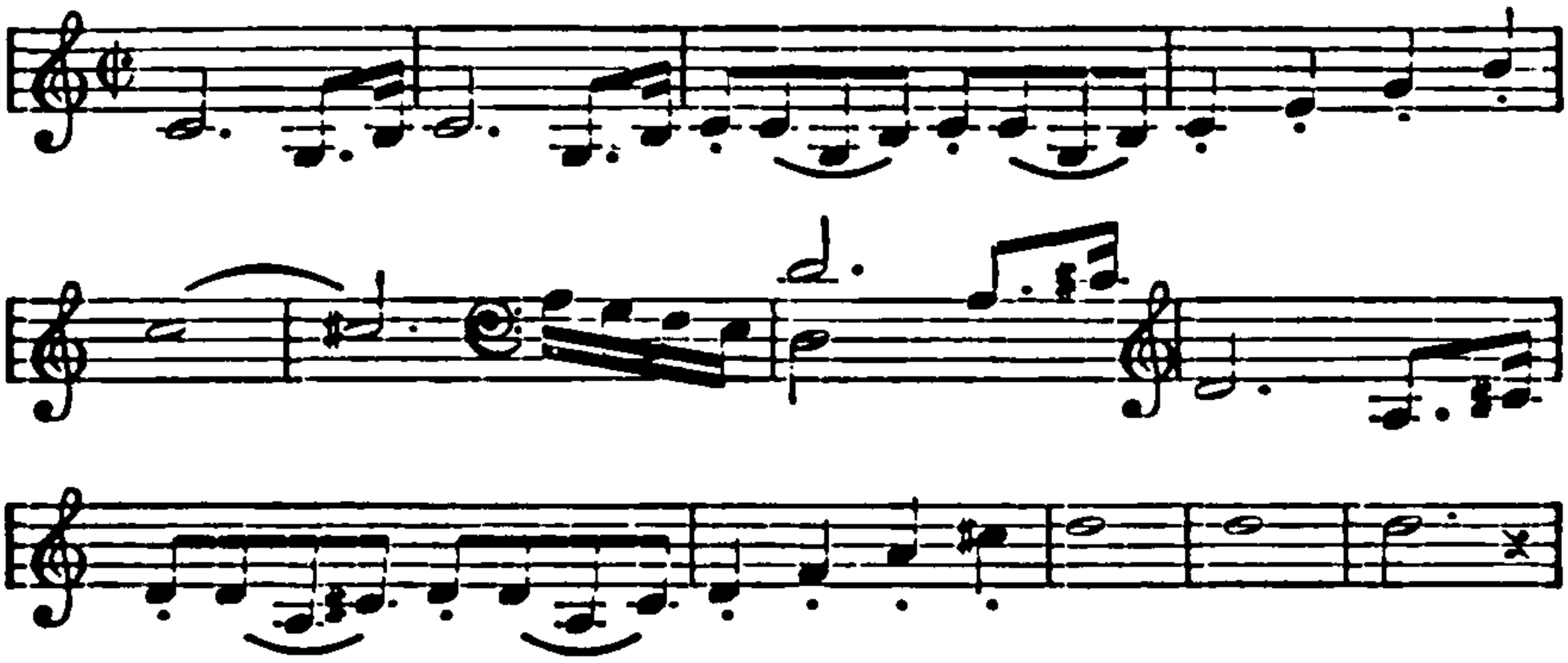
FIGURE III.

(*a*) *Allegro.*

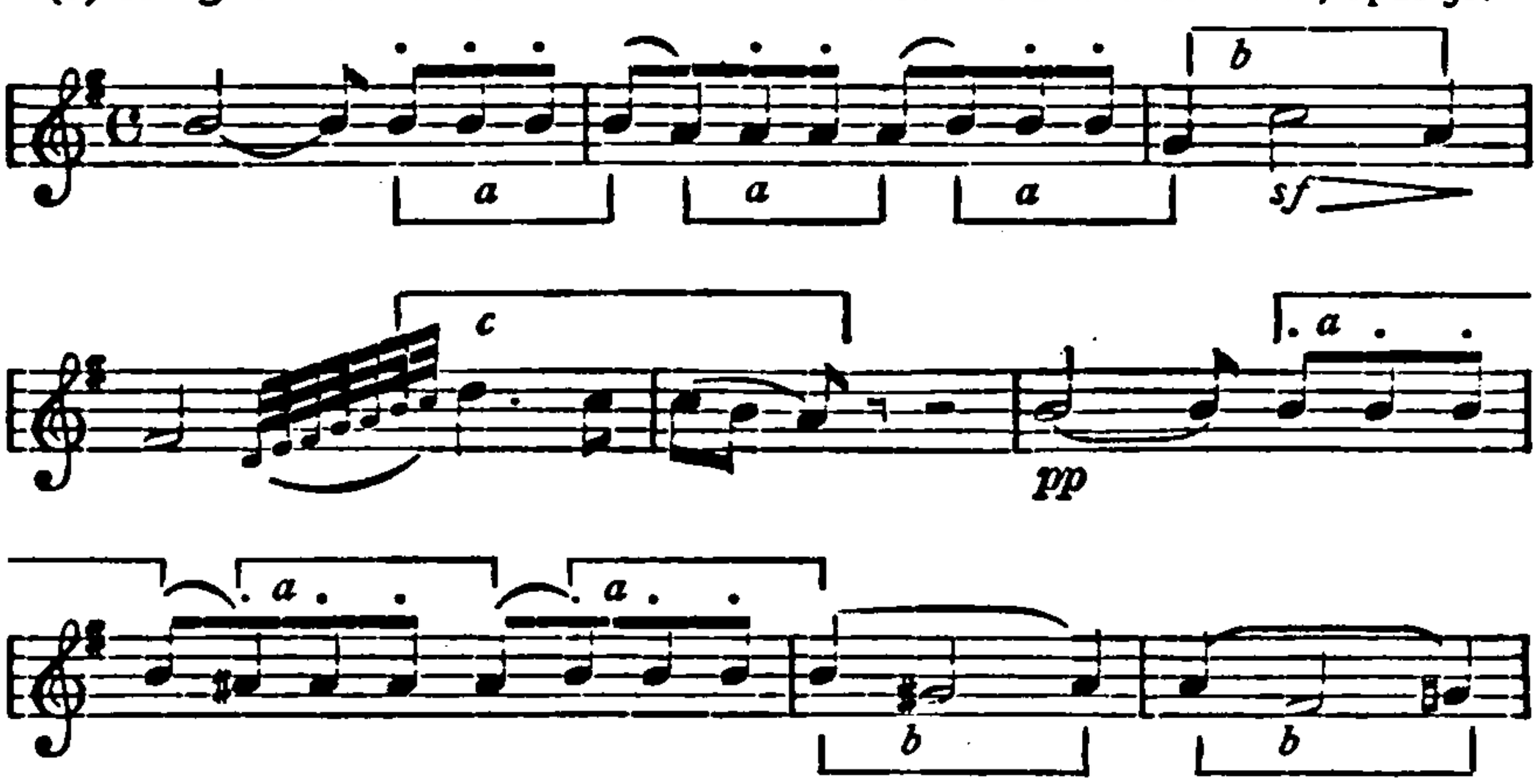
Beethoven: "Leonore," Overture.



(*b*) *Allegro con brio.* BEETHOVEN: First Symphony.



(*c*) *Allegro moderato.* BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto, opus 58.



them side by side in Figure III (I am going to assume that you can either play the examples I shall give from time to time, or get some one to play them for you).

The first is the chief melody of his overture for orchestra "Leonore," written to be played before his famous opera, "Fidelio." The only measures of this example that have one tone to each beat, as in "Yankee Doodle," are the third and the seventh. The

first and the fifth measures divide the beats among the notes thus: 1, 2, 1; the second and the sixth thus: 3, 1; and the fourth and the eighth measures have tones only on one beat, and the others are silent. Don't you see what variety Beethoven thus gives his melody, how individual and unlike anything else he makes it? It has its own particular "rhythm," as we say—that is, its particular order of long and short notes, just as Pope's "Drink deep" line had its own particular order of syllables; and as there the important words pull the accents away from where we expect them, so here, if you will listen carefully, you will notice that the second note, twice as long as the first and therefore much heavier, robs it of a good deal of its accent, and moreover by occupying the third beat keeps us from feeling any accent there at all.

Now look at the second melody, the main theme of Beethoven's First Symphony. Here is an entirely different rhythm. What a strong contrast between those long, heavy tones taking up three beats, and the two little jerky short notes that divide the fourth beats between them. Then in the third measure there are eight short notes, in the fourth four not quite so short, and the fifth measure, in marked contrast, gives all its beats to one emphatic chord. Although these two melodies are both in duple meter, you would no more confuse them than you would two of your friends because both have the same number of eyes, ears, noses and mouths. *The rhythm is the face of each tune, by which we know it.*

Turning now to the third melody, the opening of Beethoven's Concerto for piano and orchestra, opus 58, we find an even greater variety of rhythm, still on the same simple basis of duple meter: a variety so great that we shall need a new word in order to talk about it. This word, "motive," borrowed from the German and therefore pronounced *moteeve*, means any small group of tones that are so peculiar and striking in their rhythm that we easily remember them, and recognize them whenever they come in. We shall learn gradually, as we go on, how important are the motives in all music, making it move and grow as it goes on.

There are several different motives in the concerto melody: first of all the group of three light notes and one heavy which extends over the first bar-line, and is twice repeated. It is interesting to observe that this idea of three lights and a heavy is also found in each of the four movements [1] of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which he was writing at the same time as this concerto. His mind must have been running on that rhythm just then. It has been suggested that he may have got it from one of the German birds, the yellow-hammer, which sings three short notes and one long. I have often heard an American bird, perhaps a distant cousin of the German one, whose song is *four* shorts and one long.

The second motive is found in the third measure —three tones, of which, you will observe, the second

[1] A movement is a complete piece forming part of a large work such as a sonata or symphony.

is the longest and most important, taking for itself the accent which we expect on the third beat. Let us call this motive *b*, and the first one motive *a*. Then there is still one more motive (call it *c*), the peculiar group of five tones led up to by the quick run in the fourth measure.

So much of the melody is given out by the piano. Then, after a slight pause, the orchestra comes in, answering the piano by sounding motive *a* three times. It goes on with motive *b* in the eighth measure, and rather surprises us by repeating it in the ninth. Next comes a very curious thing. Play measures 10 and 11, and see if you can tell what they come from. You will soon see that they are really motive *c*, *stretched out* so that it is twice as long as at first. How pleasant it is to recognize an old friend thus in a new dress, or, so to speak, under a new light! We shall study later how composers thus follow their motives through a piece, constantly putting them in new situations, just as writers follow their people through a novel. The concerto theme ends with two measures that don't come from any of the motives, but bring it to a satisfactory close.

The wonderful thing about this tune, the thing that I want you especially to notice, is the great variety of rhythm that Beethoven gets in measures all having the same meter, and using only three motives—the great variety, and at the same time the perfect unity. Only a master-composer can do this, and only the listener who appreciates such variety in unity can appreciate the masterpieces, and

see how much finer they are than the empty little tunes we hear whistled in the streets and sung in vaudeville.

We have talked about so many things in this chapter that we'd better go over them briefly in closing it. We have seen that music, like poetry, is measured off in time by a scheme of regular heavy and light beats grouped in "measures." We have seen, nevertheless, that only the bad or careless poet makes his words correspond exactly to the set "meter"—makes

ten low words oft creep in one dull line;

—the good poet taking care to arrange his words so that they will pull the accents this way and that from the places where we expect them, and so give his lines variety of rhythm. In the same way we find that only the bad or careless musician gives one beat to each tone, as in "Yankee Doodle." The skillful composer so divides his tones among the regular beats that they fall into striking and interesting rhythms, each particularly impressive group of them making a motive.

Both the poet and the composer are really doing, with their materials, just what we have all of us done in kindergarten with colored worsteds and perforated cardboard. You must all remember those pieces of cardboard, with holes at regular intervals, on which you made various designs in worsted by taking stitches of various lengths. Well, the composer has instead of holes in the cardboard, beats of equal

length, and instead of colored worsted, tones; and by varying his stitches (rhythms) he makes the most beautiful and interesting designs (motives). We shall examine his handiwork still more carefully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PHRASES AND PHRASE-BALANCE

WHEN, in that kindergarten work that we were speaking of, you got your design made, with its various long and short stitches, what did you do next? I think I know; you skipped a certain number of holes, so as to leave a clear margin around the figure, and then made another figure of the same kind, to "match" it or balance it; and before you were done with that cardboard you had it pretty well covered with similar figures thus balancing one another. In a word, your instinct for balance or symmetry was not satisfied with arranging the stitches in order in the figures, but wanted the figures themselves to be arranged in a still larger kind of order.

It is quite the same way with the poet, as you will see by turning back to the Pope quotation, and noticing how the lines as a whole balance each other. You will see that the second line balances the first, the fourth balances the third, and the last two taken together balance the first two taken together. And what is more, if your ear is sensitive you will feel that this balance is so regular as to be almost mechanical: down goes your voice at the end of each line, as if it were run by clockwork. In fact, Pope is

here falling into the very monotony for which he blamed those poets who made their words correspond exactly with their "feet" or measures: he is making his sentences correspond exactly with his lines.

Compare with his verses these wonderful lines from one of the greatest masters of poetic rhythm—Keats; they are taken from the beginning of his "Endymion."

> A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

Here the phrases and sentences balance as in the Pope, but in a much freer, less mechanical way, because Keats has taken pains that they shall not correspond exactly with the lines. In the first line, to be sure, where it is important to give the reader a clear idea of the swing of the verses, idea and meter do exactly match, both ending at the word "ever"; but after that, what fascinating variety! The lines end at "never," "keep," "sleep," and "breathing," as the rhymes clearly show us; but the *ideas*, the sentences or phrases, end at "increases," "nothingness," "us," and "breathing," at which points, therefore, the voice naturally falls and pauses. In this way a new beauty arises, a beauty again of variety in unity: the unity now lying in the equal length of the lines, the variety in the constantly changing length of the sentences, and in the resulting irregular rise and fall of the voice.

If you have been following what I have said, two questions will now occur to you. Is there anything in music like the balancing of the lines and of the sentences in poetry? And if so, is music, like poetry, more beautiful when this balancing is somewhat irregular? If you will look at Figure III once more, Beethoven will answer both these questions for you.

Nothing could be clearer than that in the theme from the "Leonore" Overture, the melody of the first four measures makes as complete a statement as Pope's first line

A little learning is a dangerous thing;

and nothing could be clearer than that this sentence, or phrase, as it is usually called, is answered and balanced by what follows it just as definitely as Pope's line is balanced by

Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

Here are, then, two phrases, of equal length (four measures), each felt to have a certain completeness, yet both felt to hang together and balance each other like the lines of the poem, or like the figures of the worsted-work. *All our modern music is thus made up of phrases which in one way or another balance each other.*

That is the first thing that Beethoven shows us. The second is that although phrases always balance somehow, there is great variety both in their lengths, and in the ways they may be made to balance.

In the theme of the First Symphony, for example, you cannot stop after the fourth measure, the phrase runs on, and is complete only at the end of the sixth measure. This *six-measure phrase* is then answered quite regularly by another of the same length. Here the phrase length is a little unusual (the average phrase being either two or four measures long) but the balance is exact.

The Concerto theme is less regular. In the first place, the first phrase is five measures long—an uneven number. Secondly, as we saw in the last chapter, Beethoven extends his second phrase, by repeating one motive, stretching out another, and adding two measures at the end, to no less than eight measures. Yet in spite of all this irregularity there is not the least doubt in our minds that the second phrase balances the first, and balances it most satisfactorily. Indeed, the varying lengths of the phrases add a new beauty to the music, an elastic gracefulness akin to that of Keats's verses. Our second question is thus answered: phrase-balance is most beautiful when the phrases have a fair degree of variety, and tends to become "set" when they seem as if all turned out of the same mold.
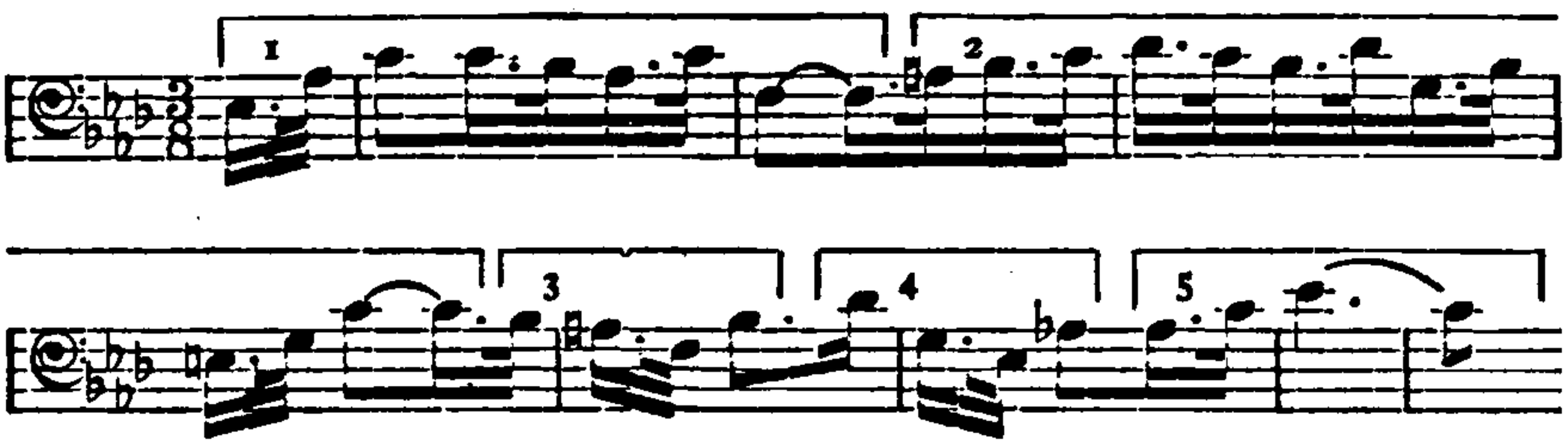
You would be astonished if you knew how much loving thought and patient labor the great composers, especially Beethoven, gave to making their rhythms strong and supple, like the muscles of a well-trained athlete. Beethoven, when he walked in the fields and woods, as he was fond of doing, always carried in his coat pocket a little blank sketch-book of music paper,

in which he could jot down his ideas. The bits of melody thus set down were then worked over and over, for days, weeks, and months, in sketch after sketch, so that sometimes we find a dozen or twenty forms of the same tune between the original germ and the completed theme. The first idea is often commonplace and lifeless; and it is wonderful to see how Beethoven, striking out some needless notes here, lengthening an important one there, now by a simple touch making two phrases balance each other freely instead of mechanically, gradually transforms it into the immortal melody we know and love.

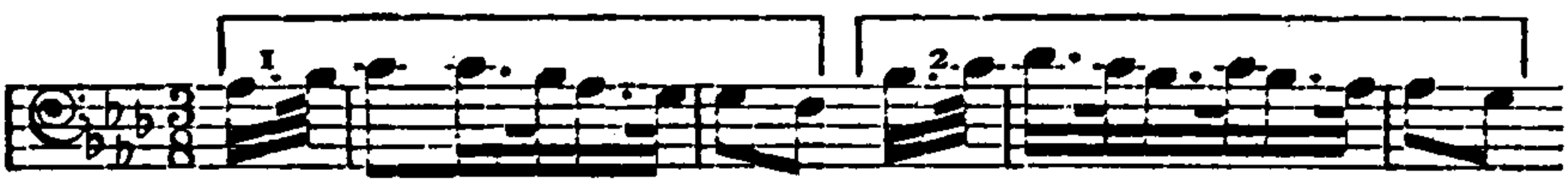
One of the loveliest of these melodies, the theme of the Andante of his Fifth Symphony, shown in Figure IVa, owes its beauty largely to the charm-

FIGURE IV.

(*a*) *Andante con moto.* BEETHOVEN: Fifth Symphony.



(*b*) First sketch of the above theme.



ing irregularities of its rhythmic ebb and flow. To help you feel this for yourselves I have marked off the phrases by brackets. There are altogether, you will see, five phrases: two long ones, then two short ones, and then one final long one—a scheme which
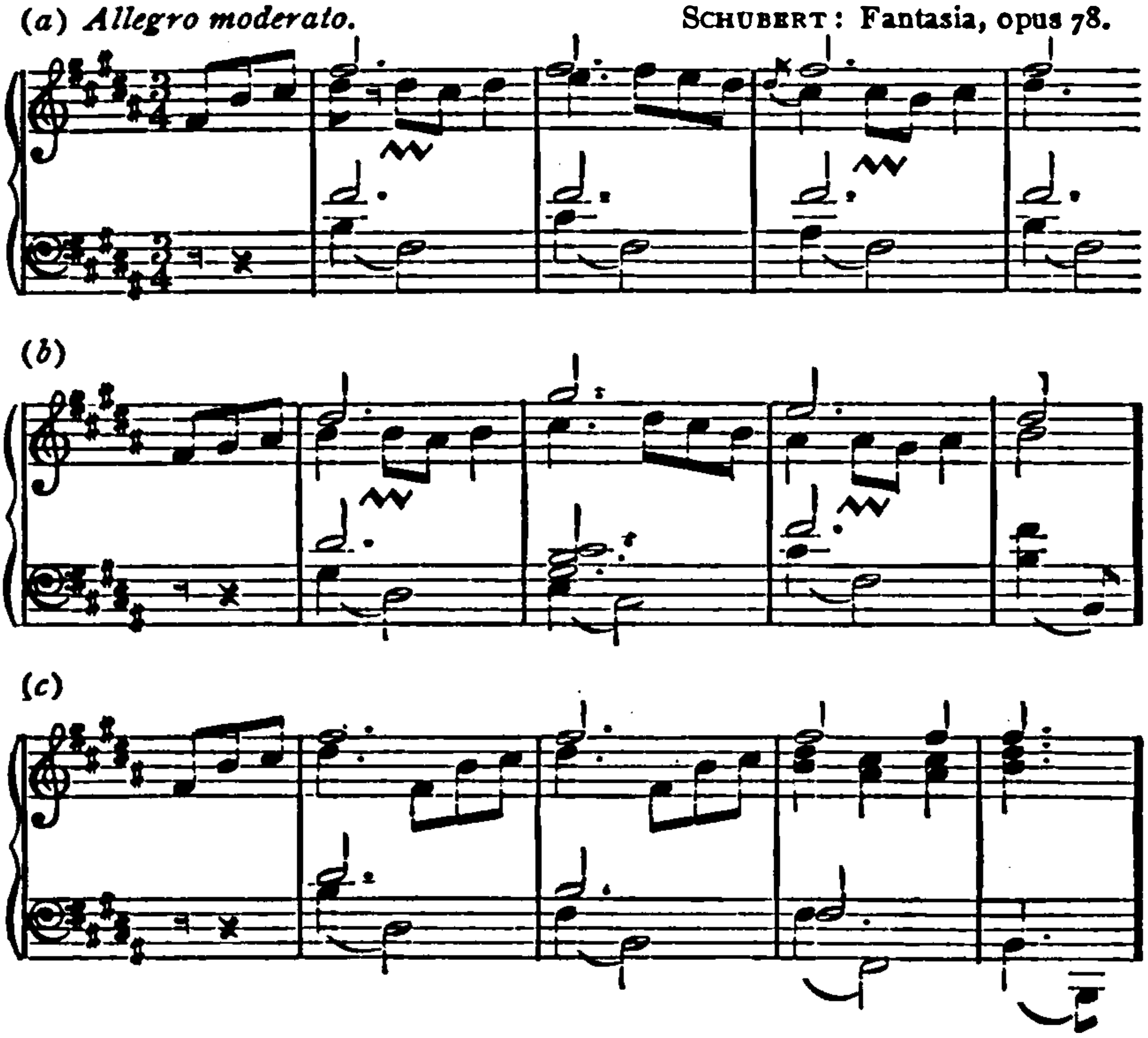
happily avoids too rigid a balance. But happier still is the freshness the second phrase gets from having its final long note delayed until the second beat of the measure, to which it pulls the accent expected on the first beat. Just listen to this several times, until you feel its magical charm. The pair of short phrases, too, are managed so that their balance is inexact—this being done by letting the second of the two give one of its beats to the final phrase. And this last phrase is made to take a different shape from any of the others by that long tone in it (three whole beats) which gives us a sense of completion, of coming to rest.

A beautiful melody, indeed; and now see the original idea, found in one of the sketch-books, out of which it was developed (Figure IVb). Do you observe how set, how inflexible, how sing-song, is the exact echoing of one phrase by the other? Do you see how much the second phrase loses by landing *kerflump* on the first beat instead of soaring over to the second? Do you notice that the tones leading up to the first accent are the same in number in the two phrases, while in the finished tune there are two of them in the first phrase, and three in the second? If you see these things, and think about them, you know already one of the most important differences between good music and bad.

One other example of delicate variety in phrase-balance will have to be enough for the present, though it is a subject we could study for years. Schubert begins the middle part of one of his minuets with the

delicious phrase you will find in Figure Va. Suppose, now, if it isn't too much of a stretch for your imagination, that you had written this phrase, and

FIGURE V.



were casting about for something to balance it. I think the chances are nine out of ten that you would hit upon another four-measure phrase, something like what I have put down at Figure Vb. And it wouldn't be bad, either. We might even be rather pleased with it, until we saw how Schubert solved the problem (Figure Vc). Once we had heard that fascinating group of phrases, two of one measure each, and one of two, making so unexpected yet so natural a balance for the first phrase, I hope we should have good taste

enough to wish never to hear again our own flat and vapid answer.

If after this example you still have any doubts as to the charm of variety in phrase-balance I can only advise you to take as a contrast some very monotonous series of phrases and feel their monotony for yourselves. Robert Schumann, great composer though he was, did not always avoid this pitfall of monotony, and if you will look at the theme of his very first published piece, the "Abegg Variations," opus 1, you will see an example of it. The motive is made out of the five tones A—B—E—G—G (in honor of a lady of that name), and the tune consists of no less than sixteen repetitions of this motive of five tones. It is true that the tones and the chords change, but the rhythm does not. Sixteen times, the same thing! It grows tiresome.

I don't want you, however, to get the impression that no music is good unless its phrases are of uneven lengths. There are so many kinds of variety possible in music that a skillful composer can keep up our interest in a long series of phrases of exactly similar length. In all simple music, indeed, like the folk-songs found among the uneducated people of all nations, or the popular airs we hear in our streets and music halls, the phrase-balance is very simple and regular—just as the meter is apt to be "sing-song" in popular poetry. In such music the necessary variety is got by other means.

We have now seen how single tones are grouped into motives of definite rhythm, how motives are built

up into phrases, and how phrases are in turn balanced in still larger groups something like the "couplets" (two rhyming lines) of poetry. There remains only one more step in this part of our study; we must see how these phrase-groups or couplets are built up into complete melodies. The principle in this last step in the composition of a tune (you remember that "composition" is simply the Latin for "putting together") is just the same as in the earlier ones: we try for as much variety as is consistent with perfect unity. Long experience has shown composers that the best way to get this is to put one or two contrasting phrases, for variety, in the middle of the tune, and then at the end to come back, for the sake of unity, to the phrases they started with.

The familiar old tune of "Nearer, My God, to Thee" will show you this plan of "statement, contrast, and restatement," as it is called. It consists of eight phrases, all exactly the same length. The third and fourth of these balance the first and second, all four together making up the first part of the tune —the statement. Notice, now, that the fifth phrase, which is answered by the sixth, introduces a little pleasant variety, by going higher in pitch and being more earnest in expression. These two make the contrast. Then finally, the seventh and eighth phrases restate the melody of the third and fourth, and thus bring us back to the point from which we started. You cannot fail to notice what satisfaction they thus give that part of your mind which cares for unity.

So simple and natural, and so delightful in its balance and orderliness, is this arrangement, in fact, that we find it used in a most surprising number of tunes, of all nations and all times. In "'Way Down Upon the Suwanee River" and in "My Old Kentucky Home," for example, you will find it used almost exactly as in "Nearer, My God, to Thee," except that the statement (first four phrases) is repeated before the contrast comes. In "Jerusalem the Golden" and the "Austrian Hymn" it is very clear. You will find it in "The Campbells are Comin'," "John Highlandman," "Auld Lang Syne," and many more.

In others you will find the arrangement of the phrases more complicated, less regular in balance, and yet clearly growing out of the idea of contrast and restatement. Just as the preacher first announces the text of his sermon, then discusses it, and at the end repeats it in all its simplicity, so the composers of all countries have used this "three-part form" as the ground plan of most of their tunes.

We have now followed the process of musical composition from single notes up to complete short tunes, seeing how at each step the aim of the composer is to get as much variety in his patterns as is possible without endangering their unity. Before we can follow this process any further, so as to see how tunes are combined in larger pieces, we shall have to go back to the seven tones of the scale that we were studying in Chapter II, and examine their ways a little more

closely. They make an odd family, those seven tones, each different from the others, yet all getting on comfortably together.

Allow me to make you a little better acquainted with them.

CHAPTER V

THE KEY-FAMILY AND ITS SEVEN MEMBERS

YOU remember we found out in Chapter II that the eighth step of any scale brings us back to the same tone as the first step, but that before getting to it we have to go through seven different tones. These seven tones, taken together as a group, form a sort of tonal family, called by musicians a "key," and named after the first step of their scale, which is the most important member of the family. Thus the tones C, D, E, F, G, A and B are said to make up the "key of C." Of course there are as many keys as there are different tones—that is, twelve—but for simplicity's sake we shall stick to this key of C for the present.

By far the most important member of the key of C is the tone which gives it its name, C, which is the first step, and also the eighth step, in the scale. C is, so to speak, the father of this particular family, and rules it with an iron hand. He always has the last word in any discussion (tune) and generally takes the first as well, or else gives it to his special favorites, E and G (Three and Five). Play over almost any tune in which only the white keys of the piano are used and you find that it ends with C, and begins

with either C, E or G. The first step or One of the key is thus its point of rest, to which we must return after our excursions among the other notes. It is the axis about which the key revolves; and all the other tones are important or unimportant, restful or restless, only because of their relations to this central tone, the One.

We said a moment ago, for instance, that tunes sometimes begin with Three or Five (that is, in the key of C, with E or G), but seldom with any of the other steps of the scale. You can easily see for yourselves why this is.

Striking C with your left hand (see Figure I) try all the combinations of two other notes with it, played by your right hand, that you can think of, just as in Chapter II you tried single notes. You will soon find that no other pair will "agree" with it so well as E and G. No others will sound so pleasant, so restful. F and A are the next best, but you won't be satisfied to stop with them—you won't wish to stop until they have moved down into E and G.

This kind of chord, got by sounding the One, Three and Five of any scale, and called a "triad" because it contains three tones, is the very backbone of all music. So common is it that we call it the "common chord"; yet so agreeable to the ear, and so restful to the mind, thanks to the "consonance" of its tones, that we can never get enough of it. The perfect blending of the three tones in it is one of nature's miracles, the more wonderful the more we think of it. Well says the poet Browning:

Here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.

One, Three, and Five, then, are very intimate companions, because they dwell together in such perfect harmony; and Three and Five therefore share the restful character of One. You can even end an entire tune on Three or Five without any feeling that you have not really got to the end; and though not many melodies thus end on Three or Five, some do, and a good many begin with them ("Nearer, My God, to Thee" begins with Three; "Onward, Christian Soldiers" begins with Five). On the contrary, it is the rarest thing in the world for a melody either to begin or to end with any of the other members of the tone-family, Two, Four, Six, or Seven. Why?

Because they do not blend with One and its common chord, the restful part of the key, but stand outside of it, and are therefore never satisfied, never quiet, but always energetic, striving, restless. Like top-heavy things that haven't anything solid to rest on, they tend to topple over into the nearest restful tones; or we may compare them to bits of iron which the restful tones attract like magnets.

Play C, E, G, and B and you will feel at once the striving and pushing of B (Seven) to get up to C. You positively cannot be comfortable until you take it there. So strong is this tendency of Seven to lead into Eight (which, you remember, is for the

harmony student the same as One) that it is often called the Leading-Note.

So it is with the other active tones. Six tries to get down to Five, as you will feel if you play C, E, and A together; Four tends toward Three (play C, F, and G, and feel the F pulling to E); and Two—well, Two isn't particular whether it goes to One or to Three, so long as it finds rest somewhere.

Now, the great advantage to the musician of all these pulls and pushes of the active tones is that they enable him to make his tunes press on and on, keeping our interest as they go, and never completely satisfying us until, at the end, they come to rest on One. When we get back to that One, we feel all the comfort of reaching home after a long journey; and, meanwhile, we have thoroughly enjoyed our adventures abroad. That is the double pleasure that the contrast of active and restful tones makes possible to us—the pleasure of motion, action, play, and the pleasure of quietude, inaction, rest. Life would be terribly monotonous if we had to sit at home in an easy-chair before the fire all day long; and on the other hand it would be very fatiguing if we had no home, and, like the tramps who live in the streets, were always obliged to "keep moving." So music would be stupid if all its tones were restful, and exceedingly uneasy and trying to our nerves if they were all restless: it is the contrast of the two kinds which makes it both stimulating and quieting.

This contrast is brought out with the utmost vividness at the very end of a tune, in what is called the

"cadence," from a word meaning "fall," and first applied to the fall of the voice at the end of a sentence. The object of the cadence is to close a tune just as the fall of the voice closes a sentence; and it does this by combining two chords, the first containing several active tones and being therefore very energetic and pushing, and the second containing nothing but restful tones. Did you ever hear of the trick that was played on Mendelssohn, the great composer, with a cadence of this kind?

It seems that a friend of his, a practical joker, learning that he was fond of lying late in bed, played loudly on his piano, early one morning, the following chord: with the left hand, G and B below middle C; with the right hand, F and D above middle C. Just that one chord he played, and then sat down to see what would happen. Poor Mendelssohn, trying to get his morning nap, heard that unhappy Seven, and Four, and Two, and waited eagerly for them to find rest in the restful tones near them. In vain—nothing more was heard. He grew more and more uneasy, he fidgeted about in bed, he tried to forget that chord. No use! He seized a dressing gown and rushing down stairs to the piano, played—but wait: I'm not going to tell you what he played, for I want you to find it out for yourselves.

Just as in sentences there are commas, semicolons, and so on, as well as periods, so there are chords in music that make a slighter stop than the tonic chord (that is, the chord on One) does. These are called half-cadences, and serve to close the middle phrases

of a tune: the most important of them are the "dominant chord," consisting of Five, Seven, and Two, and the "subdominant chord," consisting of Four, Six, and Eight (or One). As each contains active tones, neither can ever give complete rest; but the tune may poise upon such a chord for a moment with good effect. Thus for example the first, third, and seventh phrases of "Nearer, My God, to Thee," end on the subdominant; the second and sixth on the dominant; the fourth, fifth, and eighth on the tonic, or chord of rest. (The fifth, however, is less restful than the others because the melody stops on Five instead of on One.)

Have you ever noticed how a canary bird in a cage will fly from his perch to the side of the cage, linger a moment on one of the bars there, flutter to another opposite, and another and another, and finally go back to the perch? Well, that is the way a tune flies. The tonic chord is its perch from which it starts, and to which it returns; the other chords in the half-cadences are the bars that afford it brief resting places during its flight.

This plan of ending the different phrases of a tune on different chords, while the One chord, the center and resting point of all the chords, is saved for the end of the tune as a whole, gives us still another kind of variety in unity, different from any we have yet studied. It is the special kind of variety in unity made possible by *harmony*, and depends on *using as contrasting centers the different chords of a key.*

We have next to study a still more interesting kind of variety in unity which naturally grows out of this: the kind in which, instead of merely contrasting chords, all in one key, we contrast *whole keys*, one with another. In order to do this we have to be able to pass from one key into another. As a help to understanding how this is possible, I want to talk a moment about something that you may think has nothing to do with music—and that is, kaleidoscopes, those toys through which you see the loveliest figures, made of bits of colored glass.
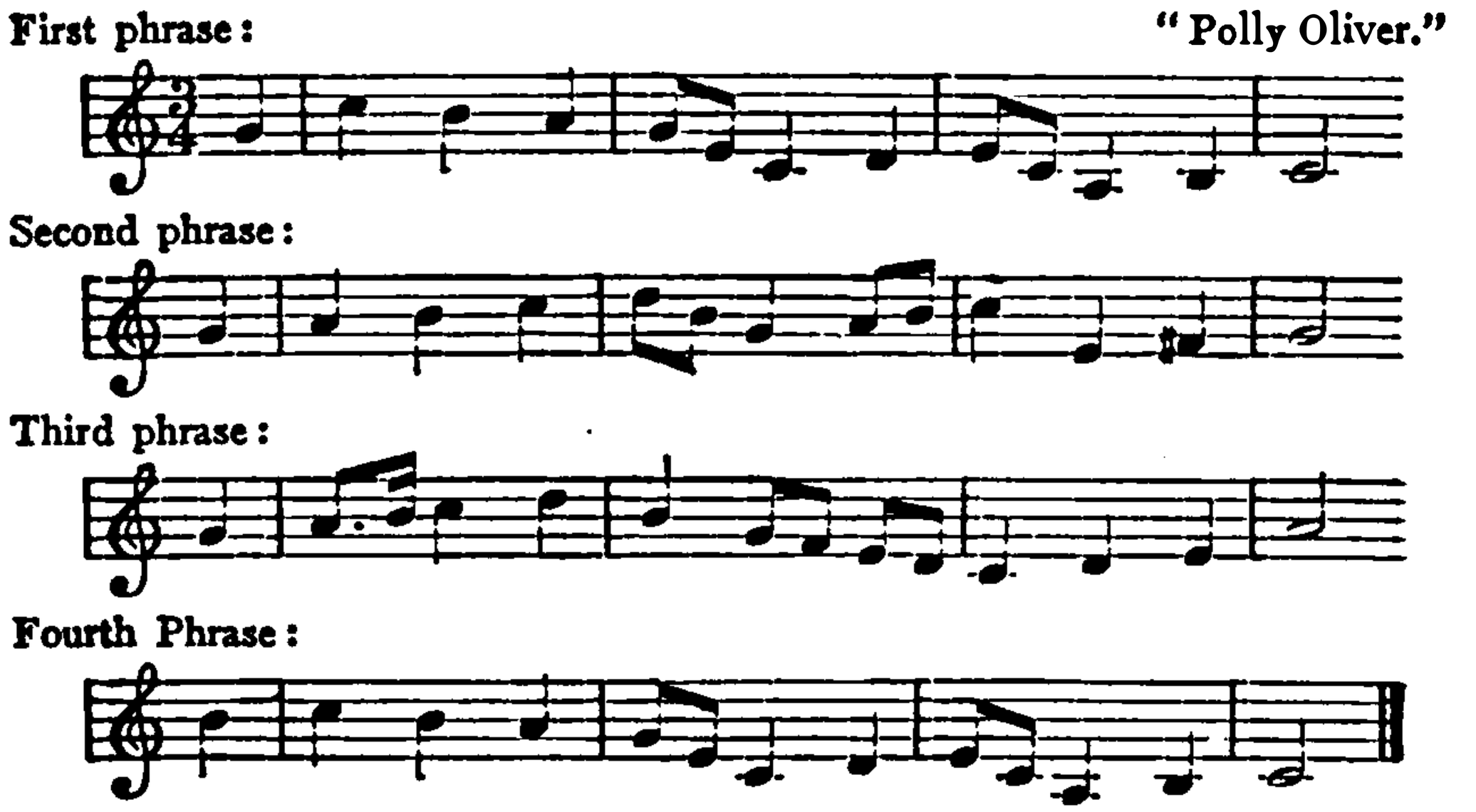
Do you remember how the bits of glass group themselves in certain ways? Here is a triangular blue bit, we will say, which makes the center round which everything hangs; nothing else is so important as that. But now turn your wrist just the tiniest bit, and, Presto, change! the whole figure melts and re-forms itself, and now that blue triangle is only an unimportant speck on the outer edge. And so on for every turn of your wrist: the pieces of glass are always the same, but the figures are always different. Why? Because these bits of glass keep getting into new *relations* to each other.

Just so is it in music. The twelve tones (represented by the seven white keys and the five black of the piano) are the bits of colored glass, and the keys or tone-families are the figures they make as the composer turns his wrist and jostles them about. For a while C may be One, the center of the whole figure, called the key of C, and everything else will be grouped about it; then it may become, say, only Four,

no longer the center of rest, but restless until it can get to B—the One, or center of the key, now being G; another turn of the kaleidoscope, and C may be Seven, in which case we shall be in the key of D-flat. *In itself*, you notice, C is no more important than the bit of blue glass: all depends on the grouping, on the relations of the tones or of the pieces of glass, as the case may be. Musicians have a special name for this change of grouping in the tones; they call it "modulation," and say that they "modulate" from the key of C to the key of G, for example, when they change from considering C as One to considering it as Four.

The old English folk-song, "Polly Oliver," shown in Figure VI, will make this clear. It consists, you

FIGURE VI.



see, of four phrases, each four measures long. The first is plainly in the key of C, and ends solidly on One with a good, strong, full cadence. The second, however, though it begins in C, doesn't stay there; when

you get to the C in its third measure you don't feel that that is a One, satisfactory to end on; you feel it rather as a Four and are not satisfied till it is followed by E (Six), F-sharp (Seven), and G (Eight). In fact, the tune has modulated to the key of G, in which this second phrase ends with a full cadence. The third and fourth phrases are in C again, the third ending with a half-cadence on the chord of F ("subdominant"), and the fourth ending the tune satisfactorily with a full cadence on C as One.

You will feel, I am sure, after playing or singing the tune through once or twice, how much charm there is in this new kind of variety in unity that modulation gives us. Although practically the same tones are used in all these four phrases, they sound quite different in the second from what they do in the others, because our minds group them differently. You must have noticed how some wall papers and carpets can be looked at in different ways: one moment you see blue figures on a red background, let us say, and the next you see red figures on a blue background —it all depends on how you look. In the same way tones actually sound different when you change your way of hearing them. Hear C, E, G, as One, Three, and Five, and they are restful, satisfying, quiet. Hear them as Four, Six, and Eight, and they are restless, because Four and Six pull toward Three and Five. Hear them as Five, Seven, and Two, and they still pull, but in a different direction (Seven to Eight, and Two to Three). By modulation, accordingly, the effects possible to the musician are much

enriched. Each of his twelve tones may now have any one of twelve different relationships, and by it may take him into any one of twelve different keys. Yet by taking care to end his tune in the key he started out in, he can bind all this variety into thorough unity.

This variety produced by contrasting different keys, or "tonalities," as they are sometimes called, is one of the composer's most helpful means for avoiding monotony. Though short pieces may get on without modulation, a long piece all in one key would grow frightfully tiresome. Indeed, the longer the piece, the more keys will generally be made use of. Let me warn you, however, against fancying that the composer picks out these keys at random. I hope you are beginning to feel by this time that nothing goes at random in music, all being governed by laws which we feel, even when we cannot put them into words.

The law which governs the composer's selection of his keys is this: The more tones any two keys share between them the more nearly related they are, and the greater will be the impression of unity we get from their use. The fewer tones they have in common, the less nearly related they will be, and the greater will be the impression of variety they give. G is nearly related to C, because F-sharp is the only tone in it which is not also in C. D-flat is remote —far away—from C, because F and C are the only tones we find in both. Whether the composer uses a near or a remote key at any particular place, depends on just what effect he wishes to produce.

Besides change of key, there is one other means of variety which we may as well speak of here. By *lowering* Three and Six, in any key, we get a modified form of it, a different *mode*, as we say, strikingly different in effect. It is called the minor mode, because the distance from One up to Three or to Six is *smaller* than in the ordinary or major mode of the key. Thus in the key of C, the minor mode is obtained by lowering E to E-flat, and A to A-flat. The minor mode has a darker, more gloomy color than the major mode, and affords a fine contrast to it, within the limits of the single key.

CHAPTER VI

HOW MELODIES ARE BUILT INTO PIECES

WE are now ready to attack that question of how tunes are combined into complete pieces, a question very important to us, since only by understanding something of it shall we learn how to follow the music we hear at concerts. Those who know nothing of "form," as this building up of tunes into pieces is called, cannot "make head nor tail," as we say, of a symphony or a sonata, and naturally prefer a song or an opera. Form is to music a good deal what plot is to a story: it is the order in which things happen.

Now there is no limit to the number of ways in which tunes may be built up into complete pieces, and if we were to try to examine them all in detail it would be like trying to describe all the horses in the world in detail—just how long each one's tail was, and just how many hairs he had on his left ear. But fortunately that isn't necessary in order to get a good working idea of a horse; and no more is it necessary to describe all pieces in order to get a good working idea of musical form. All that is needed is a description of certain general qualities that we find in all horses, or pieces, as the case may be. However much

horses' tails may differ in length, we find that every horse has, for example, four legs that "match"; a horse with legs that didn't match would tip over, and a horse that couldn't stand up would be a pretty poor apology for a horse! In the same way, in spite of the thousand small differences in pieces of music, we find that all the great composers have agreed on certain general ways of writing, the neglect of which would make their music either monotonous or hotch-potch; and monotonous or hotch-potch music is as bad as a horse that can't stand up.

It is these general ways of stringing tunes, like beads, on to a thread of musical form, that we have to study in this chapter. A good way to study them will be to make believe that we are ourselves composing music.

Suppose, then, that a musical idea, a short motive of several tones, has occurred to us. What shall we do with it? First, of course, we shall add more to it until it makes a phrase; and we shall make other phrases somewhat like it, that balance it. In this way we can build up a short tune like "Polly Oliver" (Figure VI). Then will come the question: What next? It would be tiresome to repeat it right over again; we want a change—something new: very well, then, why not write another tune on a different motive? And as we are trying for contrast, let us also use another key, though one not too far away.

Here are our two tunes, now; shall we keep on and write a third? Well, don't you think that would seem rather wandering, and make our hearers wonder

whether we were going on that way all day long? I think it would be much better, now we have got our variety, to go back and have the first tune over again: that would satisfy our feeling for unity, both of idea or musical motive, and of key. In this way we get a complete little piece, consisting of first tune or statement, second tune or contrast, and first tune over again or restatement. You will notice that this was just the way the *phrases* were arranged in "Nearer, My God, to Thee" and other tunes we studied in Chapter V; the only difference is that now we are arranging whole tunes in a piece, instead of phrases in a tune. The fact that the arrangement is the same shows how deep-seated in our minds is the desire for variety in unity which this arrangement satisfies more easily and simply than any other. So natural is it to arrange musical thoughts in this way that this Three-part form or Three-part song-form, as it is called, is found in thousands of songs, dances, operatic arias, and instrumental pieces.

Looking at our little piece more carefully, one or two changes occur to us. Rather than have the first part come to so complete a stop we may prefer to have it "modulate" to the key in which the second part is to be, thus binding the two more closely together. Or again, we may think it unnecessary to repeat the whole of the first part after the second, finding it better to shorten and combine the second and third parts. In that case the first idea will not be so definitely repeated, but its ending will be kept, and will give the needed feeling of unity. Our piece will then

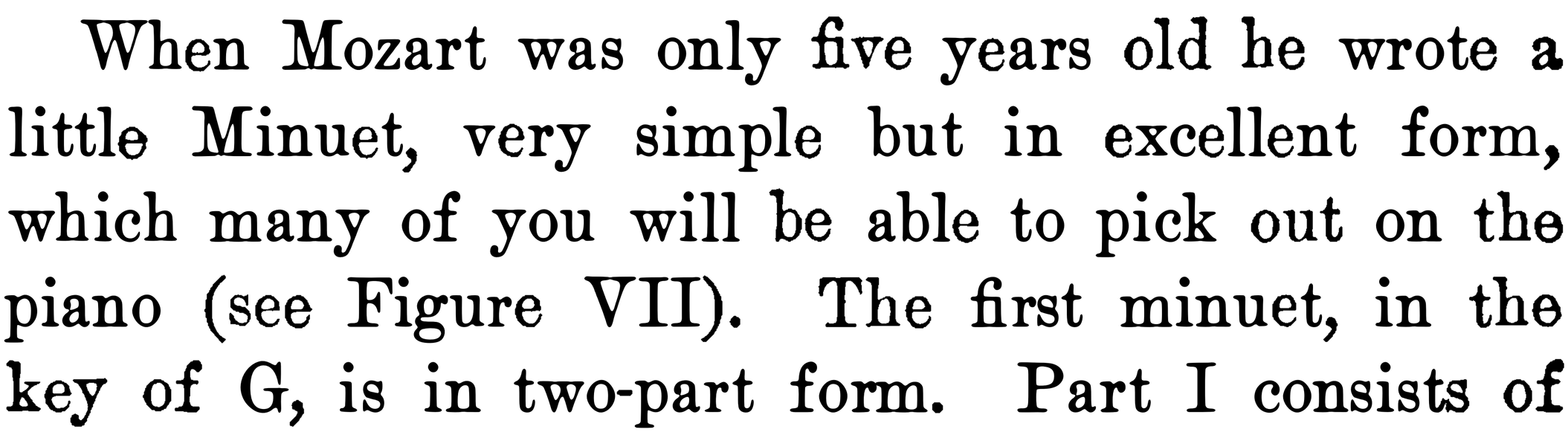
consist of only two instead of three parts, of which the second begins in the key of contrast but modulates back to the home key and ends there with the same cadence (ending-passage) that we heard in the first. This Two-part form is also very popular with composers of all countries and times.
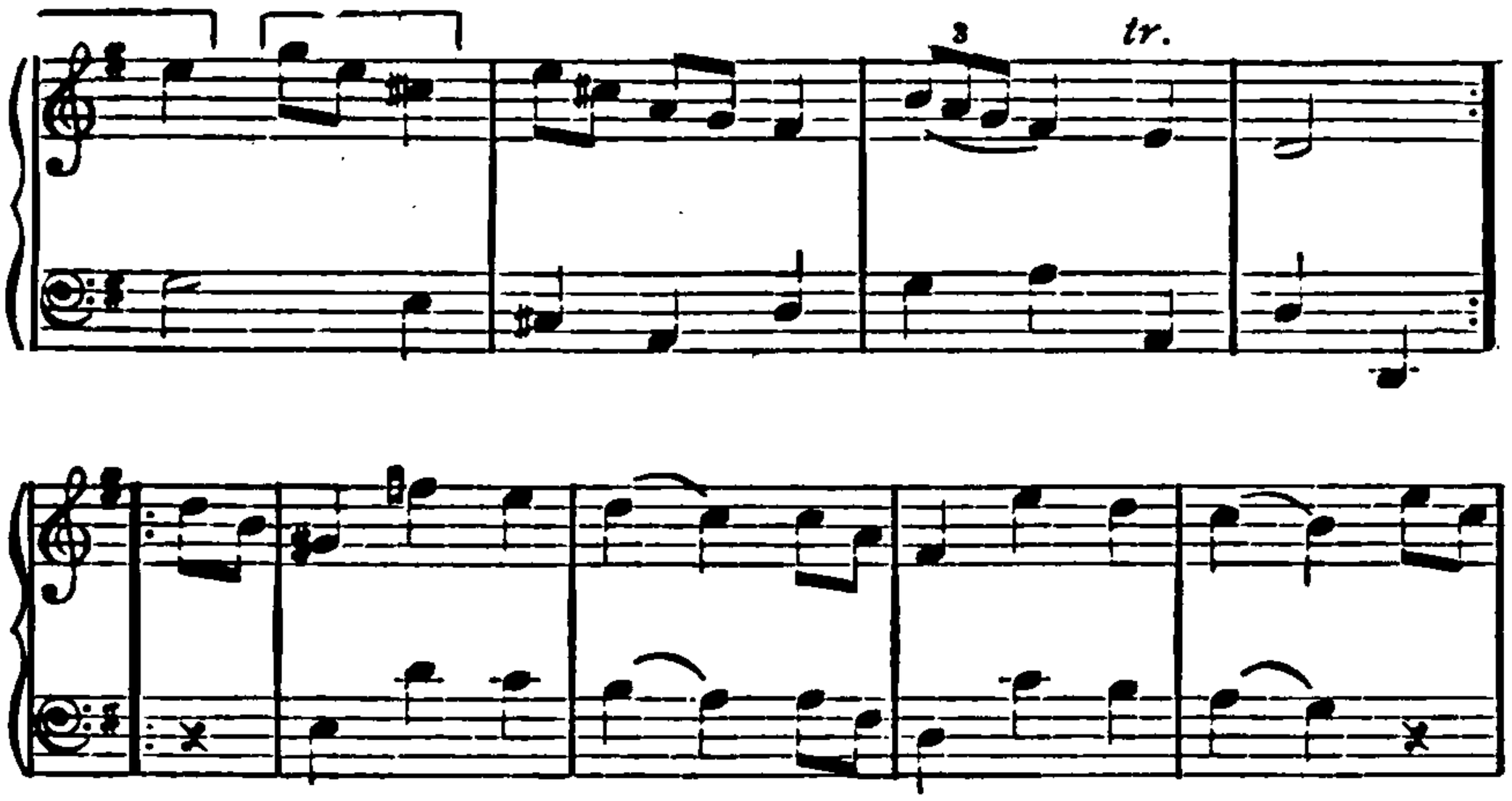
If our piece is now too short to please us, all we have to do is to apply again the same plan of arrangement, and write a second piece which will serve as a contrast to the first, after which we can repeat it. For this we shall naturally choose some *other* key of contrast than that already used. This plan gives us the form used in hundreds of minuets, from those written in the eighteenth century down to those found in modern sonatas and symphonies. The second piece in the minuet is often marked "Trio," or "Minuet II," and at the end of it is written "Minuet da capo" —that is, the minuet (first piece) to be played again "from the beginning."

When Mozart was only five years old he wrote a little Minuet, very simple but in excellent form, which many of you will be able to pick out on the piano (see Figure VII). The first minuet, in the key of G, is in two-part form. Part I consists of
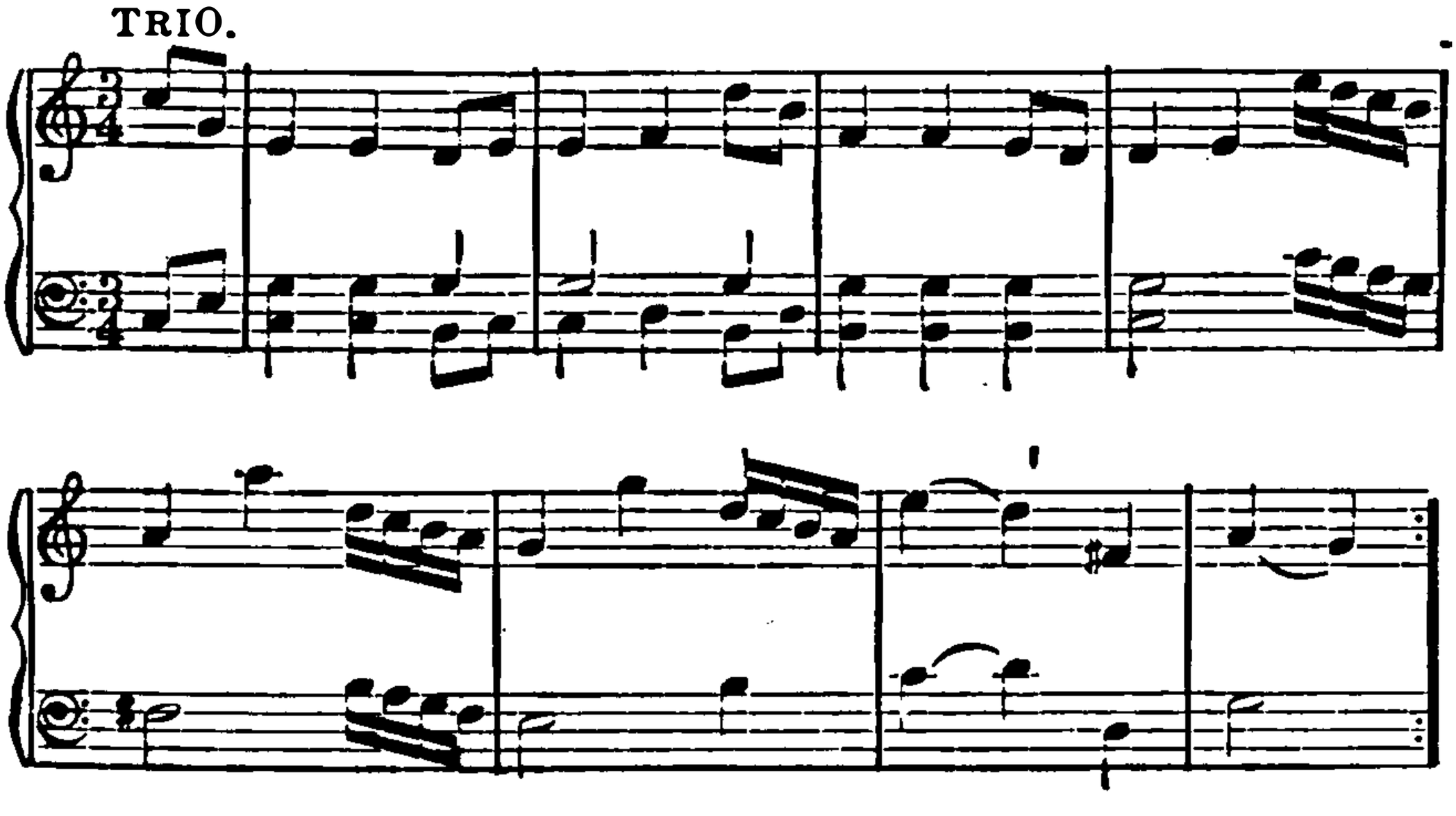
FIGURE VII.
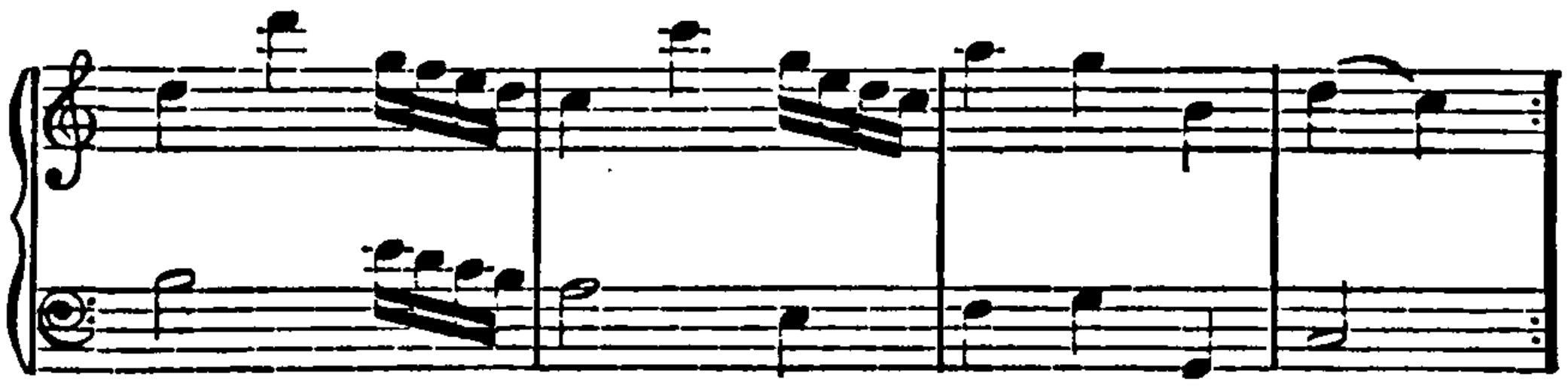
MOZART: Minuet written by the composer in his fifth year.





TRIO.





Minuet Da Capo.

two two-measure phrases, balancing each other, and both together balanced by a single four-measure phrase in which the music modulates to the related key of D. This part (as well as the second) is repeated, which was often done. The second part has phrases of just the same lengths, and returns to the home-key of G. Notice how alike are the endings of both parts. The second minuet, or Trio, is in the contrasting key of C, with a modulation at the end of the first part to G, and return in the second part. After it, the first minuet is played again, so that we end as we began in the "home-key" of G.

Mozart, Haydn, and the other composers of the eighteenth century wrote most of their minuets either practically just like this one, or else with one or both of the contrasting pieces in Three-part form; the parts were, of course, a little longer and more complicated than they are here. With Beethoven the minuet kept the same general outline, but took on still larger proportions; and sometimes he repeated the Trio again after the Da capo and ended with the first minuet played for the *third* time. Schumann, taking a hint from this, sometimes used his minuet three times, but made a new and different Trio for his second contrast, so that the order of the whole

was: Minuet, Trio I, Minuet, Trio II, Minuet. In spite of all these changes, the idea underlying the minuet is always that of presenting short tunes so that they will contrast well, and of binding them together by repeating the first at the end.

But there is another way of getting variety besides changing the tune. Keeping the same tune, we can repeat it several times, *each time with a different accompaniment.* If, for instance, we have first used solid chords for it, the second time we will have a rippling figure, the third time staccato chords, the fourth time scales and runs, and so on as long as we care to keep it up. This is what is called making variations on a Theme, and has always been popular: composers like it because it calls all their ingenuity into play, performers like it because the rapid passages give them a chance to play brilliantly, and audiences like it because it is easy to follow, the theme remaining the same throughout.

The chief fault of the Theme-and-Variations form is that unless it is most cleverly managed it grows monotonous, since the contrast is all in the dress which the theme is made to wear, and not a bit in the theme itself. It is a musical masquerade in a hundred different costumes—the person under the disguise is always the same. What would interest us far more than such changes in the *outside* of the music would be a real *inward* change—a growth and development in the melodies themselves.

And so the most interesting of all musical forms, when we rightly understand them, are neither those in

which tunes are merely repeated one after another, as in the song-forms and minuet, nor those in which a single tune is decked up in finery like a doll, as in variations, but rather those in which the melodies are like seeds from which grow, gradually, and by a law of their own nature, the most rare and beautiful plants. Of all the kinds of study which music offers, perhaps the most fascinating is this tracing of a long movement of a sonata or symphony back to a few short motives of half a dozen tones each, out of which it has grown just as slowly and surely, and just as wonderfully, as " great oaks from little acorns grow."

One of the greatest masters of this art of developing themes is Beethoven; and we can learn more about it by looking at a few examples from him than by any amount of description. Here are the little germs of melody, or motives, out of which grows most of the first movement of his splendid " Eroica " Symphony: two of them, you see, both of four notes, but easily

FIGURE VIII.

BEETHOVEN: Third Symphony.
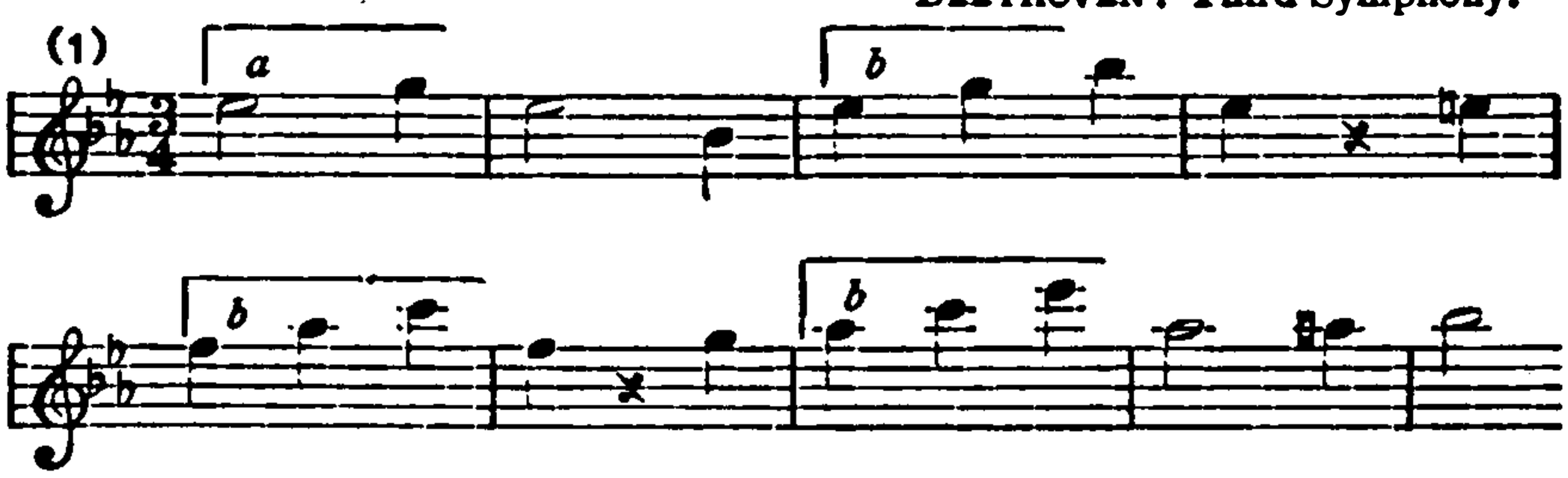


told apart by their rhythm (Figure VIII). In Figure IX I have put down a few of the developments that these short motives go through, and I think if you will examine them carefully you will agree with me that it is almost miraculous how much Beethoven makes out of so little.

How Melodies are Built into Pieces

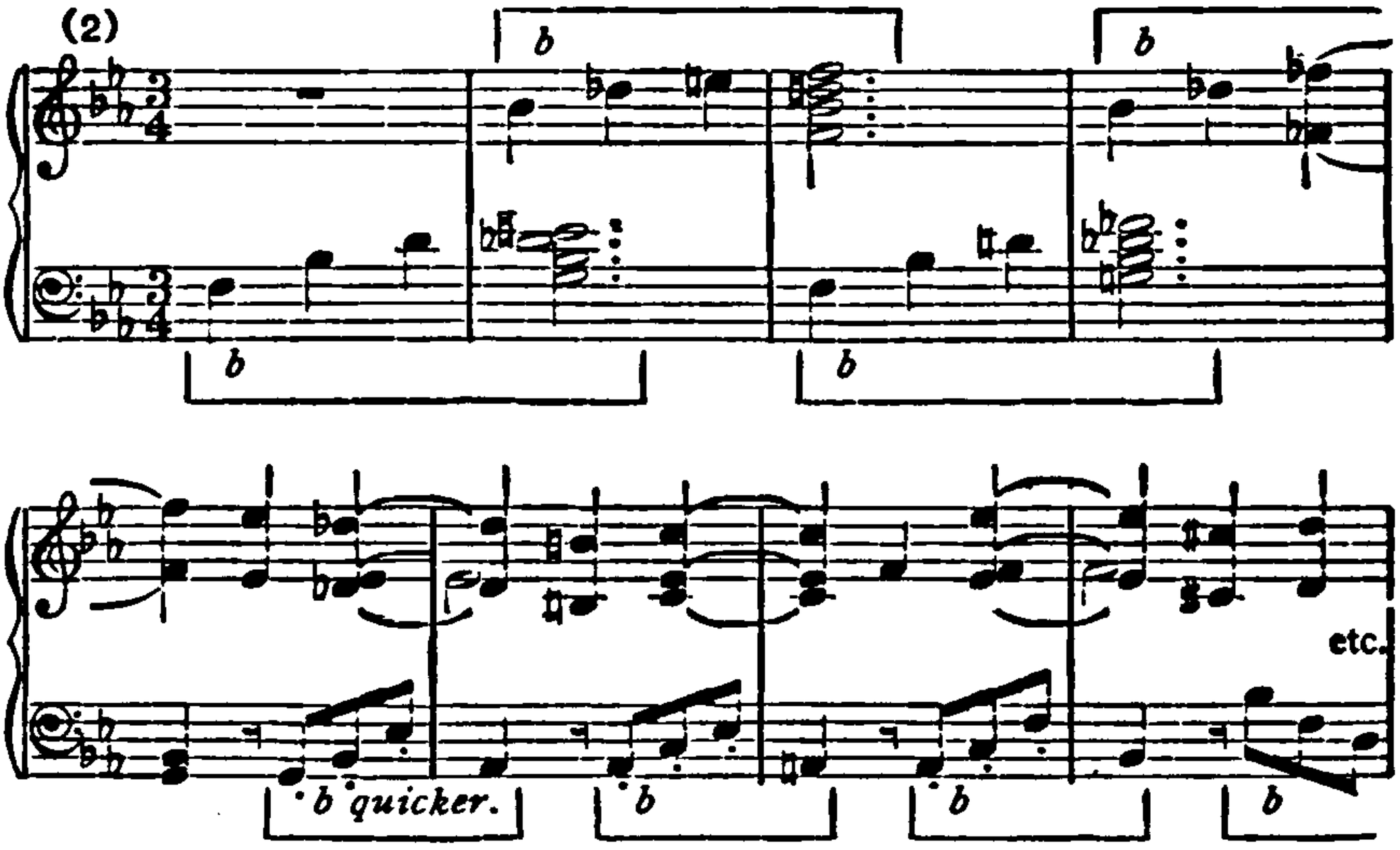
FIGURE IX.

BEETHOVEN: Third Symphony.
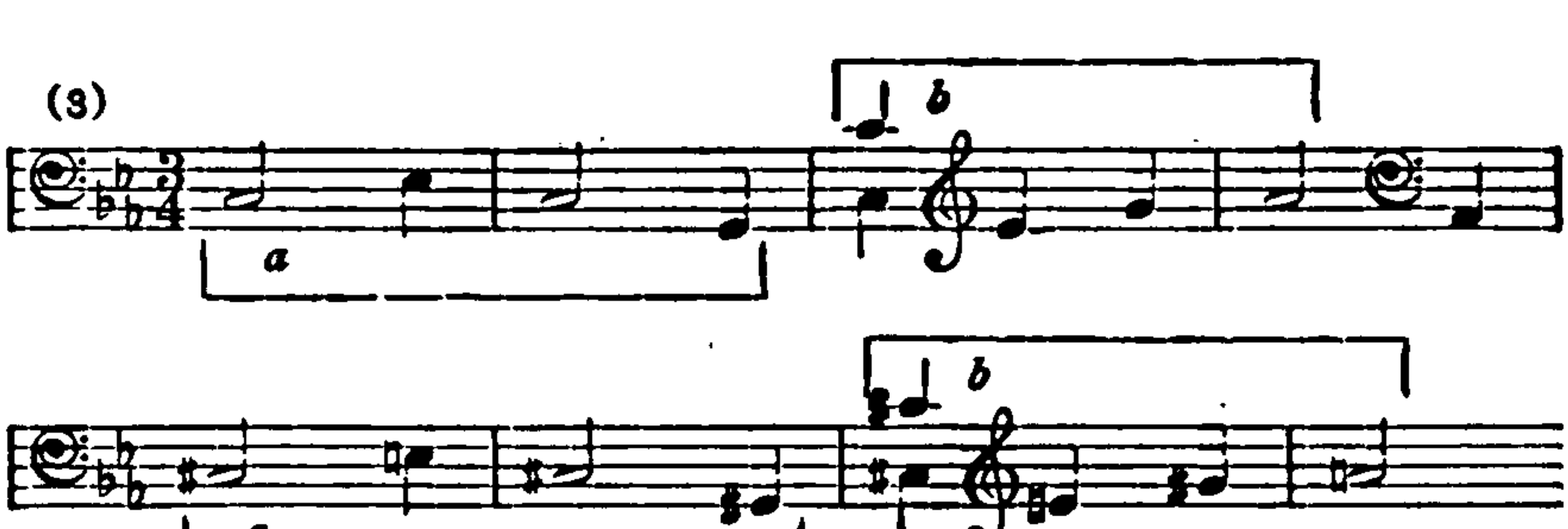
(1)
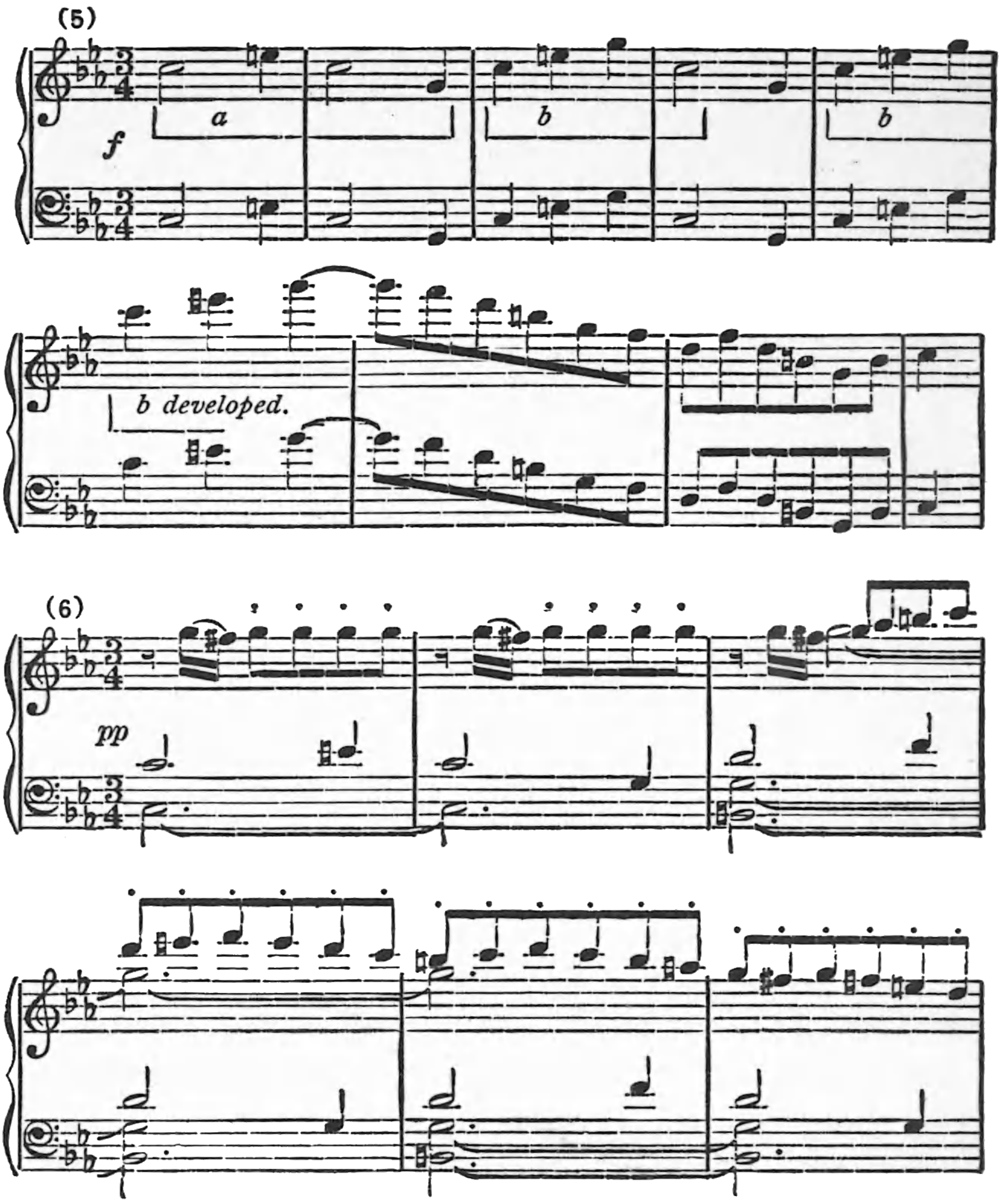


(2)



(3)



(4)



In No. 1 he repeats *b* several times, putting it higher and higher each time, and thus making it more and more exciting. *b* is also used in No. 2, but here it makes a sort of conversation between a lower voice[1] and a higher, one taking it up before the other is through with it. Later it comes in in the bass in a time twice as quick as before; notice how lively and

[1] Each distinct line of melody in the music is called a "voice," even if it is played instead of sung.

elastic this change makes it—it seems fairly to "hop, skip and jump." Variety of key is added to the other kinds of variety in No. 3; we get *a* in the bass and *b* in the treble (slightly changed) first in the key of C minor, and then in C-sharp minor. You don't have to recognize the keys to feel the effect of pushing on that this modulation gives.

In No. 4 Beethoven combines with motive *a* in the bass a new and more restless rhythm in the treble. No. 5 presents the motives in the major, loud and bold, and extends them by adding four measures of great energy that grow naturally out of *b*. The final example, No. 6, shows *a* in the middle, soft and mysterious, long-held notes in the bass, and a new melody, dainty, tripping, staccato, at the top. All of these contrasting ideas you will notice grow out of the original germ quite simply and spontaneously, and are enough like it so that we feel they all belong together.

Once composers had learned how to develop their themes in this way it was easy to make pieces much longer and more interesting than minuets; and there grew up for such longer pieces a good many different forms, of which the most important were the sonata-form and the rondo. These are built, just as much as the smaller forms, on the plan of statement, contrast, and restatement. This simple and natural scheme is applied both to the order of the themes or melodies, and to the order of the keys used (beginning in the home-key, modulating more or less widely in the middle, and returning home at the end), and can be

traced in a Beethoven symphony quite as clearly as in a Mozart minuet. The difference is that in the larger works there are more separate themes, each theme is longer, and all are developed more thoroughly. The *dimensions* are greater, but the *shape* is the same.

In this last combination, then, of the long series that we have followed out together (tones into motives, motives into phrases, phrases into groups, groups into tunes, and tunes into complete pieces) the composer aims just as much as in any of the others at variety in unity. The greatest masters of form, like Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, are those who succeed in combining the most contrasting melodies, rhythms, and keys in such a way that they clearly *belong together*, and we feel that we could not take out a single block without bringing down the whole house. To make music so perfect in form as this is the most difficult of all the tasks of the composer; for the larger the blocks he has to build with, the harder it is to fit them together both ingeniously and solidly, the more danger is there that his building will be either heavy and "chunky," or insecure. It is comparatively easy to give a short tune plenty of variety; but in giving a symphony enough variety to keep it from becoming tiresome, you will make it a mere bundle of fragments unless you are a really great artist.

Moreover (and this is what is particularly important to us as listeners), the larger forms are not only harder than the small to write, they are also much

harder to hear. A piece of music, you see, is never given to us all at once, in a single instant of time, as a picture or a statue is; it is doled out to us bit by bit; when we get to the middle of even the shortest tune we can no longer hear the beginning, and when we get to the end we can no longer hear the middle. We *hear* nothing but single tones, one at a time; only by *remembering* them and connecting in our minds what we remember with what we now hear do we grasp the tune, which is a *line* rather a series of dots. Therefore the longer a melody is the more of a strain is put upon our memory to hear it *as* a melody. We are likely, especially if our ears are inattentive or untrained, to forget the beginning before we hear the end. In this case we no more hear the melody than we should see a picture of which we covered up one half, while we looked at the other.

If this is the case with a short melody, how much more with a movement from a sonata or a symphony lasting ten or fifteen minutes! Here we have to listen to and remember perhaps half a dozen different themes, to notice the changes made in each as it is developed, and to recognize any one when it is repeated, after a space of several minutes filled with other things. Only in this way can we get a clear picture of the beautiful panorama of tones that has been unrolled before our ears. It is easy to see why so many of us enjoy a simple tune, and so few a symphony of Beethoven. Most of us have never trained our musical memories enough to grasp the symphony—we don't really perceive its shape at all, any more than

a fly walking on an orange perceives that it is round.

But is it worth while, you ask, to work one's memory so hard, simply in order to feel the shape of a piece of music? Why not just enjoy the separate tunes, one after another, as they come along? Well, you would only have to push that idea one step further to ask: Why feel the shape of even a short tune, why not just enjoy the separate notes, one after another, as they come along? And this is doubtless as far as some people ever get toward enjoying music. Like Charles Lamb, they are "sentimentally disposed to harmony, but organically incapable of a tune." But if you can grasp a tune you will surely insist that your pleasure in music is keener than theirs. Why not make it as much keener again by learning to grasp a whole group of tunes?

CHAPTER VII

THE FEELINGS AROUSED BY MUSIC

WHAT I called the "sensuous" and the "æsthetic" appeals of music we have now studied with some care. There remains the emotional appeal, the power that music has to arouse our feelings; this we shall discuss in the present chapter. The next chapter will continue this part of our subject by showing how certain pieces of music (not by any means all) not only call up feelings but give us definite ideas or even tell us stories. In reading both these chapters about expression I hope you will constantly bear in mind how important to this third or expressive value of music is the second, æsthetic value we have been studying. Without beauty music cannot be deeply expressive.

Have you ever, at a concert, when a march, or some such strongly rhythmic piece was being played, happened to notice the audience all keeping time?—the heads bobbing and the feet tapping? Have you found yourself at it, and realized how pleased and excited you were by the regular motions? If you have, you will hardly be surprised when I tell you that however little your body may have been moving, however proper and dignified you may have looked, *your mind*

was dancing. By sympathy with the music your muscles pulled and pushed as if they would force you to dance. You were too polite to do that; you kept almost perfectly still, only the nodding head or the tapping fingers or toes betraying you; but your mind, just the same, was dancing, and the delightful exhilaration of dancing filled it as you listened to the swinging, swaying music.

This example gives us a glimpse of the way in which all music rouses our feelings, and shows how different it is from the way paintings and statues make their appeal. A picture or a statue shows us something outside ourselves; we think first of this object—say a group of soldiers charging the enemy; and the feelings of activity, courage and adventure which it suggests come to us only gradually as we think about it. Critics call this kind of expression "objective," because it leads from the object or thing to the feelings that that thing calls up. Now music does not thus show us anything definite. A military march, for example, does not present a picture of some particular battle—Gettysburg or Bull Run. It works just the other way. It begins by churning up our feelings, plunging us without our knowing how or why into an energetic state of mind, working directly on us, the "subjects" or persons acted upon. This "subjective" excitement may then arouse definite ideas in our minds; but these ideas will come second, not first as in the case of the picture. Music must always start by making us feel "queer inside."

In order to understand how mere sounds can so

powerfully stir us, we have only to consider how short a step it is with us from feelings to movements, and how closely feelings and movements are therefore connected in our minds. Even the oldest and most sedate of us can remember, I am sure, how, as small children, we used to jump and clap our hands when we heard any good news. Our feelings of delight had to vent themselves in such bodily movements, or we should "burst." In the same way savages, who have in grown-up bodies the minds of small children, express joy by all manner of leaping and skipping and kicking. To dance, in short, is natural to every man in his moments of energy and health; it is only the fear of making fools of ourselves in public that keeps our feet glued to the earth and our arms fastened to our sides on a fine spring morning.

If vigorous bodily movements are thus the natural companions of happy energetic feelings, it is not hard to see how such movements, even if only suggested and not carried out, will arouse these feelings. When we hear music in the rhythm of the march or two-step we have a strong impulse to go through the actual steps with it; this impulse we fight, and allow ourselves only the tapping and bobbing I spoke of; but even this slight imitation of the dance movements fills our minds with the excitement, the energy, the joy in living, that we associate with such motions. Listening to dance music is almost as exhilarating as actual dancing.

On the other hand, when we are sad we no longer

make quick or energetic movements; our sorrow, which is a sort of weariness of the heart, makes all our motions heavy, slow, and unwilling. As a result, we connect in our minds such slow motions with sadness, just as we connect quick ones with joy; and music that suggests slow motions—a funeral march, for instance—plunges us at once into a mood of sadness.

Feelings of sorrow, however, express themselves not only, or even chiefly, in movements, but rather in moanings and wailings of the voice; and this brings us to another element in musical expression. Our moods of sadness probably find quite as natural an expression in groans and cries as our joys find in bodily motions: familiar examples are the bawling of very small babies, and the crooning and chanting of the funeral ceremonies of savages. It is a little harder to show how music suggests such cries than it is to show how it suggests motions. But I fancy you must sometimes have noticed, after hard listening to music which moved you deeply, a sense of aching fatigue in the muscles of your throat. This shows, when we stop to think of it, that song-like music gives us an impulse to sing just as dance-like music makes us want to dance; in each case we tend to "imitate," to do just what the music is doing; we nip this tendency in the bud, but not before we have got the same *feelings* that we should have got by carrying it out.

Here is what we have so far learned, put into a few sentences:

1. *The expression of joy in music is due largely to its suggesting by strong accents the bodily motions we make when joyful, although*

2. *These motions are only suggested, not carried out.*

3. *The expression of sorrow in music is due largely to its suggesting by rising and falling tones the cries we make when sorrowful, although*

4. *These cries are only suggested, not actually uttered.*

Looking now a little more closely at these two elements of expression, which we may call the dance element and the song element, we shall be surprised to see how close is the connection between what the music does and how it makes us feel. Great rapidity of movement, for instance, always agitates us—so much so that after a rushing *allegro vivace*, although we have been sitting quite sedately in our seats all through it, we sometimes feel fairly breathless. Slow, even, stately movement gives us a sympathetic sense of deliberateness and solidity, or fills our mind with noble feelings. *Regular* motion, in which the tones are all of the same length, marching on irresistibly, gives an impression of overwhelming power, as we see in some of the grand climaxes of Tschaikowsky's "Pathetic Symphony." The process of gradual going faster and faster, called the "accelerando," is always stimulating; the "ritardando" (a getting slower) is usually quieting and restful. It is interesting to notice, however, that sometimes a

slowing of the motion is just the reverse of quieting, as for instance, when at the end of a long climax the pace becomes more deliberate and majestic. This may be because such deliberateness suggests the calm energy with which we move when we are intensely in earnest.

Passing next to the song element in expression, we find that a general rule is this: The greater the effort that would be needed to produce a sound by our own voices, the more exciting to our feelings will be that sound, however it is produced. Accordingly, loud sounds are more exciting than soft, and high sounds are more exciting than low; for to sing loud requires more breath, and therefore more activity of the chest muscles, than to sing softly, and to sing high requires more tightly pulled vocal cords, and therefore more activity of the muscles that operate these cords, than to sing low. Increasing the volume of a tone from soft to loud, called *crescendo,* is always stirring, and the *diminuendo*, or diminishing force, always quiets and calms the hearer's mind. As a usual thing, a climax is produced partly by the crescendo and partly by making the melody climb higher and higher, while the opposite of the climax, a "letting-down," combines the *diminuendo* with melody going ever lower.

Furthermore, a *sudden* rise or fall in pitch, in other words, a leap, is more powerful in expression than a *gradual* rise or fall by steps. Melodies that go up and down along the scale line are not so striking as those in which there are wide jumps;

they arouse in us quieter, more restrained feelings. One reason why "Dixie" has so much more "go" than "Yankee Doodle" is that the line of its melody is so much bolder. It would be interesting to make a large collection of melodies from different composers, and see whether those with lively active dispositions didn't use more large jumps than the more meditative, timid ones. Beethoven, who was a man of tremendous energy, makes many melodies of bold outline; and in our own day Richard Strauss's tunes are as full of jumps as a flea.

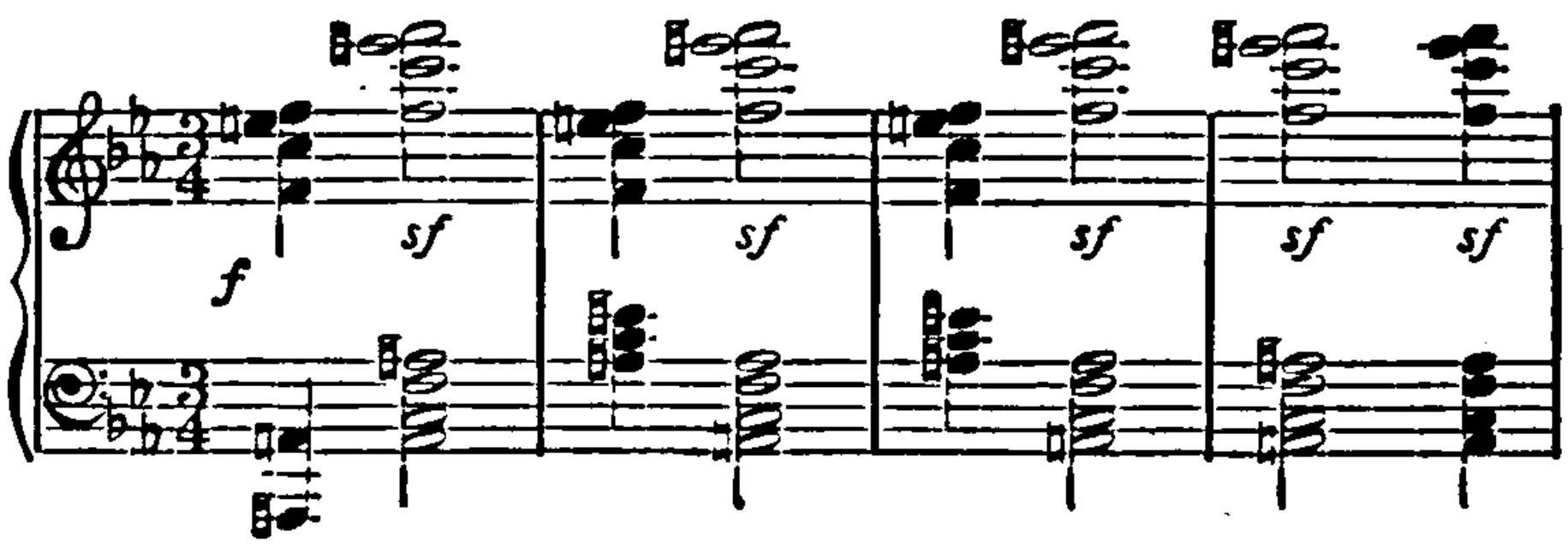
The last kind of expression that I shall speak about in this chapter is that which depends on consonance and dissonance. If you have forgotten what these are, look back to Chapter II, and you will see that two or more tones which mix together well and seem "smooth," are said to be "consonant"; while those that refuse to mix, and sound harsh, sharp, and grating, are said to be "dissonant." C and E are consonant with one another; C and D are dissonant. Moreover, you will see at the end of that chapter that dissonances have a great use in our modern music; and this use is largely due to their expressive power.

Dissonances are expressive in two distinct ways. In the first place, since very strong dissonances really hurt our ears, we readily connect them in our minds with painful feelings and thoughts, and so they may give great eloquence to music that is sad or tragic. Our ears revel in them in certain moods, as our hearts revel in sorrow. Thus Beethoven ends one of

the great climaxes in his "Symphony Eroica" with these harsh chords:

FIGURE X.

Allegro con brio. BEETHOVEN: Third Symphony.
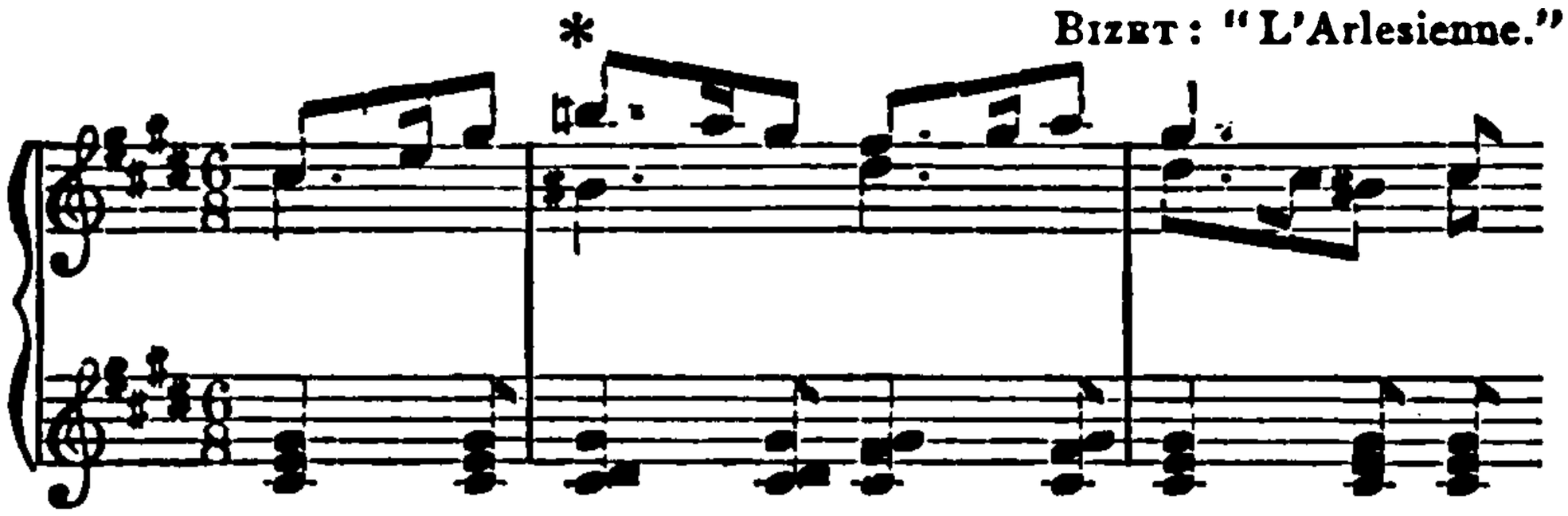


Play them alone and they are merely disagreeable; but play them in their proper place in the agitated first movement of the symphony, and they are felt to hammer home the passionate mood of the music as nothing else could do.

In the second place, when dissonances are clearly felt to result from the free motion of two or more melodies going along together, they may add greatly to the expressiveness of these melodies by calling attention to their differences. In every family the various members, if they have any individuality, will not always agree perfectly: life would be terribly flat if they did. And since each melody in a piece of music is like a person, with its own habits and ways, if several are put together there are bound to be some clashes. These clashes are the dissonances; and if they are not too harsh they add greatly to the effect of the music, because they bring into clear relief the independence of the melodies, and emphasize by contrast the character—I might almost say the personality—of each. Sometimes such

dissonances are only piquant and interesting; at other times they give a wonderful strength and rude force to the music.

In Figure XI are some dissonances of the piquant kind. The passage is from a suite for orchestra by

FIGURE XI.



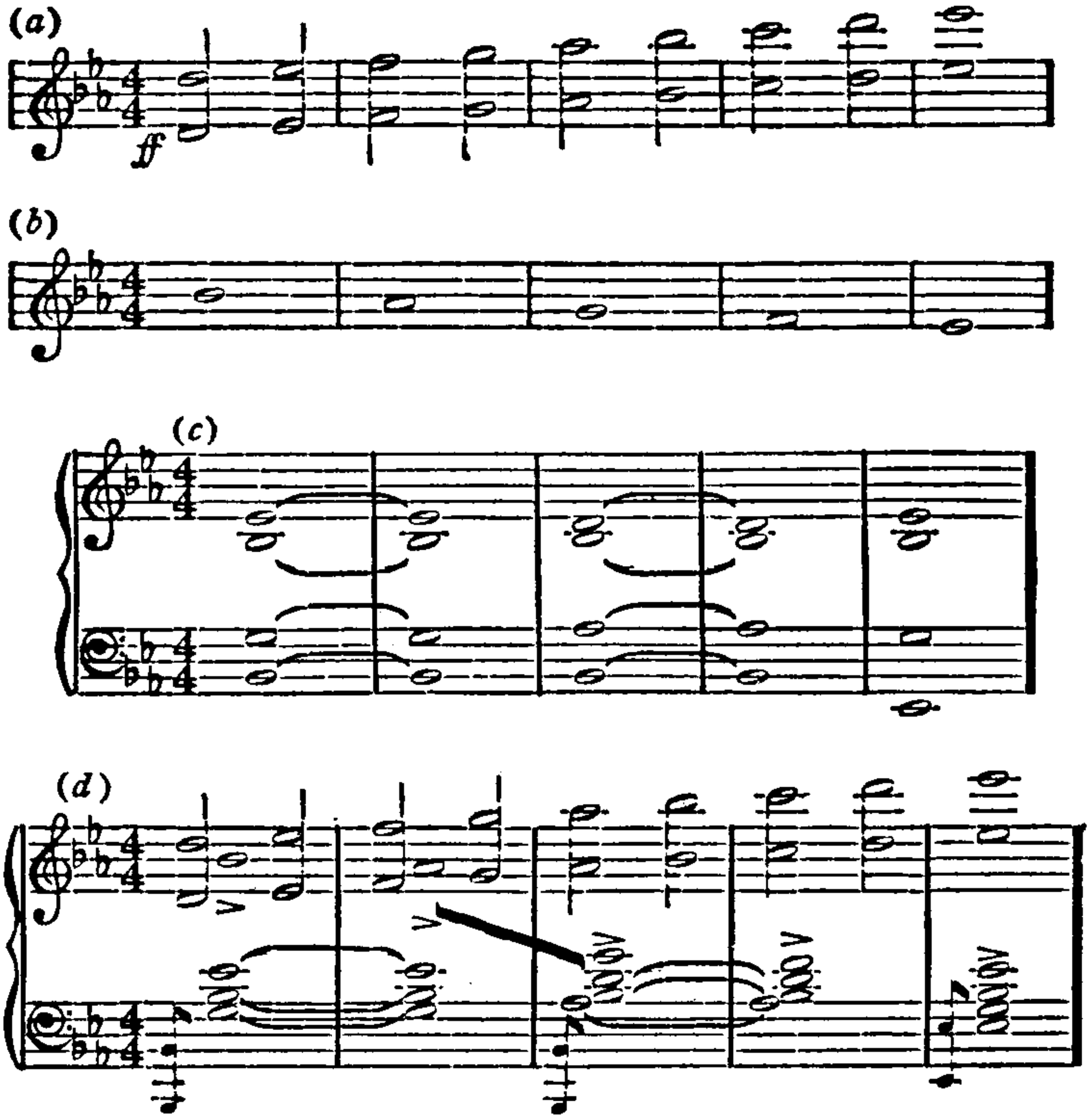
Bizet, the composer of the beautiful opera, "Carmen." The two melodies (played by the right hand) are sung by two flutes; the accompaniment is given to the stringed instruments. If you will first play the top melody with the accompaniment, and then the second melody, in the same way, you will see that all goes smoothly. Now play both, and notice what a harsh dissonance there is at the point marked *; yet this dissonance is not only allowable, but delightful, because it brings out so clearly the differences in the two melodies. It is like a lover's quarrel, that only lasts a moment, and makes the two lovers all the more devoted in the end.

When dissonances result from the irresistible onward movements of two or three voices, each minding its own business energetically, they sometimes make the music almost brutally strong. Such effects may be trying to the ear, but they are most

stimulating to the mind. A single illustration, from one of the greatest of living composers, Richard Strauss, will make this clear. At the end of a magnificent climax in his "Ein Heldenleben" ("A Hero's Life"), Strauss divides the orchestra into three parts: the violins, violas, flutes, oboes, clarinets, and one trumpet take the vigorous rising scale shown at Figure XII (a); *at the same time* no less than eight

FIGURE XII.

STRAUSS: "A Hero's Life."



French horns play loudly the falling scale shown at (b); and for a foundation to the whole the trombones and tubas play the chords at (c). Now it is hard to play these all at once on the piano, but at

(d) I have combined them as well as I could, and if you will play them you will notice two things: first, that the different melodies "step on each other's toes" at several points; second, that once your ear can follow the melodies, this very harshness makes them only more stirring, emphasizes the noble dignity of their movement, and gives the passage a matchless brilliancy and force. Thus does well-used dissonance intensify expression.

We have now studied some of the means by which music arouses sympathetic states of mind in us, through the interplay of quick and slow, loud and soft, high and low, harsh and smooth. These states of mind, we have seen, are not very definite. The sense of powerful life aroused by a march may suggest to one of you, soldiers; to another, mountain-climbing; to a third, Abraham Lincoln; and critics have often lamented that music has to leave things so vague. But I have tried to show you that for this very reason it is more powerful, it moves us more deeply than the other arts. Instead of working from the outside inward, as they do, it works from within outward; it is a "subjective" rather than an "objective" art; and it can set all our emotions a-boiling as it does just because it appeals to us *directly*; it forces us to throw ourselves into it, and to live and breathe and have our being in unison with it.

CHAPTER VIII

MUSIC THAT TELLS STORIES

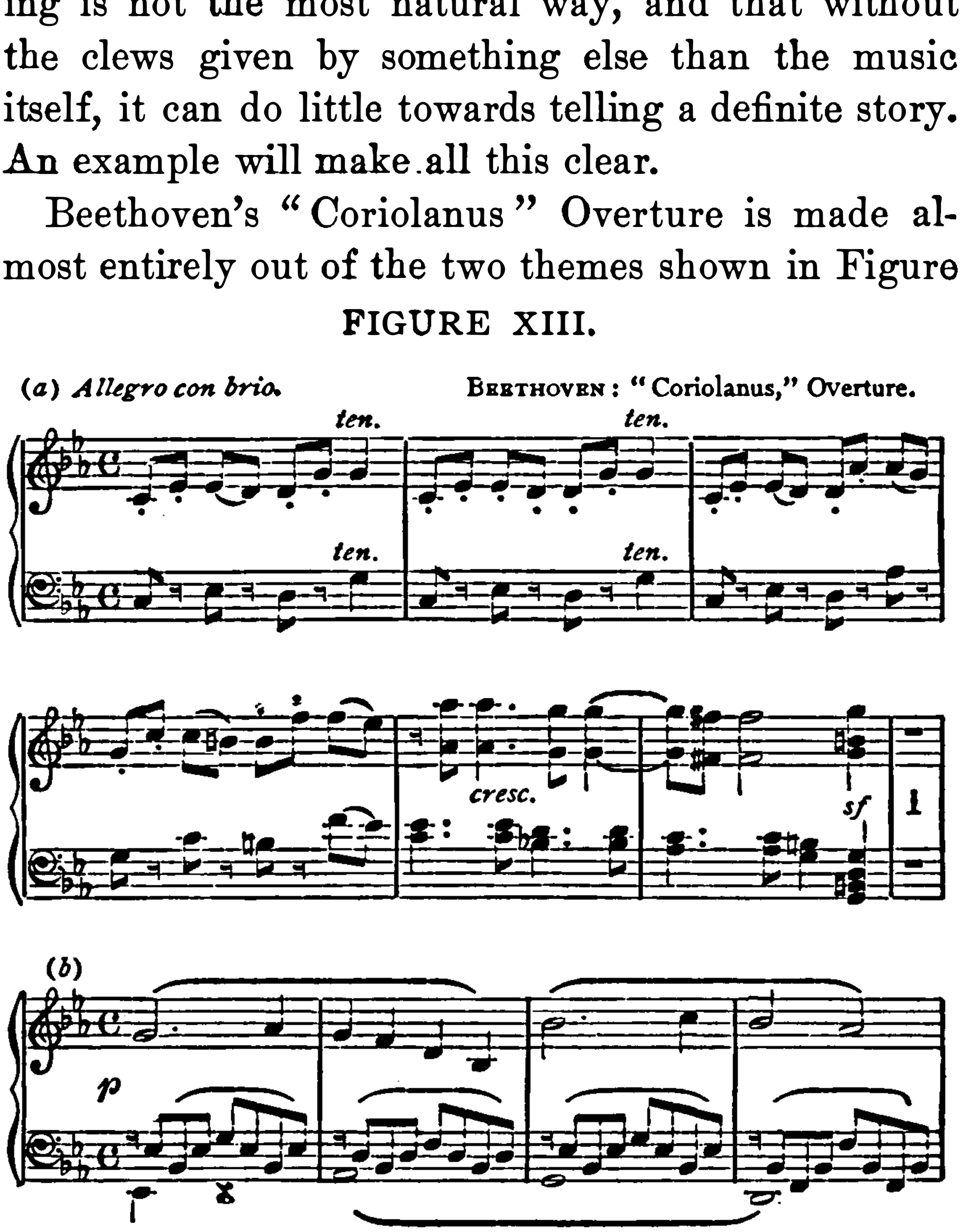
RICHARD STRAUSS introduces into his "Ein Heldenleben" ("A Hero's Life"), various themes or melodies which are supposed to represent his friends and enemies—for this "Hero," it seems, is no other than the Herr Doctor Richard Strauss himself. Frau Strauss is pictured by a long solo for a single violin, in which her coquettishness is suggested by many little twists and turns; and Strauss is so sure that he has painted his wife's portrait clearly in this passage, that he said to a friend: "You have never met my wife, but now [that is, after hearing the solo] you know her quite well, and when you go to Berlin, you will be able to identify her." He has insisted, also, that in another of his works he has given us a picture of a woman with red hair; and he believes that the tone language is getting so definite that some day it will be possible to compose in music a tablespoon so that the audience will have no difficulty in telling it from the rest of the silverware. Can Strauss be making fun of us, or is he really convinced that music can describe objects as well as arouse emotions? And if he is, how far is he in the right about it?

Well, without going quite to the length of tablespoons, I should say that music can certainly suggest outside objects and events, provided we listen to it in a certain way, and provided certain clews as to its meaning are given us; but that this way of listening is not the most natural way, and that without the clews given by something else than the music itself, it can do little towards telling a definite story. An example will make all this clear.

Beethoven's "Coriolanus" Overture is made almost entirely out of the two themes shown in Figure

FIGURE XIII.

(*a*) *Allegro con brio.* BEETHOVEN: "Coriolanus," Overture.



XIII. The first, (*a*), is quick, restless, agitated; there is a nervous uneasiness about it, due to its move-

ment and to the rise in pitch in the third and fourth measures; and yet there is energy, rude strength, in the emphatic ending. The second theme, (*b*), on the contrary, is softer, smoother, gentler; it is in clear major instead of dim minor; and the curve of the melody gives it a pleading, wistful expression. If we were to hear these two melodies without knowing anything about them, they would simply stir up certain states of mind in us, in the way described in the last chapter; their expression would be what we called "subjective"; and if anything more definite came into our minds on hearing them than these subjective feelings (of restlessness, and of tender longing), it would not be the same thing, probably, in any two of us.

But Beethoven has given his music a title—"Coriolanus"; and the moment we know this title, it gives us something particular to hang our feelings of restlessness and tender longing upon. Coriolanus, we know, was a Roman, who was so angered at his banishment from his native city that he conspired with one of its enemies to humble it. He brought his army to within five miles of Rome, and would have attacked it had not the piteous prayers of his wife and his mother finally proved stronger than his hate. With this key to help us we easily see pictured in the first theme Coriolanus's bitter and vengeful feelings, and in the second we hear the tearful pleading of the two women. We may even follow the story along in imagination right through the whole overture, and at the end, when theme (*a*) ap-

pears in slower and slower notes, and at last dies out altogether, we may get as vivid an idea as we could from a book, of Coriolanus's unwilling abandonment of his attack on the city.

Notice, however, that the music itself does not tell us all this. It is only in the light of the title that we read just this particular story into the overture. Had Beethoven called it "The American Revolution," for example, we should have been quite sure that theme (*a*) showed us the colonists' preparation for war, and theme (*b*) their sorrow at fighting their own fatherland. And so I say that the most natural and usual effect of music is to set up what I called subjective moods or states of mind in us; and that we are led to couple it with objects outside ourselves only by a title or other such hint. Nevertheless it can, within limits, suggest objects and tell stories about them; and this objective side of musical expression is what we must now study.
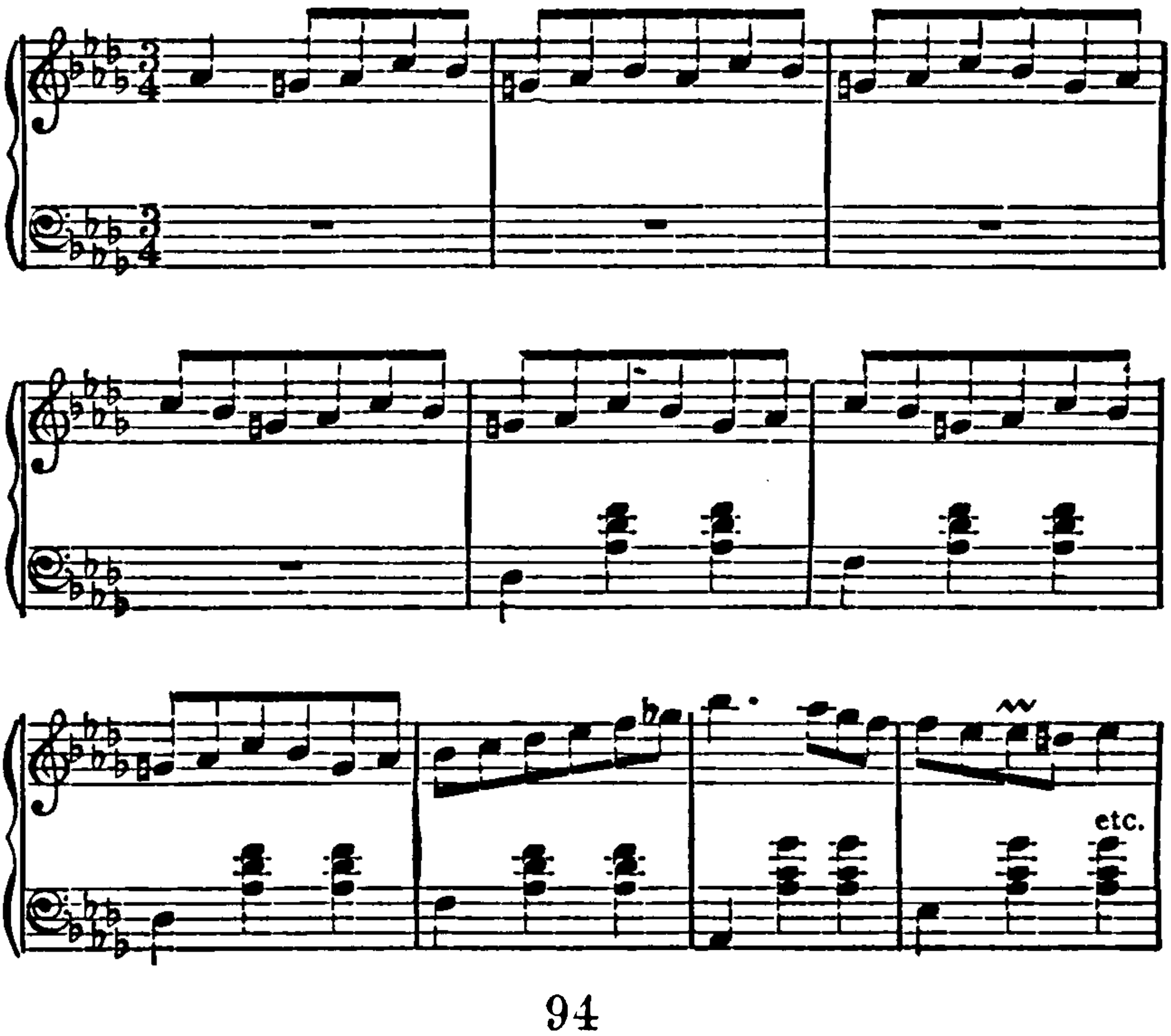
Just as music can suggest bodily motions, as we have already seen, thus arousing the emotions that go with them, so, if we can be induced to connect it not with ourselves, but with the outside world of things, it can suggest motions in this outside world. When Beethoven, in the slow movement of his Pastoral Symphony, called "Scene by the Brook," wishes to suggest the even rippling motion of the water, he makes the accompaniment of the melody out of a wavy figure of tones all of the same length. This gently rocking accompaniment keeps up through most of the movement. Mendelssohn in his

overture, "The Hebrides," descriptive of the Hebrides Islands off the coast of Scotland, imitates the grand slow rise and fall of the ocean surges. Wagner paints the rippling of the Rhine in the overture to "Das Rheingold," and the lapping of flames in his wonderful "fire-music."

Have you ever noticed the funny twistings of a dog or a cat trying to catch its own tail? Chopin saw one day a little dog spinning about in this ludicrous way, and translated the motion into music, making out of it the theme for his waltz in D-flat called "Valse au Petit Chien," or "Waltz of the Little Dog."
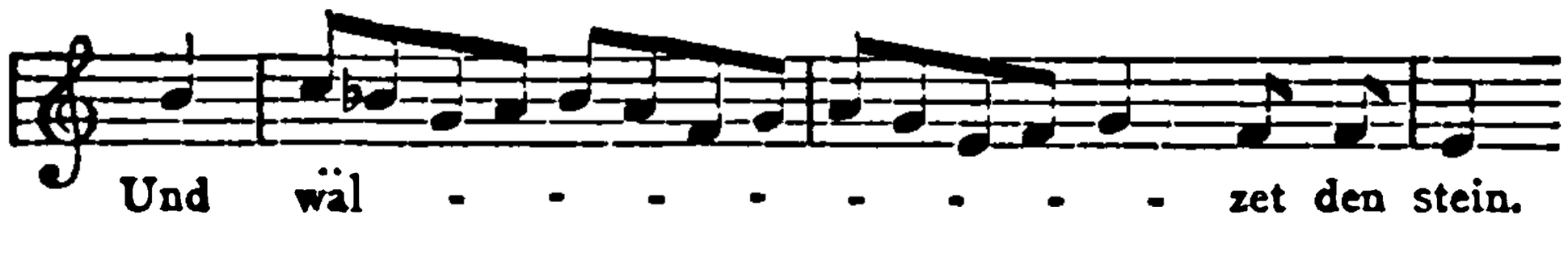
FIGURE XIV.

Molto vivace. CHOPIN: Waltz, "Au petit chien," opus 64, No. 1.



You won't fail to notice the laughable effect produced by the figure of four notes, which, since it does not quite fill the measure, gets a new accent each time it appears. In somewhat similar fashion an old German composer, Schütz, setting to music the words "and roll away the stone," does it in this realistic way:

FIGURE XV.



Again, just as what I called the song element in music can suggest to us our own cries, so if we listen "objectively" this same element can suggest the cries of others. We often hear musical phrases which vividly suggest that some one is pouring out his joys or his sorrows in speech—we can almost hear the words. The theme of the two women in "Coriolanus" is an example; how their hopes and fears seem to find voice in that pleading bit of melody!

Beethoven is a great master of this method of suggesting actual speech or utterance in the musical phrase. In the "andante con moto" of his fourth piano concerto, for instance, he gives us a sort of dialogue or conversation between the orchestra and the piano, in which each is kept as distinct as a character in a play. The orchestra seems to represent some cruel, heartless tyrant, grim, un-

yielding, without mercy. Its phrases are short, nervous, and positive, like the verdict of a stern judge on a condemned criminal, from which there is no appeal. There is a proud nobility about them that suggests some force more than human. The piano, on the contrary, speaks timidly, hesitatingly, almost apologetically. The chords sound thin and weak after the thundering tones of the orchestra. It is a voice of pleading, a human voice crushed and helpless in the presence of a power so much greater than itself. . . .

Or take the famous recitatives (speeches) for the double-basses and the violoncellos in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The very idea of making these big, unwieldy bass instruments speak important lines of the music was daring; before Beethoven's day they had always been humble members of the orchestra, content to play the bass. But Beethoven was original in everything he did, and few things in music are more dramatic than these speeches by the bass instruments. They occur near the beginning of the finale or last movement of the symphony, and seem to say something almost as definitely as words could; indeed, Beethoven himself said that they were to be played "as if they had words." As we hesitate on the brink of the finale, not knowing what its main theme will be, the themes of the first three movements are one by one suggested by the orchestra; first, that of the opening *allegro*; then that of the *scherzo*; then that of the *adagio*. Each is interrupted, scornfully, almost violently, by the bass in-

struments, which seem to cry: "No, no; that will not do at all!" A little reluctant they are, to be sure, to refuse the beautiful melody of the *adagio*, but it has to go. Then a new theme is suggested, the theme known as the "Hymn of Joy." This is enthusiastically accepted in a final speech by the basses, and becomes the subject of the finale. The whole passage (it comes at page 310 of the piano arrangement of the symphony in the Litolff Edition) is a wonderful example of how tones can be made to talk almost as plainly as people.

The suggestions of motions and of speech by music are the most important means the composer has of making it tell a story, just as the dance and the song elements are the most important means for making it arouse emotion. There are, however, one or two other ways in which the suggestion of outside things can be managed, which deserve a word or two. The contrast between consonances and dissonances can be made to suggest the contrast between pleasant and unpleasant things. Thus in the part of "A Hero's Life" called "The Hero's Helpmeet," Strauss uses clear, mellow chords, while in the section devoted to the hero's enemies the dissonances fairly hurt our ears.

The suggestion of "high," "light," and "bright" by high notes, and of "low," "heavy," and "dark" by low notes has been used by many composers, but never so poetically as by Wagner in the prelude to "Lohengrin." The appearance of the theme in the thin, clear tones of the violins, in the highest part

of their register, its gradual descent to the lower instruments and increase in loudness as well as fullness during the long climax, and its equally gradual rise again, higher and higher, as if into thinner and thinner air, until it finally dies away like a melting cloud: all this tells us the story, or rather paints us the picture (so vivid is it) of a company of angels, bearing the sacred Grail, descending to earth, and after consecrating mankind to the service of Christ, "soaring up again," as Wagner puts it, "to the ethereal heights."

Finally, the composer may actually imitate with the instruments the sounds of the outer world, as Beethoven makes flute, oboe, and clarinet imitate the cries of the nightingale, quail, and cuckoo in his Pastoral Symphony; as Mendelssohn, in his overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (in which play, you remember, Bottom is turned by the fairies into a donkey), imitates the bray of an ass; as Berlioz, in his "Symphonie Fantastique," makes thunder by means of four kettledrums. Some of our composers to-day go to great lengths in this matter. Tschaïkowsky directs that cannon be fired during the playing of his Overture "1812," which celebrates the victory of Russia over Napoleon. Richard Strauss uses a specially invented "wind machine" to give the sound of the rushing wind in his "Don Quixote." Such methods are very well in their way, but they are easily abused. The true artist never imitates nature exactly: to paint a basket of fruit so that it looks real enough to eat is nothing but a clever

trick; and to make a musical "battle" or "storm" is not much better.

These methods of making music refer to something outside itself have been pushed much farther by composers of our own day and of what is called the "realistic" school, than they were by those who first used them. Beethoven, whose greatest works date from about the beginning of the nineteenth century, set the fashion for the "romantic" school, which bridges the gap between the classical music of the eighteenth century and our modern music. In his overtures "Coriolanus," "Egmont," and some others, he wrote music which might well be listened to, like the older works, for itself alone, but which, once we have the key afforded by the title, is seen to suggest a more definite story. The story, nevertheless, is hardly more than suggested; the main feelings it inspires are reflected in the music, but it is not told in detail. The musician does not begin at the beginning, like a novelist, and go through to the end, telling us how the hero and heroine met, how their love did not run smooth, and how they were at last nevertheless "married, and lived happily ever after." He gives us not the events, but the feelings they aroused; he is not a story-teller, but a poet.

Such "poetic" or "romantic" or "descriptive" music (it has been given many names) is found in many of the works of the composers who followed after Beethoven; in Schubert's songs; in Schumann's "Manfred" and "Genoveva" Overtures and his

"Spring" Symphony; in Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Hebrides," and "Ruy Blas" Overtures, and his "Scotch" and "Italian" Symphonies. In all these important works of the Romantic School the form of the music is based on the old principles of contrast and return to the earlier melodies, and of development of themes, which we studied in Chapter VI, and the only clews to particular meanings are given us in the titles.

But gradually it occurred to musicians that they could be more definite than this—they could tell the stories just as they happened, event by event—in a word, they could make music "realistic." And so first Berlioz in France and Liszt in Germany, about the middle of the nineteenth century, and later a great many other composers, such as Tschaïkowsky, Saint-Säens, and Richard Strauss, developed what is called programme music. This differs from merely poetic music in the following ways: In the first place, as the name shows, each piece is provided with a programme, a brief account in prose or poetry of the "plot." The programme of Strauss's "Ein Heldenleben," for example, consists of the following six headings: "The Hero"; "The Hero's Antagonists"; "The Hero's Helpmeet"; "The Hero's Battlefield"; "The Hero's Mission of Peace"; "The Hero's Escape from the World."

In the second place, the composer uses all the means of describing things in the outside world that we have been discussing, in order to make his story as clear and as detailed as possible. In some cases,

also, he uses a method invented by Berlioz for making clear to us the various people of his story. Each person has what is called a *leit-motiv* or leading-motive, a short melody that we learn to connect with him and that reminds us of him every time we hear it. By all these methods the story is made definite.

Finally, instead of using the old forms of classic music, the programme composer takes up and drops his various themes just where he pleases, being guided only by his story. Unimportant themes may come in for a moment and then vanish entirely, just as unimportant characters in a play walk across the stage and disappear; the important themes, of course, will be made much of, and developed as in classical music. The composer who did most to introduce this free form, called Symphonic Poem or Tone Poem, was Liszt.

Such, then, are the chief kinds of expression in music, and the schools founded upon them. The classic school, represented in our own day by Brahms, aims at the expression of emotion and at pure beauty. The romantic or poetic school adds to these aims a somewhat more definite suggestion of a person, place, or idea, indicated by a title, and uses the classic forms. The realistic or programme school aims at definite story-telling, and plans the form according to the story.

CHAPTER IX

THE INSIDE OF A PIANO

THERE are very few houses nowadays in which a piano is not to be found; the highly polished black box, either standing upright or placed flat on three legs, has become a familiar bit of furniture; yet although it contains almost as many marvels as that famous box of Pandora's, few of us ever take the trouble to peep inside it. To examine the inside of a piano is, however, not only an interesting experience in itself, but one which throws a great deal of light on the peculiarities of piano music.

Here is a "baby grand" piano, the top of which is opened and the music-desk removed, so that we can get a clear view of its works. (If some of you can find no grand piano to examine, you can easily make out in an upright the various parts I am going to describe. They are differently placed, but their use is the same.) We notice first of all a solid iron plate, across which are stretched many strings. These are fastened at the back of the piano to pins, passed over a wooden bridge which is glued to a board called the "sounding board," and wound around pegs by turning which they can be loosened or tightened. You can see lying underneath the strings in a row

the felt hammers, ready to dart up and strike whenever you press the keys; also you will notice a line of similar bits of felt-covered wood resting on the strings, and called "dampers" because they damp or stop the vibrating of the strings.

Now strike a key, say middle C (see the picture of the keyboard in Figure I). What happens? The hammer darts up and strikes the strings, falling back slightly so as not to interfere with their vibrating. At the same time the damper belonging to these strings is lifted, that they may be free to vibrate, and stays so as long as you hold down the key. The three strings have been stretched to exactly the same tightness by the piano tuner, and as they are also of exactly the same length they make just the same number of vibrations, or swings up and down, in the same time—no less, if you can believe me, than two hundred and fifty-six swings each second, or fifteen thousand, three hundred and sixty each minute!

But these motions of the strings are so slight, and the strings themselves so thin, that very little sound would be thus produced if it were not for the sounding board, which is often called "the soul of the piano." This light yet strong sheet of wood is so made that it takes up and greatly increases the vibrations carried to it from the strings through the bridge on which they rest, as you can feel for yourselves by lightly touching it through one of the holes in the iron plate when some one is playing. Thus increased by the sounding board, the vibrations next pass out into the air in the form of "waves" or

little puffs, which striking upon our eardrums give us the sensation of this tone, middle C. How wonderful it is that, though we should never dream of trying to count two hundred and fifty-six in a second, our eardrums know without counting what tone they are hearing, and at once notice a change of even two or three vibrations.

Whatever key you strike you set in motion a set of strings [1] which has been tuned to vibrate at a certain rate. The faster the vibration the "higher" will be the tone. If you remember that the longer, heavier, and looser a string is, the slower will be its vibration, and the shorter, lighter, and tighter it is, the faster will it vibrate, you will understand the arrangement of the piano strings at a glance. They are carefully graded from the long and heavy one (wound with copper wire to increase its weight) of the lowest bass tone, vibrating only twenty-six times a second, to the set of three slender wires not much over two inches long, which make the four thousand and ninety-six vibrations per second of the highest tone in the treble. The tightness you cannot see, but you all know how the tuner raises a tone by tightening the string. The great brilliancy of the tone of modern pianos is largely due to the tightness of the

[1] Each set of strings sounding the same tone is called a "unison" —"one sound." From the C below middle C downward, twenty tones in my piano have only two strings to each unison, and the last eight tones in the piano have only one string apiece. This arrangement is to make the volume of tone as equal as possible through the whole range—a single long and thick string producing as much sound as several short, thin ones.

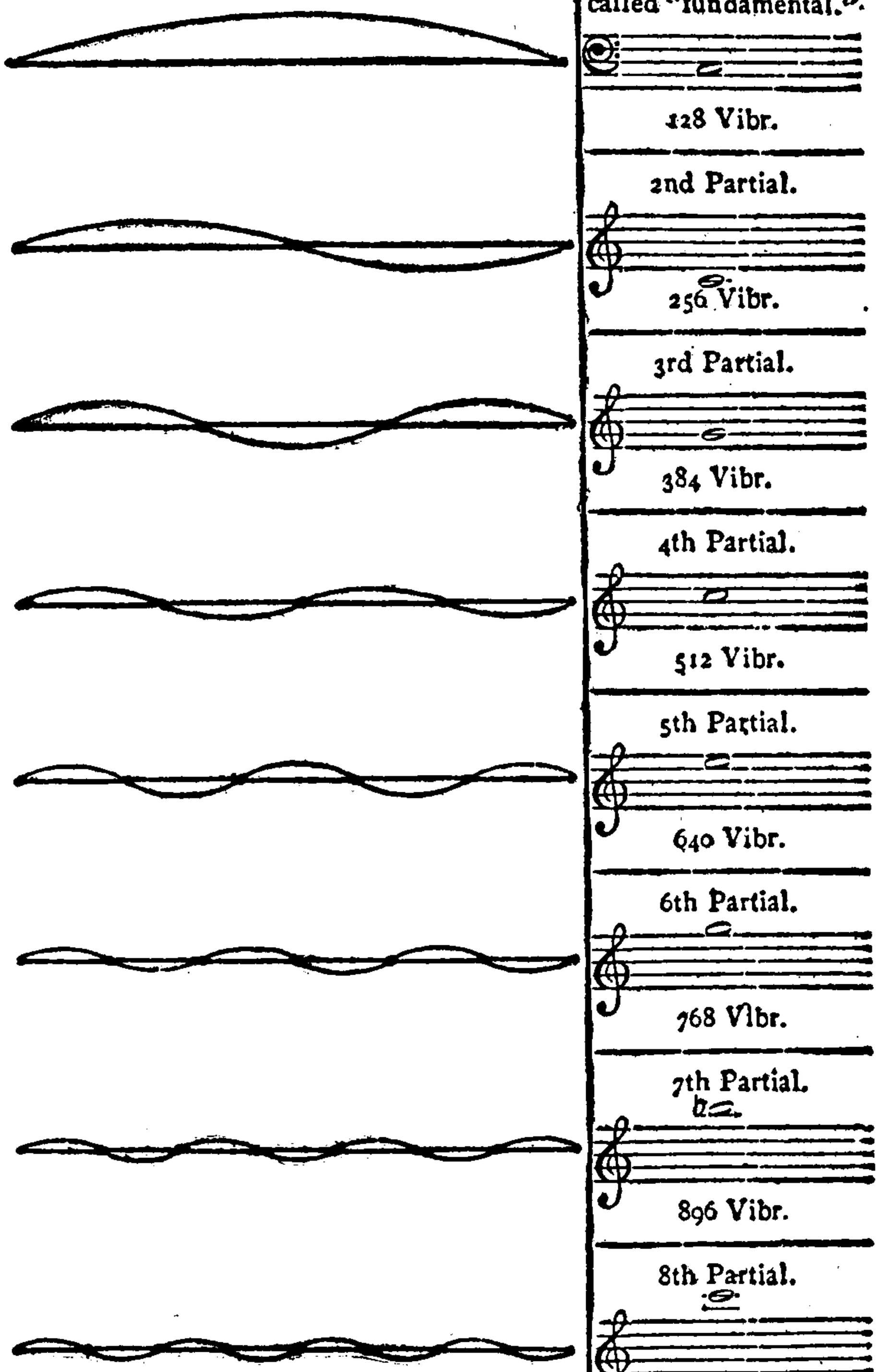
stringing, all the strings together being said to exert a constant pull of forty thousand pounds on the iron plate, the object of which is to bear this enormous strain.

We now come to a matter hard both to explain and to understand—the queer habit strings have of vibrating in several different ways at once! I wish we could pass on without troubling ourselves about this, but it is so important, and it throws so much light on many other important points in music, that there is nothing for us to do but grapple with it and conquer it once for all. A little close attention now will pay us well in the long run.

It is the queer habit of a stretched string when struck to vibrate not only *as a whole*, but to divide itself up into halves, thirds, fourths, fifths, and so on, which also vibrate in as many different ways. Look at Figure XVI, and you will understand. There, in the column at the left, you see all these different kinds of vibration. Now it is a rule that half a string vibrates just twice as fast as the whole, a third just three times as fast, and so on. Therefore, if we take a string of such length, weight and tightness that it will vibrate *as a whole* one hundred and twenty-eight times a second—which is just what the strings of the C an octave below middle C do—its halves will vibrate two hundred and fifty-six times a second, its thirds three hundred and eighty-four times, and so on, and so on. (These numbers of vibrations are shown in the right hand column.) Furthermore, each of these rates of vibration will

produce its own tone (middle C, the G above it, etc.). In fact, when we make those strings vibrate, they really do not produce just one simple tone, but a

FIGURE XVI.



whole series of tones, which our ears hear as one because it is their habit to. Each of these tones is a part of our impression (and for that reason called a "partial tone"), but we call them all by the name of the first or "fundamental" one—the *foundation* of all the rest—which is also the strongest of all. At the right of Figure XVI you see the first eight "partials" of the C we started with.

Some of you may find it hard to believe that our musical tones are really made up of so many parts—they sound so simple and "single." But what, let me ask you, tastes more "single" than lemonade?—yet you know that lemonade is made of lemon juice and sugar, little as it *tastes* like either lemon juice or sugar. The two mixed together make a new thing. In similar way, we know that ordinary sunlight is made out of the colors of the rainbow.

That there are all these different partial tones in our C, moreover, we can prove by a simple experiment on the piano. We can analyze the tone into its parts, just as a prism analyzes sunlight into red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. The experiment depends on what is known as sympathetic vibration, or the starting into vibration of a string by the motions of another string which is in tune with it. It is truly marvelous how much can be done by exerting a very little force at just the right moment. Have you ever noticed, in "swinging" some one, how the least touch applied just as the swing forward begins, is enough to make him go ever higher and higher, while twenty times as much effort, ap-

plied a half second too soon, will not only not make him go, but will actually stop him? Well, so it is in sympathetic vibration. If two strings, A and B, are exactly in tune, so that they will vibrate just the same number of times per second; and if then we start A a-going, the little puffs of air it sends over to B, absurdly weak as they are, will be enough to start it going, too, because they strike it just at the right moments. Change the pitch of B by five vibrations a second, and it will not respond to A in the least.

Well, if the *halves* of that string shown in Figure XVI are vibrating exactly two hundred and fifty-six times a second, they ought to correspond exactly with the *whole* of the string that sounds middle C, for we found that that tone had the vibration rate two hundred and fifty-six. Here is our experiment, then. Press down, without striking, with your right hand, middle C. This will raise the damper from its strings, leaving them free to vibrate. Now strike, with your left hand, with a strong, brisk stroke, the C below middle C, letting it go immediately. You will hear the tone middle C singing clearly. Repeat the experiment, striking B or D instead of C, and you will hear no "sympathetic" tone. This proves that in C there is a series of vibrations that exactly correspond with those of middle C (that is, the vibrations that make the second partial), while in B and D there are no such vibrations.

In the same way, holding down without striking the G above middle C, we can make it sound by

sympathy with the *third* partial of the low C; and we can similarly get the C above from the *fourth*, the E above that from the *fifth*, and the G above that from the *sixth* partials. You will notice, however, that the fifth is very much fainter than either the fourth or the sixth. This is because, ever since the time of Bach, a system of tuning has been in use (the so-called Equal Temperament) which purposely puts certain tones a little out of tune. The E is one of those tones. The absolutely true E would have exactly five times one hundred and twenty-eight, equals six hundred and forty, vibrations per second. The E, as we tune it, has six hundred and forty-five. This little difference is enough to destroy the sympathy: the hundreds of little pushes through the air from the lower strings come just a little too late, and move the upper ones only slightly.

The same thing is even more clearly seen in the case of the seventh partial tone, B-flat: This does not correspond with the B-flat used in our system of tuning, one having eight hundred and ninety-six vibrations, the other nine hundred and twelve: therefore you cannot make the B-flat sound by sympathy at all. Isn't it wonderful that these little differences, which the keenest ears would hardly perceive, are never missed or ignored for a moment by the great natural law of sympathetic vibration!

Of course it is possible to vary the experiment in countless ways. For instance, middle C is not only the second partial tone of the C below it, but also

the third partial of the F below that: and you can accordingly make it sound by sympathy with that tone. All you have to remember in planning an experiment is that the distances from partial to partial are always as follows: From 1 to 2, an "octave"; from 2 to 3, a "fifth"; from 3 to 4, a "fourth"; from 4 to 5, a "major third"; from 5 to 6, a "minor third"; from 6 to 7, a "minor third"; from 7 to 8, a "major second."

Interesting as all this theory of partial tones is, especially to those fond of science and mathematics, you probably do not yet see its bearing on music. It is this. If we could get some way of lifting the dampers from all the strings at once, leaving them free to vibrate, then when we struck a key, or several keys, we should not only start just those particular strings, but *all the strings that corresponded with their partial tones* (by sympathetic vibration). Now we have such a means of lifting all the dampers at once in the "damper pedal," usually but wrongly called the "loud pedal"—the one farthest to the right. The purpose of this pedal is not only to increase the loudness of the tones played, but to add to the strength of their partials, and thus to enrich their quality—to make them fuller, richer, mellower. Play the simplest chord, such as C—E—G, first without and then with the pedal, and you will feel the difference. The first is like a bare tree on a desert, hard, sharp, definite. The second is like a tree covered with delicate shimmering leaves, and seen through a slightly misty air—it has what

painters call "atmosphere." Try this until you can feel vividly the difference.

No other instrument, or group of instruments, has such a power of mixing and deliciously blurring its tones as the piano gets through the damper pedal. What lovely effects of melting, rainbow-colored sound Chopin gets by a skillful use of it! Writing of his Étude in A-flat, opus 25, No. 1, Schumann asks us to imagine "an Æolian harp that had all the scales, and that these were jumbled together by the hand of an artist into all sorts of fantastic ornaments"; and Liszt tells us that Chopin "imprinted on all his pieces one knows not what nameless color, what vague appearance, what pulsations akin to vibration," and that "his modulations were velvety and iridescent as the robe of a salamander."

Of course, on the other hand, the power of the pedal can be terribly abused. There is only one thing worse than not using the pedal when we ought, and that is using it when, as a young friend of mine says, we "ought to not." I still wince when I remember the playing of a gentleman I heard years ago, who had solved the problem of the pedal by the simple plan of putting it down when he began a piece, and not lifting it until he stopped. Few pianists go to that extreme, but there are many who press the pedal at the exact moment they strike a chord, instead of a lightning-flash afterwards, with the result that every chord "runs" into the next like the colors in a bad water-color, and the music is a botch, a mess.

The pedal at the left, the "soft pedal," is used not only to soften the tone, but to give it a slightly different "tone-color," by shifting all the hammers a little to the right, so that they strike only two strings, instead of three, of each unison. In the early pianos they could be shifted still farther so as to strike only one, which gave the "una corda" (one string) effect so often marked in Beethoven. The old-fashioned square pianos, such as used to be common thirty years ago, but are now seldom seen, had a trick of getting out of order in such a way that the hammers shifted too far to the right and struck one string of the next tone, with truly horrible effects of discord. In upright pianos the soft pedal moves all the hammers nearer the strings instead of to one side, so that they get less stroke; but this merely softens the tone, having no effect upon its quality.

Just one final word on an unfortunate result that has followed the great popularity of the piano. It is so convenient to get an idea of all sorts of music, whether for orchestra, voices, organ, or string quartet, by arranging it for the piano, that we are in danger of making this instrument a mere musical maid-of-all-work, and forgetting that it has a quality all its own, a "character," so to speak, just as the violin, the flute, the organ have. We ought to love the piano best for what it can do best, just as we love a poet for his poetry and a shoemaker for his shoes, and not think that because it can give a rather poor imitation of an organ or an orchestra that

is its truest use. I have tried to show you in this chapter that the piano can do some things better than

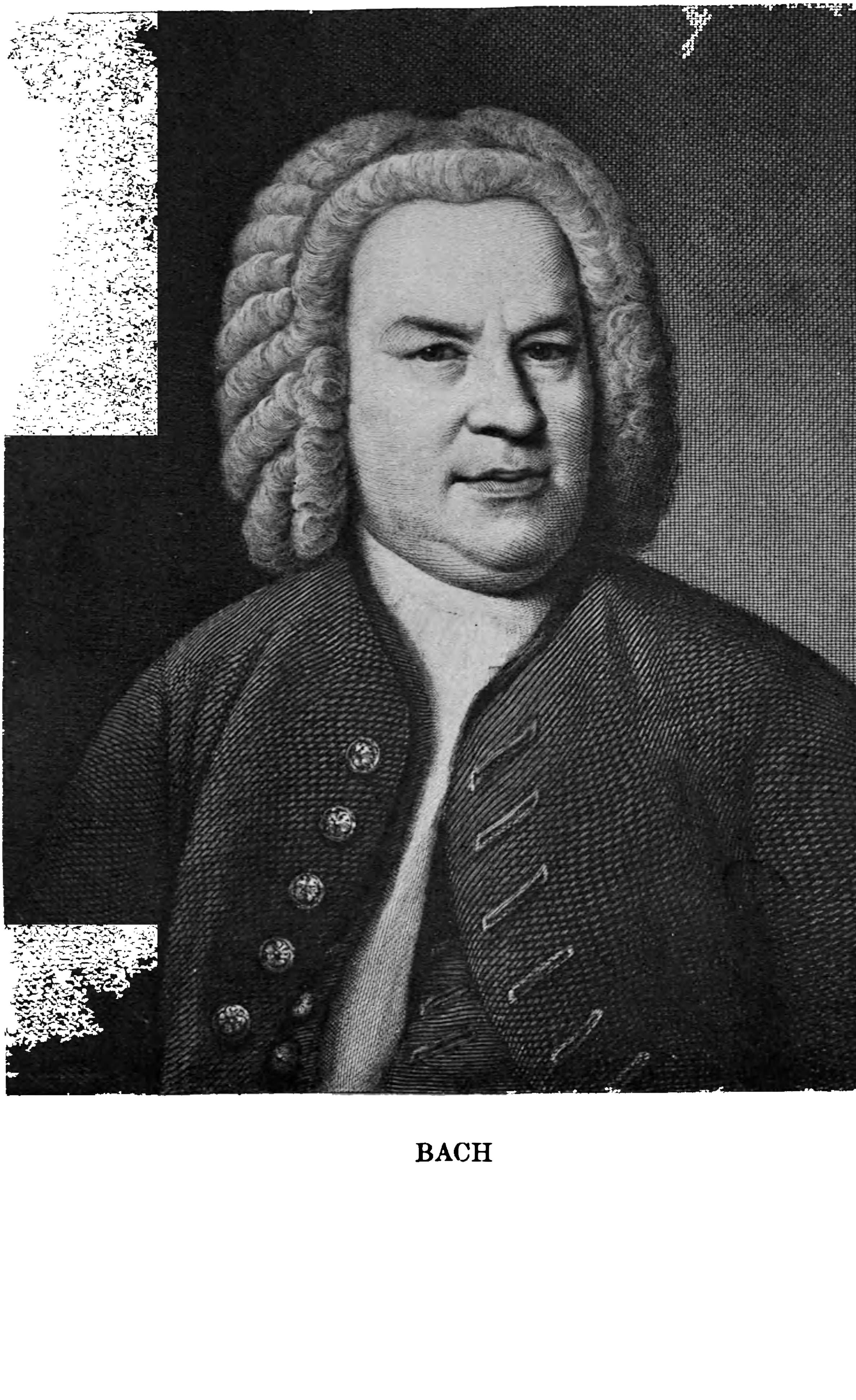
y other instrument. Let us enjoy these things in it most of all, and learn to demand them from composers and players.

CHAPTER X

AT A PIANO RECITAL—BACH'S FUGUES AND SUITES

IF you look at the programme of a recital by any of the great pianists of the day you will very likely find that the first name on it is that most noble and honorable of all musical names—Johann Sebastian Bach. The first piece on such a programme is apt to be one of the fugues, with its prelude, from his collection called "The Well-Tempered Clavichord," or perhaps an arrangement by Liszt of one of his great fugues, toccatas or fantasias for organ. And this is as it should be: for Bach is in a sense the fountain head from which flows all our modern music, standing, to our view, at the beginning of things musical, somewhat as Chaucer, to us English speakers, stands at the beginning of things literary. Both the musician and the poet were such true men, so simple, sincere, and human in all they felt and said, and at the same time such great artists, that the essence of their art is immortal, and remains to-day, when so much that was done at a later time is already musty and crumbling, as fresh and strong as ever.

On the other hand there are so many strange words and phrases, so queerly spelled, in Chaucer's



BACH

poems, that it is hard for us of to-day to get their meaning; and in the same way Bach's music is written in a style so different from what we are used to that we cannot understand it without a little special study. Both are locked treasure-houses, to which it is well worth our while to find the keys.

Now the chief reason that Bach is hard for us to understand, and that some of us lose patience and pronounce him "dry," is that his idea of melody, which is the essence of music, is different from ours. We are used to hearing only one melody at a time, and that "on top" or above all the other tones, where it is very prominent; and we expect it to be measured off in regular phrases, such as we studied in Chapters II and III, with a little pause at the end of each. The rest of the tones we don't expect to make "tunes": they are merely "accompaniment," such as a guitar or a mandolin makes for a song. Musicians call this kind of music "homophonic," from Greek words meaning "one-voiced."

In Bach's day, on the contrary, music was still under the influence of the style of Palestrina (1528–1594) and other old masters, who wrote their pieces not to be played on instruments, but to be sung in church by choruses consisting of many different groups of voices, like the sopranos, altos, tenors and basses of our choirs. The aim of such composers was to make a separate melody or "part" for each group of voices, and to make each one interesting. In short, their music was "polyphonic" or "many voiced."

Now there are two reasons why such music is difficult for us to hear intelligently. In the first place, we have to listen to four or more things at once instead of only one, since the lowest and the middle voices are almost as important as the topmost. In the second place, the pauses at the end of the phrases, which divide up a melody as commas and semicolons do a sentence, and so make it easier to follow, are in this style covered up by the flow of the other voices, so that instead of being a string of beads, as it were, with a space after each, the music is an intricate basket-work, its many strands crossed and interlaced in the most baffling way. To the trained ear this inweaving is a supreme beauty. Think of it! not merely one melody, and the rest mere accompanying tones, but a whole bundle of melodies winding in and out like the many-colored threads in some rich old tapestry. Not a note that is not a necessary part of the pattern, and no ends showing.

Of all the compositions that Bach wrote in this many-voiced style, so difficult and yet so well worth while for us to learn to appreciate, none are finer than his great fugues, for the organ and for the clavichord, an instrument like our modern piano, but smaller and of weaker tone. The organ fugues were written in his youth, while he was organist at the ducal court of Weimar, a post which he held from 1708 to 1717 (he was born in 1685). To a later time belongs his series of forty-eight preludes and fugues for the clavichord, called "The Well-Tem-

pered Clavichord," and written partly to show the advantages of the new method of tuning known as Equal Temperament, introduced by him and still in use. It would puzzle you too much if I were to explain this system of tuning. All that you need to know about it is that it made it for the first time possible to play in any key, and to modulate or pass from one key to another freely. To show this, Bach took the twelve keys in order, and wrote a prelude and fugue in each, first in major, then in minor, making twenty-four in all. This made the first book of his work; in the second he did the same thing over again, writing new music, but using the same order of keys. Thus there are altogether forty-eight preludes and fugues, and the work is sometimes called "The Forty-Eight."

Fugue number sixteen, in the first book, in the key of G-minor, is a good example to show how interesting and beautiful such a piece can be.[1] It is written for four "voices," which we may call soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Like all fugues, it grows entirely out of a little germ of melody, called the subject, just as a plant grows from a seed. In this case the subject consists of two motives, one of five tones, the other of six, and is announced all alone by the alto. It is then "answered" by one voice after another—each repeating the subject—the soprano at the end of the second measure, the bass at the beginning of the fifth, and the tenor at the

[1] Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavichord," Peters Edition, Book I, page 62.

end of the sixth. The other voices meanwhile go on with other fragments of melody, yet so like the subject that they all seem to grow out of it.

As the musical story goes on, the "plot thickens"; the subject is heard bandied about from voice to voice, and in new keys, and there are "episodes" made from a few notes of it built into new patterns. You will find it interesting to play through the whole piece and see if you can recognize the subject every time it appears, and count its entrances—there are altogether *sixteen* of them in two short pages! In the seventh measure from the end you will notice how excitingly they are crowded together; the tenor is too impatient to wait for the soprano to finish, and the bass comes in when the tenor is only half done. Yet so cleverly managed is this "Stretto," or "crowding together," as it is called, that the voices, though all talking at the same time, make perfect harmony. There is all the excitement of a debating club arguing an important question, but none of the noise and confusion. In some fugues we find the subject treated in other ingenious ways: lengthened out to twice its original length, or squeezed together to half; or turned upside down; or even sounded backwards; but Bach never does these things merely for display, but only when they seem natural.

The wonderful things about a fugue, the things you should try to feel whenever you hear one, are the way it all grows out of the little subject, and the way each voice, played alone (which you should try),

is a melody, and at the same time all agree and make harmony together. Only the greatest works of art are thus perfect not only as a whole, but in every minutest part.

Another remarkable point is the expressiveness of all these fugues, and the contrast between them. This one in G-minor is earnest and sad; No. 2 is dancing, merry, delicate; No. 12 is nobly thoughtful; No. 17 is vigorous, energetic; No. 15 is full of whim and humor; No. 22 is melancholy, tragic, almost heart-broken; and so on through the list, and Book II shows an equal variety. In fact, as I have said in another place:[1] "Bach might have boasted, had it been in his nature to boast, that in this work he had not only written in every key known to musicians, but in every mood known to men."

When he was thirty-two Bach moved from Weimar to the town of Cöthen, where he had been offered the position of director of music to the prince of that region. Prince Leopold himself played the violin and the clavichord, and was more interested in instrumental music for the drawing-room ("chamber music") than in the serious organ style that Bach had previously studied. The result was that the composer now turned his hand to writing sonatas and suites for stringed instruments like the violin, viola, and violoncello (most of which have been arranged for piano) and for the clavichord and another piano-like instrument, the harpsichord.

In works of this kind he is much less influenced

[1] "The Appreciation of Music," page 45.

by the old church music for voices (polyphonic) than by the dance tunes which had for many years been played and loved by the German peasants, poor people who knew little of the complications of fugues but appreciated a simple tune of strong rhythmic swing. The sonatas, suites, partitas, etc., of Bach's day are nothing but collections of five or six such dance tunes, with one or two pieces or "movements" of a more learned kind. The chief dances used were the gavotte, the minuet (a stately and graceful dance which the court lords and ladies did not consider beneath them) the bourrée, courante, allemande, and other dances now out of fashion, the slow, serious sarabande and the lively jig or "gigue." Bach's sets of six "English Suites" and six "French Suites," and his suites and sonatas for violin and for violoncello, are the finest compositions of this kind that we have, and are still heard in our concerts.

The English Suite No. 3, in G-minor, may be taken as an example. The first movement, although a lively allegro, is in the polyphonic style, each voice making a melody by itself, and is worked out with all the ingenuity of Bach the fugue writer. It is followed by an "allemande" and a "courante," both dance-like in rhythm. Next comes a beautiful sarabande, full of deep feeling, and more like our modern music than any of the preceding movements, in that it has only one chief melody, and that "on top." Nevertheless even here we can feel Bach's impulse to make all the parts sing; one of the love-

liest melodies, fairly vibrating with emotion, is found in the *bass* at the fourth measure from the end.[1]

You will notice after the sarabande a movement marked "Agréments de la mème Sarabande"—"Ornaments of the same Sarabande," and consisting of what is really the same music decked out with trills, turns, and other such finery. The eighteenth century people, you see, were so fond of show and decoration that they dressed their very tunes, and even so sober a man as Bach was unable to resist the fashion.

It must be said in fairness, however, that these decorations had one genuine use. The tone of the clavichord and the harpsichord was so faint, though sweet, that it died out almost as soon as it was produced. There was, moreover, no damper pedal by which it could be eked out through sympathetic vibration. The only way to keep a tone sounding was to strike the key over and over again; and this is just what the ornaments, with their many short notes on the same tones, provided for excellently. You can notice a similar arrangement in any modern piano piece, in the accompaniment, where the composer, instead of writing the chords for the left hand in long-held tones as he would do for the organ or for voices, breaks them up into patterns of short tones constantly repeated.

The fifth movement of Bach's Suite is a gavotte—or rather two gavottes, arranged just like the two minuets of Mozart in Figure VII, the second serv-

[1] Bach's English Suites, Peters Edition, page 37.

ing as a Trio or contrast, after which the first is repeated. The first is in the two-part form explained in Chapter VI, and the second in three-part form, the first strain being repeated at the end. You will find it interesting to study for yourselves the contrasts of keys Bach uses here, and his ways of building the whole piece out of one or two simple motives. In the second gavotte Bach keeps the same bass-note—G—sounding right through. This is in imitation of an instrument called the musette, which like a bagpipe keeps droning the same bass-tone, while the tune skips about in liveliest fashion.

The Suite ends in highest good humor with a gigue—a merry dance of the Virginia reel or sailor's hornpipe kind, named after the old French gigue or violin, because it was in the old days played by village fiddlers. In spite of its almost boisterous gayety there is a good deal of real music in the gigue as Bach writes it. This one is a model of clear two-part form, the division coming at the double-bar in the middle; it is cleverly written in the polyphonic style, for three voices, which announce a subject one after another, answering or imitating one another as in a fugue; and what is an even greater sign of musical learning, the second half is made from the subject of the first, *turned upside down* ("inverted"). This arrangement is found in many of Bach's gigues.

After staying at Cöthen six years, Bach moved in 1723 to the large city of Leipzig, where he taught in the St. Thomas School and took charge of the

music in four of the chief churches. He continued there for more than quarter of a century (he died in 1750) composing much for voices and organ—masses, motets, cantatas, and Passions, or musical settings of the story of Christ's sufferings and death. He lived quietly, troubled by no desire to be famous or rich like the other great musician of his day, Handel, but striving only to make his music as beautiful as possible. His happiness was all in steady patient work and in the society of his wife and children, of whom he had a large family, almost all musical. By the outside world he was not understood. Unable to find a publisher for his great work "The Well-Tempered Clavichord," he is said to have ruined his eyes in the task of engraving it himself. At his death he was so poor that his children had to be sent to their uncles and aunts to be educated, and their devoted mother died in a poor-house. Even his music was neglected for many years after his death. It was not until 1829, for example, that his "St. Matthew Passion" was revived by Mendelssohn.

Yet in spite of all this neglect and misunderstanding Bach must have had great happiness in his work. His aims were absolutely sincere and unselfish; he wrote not for money or for fame, but for love of beauty and the impulse to express his deep religious faith; and his skill matched his ideals. If there ever was a musician who could afford to let his music stand on its own merits, who had no need for anxiety about it, it was Bach, who learned as fully as

any other composer I know of that lesson of which Matthew Arnold writes:

> One lesson of two duties kept at one
> Though the loud world proclaim their enmity;
> Of toil unsevered from tranquillity,
> Of labor that in lasting fruit outgrows,
> Far noisier schemes; accomplish'd in repose;
> Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.

CHAPTER XI

AT A PIANO RECITAL (*Continued*)

BEETHOVEN'S SONATAS

IF the second piece on our programme is a sonata of Beethoven, as is very likely, we shall be struck by the complete contrast it presents to the Bach fugues. Beethoven was born only twenty years (1770) after Bach died, and in the same country, Germany; yet so rapidly had music been developing in the mean time that the style of writing in which he grew up shows little resemblance to that of Bach. All these changes were largely due to three men: Bach's own son, Philip Emanuel Bach, who lived from 1714 to 1788; Joseph Haydn (1732–1809); and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91). What they were you will see for yourselves if you listen attentively to the music.

Suppose it is the so-called "Sonata Pathétique" (opus 13) that the pianist has chosen: the very first strain will take you into a different world from Bach's. There is an energy about this phrase, with its odd rhythm to which the short tones give such a feeling of excitement, and with the complete silence at the end of it, that we do not find in Bach's tranquil, even-flowing music. It sounds like a cry of sor-

row, straight from the heart. And at the beginning of the part marked "Allegro" what strength and impatience is voiced in that upward sweep of the melody through two octaves! This music is like a young man of noble, but intense passions—proud, hot-blooded, self-willed. It does not speak to us with distant politeness and a formal bow: instead it rushes at us, seizes us by the throat, and compels us to listen.

This roughness of manner and earnestness of expression, which you will find in almost everything Beethoven wrote, has been explained by some writers as due to a tendency of all the musicians, poets, and other artists of his day toward what is called "Romanticism." The earlier "classic" artists, these writers say, tried above all to make their work clear, quiet, and calm, and did not "wear their hearts on their sleeves," as we say, that is, did not try to put their private, personal feelings into their work. Such a poet as Alexander Pope, always correct and always reserved, is an example of the "classical" way of looking at art. But toward the beginning of the nineteenth century the artistic fashion changed, and it became the custom to be just as "romantic" as one could, to express one's most private and deepest feelings, as Keats does, for example, in poetry, and as Beethoven does in music.

There is a good deal of truth in such a theory, for art certainly has its changing fashions from age to age; but we must also take into account Beethoven's peculiar personality. He was an extraordinary man.



BEETHOVEN

He felt deeply, loved and hated with all his might, judged everything for himself, could never bring himself to "follow the leader" tamely as most of us do, but strove always for truth and for beauty as he saw them. Of course he found few to agree with him; and being both impatient and proud he would not explain himself; and year by year he lived more alone with his ideals, and others thought him more cccentric, and willful, and masterful. They were right in a way: he was willful; but it was the willfulness of a man who knew that he had a great work to do, and that he understood how to do it better than anyone else.

It is natural that everything connected with Beethoven should show in its own way this masterful nature of the great man not understood. We see it in his face, with his deep-set steady eyes, firmly held lips, and square jaw. We read it in the stories of him:—how he would not humble himself before the emperor when he met him out walking; how when he was asked if he had noble blood, he replied proudly that his nobility lay in his head and in his heart; how when some one told him that a certain harmony in one of his pieces was "not allowed," he answered: "Very well, then, *I* allow it." And above all we hear it in his music, in those bold, commanding phrases, in those long, deliberate climaxes, in those sudden changes from soft to loud or from slow to fast, that seem often the result of mere whim.

Besides the more intense expressiveness that marks off Beethoven from Bach, however, you will also feel

a difference in the very stuff of the music—in the way it is put together. Bach's is usually polyphonic, woven out of several equally important melodies. At the opening of the "Sonata Pathétique," on the contrary, you will hear but one melody, with an accompaniment; the music is "homophonic," or "one-melodied"; and most of Beethoven's music, as well as most of Haydn's and Mozart's, is in this simpler style. It is true that among Beethoven's later works we find several fine fugues, but they do not sound like a quite natural expression of his thoughts. The fact is that in his day the influence of instruments on musical style had become even more important than that of voices; and the single melodies rather than their interweavings had become the important matter.

All through the years when Haydn and Mozart were preparing the way for Beethoven, the order in which these single melodies or themes could best be made to follow each other had been deeply studied, and a scheme had been slowly worked out, which for simplicity and clearness, combined with endless chances for striking contrasts, has never been beaten. This scheme was called "Sonata-form"—a word which I hope you will not confuse with "Sonata." Sonata-form means a definite plan or order in which the melodies follow each other in a piece or movement; a Sonata is a composition for one or two instruments, having one or more of its movements, usually the first one, in this form. If written for more than two instruments it is called a Trio, Quartet,

Quintet, and so on, as the case may be; if for a whole orchestra, it is a Symphony; if for a solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment, it is a Concerto.

The sonata-form, the most perfect form we have, is the result of carrying out our natural ideas of orderliness in music, which we studied in Chapter VI, as far as they will go. It is hardly more than a three-part song-form magnified. You remember that this form is based on the plan of Statement, Contrast, and Restatement. Well, so is the sonata-form; but here each part, instead of being just one melody, is a bundle of different melodies; and these are themselves arranged in the parts in much the same way.

Part I, the Statement, is called the Exposition, which is only a high-sounding name for the same thing, taken from the Latin. Part II, the Contrast, is called the Development, for reasons we shall presently see. And Part III, the Restatement, is again Latinized into "Recapitulation" or "Reprise"—of which words we will choose the shorter.

If you will now open Beethoven's Sonatas at the "Pathétique," opus 13, we can examine it together. The first movement is a fine example of sonata-form. It begins with a slow introduction, marked "Grave," which is not a regular part of the plan. The first section proper, the Exposition, begins at the marking *Allegro di molto e con brio* and extends through one hundred and twenty-one measures.[1] You will no-

[1] It will be worth while for you to number the measures as far as 186, in pencil, so that you can easily follow the references.

tice that it is marked to be repeated. This was a custom in Beethoven's day. As the Exposition contains all the themes of the movement, it is necessary that it be thoroughly understood. Nowadays composers usually trust to their hearers' grasping the themes in one hearing, but in the days when the sonata was new and strange the repetition was needed.

Looking now more closely, you will see that this section has several distinct parts, as follows. Measures 1–40: energetic, stirring, mostly in key of C-minor; 41–78: quieter, rather wistful melody, mostly in E-flat minor; 79–121: one or two new melodies, with something of the energy of the first part, but on the whole giving us the feeling of calming down, of reaching an end. At 110 you will see a phrase or two of the first melody repeated. This part is mostly in the key of E-flat major. Let us call the energetic melody the First theme, the quieter melody the Second theme, and the two ending melodies the Third or Closing themes. You will find in every movement in sonata-form this general plan of themes. The first theme is the most important, and gives its character to the whole movement. The second is planned chiefly to make a good contrast with it. The closing themes, of which there may be several, are to notify us that the section is drawing to an end, and often contain, as in measure 110 here, a short reminder of the first theme. You will notice also the contrast of *keys* as well as of melodies; in measures 1–40 C is the central tone; in all the rest it is E-flat.

The second large section, the Development, so called because its business is to develop the hidden possibilities of the themes in the ways we discussed in Chapter VI, extends, from the point we have now reached, up to measure 186. It begins by reminding us of the solemn introduction, but quickly passes to an unexpected key and a long mysterious, held chord. The racing speed returns, and we hear a phrase of the first theme, which was first given us in measures 25–26, followed by the motive from the introduction, taken much faster (131–132). The music slides restlessly from one key to another, but at last settles down to a steady G in the bass (158). From vague rumblings shoot up bits of the first theme, preparing for its return.

The Reprise is, as its names implies, a repetition of the Exposition section, and corresponds with it, as you will see, pretty closely. There is, however, one important difference: while the Exposition presents to us a *contrast* of keys, C being pitted against E-flat, in the Reprise we have unity of key, C keeping everything for itself. The arrangement of keys is one of the most delicate beauties of the Sonata-form. Beginning with a simple contrast of *two* keys in Section I, we have a bewildering confusion of *many* keys in II; and in III we come out of the woods, so to speak, and find ourselves altogether in the *one* home key.

The last fifteen measures of this movement do not belong to the Reprise. They form a brief tailpiece or "Coda," to end all with just the right effect. In some of Beethoven's later works the codas are almost

as long and intricate as the developments, but here he gives us only brief reminiscences of the introduction and the first theme.

A TABULAR VIEW OF THE SONATA-FORM

SECTIONS	THEMES	KEYS	REMARKS
Introduction		Home key	Not a part of the form. Often lacking.
I. Exposition	I. II. Closing themes	Home key Contrast key " "	Contrasts in mood with I. Often contains suggestions of I.
II. Development	On any or all of the themes	Many keys	Aims at variety in all ways.
III. Reprise	I. II. Closing themes	Home key " " " "	May be shortened. " " " " " "
Coda			Not a part of the form, but may be long and important.

After the strain on our attention of listening to a movement so carefully dovetailed together as this, we need a change, a rest; and the composers of sonatas usually provide us with one by making the second movement slow and full of feeling, and simple in form, having only one or two themes, not elaborately developed. Beethoven's slow movements are earnest, noble, large: they are built on songlike themes so appealing that they fairly seem to speak to us; and what they say is always inspiring, a message of peace, or hopeful courage, or religious comfort. Like

everything that he writes, their form has beauty of proportion and the lovely wide curves of melody that remind one of the arches in a great cathedral; but in the slow movements this beauty lies less in the combining of the themes than in the themes themselves. The *Adagio cantabile* of the Sonata Pathétique is an example; its form is simple—chief theme, contrasting theme, chief theme repeated, another contrast, chief theme once more (each time with a different accompaniment), and a short coda; but how calm and wide is the sweep of this melody! how much it has of that variety of meter we studied in Chapter III!

Then after seriousness comes play; in the third movement we find the motion and the mood of the dance: either it is a courtly minuet, modeled after those of the old suites, or else Beethoven's high spirits turn it into a carnival of fun, and it receives the name of "scherzo," the Italian for a "joke." In his scherzos you will find Beethoven in what he himself called his "unbuttoned" mood: not on his good behavior, that is, but ready for the wildest pranks, delighting to startle us by sudden changes of loudness, speed, or key, by horrid discords, by clumsy antics as of dancing bears, by unexpected turns of melody—by anything and everything, in a word, that gets the music out of the beaten track and gives the pleasure of surprise. There was always a good deal of the naughty boy in this great man, as we see from stories such as that of his sending to a lady who had begged for a lock of his hair, a snippet from a goat's beard; and it

is this bad boy of a Beethoven that plays tricks on us in the scherzos.

The same spirit of high good humor is usually felt also in the last movements or "finales" of the sonatas; but these, a little more elaborate than the two middle movements, are as a rule either in the sonata-form, or in a similar form called the rondo. "Rondo" is the Italian for "round," and refers to the way the music has of constantly coming around again to the chief theme, however often it may seem to have got away from it.

The third movement of the Pathétique Sonata (which has no minuet or scherzo) is a good example. The main theme, striking in at once without any introduction, bustling and energetic, comes to an emphatic stop in the seventeenth measure, as if to say "There, that's the whole story!" Presently, however, a new melody is heard, soft, tranquil, graceful, in the contrasting key of E-flat (measure 25), and a little later, still in the same key, a third theme (measure 44), which leads gradually up to a climax in (58) and a pause at (60). So far everything looks like "sonata-form"; we have our three themes and just the proper contrast of keys. But if it were sonata-form we should now have the "Development," and instead of that we have what? Why, the first theme over again. We have come around to where we started from, and the piece is a rondo.

Continuing our analysis we find:

(61–78), first theme.

(79–107), *another* contrast, in still another key.

This theme, you will notice, is in the "polyphonic" style—it has two equally important melodies.

(120–134), first theme, third time.

(134), contrasting theme first used, now in the "home-key."

(154–170) third theme, home key.

You will notice that (120–170) is treated exactly as it should be in the Reprise of a sonata-form—all the three themes in the home key. We often find these striking resemblances in the two forms.

(171–182), first theme, fourth time.

(182–end), a coda. We get two final hints at the theme again in measures (202–206).

I cannot leave this movement without asking you to admire the skill with which Beethoven draws out what is hidden in his third theme, in measures (154–170). This is a fine example of true development of a theme.

Bach's Well-Tempered Clavichord has been called the musician's Bible; Beethoven's Sonatas might be called the musician's Shakespeare. Like the plays of the great Englishman, they are so many-sided, they express such deep and various feelings, and with such constant beauty of form and style, that we might study them all our lives without exhausting them. What I have said here about their forms is meant to help you in this study. Not that it is important for you to label all the melodies "first theme" or "second theme," or know just which key each one is in; this would lead only to a scientific knowledge such as the botanist has of the number of petals in a

flower. What you want is rather the loving interest of the artist in beauty. But this interest, different as it is from the scientist's, can be satisfied only by an equally patient study. If you wish to perceive the elastic meter, the constantly shifting outline, the endless variety of rhythm, resulting in perfect unity, of Beethoven's melodies; if you would grasp the wonderful symmetry of his pieces as a whole, seeing the relation of part to part, binding together in your memory what comes to your ear only a bit at a time; if you would feel at home in these temples and cathedrals of tone, where every column has its purpose and the curve of each arch is answered in another; if, in a word, you would understand that beauty of form which is to the emotions of Beethoven's music what a perfect body is to a noble soul, you must listen with your minds as well as your ears, and you must return again and again to the same piece as we return again and again to the words of a great poet, and find each time in them a new depth of meaning.

CHAPTER XII

AT A PIANO RECITAL (*Continued*)

CHOPIN, SCHUMANN, AND LISZT

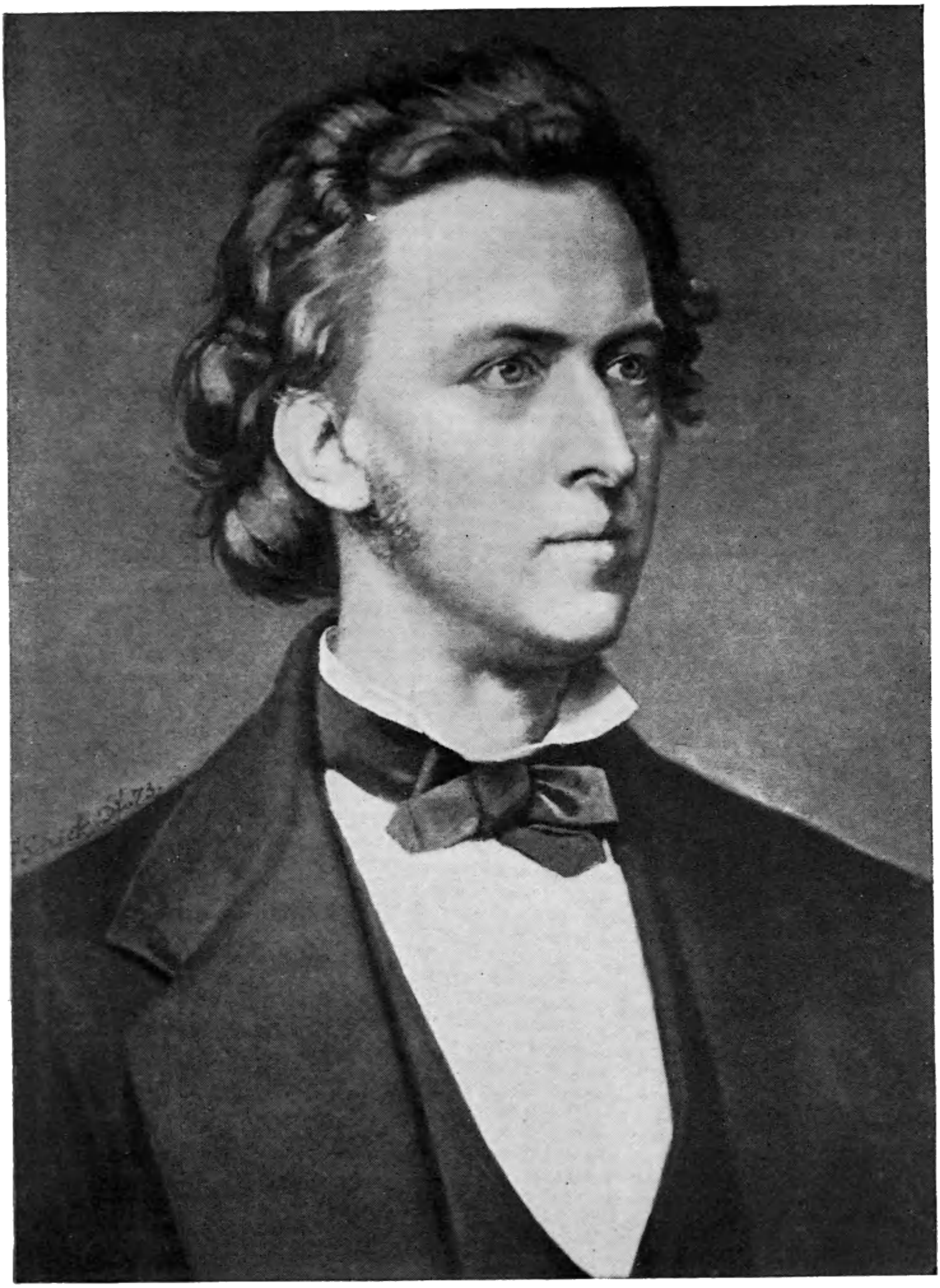
ALMOST perfect as are the single melodies and their arrangement in order, or, in other words, all that has to do with form, in Beethoven, his piano music leaves our modern ears a little unsatisfied so far as its color-effects are concerned. You may be surprised to hear me speak of "color" in music. But just as in painting those effects which depend on the shapes of objects, and appeal especially to our perceiving minds, are called effects of form, while effects which depend on the material of which the objects are made, and appeal to our sense of sight, are called effects of color; so in speaking of music we may borrow these words, and say that the curve of a melody has beauty of form, and that the tones out of which it is made, taken by themselves, have beauty of color, meaning that the tones, as they impress our sense of hearing, are "rich," "warm," "mellow," "clear," and so on. In the very first chapter we considered three different appeals music may make, the sensuous, the æsthetic, and the expressive. Well, "color" and "form" are merely names for quali-

ties that make the sensuous, or the æsthetic, appeal; color pleases the ear, form pleases the mind.

When we say, then, that marvelous as Beethoven's form is, his color leaves us a little unsatisfied, we mean that he satisfies our minds but not our ears. The sounds his piano music gives us, merely as sounds, are often either thin and hollow or thick and "muddy," because they are close together, either high up or low down, instead of spread widely over the keyboard. The reasons for this were, first, that Beethoven was thinking so hard about the music itself that he didn't stop to consider how to make it sound its best, and second that the damper pedal, so immensely important to the effect of all piano music, was comparatively new in his day, and its possibilities were not realized.

It therefore remained for later composers, who could not equal Beethoven in formal beauty, to excel him in beauty of color. Their canvases glow with rich, full tones, and shimmer with delicate filigree; their sounds are as full of variety, of light and shade, as a landscape on a day of racing clouds; and the skillful use of the pedal blends together all the effects, smooths over all the sharp angles. Of the masters of this glowing modern style, the greatest is without doubt Fredéric Chopin (1809–1849).

Though born in Poland, and a patriotic son of that country so long and cruelly downtrodden by Russia, Chopin lived most of his life in Paris, where he was a fashionable teacher and pianist, petted by the duchesses and princesses of that brilliant society. He



CHOPIN

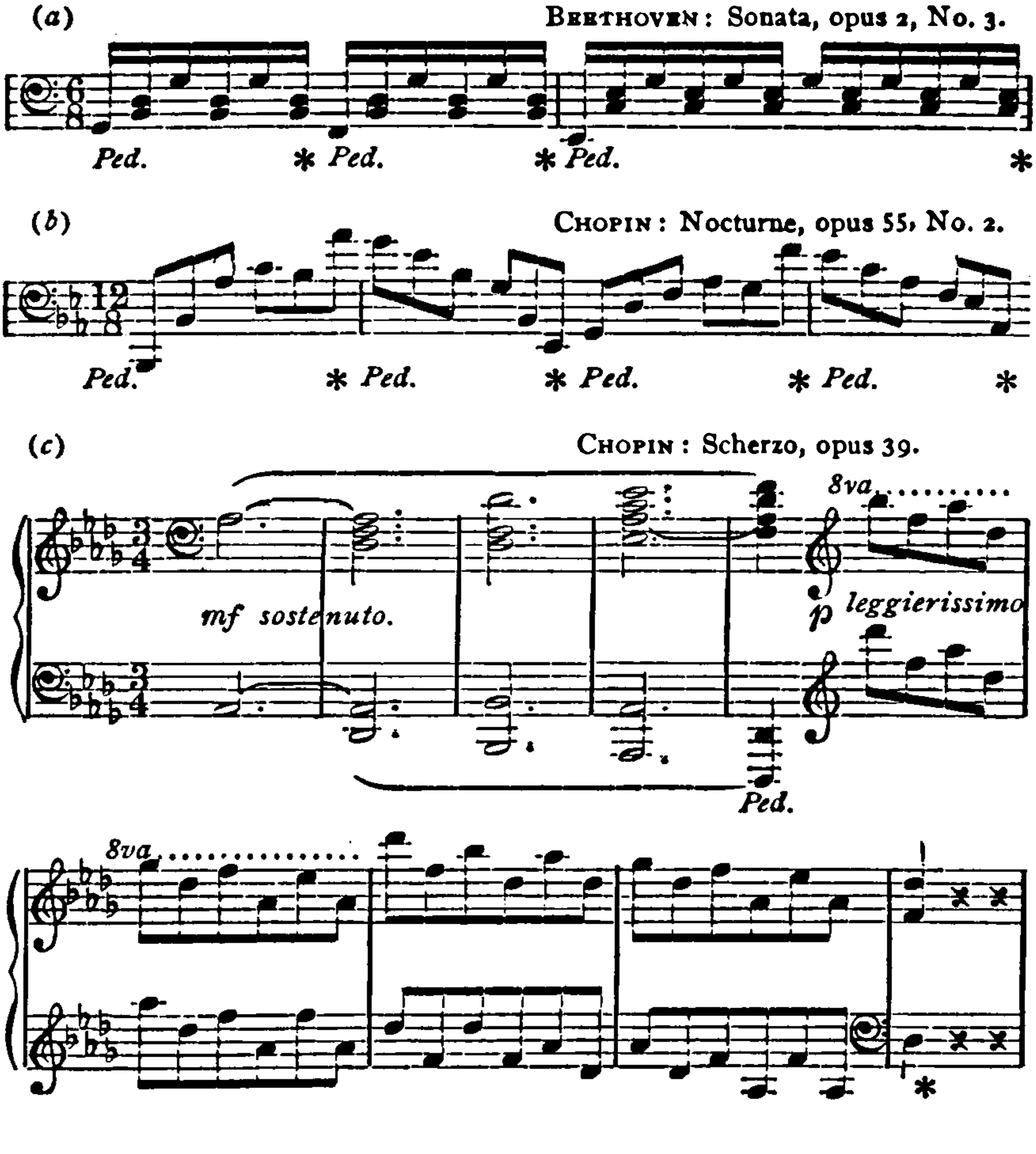
was always delicate in health, haughty and reserved in manner, and most particular about his surroundings; he had his rooms papered in soft greens and dove-colors and filled with flowers; he always wore white gloves and rode in a carriage to his lessons, and he was as fussy about his clothes as if he had had nothing else to think about. Exquisite taste, a sensitiveness almost unhealthy, a love of perfection, and dissatisfaction with anything short of it—these were the chief characteristics of Chopin.

You can readily understand how such a man would spare no pains to make his music as perfect in coloring as possible. He early found that by using the damper pedal freely and making the hands move back and forth over wide spaces, he could get at wonderfully rich and at the same time clear effects. If you will compare the two bits of accompaniment shown in Figure XVII (a) and (b), using the pedal as marked, you will notice how much better Chopin's "sounds" than Beethoven's. The reason is that Chopin, instead of "bunching" the tones so that they can be played with little motion of the hand, spreads them widely, and blends them by means of the pedal.

In this case nearly all the tones in each chord *belong to the chord* and are parts of it; but Chopin soon found that by putting in a few tones that are not parts of the chord, but make "dissonances" with it, he could still further deepen and enrich the "color." Figure XVII (c), from his Scherzo, opus 39, is an example. By holding the pedal from the moment the

chord in the fifth measure is struck, he makes all the following tones merge with it. Many of these tones are dissonant with the chord; but for this very reason, if they are properly played, softly, lightly, they make, so to speak, a glistening veil over the hard out-

FIGURE XVII.



line of the chord itself. Such a use of dissonances, blended by the pedal, is found in hundreds of passages by Chopin and other modern piano composers, producing a vague richness of color that may be com-

pared with that of modern paintings of the "impressionistic" school, such as those of Monet.

Some composers, indeed, often overdo these rich effects of mixed tones, giving our ears such a constant diet of them that they rebel as our stomachs would against a steady diet of plum pudding and mince pie. We actually long for a piece of plain bread. But Chopin had too fine a taste to make this mistake. Notice how strong, pure, and simple are the opening chords in the passage from the Scherzo. In nothing does Chopin show his greatness more than in his keen sense for variety of color. Before we tire of his royal purples and deep reds, his sparkling webs of gold and silver, he relieves them with a wide space of clear green or gray.

It is in beauty of form that he falls short. He wrote only three sonatas and two concertos (for piano with orchestral accompaniment) in the larger forms that Beethoven uses so splendidly, and these will hardly bear comparison with Beethoven's. If you listen closely to the first movement of his Sonata in B-flat minor, for instance, you will feel that it does not hold together, that there is too great a contrast between the stormy, agitated first theme and the quiet second theme. Beautiful as this is, it seems more like the beginning of a new piece than the continuation of the same movement.

He probably knew by instinct where his weakness lay, for he confines himself in most of his work to short pieces in simple two-part or three-part forms, for the most part dances. These pieces he does not

make suitable for actual dancing: he "idealizes" them, as we say; that is, his ideal of musical beauty leads him to introduce delicate changes of speed (called "tempo rubato," "stolen time," because one part of the melody steals some of the time of another) and to vary the lengths of the phrases in a way that would throw dancers out of step, but that makes the music more interesting.

He uses for this purpose some of the dances for which his native country is famous, particularly the Polonaise, a stately dance with which the ancient Polish nobles used to celebrate the election of their kings, and the more lively Mazurka, which he knows how to make now melancholy and tender, now wildly gay. He also wrote many waltzes, graceful or brilliant, and other dances such as a tarantelle, a bolero, a krakowiak.

The deeper emotions which naturally express themselves in song rather than dance, are found in his matchless nocturnes and preludes, and in a few larger, more ambitious pieces—impromptus and ballades. The twenty-seven *études* or studies are not merely exercises for the pianist, as their name might make us think, but like everything he wrote are full of poetic feeling and delicate beauty.

The music of Robert Schumann (1810–1856) is less exquisite but more full of vigor and health than that of Chopin; Schumann, moreover, did not confine himself to the piano like Chopin, but wrote much for other instruments and for orchestra. He began, it is true, as a pianist, and might never have become any-

thing more had it not been for an odd accident, which throws so much light on his enthusiastic and impatient disposition that I must tell you about it.

It happened in Leipsic, when, as an eager young student, he was trying to make enough progress as a pianist to persuade his mother to let him give up studying law, which he hated, and devote himself entirely to music. How hard he tried to curb his headlong nature, to be wise and patient! "To bring to light anything great and calmly beautiful," he writes his mother, "one ought only to rob Time of one grain of sand at a time; the complete whole does not appear all at once, still less does it drop from the sky." Yet in spite of this good sense, Schumann found the drudgery of piano practice so trying that he invented a machine to shorten it. He tied a string to the fourth finger of his right hand, that bothersome finger that never learns to mind its own business, passed it over a pulley on the ceiling, and fixed a weight at the other end. He thought that by practicing with the finger thus separated from the others he could make it independent; but instead he lamed his hand forever, and had to give up all his ambition to become a concert pianist. In this seeming misfortune, however, was hidden a blessing: having to put all his energy into composing, he became one of the greatest of musicians.

One so eager to follow his ideals, so impatient of dullness and the ruts that most people plod along in, found much to find fault with in the music of his day. Most of his fellow musicians cared little for

deep feeling, for poetry, for all that depends on imagination; they hadn't enough spirit to break any rules, or to find new beauties out of the beaten path. Schumann contemptuously called them Philistines, after those dull people in the Bible, and made his friends into a club, the David-club, to fight them. His imagination, his love of "making believe," showed itself here, too, for most of the members of this club were not actual people at all, but creatures of his fancy. There was Florestan, who was the active, energetic side of himself, and Eusebius, who was the thoughtful, dreamy side; Felix Meritis was his friend Mendelssohn; Chiarina was his teacher's daughter, Clara Wieck, whom he afterwards married. He founded a paper, the *New Journal of Music*, in which he had these imaginary persons hold long conversations about music; he wrote the "Davidsbundlertänze" ("Dances of the David-club") in which he pretended that each piece was written by either Florestan or Eusebius, or the two together.

All the music of his early years shows his dislike of the commonplace, his passion for the novel and the unexpected. The melodies are most original, full of odd leaps and strongly marked rhythms; the harmony is often harsh; effects of "color," produced by the pedal, by crossing the hands, by striking a chord and letting up the keys one after another, and so on, are frequent; and the form is highly individual, the themes being little developed, but following each other like the scattered thoughts of an active but un-



SCHUMANN

trained mind. Curious names abound: "Butterflies," "Carnival," "Fantastic Pieces," "Flower Piece," "Arabesque." Mottoes and poetic quotations are used, and names are spelled out in letters in the tones of a theme, as, for instance, in the Northern Dance which begins with the name of Gade, a Danish composer—G-A-D-E.

Naturally such queer music was only gradually understood, and most of Schumann's fellow musicians either considered him a little "cracked" or did not notice him at all. In spite of the devotion of his wife, Clara (Wieck) Schumann, a famous pianist who gave her life to making his works known, they made slow headway, and there is a story of a gentleman, after one of her concerts, saying pleasantly to her husband: "And are you musical, too, Mr. Schumann?" This was not so ridiculous as it seems to us, because Schumann was so intensely quiet, so reserved and thoughtful. He lived almost entirely in the world of his own imagination, would sit absolutely silent in company, gazing at the floor, and communicated with the world only in his music. But this very quality is one of the things most original in his works; their deep thoughtfulness, their earnest but suppressed feeling, their mystery and suggestion of day-dream and reverie. The most familiar example is the beautiful piano piece "Träumerei" ("Dreaming").

It would be hard to think of a greater contrast to the character and the music of Schumann than we find in those of Franz Liszt, who was born in Hun-

gary, in 1811, and died in 1886. The famous Hungarian was as thoroughly at home in the world of fashionable society as the German was ill at ease in it; and all his piano compositions show a sense for effects that will "tell," and a skill in producing them, which we never find in Schumann's sincere music, written to express his own inner feelings. "How extraordinary his playing is," he wrote to Clara Wieck, "so bold and daring, and then again so tender and delicate! But there is a good deal of tinsel about it, too."

The "tinsel" in Liszt, both as a pianist and as a composer, was partly due to the fashions of the day, the public caring much more for trivial melodies from the operas, embroidered by all kinds of glittering scales and running passages, than for real music. Liszt followed the fashion to a certain extent (much more than Schumann or even Chopin), but he used his great influence both to make show playing less merely stiff and brilliant, more free and elastic, and also to introduce more serious melody and more interesting harmony. He arranged for piano—"transcribed," as we say—many songs by Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, as well as preludes and fugues by Bach, and even orchestral pieces of Beethoven, Wagner, Weber, and others. His most famous transcriptions are those of the national melodies of his own country, the fifteen "Hungarian Rhapsodies," so often used as show pieces at the end of recitals. In these he surrounds the simple but delightful tunes with a bewildering network of trills,

scales, runs of all kinds, and ranges from tinkling effects in the treble, like those of a music box, to thunderous *fortissimos.*

There is a good deal of difference of opinion as to the artistic value of his use of the piano for these orchestral effects of tone. No one can deny the skill with which he makes the piano roar and cry and throb as if it were possessed, but isn't it better after all for the piano to remain a piano, as it always does in Chopin's hands, to keep its own character, its delicate shades of color and lovely mingling of tones through the pedal, rather than to try to match the orchestra, which after all it can't do? There is more real music, to some of us, in a simple prelude by Chopin or a romance of Schumann, or even a "Song Without Words" by Mendelssohn, than in all the "sound and fury" of a Hungarian Rhapsodie.

Of Liszt's original compositions the best known are the studies "Forest Rustlings" and "Dance of Gnomes," the "Legends," "Sonnets of Petrarch," and "Religious Harmonies," the set of piano pieces called "Années de Pelerinage" ("Years of Pilgrimage"), and the single sonata. In all these the style is now dazzlingly brilliant, now appealing, emotional; but if you listen carefully you will feel that Liszt's emotion is not so genuine as Schumann's, that there is a good deal of pose in it, that his sentiment is often only sentimentality.

In spite of the theatrical tendency in Liszt, however, he is a man of such great force, so much of that strange quality we call "personal magnetism," that

his work is original and important. In the purely mechanical side of piano playing, in matters of free motion of the wrists and arms, effects of touch and of the pedals, he brought about great changes. And by what he composed himself, and by the generous help he gave to other composers, especially Wagner, he made a deep impression on the history of music.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ORCHESTRA

THE piano, as we have already seen, is an instrument by which a player can start vibrations in the air, so regulated as to speed, force, and duration that they give our ears the sensation of music. The orchestra is really nothing but a much greater and more complicated instrument, by which a hundred men, trained and led by a conductor, can produce similar vibrations in the air. It is, of course, able to do much more than the piano in many ways. In the first place, it can play louder; a hundred men can shake the air more violently than one, even if he be a Rubinstein. In the second place, it can play more separate tones at the same time; a pianist has but ten fingers, and even with the pedal his powers are limited; moreover, to play half a dozen melodies at once, crossing and intertwining, is impossible for him, easy for an orchestra. Thirdly, and most important of all, the pianist is like a painter with only one color on his palette, though it may be used in many shades; but the orchestral palette is almost unlimited in its varieties of color or tone-quality.

In order to understand this, you must know that while nearly all musical tones are made up of several

different partial tones, as we have seen in the case of the piano, the number and strength of these partial tones may differ greatly according to the way they are produced, and this difference always results in a difference of what we call tone-quality. The rule is that the fewer and weaker the partial tones the more "pure," "clear" or "quiet" is the quality; the more and stronger the partials, the richer, keener, more brilliant the quality. This may be seen even in the piano. When I strike a string hard it vibrates not only more, but in more separate and distinct ways (giving more partial tones) than when I strike softly; the result is that the tone is not only louder, but more "brilliant." And as we saw in Chapter IX, the same tone or chord, struck with the same force, is richer when the pedal is held, because then the strings that correspond with the partial tones vibrate in sympathy and so add to the force of these partial tones.

In the orchestra we have many different instruments, acting in different ways, producing less or more partial tones, and therefore varying in quality much more than piano strings possibly can. The violin, for example, owes its clear, penetrating, bright tone to the presence of many partial tones. The flute, in the lower part of its register,[1] produces only one or two partials. and has therefore a mild, pure tone. The oboe owes its sharp quality to comparatively loud high partial tones. Clarinet tone, so peculiar that

[1] Register: the range of tones from low to high which an instrument can sound; its compass; also used to mean a special part of this compass, as "low register," "high register."

one can hardly confuse it with any other, is the result of the fact that only the unevenly numbered partial tones, the first, third, fifth, etc., are present in it. The clanging sound of bells comes from their giving out different sets of partial tones at the same time.

All these differences, so important for us to hear if we would enjoy the varieties of color in music, and so interesting to study, depend upon the peculiar ways in which the instruments start the air a-throbbing. According to these peculiar ways the instruments may be arranged in several groups, as follows: I. Strings made to vibrate by a bow; the violin, the viola, the violoncello, the double-bass. II. Strings struck by hammers; the piano, the dulcimer, etc. These are little used in the orchestra. III. Strings plucked by the fingers; the harp, the banjo, the guitar. Only the first is used in orchestral music. IV. Columns of air made to vibrate by blowing across them; the flute, the piccolo, the organ. V. Columns of air started into vibration by a strip of metal or wood called a reed; the oboe, the clarinet, the bassoon, and others. VI. Columns of air moved by the lips of the player, themselves acting as reeds; the horn, the trumpet, the cornet, the trombone, the tuba. VII. Stretched skins, or pieces of metal, wood, or other material, struck by hammers; the drums of all sorts, the cymbals, the triangle, the tambourine, and the like.

Of these groups numbers I, II, and III belong to a larger group called String Instruments, or simply

"The Strings"; numbers IV and V, because usually made of wood, are classed together as Wood-wind Instruments, or simply "The Wood-wind"; group VI, usually made of brass, are called "The Brass"; and group VII, all played by striking or *percussion*, are called The Percussion Instruments, or sometimes "The Battery," from the Latin *battuo*, to beat. These four bodies of instruments are found in every large orchestra, and are important in the order named.

You can easily learn to recognize most of the instruments by sight as you sit at a concert, and will find your pleasure much increased by doing so. Stretching to the left and to the right of the conductor or leader, along the front of the stage, are the first and second violins, usually about sixteen of each. These are all alike, and are divided into firsts and seconds merely because they have different parts of the music to play. Directly behind the second violins (and to the right of the conductor) are the violas, about twelve in number. The viola is simply a larger violin, which you will find it hard to tell apart from it unless you are sitting well up. Behind the first violins are the twelve violoncellos, much larger—indeed so large that they have to be played between the knees of the players, resting upon the floor. At the back of the orchestra, to your left, are the eight or ten double-basses, great instruments to which the players have to stand. They are put far back so that their deep, heavy tones will not drown out other sounds. This completes the strings.

Next comes the wood-wind, usually grouped well down the stage, and directly in front of the conductor, and a little harder to tell apart. With the flute you will have little difficulty: it is the only one which the player holds sideways and blows across instead of into the end except the piccolo, merely a smaller flute. There are two or three flutes. But the oboe and the clarinet look puzzlingly alike, being almost the same shape, except that the oboe is a little smaller and the "bell" at its end flares out less. If you look while they are playing your ear will help your eye, for the tone of the oboe is thinner and sharper, that of the clarinet more smooth, mellow, liquid. There are usually three clarinet players, one using sometimes the bass clarinet, a similar but larger instrument. Of the three oboe players, one uses sometimes the slightly larger English horn (not really a horn at all, but an oboe of deeper tone). The three bassoons are long wooden tubes, blown into through a curved mouthpiece of metal; they so much resemble bundles of fagots that the Italians call them "fagotti." The contra-bassoon, or double-bassoon, is still larger, but somewhat similar in appearance.

Back of the wood-wind instruments you will see the yellow gleam of the four horns, with their flaring mouths and their long tubes curved into a circle, and near them the four trumpets, looking like large cornets. To the left, across the stage from the double-basses, and like them well in the rear, sit the four men making up what is called the "trombone choir."

Three of them play trombones, brass instruments made with a section that pulls in and out; the fourth struggles with a perfect monster of brass, a sort of instrumental elephant or rhinoceros—the tuba.

Finally, at the very back and center of the stage are the percussion instruments: the kettle-drums, great copper bowls covered with parchment, two or three of them in charge of one player; the bass drum, such as you can see any day at a Salvation Army meeting; the cymbals, brass plates or disks which the player clashes together; and a few others.

In your study of just what is going on in the orchestra you can have one other guide almost as helpful as a knowledge of where the various players sit: that is, a copy of the printed music from which the conductor leads, called the "score." Orchestral scores are now published in small size, in volumes that will go in one's pocket; and there is no greater pleasure for one who can read music, even if only a little, than to follow in them the music as it is being played. It is true that one cannot hear the music as a whole so well when one's attention is fixed on the details, but one way of listening helps the other. The study of a score is like the study of a map; we cannot enjoy to the full a journey through a new part of the country if our eyes are glued to a map of it, yet we enjoy it far more the second time if we have followed it first on the map. So the best way to hear a symphony is to hear it twice: first following the details on a score, and second giving our whole minds to the general effect.

The Orchestra

The four groups of the orchestra—strings, wood-wind, brass, and percussion—are arranged in the following way in the score. The five lines or staves at the bottom of the page are given to the strings, the most important of all the groups, and in a sense the foundation of the orchestra, in this order: First Violins, Second Violins, Violas, Violoncellos, Double-basses. As the first violins have more to do than any other instruments, their staff, the fifth from the bottom, is the one to which you will give the closest attention. At the top of the page come the wood-winds, in this order: Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons. Each of these have usually one, but sometimes two staves. At the middle of the page, just below the staves of the wood-wind, are those of the brass: Horns (usually two staves, two horn-parts on each), Trumpets, Trombones, and Tuba. If any percussion instruments are used, their parts come in between those of the brass and those of the strings.

This is all you need to know about the arrangement of a score to get a great deal of pleasure and profit from it, by using it as a rough map or chart, so to speak, of the "lay of the land." You cannot, to be sure, read it quite accurately without more special knowledge. There are many "transposing instruments," as they are called, in the orchestra, which play their notes lower or higher than they are written, and there are others which use other clefs than the familiar G and F clefs ("treble" and "bass" clefs) of piano music. If you are interested in these matters you can read about them in any book on the

orchestra,[1] but just now all we want is a general idea of what is going on as we listen to a symphony or a symphonic poem.

As you get used to following the orchestra in the score you will notice that in spite of the limitless number of combinations of instruments that may be used, and in spite of the bewildering variety of the effects that may thus be produced, there are certain particular things that each group can do better than any other, and that it is therefore apt to be doing a good deal of the time. With the exception of the "battery," each group can make complete harmony by itself, like a choir of voices—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass—and so may be employed alone. The strings, however, are the group most often employed thus independently of everything else, for several reasons.

First, they are more agile—they can play more quickly. The violin can render with ease and accuracy twists, turns, and rapid runs that would be difficult for a flute or a clarinet, ridiculous for an oboe or a trumpet, and impossible for a trombone. Secondly, they can play louder and softer: you cannot possibly get the brilliancy out of the wood-wind that you can from the strings, and while the latter can give forth the merest breath of tone the clarinets' and bassoons' softest pianissimo is loud in comparison. Thirdly, they can play on for hours without getting tired, but the wind players, both wood and brass,

[1] See, for instance, the present writer's "The Orchestral Instruments and What They Do."

must have frequent pauses to rest their lips and get their breath. Fourthly, pleasant as wood-wind and brass tone is as a contrast, we quickly tire of too much of it; string tone is best for a steady diet. For all these reasons the strings do two thirds of all the orchestral work.

As for the wood-wind group, each member of it has so much individuality, is so different from all the others, that although they can be used together as a "choir," they are more often heard separately in "solo" (alone) playing melodies accompanied by other groups. Or two or more of them may combine on such a melody—a flute and a clarinet, an oboe and a bassoon, etc. The possibilities here are countless, as you will soon find in the scores.

The brass instruments, especially the horn, may also be used in "solo," but owing to their full, round tone, with its great solidity and carrying power, they are suited above all to hold chords in long notes while other instruments are giving the melody. As the orchestra has no pedal to mix its tones and keep them sounding, like the piano, it has to hold the music together, so to speak, in some other way, and the best way is to give long notes to the horns, or to the trombone choir. In such passages the strings, oboes, clarinets, and so on, draw the musical pattern, and the brass fill in the color that makes all solid and prevents the effect of a thin tracery without substance.

The drums and the rest of the percussion group have still another mission. Unable either to sing a melody or to hold a harmony, they are invaluable

for giving life to the rhythm by marking the accents. Thus we see a little how many-sided a thing is an orchestra; each group, each instrument, has its own appointed part in the work of making the music clear, varied, solid, and rhythmically alive.

No branch of study connected with music is more fascinating (or more endless) than that of orchestration, of the ways different composers have of making this mighty instrument play what they have heard with the ears of their imaginations. There are so many possibilities that even the simplest chord may be written in a hundred different ways, each having its own peculiar sound. I read not long ago that some curious student had collected examples from the scores of many composers of the chord of F-major, F-A-C-F, and had found that no two wrote it quite alike. And, indeed, we need only listen to their works to hear that each musician has his own peculiar mode of writing, his own special quality of tone color. Mendelssohn is clear and pure as spring water; Dvorák is rich, full, mellow; Wagner is full, solid, sonorous; Tschaïkowsky is now dark, gloomy, now sparklingly brilliant; Berlioz is thin, but with a sheen as of silver or gold; Brahms is dark and gray, of a noble plainness.

Nevertheless there are certain qualities common to all good orchestral writing. The mass of tone must be solid, not ragged and full of chinks and crannies like a threadbare tapestry. It must be well balanced, so that the melodies stand forth prominently and the less important parts stay in the background where

they belong. To secure this perfect balance of tone requires great skill and long practice, and even composers like Schubert occasionally fail in it, as in the place near the end of the first movement of his C-major Symphony, where he covers up his theme, given to the wood-wind, by too heavy a mass of strings and brass. Finally, there is the important matter of contrast, by neglect of which a composer sacrifices one of the greatest beauties of orchestral music. The different choirs should be set off against each other, so that each sounds more charming by contrast with the others. Schumann often failed in this matter. He is said to have at first given the trio of the scherzo in his Symphony in C to strings, in spite of the scherzo itself having been almost entirely for strings; it was at Mendelssohn's suggestion that he rewrote it for the wood-wind instruments, to which it is perfectly suited.

Even when several groups are playing at once, they can be so managed that their differing tone-qualities are relieved against each other, or on the other hand they can be so "doubled," or made to play the same melodies, that the color is monotonous and dull. Suppose for instance, that our music has three distinct melodies or voices. Here are two ways in which we may score it:

First Way

Melody 1.—1st violins, flutes, oboes, trumpets.
Melody 2.—2d violins, violas, clarinets, horns.
Melody 3.—Violoncellos, bassoons, trombones.

Second Way

Melody 1.—1st violins, 2d violins, violas, violoncellos.

Melody 2.—Flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons.

Melody 3.—Horns and trumpets, or trombones.

Scored in the first way, the mass of tone will be full and thick, but all of one mixed color, and therefore lacking in clearness and relief. Scored in the second way, each part will stand out, because the first is all string tone, the second all wood-wind, and the third all brass: the effect of the whole will be much more brilliant.

I have here suggested only a few of the many interesting things you will find to study in music for the orchestra. The more you study, the more you will find to hear, to admire, and to enjoy.

CHAPTER XIV

AT A SYMPHONY CONCERT

THE SYMPHONIES OF BEETHOVEN

BEETHOVEN'S nine symphonies, taken together, must on the whole be ranked as the greatest contribution ever made to music by a single man. They are in music something like what Shakespeare's plays, or Thackeray's novels, are in English literature. They are, indeed, a complete literature in themselves. They will bear the study of a lifetime. One who knows them thoroughly knows the best that is in music; no one who does not love them can be considered a true music-lover.

Like all the greatest things in art, these masterpieces were the final result of a slow progress, the perfect blossoms of seeds planted by others. Of those composers who prepared the way for Beethoven, the two most famous were Haydn and Mozart.

Joseph Haydn, born in 1732, in a Hungarian village not far from the city of Vienna (which afterwards became his home, as well as Mozart's and Beethoven's, so that the three are often called the Viennese composers), occupied for the greater part of his life the position of "Chapel-master," or

director of the orchestra, to the family of the Esterhazy princes. It was here a part of his regular duties to compose many symphonies, string quartets, and other such works. In 1791, and again in 1794, he traveled to London, writing, for a concert manager named Salomon, his twelve so-called Salomon Symphonies, by far the best of the one hundred and twenty-five symphonies that he wrote altogether. He was a simple, sensible, cheerful man, a devout Catholic, a hard worker, and a faithful friend; and when he died in 1809 he was honored and mourned by all.

His symphonies, as you may guess by their number, were neither so long nor so carefully made as more modern ones, but they were the pioneer-works which set up a standard for later composers, and justly entitle him to the name of Father of the Symphony. By his friends he was more familiarly and affectionately called simply "Papa Haydn."

As regards form, he fixed the scheme of the symphony as follows: there were three or four separate movements, of which at least one, usually the first, was in the sonata form, with exposition of two or three themes, development, and restatement, also sometimes slow introduction and coda. The last movement might be either in sonata form, or a rondo, consisting of a main theme many times repeated, with other contrasting themes in between. Of the two middle movements one was a slow movement, emotional and songlike; the other was a sprightly, and sometimes humorous, minuet with "trio." A pecu-

liarity was that in the first movement he often used only one theme, in the contrasting keys, instead of two distinct melodies. The spaces between the themes, too, were apt to be filled up with more or less unimportant matter, scales and runs, instead of developing out of the themes; and the development portion was short and not always particularly interesting.

In style the music was "homophonic": that is, the musical ideas were single melodies, or series of chords, rather than the network of intertwining "voices" of the polyphonic style of Bach. This simple style adopted by Haydn was well suited to instruments, and to the kind of form which depends chiefly on contrasts of melodies and of keys, as well as to the straightforward expression we find in Haydn, recalling that of the popular airs among which he grew up. The emotion reflected in his music, indeed, is hardly ever deep, earnest, religious, like Bach's, but rather cheerful and gay.
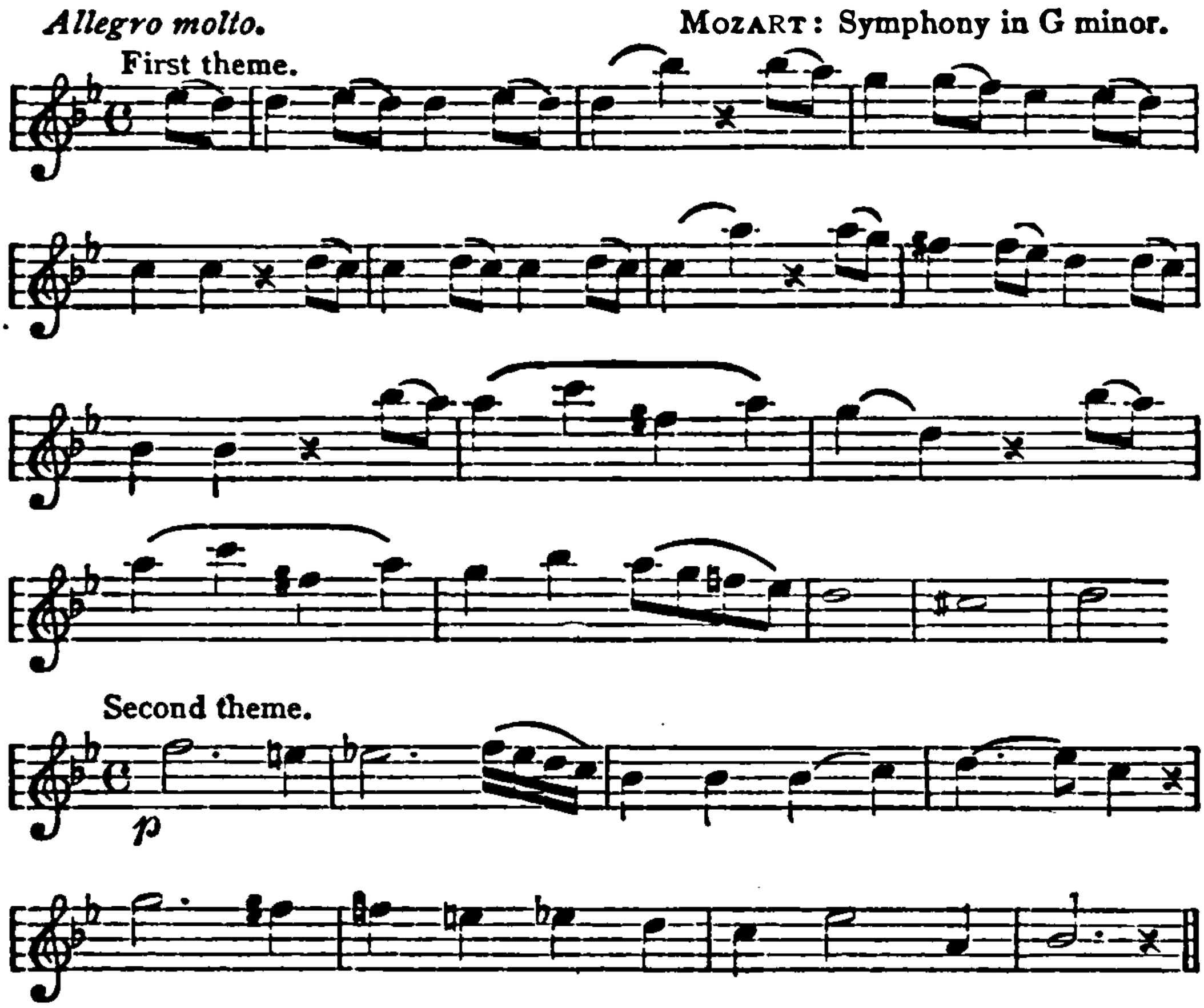
He also adopted an arrangement of the orchestra which has since been only extended, never really changed. He used four groups, strings, wood-wind, brass, and percussion: the first practically as we have it to-day; the second consisting of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, and two bassoons; the third containing only pairs of horns and trumpets; and the "battery" represented by kettledrums alone. This too was a great advance, for before his day it had been customary to use many more wood-wind instruments, which injured the balance of the tone.

It must be admitted that Haydn's symphonies now sound rather thin and old-fashioned, and only three or four of them are often heard. Several of these show his love of a joke. The "Farewell" was written to persuade Prince Esterhazy to let his orchestra, who were staying at his country place, go home to their wives and children. One player after another comes to the end of his part, takes up his music, and goes out, until only one is left playing. The prince saw the point, and remarked: "If all go, we may as well go, too." The "Toy Symphony" is orchestrated for two violins and a double-bass, together with all manner of toy instruments—drums, penny trumpets, whistles, and rattles. The "Surprise" is so named for a loud chord suddenly introduced in the quiet slow movement to wake up the English audiences, who were too fond of their after-dinner nap. One of the finest of the symphonies is the "Oxford," played when Haydn was given the degree of Doctor of Music by Oxford University.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, born in 1756, and dying when he was only thirty-five, wrote in his short life forty-nine symphonies, of which the three greatest, the C-major, known as the "Jupiter," the E-flat major, and the G-minor, were all composed in the summer of 1788. His symphonies, while following Haydn's closely in general plan, are much more perfect works of art. Their themes, to begin with, have that exquisite grace, that variety of outline, that tender and yet noble expressiveness, which we

find in all Mozart's melodies. They are less square-cut, less matter of fact, than Haydn's, not so closely modeled on the songs of the people, as two examples, the main themes of the G-minor symphony (Figure XVIII) are enough to show. What freshness, what

FIGURE XVIII.



life, are here! How naturally the phrases rise and fall, as flowing as water, as free as flame!

The same examples will show you how skillfully Mozart contrasts his ideas. The first is careless, almost "happy-go-lucky"; the second slower, more serious and earnest. Hardly ever does he use the same tune for both themes. He is fond, too, of making his melodies not only out of the ordinary scale of eight tones, but from the scale containing the tones

in between them, which we mark by sharps and flats, the scale called "chromatic"; and this, as you see in the second half of the second theme, produces an effect of more intense feeling, such as we often find in Wagner and other modern composers.

Again, Mozart, who had a much better musical education than the self-taught Haydn, thoroughly understood the old polyphonic way of writing, and could weave the voices together with the skill of Bach, yet with a clearness and brilliancy all his own. Consequently his developments are more interesting than Haydn's, the themes being heard in the bass and in the middle parts almost as often as on top, as you may see in this very symphony; and sometimes he writes a whole movement in this style, as for example the finale of his "Jupiter," which is a splendid fugue with three distinct "subjects."

Altogether, Mozart stands for all that is finest, noblest, purest, in classical music. Just what we mean by this word classical is hard to describe, it has been used in so many ways. In the first place it means belonging to the highest class or rank, most finished or perfect. In this sense Greek sculpture is classical, and indeed any work of art in which the proportions are harmonious, the form is complete and satisfying. Later, when artists came to care more about expressing their feelings than about pure beauty of form, the word romantic was used to describe their work, and in contrast with it classical came to mean reserved, unexpressive, and in an extreme use even dry, cold, forbidding. In comparison

with Beethoven Mozart is classic in this sense; as he is less energetic, more serene. But it is in the first sense that he is most justly called classical. His music is so pure and untroubled in expression, so balanced in form, so clear in style, that it deserves to be called perfect if any work of man can deserve it. It seems almost more than human; its calm beauty seems touched with the divine.

To hear a Beethoven symphony, say the Fifth, after one by Mozart, is like passing from a Greek temple like the Parthenon, with its regular columns, its quiet vertical and horizontal lines of white marble, its tranquil sculptured gods and goddesses, eternally smiling, into the dim, vast spaces of a Gothic cathedral. Here all is grand, rugged, mysterious. The great arches lead our eyes up and up, until we hardly know whether we see or dream. The sculptures are not always beautiful, often grotesque or pathetic—grinning faces, the writhing bodies of tortured saints. The air is heavy with incense, and shot through with many-colored lights. We are no longer calmed and satisfied; we are inspired and at the same time perplexed.

Beethoven, in a word, is a romanticist, and the effect of his art is to suggest more than it clearly says, to lead our imaginations to adventures of their own. He aims not to charm us, but to move and stir us. His ideas are not so complete, so rounded and definite, as Mozart's, but partly for this very reason they are more exciting. And there is in all his music a willfulness, a wild, almost savage energy, that is

certainly less divine, but somehow also more human, than the untroubled peace of classicism.

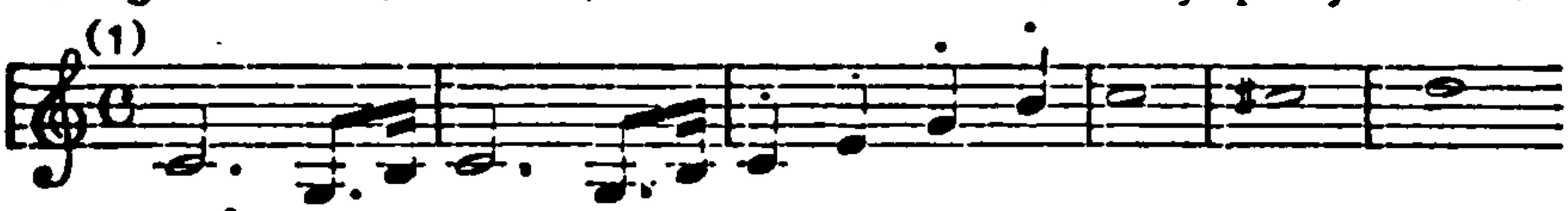
Look, for example, at the main themes of the first movements of his nine symphonies, in Figure XIX. Don't you feel the resistless force of them? Don't they stir in you a sympathetic energy? Short, all of them, wonderfully to the point, not a needless note in any, and each of a rhythmic pattern that once heard can never be forgotten. These are not the measured sentences, courteous and flowing, of a polished orator; they are the sharp, explosive words rapped out by a man eager to say something he feels deeply, a man intensely in earnest. They are the words of the rough, the bearish Beethoven, proud, willful, obstinate, the man who hated shams as much as he loved truth, whose heart, cut off from others by the terrible affliction of deafness and by their inability to understand his ideals, yet beat in sympathy with all that was noble and sincere in human nature.

Impatient as Beethoven was of the rules which musicians of less courage considered unbreakable, however, much as he disliked tamely to follow the leader, he was great enough to know that true freedom comes only to him who can obey: as the old poet Quarles expresses it, "The laws of nature break the rules of art." It was petty rules that Beethoven despised; for laws, for the great general facts of the ways our minds work, and of what appears to us beautiful, he had the deepest respect. He studied ceaselessly, as his sketch-books show, with their many

FIGURE XIX.

Allegro con brio. BEETHOVEN: Symphony Themes.

(1)



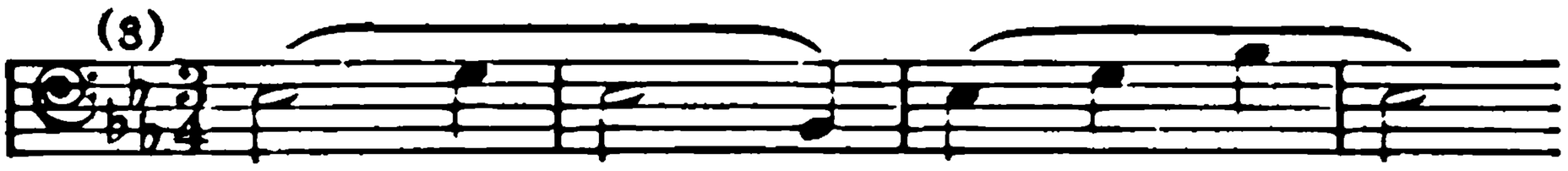
Allegro con brio.

(2)



Allegro con brio.

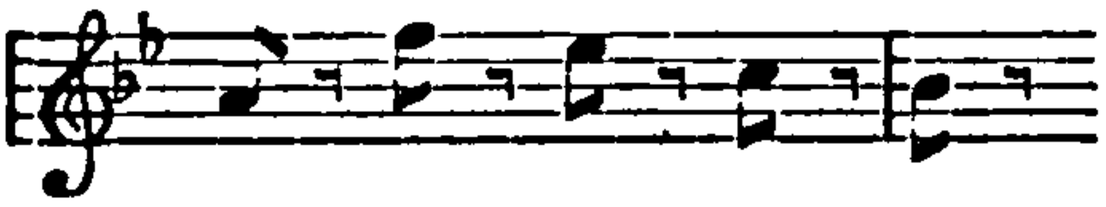
(3)



Allegro vivace.

(4)





etc.
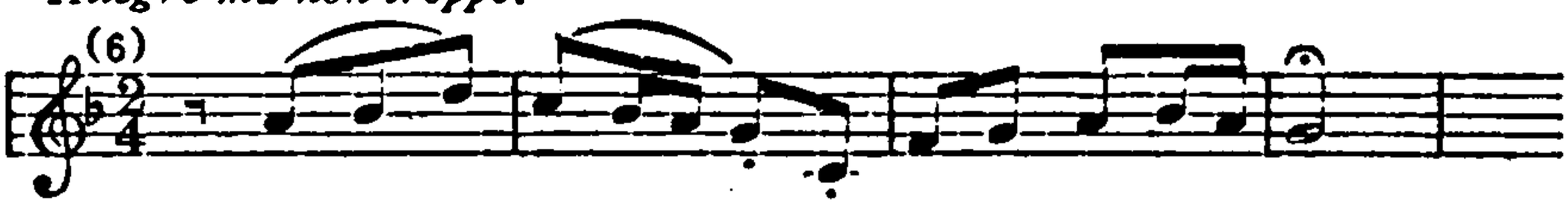
Allegro con brio.

(5)
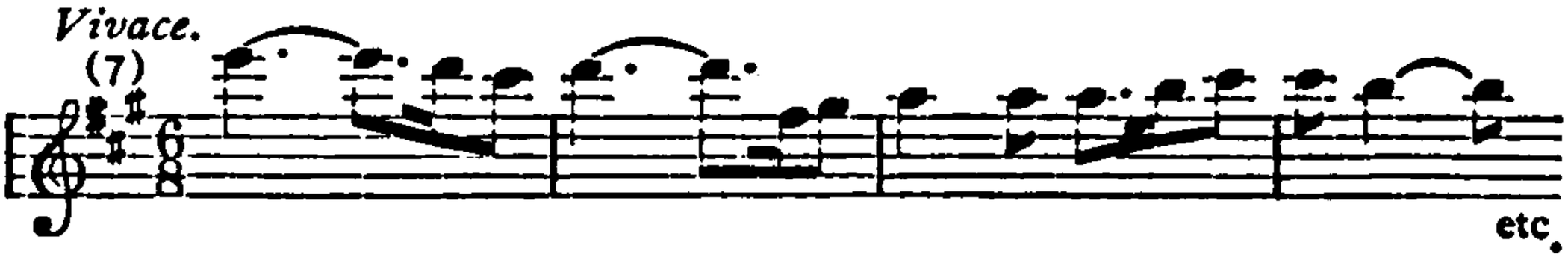


Allegro ma non troppo.

(6)



Vivace.

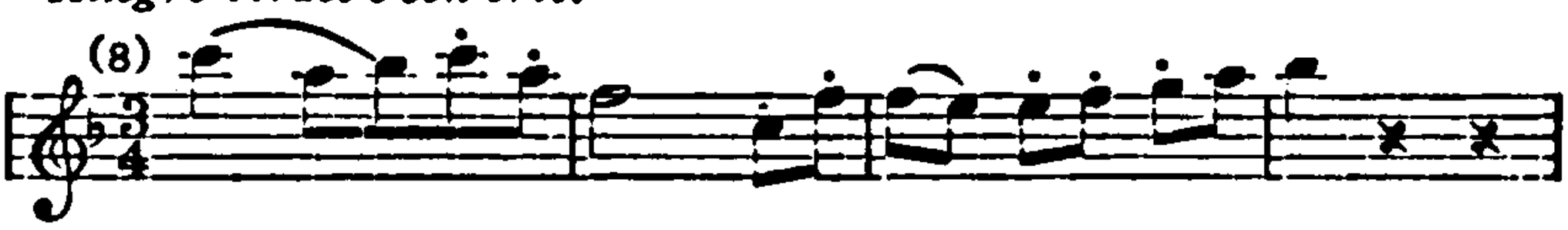
(7)



etc.

Allegro vivace e con brio.
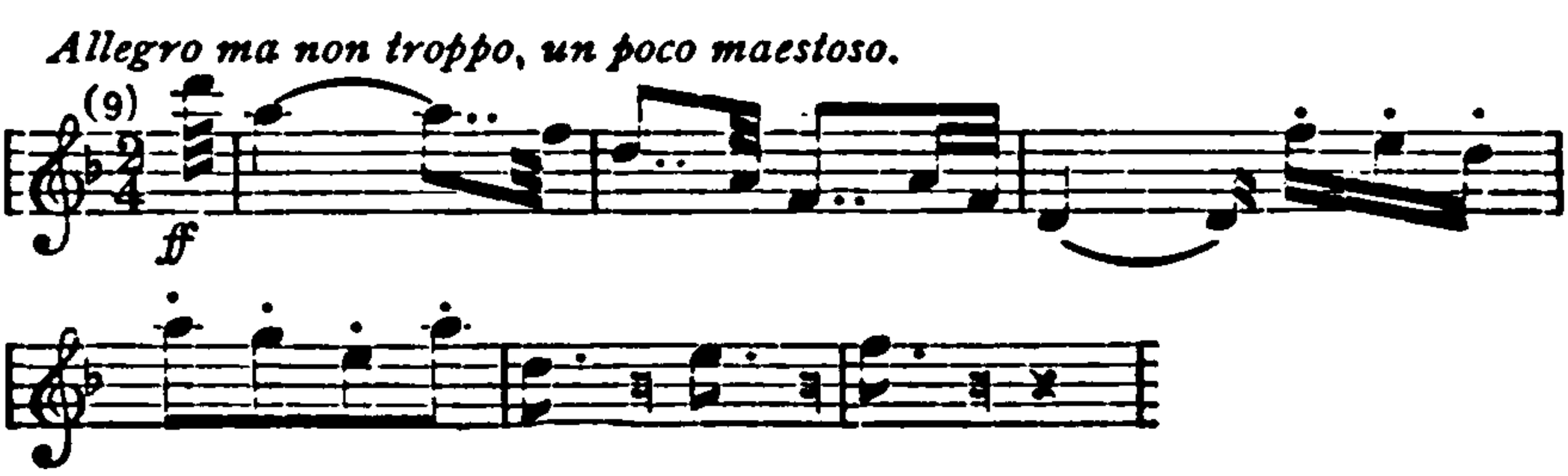
(8)



Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso.

(9)

ff



versions of single themes and their patient experiments in putting them together, to make his music not only strongly expressive but solid and yet various in form. The result was a wonderful harmony between the feelings expressed in his works and their musical beauty, a "perfect balance," as one writer puts it, "of expression and design."

In the two qualities which our minds require in all artistic designs, unity and variety, Beethoven is equally successful. Unity, in music, depends chiefly on the power to make a whole piece or movement grow out of a single musical idea (motive) or out of several such ideas—that is, it depends on thematic development: and Beethoven is in this matter one of the most masterly of all composers, as we have seen.[1] You will be amazed if you will go carefully through the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, noticing how much he makes out of that motive of three short notes and one long, how little there is that is not somehow connected with it. We have all met people who in talking can never stick to the point, who begin speaking of the weather, and in two minutes are telling about their plans for next Christmas. And we have met other people who can control their thoughts, talking connectedly or "logically" as we say, and therefore "getting somewhere." Well, Beethoven, even in his most whimsical moments, when he seems to be making fun of everything, is always logical: he sticks to the point, and says something worth hearing.

[1] Chapter XI.

But he is not monotonous; he has too much variety for that. Thought number two follows thought number one, but not in the stupid way which any fool could prophesy beforehand. It follows it *naturally*, yet *unexpectedly*, just as in a witty saying. You have to keep your ears open, and your mind alert, to follow Beethoven. Just when you think you know perfectly what is coming next, he gives a little twist of melody, or harmony, or rhythm, or a sudden change of some kind, that at once surprises and satisfies you. He made endless experiments in this kind of pleasant variety. Because people had got used to expecting the second theme in a symphony in a certain key, he often used for it other keys. He loved to introduce a single tone that seemed not to belong to the key at all, and then show that it did. He loved to change the key suddenly without warning, as he does, for example, twice in the coda of the first movement of the "Eroica" Symphony. He loved to get a certain rhythm going, and then mischievously make it twice as fast. In countless ways he is a witty composer, as Stevenson is a witty writer when he tells us that in an argument a woman will always say at the end exactly what she said at the beginning, "unless she has forgotten it."

As for variety in expression, Beethoven's Symphonies are as remarkable in this respect as Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavichord." Each has not only its own themes and style, but its own unique mood. The First and Second, though written when he was much under the influence of Haydn and Mozart, and

therefore in some ways less strikingly original than the others, are still distinct: the First full of energy, yet a little quaint and old-fashioned, especially in the slow movement; the Second, with its long introduction at the beginning and its lovely "Larghetto," more charged with deep feeling.

The Third, called "Eroica" ("Heroic"), Beethoven wrote as a tribute to Napoleon, the defender of the rights of the common people against the tyranny of kings, but angrily tore his name from the title-page when he learned that he, too, desired the title of "Emperor." All his passionate love of freedom, his deep sense of the value of the human soul for itself alone, aside from the accidents of fame, wealth, and worldly power, are sounded in the eager, rushing "Allegro," and in the nobly sad Funeral March.

The Fourth bubbles with gayety and high spirits. Its motto might be "On with the dance; let joy be unrestrained." Only in the Adagio do we feel a profounder emotion. It is one of the marvels of art that this work, so full of the boyish, holiday spirit, was written at a time when Beethoven was in black despair over his increasing deafness.

Of all the nine, the Fifth is the most widely loved, perhaps because it is in a sense the most human. Its story is the tragic story of a young man's fight against an unkind fate; Beethoven himself suggested that the motive at the beginning is "Fate knocking at the door." Yet all is not sadness even here; whatever struggles there may be in the first movement,

the lovely Andante suggests the "peace which passeth understanding," the peace that comes of acceptance of God's will; and in the Finale there is the splendid strength of a spirit which has conquered itself.

In the Sixth or "Pastoral" symphony, Beethoven tries something new; turning his back on human nature, which has occupied him in the preceding three works, he goes out into the woods and fields. This symphony is a poem of country life. The method, as well as the subject, is new. Here for the first time in the series we find a definite "programme," a story told in detail, with even the songs of birds and the roar of thunder represented. The movements bear the following titles: "I. The cheerful impressions excited on arriving in the country; II. By the brook; III. Peasants' merry-making; IV. Storm, and the shepherds' hymn, gratitude and thanksgiving after the storm." It is worth noticing, however, that in spite of all this "scene-painting" there is also a true musical expression of emotions; the music not only tells a story, it expresses the inner feelings that this story arouses. Indeed, no music is fuller of the good cheer, the quietude, the health, of the green fields.

In the next two symphonies Beethoven gives free sweep to the love of humor, the whim and mischief, which were such an important part of him. The Seventh has been called, by Wagner, "the apotheosis [glorification] of the dance," a name which excellently fits such a carnival of lively rhythms. Throughout the body of the first movement, after the

slow introduction, we are carried along by the persistent rhythm as of a galloping horse. The Eighth abounds in those sudden changes, those surprises of all sorts, which its composer so loved. He seems to have thrown over his sense of dignity and to be indulging to his heart's content in the wildest antics. In the second movement he has a pleasant joke on his friend Maelzel, the inventor of the metronome, that clocklike instrument which ticks the time at which a piece is to be played. The wood-wind instruments tick in this way almost all through, while the violins play the graceful melody.

Toward the end of Beethoven's life he was saddened by the wickedness of a nephew he loved dearly, by his deafness, and by being so poor that he had to write pieces he didn't care for in order to make money. He turned to his religion for comfort, and the wonderful Ninth Symphony, in which a chorus of voices is added to the orchestra, is the expression of his religious faith and hope. It is full of a lofty trust, a resignation to the ills of this world, and a divine peace. There is much that is mysterious and hard to understand; but the more you hear it the more you will feel that it is truly the crown of this noble series of symphonies.

CHAPTER XV

AT A SYMPHONY CONCERT (*Continued*)

MODERN SYMPHONIES

HERR FELIX WEINGARTNER, in his little book on "The Symphony Since Beethoven," compares the nine symphonies of that composer to the peaks of a great mountain range, standing high above everything else in the land of music. We may also find in this land, he says, "many a pleasant range of hills, and many a romantic cliff, that can fascinate and charm us." But in order to enjoy these lesser beauties, such as we find in many modern symphonies, "we must turn completely away from Beethoven." So true is this that composers themselves have realized it, and have perhaps hardly tried to rival the majestic forms of the master-builder. They have been content to imitate from afar his method of building, and to trust to the novelty or charm of their themes, or to the brilliancy of their harmonic and orchestral coloring, for their appeal.

Of such composers, of whom there have been many, we may select six as being on the whole the most important. Three of these, Schubert, Schumann, and Mendelssohn, lived in the first half of the nine-
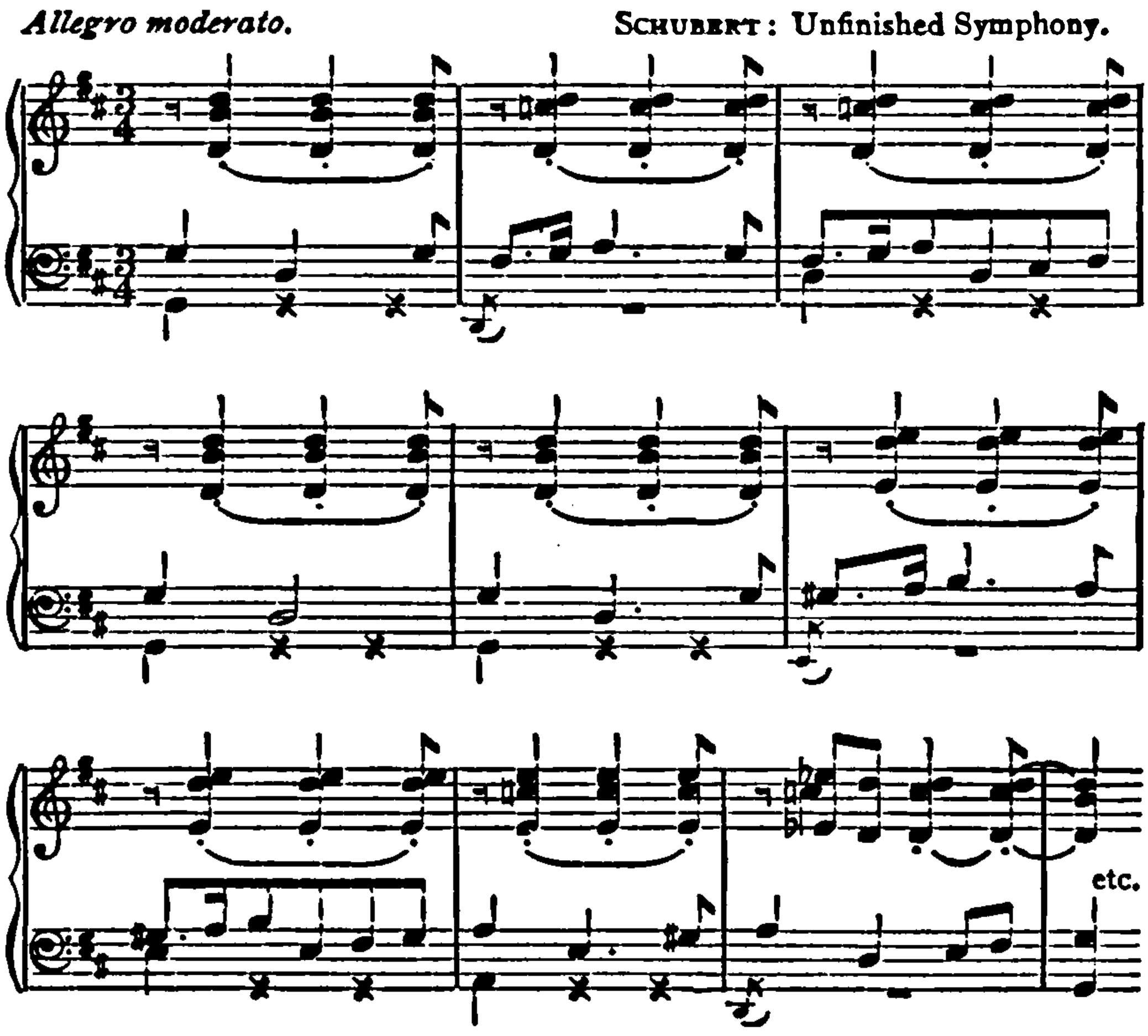
teenth century, just after Beethoven. The other three, Brahms, Tschaïkowsky, and Dvorák (pronounced Dvorzhahk) belong to the later half of the same century, and died not many years ago.

Franz Peter Schubert, born in 1797 in Vienna, died there after a short life spent entirely in composing, and in great poverty, in 1828. He is famous chiefly for his songs, loved wherever music is known; but he composed also many piano pieces and other instrumental works, and ten symphonies, of which only two, one in C-major and one in B-minor, known as the "Unfinished," are now heard. These both abound in graceful, appealing melodies, of which a good example is the second theme of the first movement of the "Unfinished," played by the violoncellos, shown in Figure XX. You will notice that it has more of the tenderness of a song than of the largeness and grandeur we expect in a symphony.

This songlike or "lyrical" grace is what we always find in Schubert, so that he is often called a "lyrical symphonist." We do not find the strength and the balance of form, the architectural quality, of Beethoven; and this is partly due to the very good qualities we do find—Schubert, as we say, "has the defects of his qualities." For it is in the nature of a song to be complete in itself: its phrases balance each other, one leads into the next, and the last brings entire satisfaction. The song is therefore not so well suited to be the germ or seed of a large work like a symphony as the short, striking motive, like those in Figure XIX, which is in itself only a fragment, and

so absolutely requires to be developed or made to grow into a larger whole. Schubert cannot work out his themes with the effect of gradual unfolding so magnificent in Beethoven, because they are really finished things at the start; what he does do is to repeat them,

FIGURE XX.
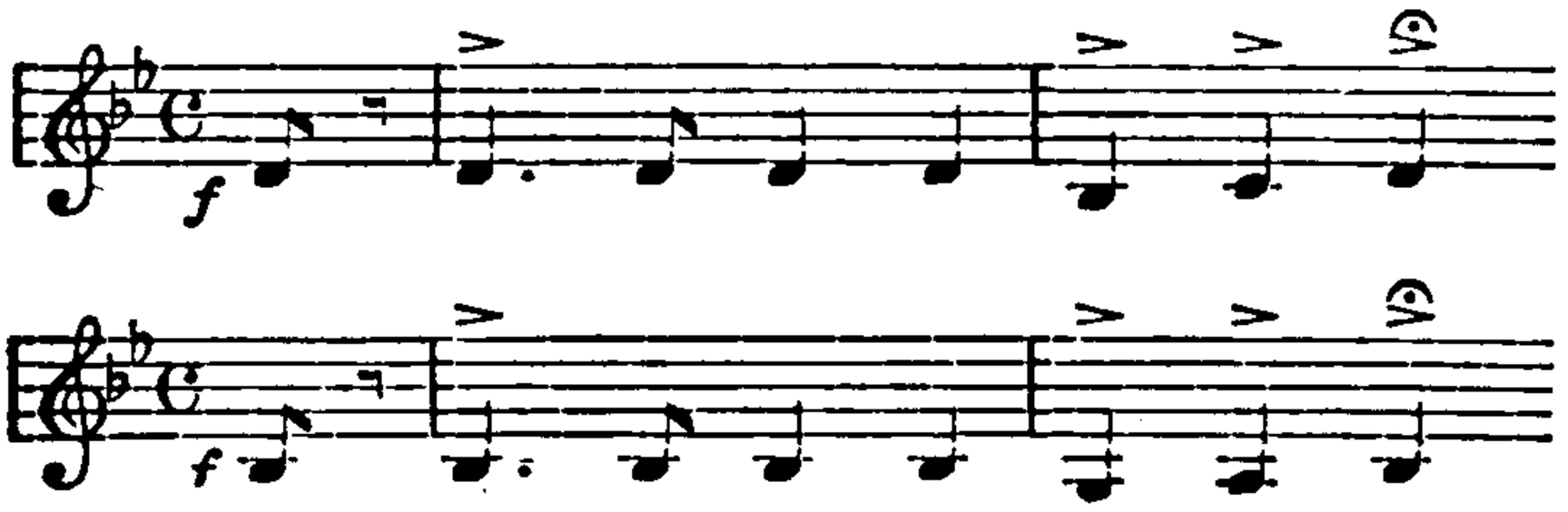


often with slight changes, but not with enough of novelty to keep us constantly on the alert. What saves him is the magical charm of the tunes themselves, and the glow and shimmer of the colors he weaves about them. These are so delightful that most of us will agree with Schumann, who said of

his C-major symphony, which lasts over an hour, that it was "of heavenly length."

Schumann himself, though he was first of all a composer for the piano, wrote four symphonies and several fine overtures,[1] in which the music is so full of life and so throbs with healthy, manly feeling that we willingly forget certain weaknesses of form like those of Schubert. A more serious drawback is Schumann's lack of skill in orchestration. It is strange that he, who had such a keen ear for all kinds of "color" effects on the piano, should have written heavily and monotonously for the orchestra. It was partly because he did not feel sure of the individual instruments. Here is an odd example. The first symphony opens with the call for the horns shown at Figure XXI (*a*). This was originally written as at

FIGURE XXI.

(*a*) *Andante un poco maestoso.* SCHUMANN: First Symphony.



(*b*), but could not be satisfactorily played by the horns then in use, because the G and the A were dull and muffled, so that the effect of the passage, which should be stirring, was almost laughably halt-

[1] The overture is a single movement for orchestra, usually in sonata form, but sometimes, when written as an inroduction to an opera, made up without any definite plan from the chief melodies of the opera itself.

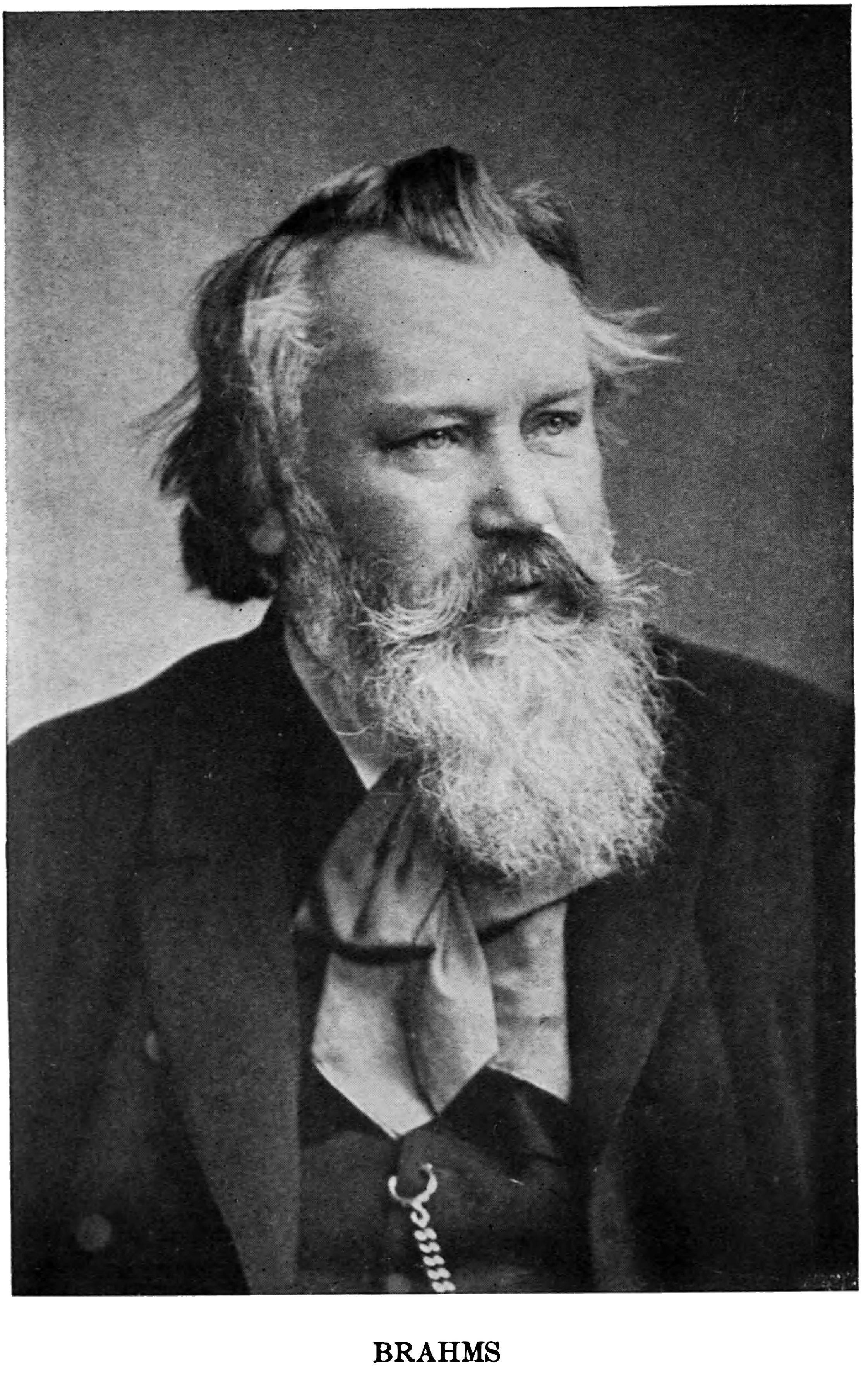
ing. It was at Mendelssohn's suggestion that the notes were changed. Being so uncertain of what particular instruments could or couldn't do, Schumann "doubled" the different instruments (that is, put two or more on the same melody) until often all variety was lost. Using all the different kinds too constantly, he saved nothing for contrast.

There used to be a story, years ago, in Boston, of a theater manager who summoned to his office a new cornetist he had engaged a day or two before, and said to him: "See here, young man, I noticed at the performance last night that about half the time you were not playing. What do you mean by being so lazy?" The player replying that at those moments he "had a rest," the angry manager went on: "Oh, you had a rest, did you? Well, I didn't engage you to have a rest, I engaged you to work; and if you don't work I shall discharge you." Little did that manager know that in a well-written orchestral score the rests are as important as the notes.

It is worth while for you to try to notice the heaviness, the lack of contrast, in Schumann's orchestra as compared with the brilliancy of Dvořák's or Tschaïkowsky's, because only by noticing such differences do we cultivate our taste and learn to know the best from the less than best. To help you to see such differences, which may seem little enough at first, is one of the chief purposes of this book. But do not let such knowledge make you contemptuous; the person who sneers at everything, who says

"Schumann is overrated; he didn't even know how to use the orchestra," is almost worse than the person who swallows everything whole; indeed, the reason we try to see the faults clearly is that only when we do can we fully appreciate the virtues. And in this case there are plenty of virtues to admire. Schumann is a great master of noble, living melody, as in the first movement of the First Symphony; of quiet, thoughtful, serious feeling, as in the lovely adagio of the Second Symphony; of grand, mysterious harmony, as in the movement in the Third marked "Feierlich" ("Solemn"), inspired by a visit to Cologne Cathedral; of restless passion and tender longing, as in the "Manfred" Overture. It is far better to have something so well worth while to say, even if one says it haltingly, than to be glib of tongue and empty of mind.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, an elegant gentleman of wealth and cultivation, clever with pencil and pen, a good dancer and horseman, a charming letter-writer, and the idol of the musical world during his short life, was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1809, and died at Leipsic in 1847. As we should expect from his personality, his music, of which he wrote a great deal and of many kinds, is more graceful and refined than earnest, deep, or powerful. He was a man of poetic imagination, appreciative of the beauties of nature and of other arts than music, especially literature; and his best works, such as the "Italian" and "Scotch" Symphonies, and the overtures "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Ruy



BRAHMS

Blas," and "Hebrides," were suggested by places or books, and are descriptive.

Not that he was a "realist" or writer of programme music. He seldom tried to make music tell a definite story, or introduced into it the sounds of the outside world (although he does give us the "hee-haw" of the ass that Bottom was turned into by the fairy in the "Midsummer Night's Dream"). His idea was rather to write in the classical way, making beauty of form and the expression of inner feelings his main aim, but to give both in his titles and in the music itself hints of some special story or scene. He stands half-way between the purely classic composers and the realistic writers of to-day. In the "Pilgrims' March" (second movement) of the "Italian" Symphony, you can see mirrored in the regular rhythm and the tranquil melody, if you care to, a procession of holy pilgrims; or if you prefer you may simply enjoy the grave beauty of the music, orchestrated with Mendelssohn's usual clear and transparent coloring.

One of the most important of modern composers, perhaps the only one who in nobility of style and mastery of musical architecture approaches Beethoven's level, is Johannes Brahms, who was born in Hamburg in 1833, and died at Vienna in 1897. He occupies a position all his own; he was little influenced by the modern tendency to care more for richness of color and for vividness of expression than for solidity and beauty of form; he passed his long and uneventful life in the pursuit of an ideal which

like Bach's was too high to be understood by many; and while some critics do not hesitate to place him with Bach and Beethoven (the now famous "Three B's") others call him dry, dull, and old-fashioned.

The explanation is that Brahms, though a man of deep feelings, used his head in his music quite as much as his heart. He loved to think for himself, and to require thought from his listeners. Thus, like Beethoven, he was a master of the art of thematic development, of bringing out of his themes, gradually, all the possibilities they contained. Take the main motive of his Second Symphony, for instance; like that of Beethoven's Fifth, it is a mere fragment of four notes, and oddly enough in the same rhythm, too, of three shorts and a long, though differently accented. Out of this simple motive Brahms slowly weaves the richest, most varied patterns; it is squeezed into a smaller space or stretched out into a larger, it is tossed about from player to player, constantly it appears in a new light. In short, Brahms shows himself here as elsewhere a master of musical logic.

But on the other hand he is so clever at working out themes that he does not always stop to ask himself whether a theme is worth such elaborate treatment. Sometimes it seems to us that he throws away his skill on dry, empty bits of tune, that no amount of dressing up can make look anything but ugly. And even when his melodies are beautiful—and no melodies in the world are more beautiful than, say, the second theme in the Allegro of the Third Sym-

phony, or the main theme of the Adagio in the Fourth—he may take them through so many twists and turns that we can only follow them by attending very closely; and if we are dull or lazy we are apt to blame the composer.

Another thing that makes Brahms's music fail to appeal to a good many people is that he cares little—perhaps too little—for "effects." He is more interested in his musical thoughts themselves than in the way they are going to impress his hearers; he is like a man so eager to say something that he does not stop to be oratorical, to wheedle or dazzle or frighten his audience. Someone has said that his music "looks better than it sounds," meaning that the musical ideas—the melodies and harmonies—impress a trained reader of the score more than the actual sounds impress a hearer who has not previously studied them. It is true, I think, that the tone color of Brahms's orchestra is far less bright, rich, and varied than that of most other great modern composers. He combines his instruments in such a manner that the sound-mass is often "thick" or "gray," and he does not write for each single instrument so as to "show it off" to the best advantage. But on the other hand his ideas themselves are rather grave and noble than charming or brilliant; and good critics have held that his dark coloring is just the right kind of a body to match the soul of his music.

It is when we contrast Brahms with Tschaïkowsky or Dvořák that we best appreciate the peculiar qualities of each. The latter composers are easier to get
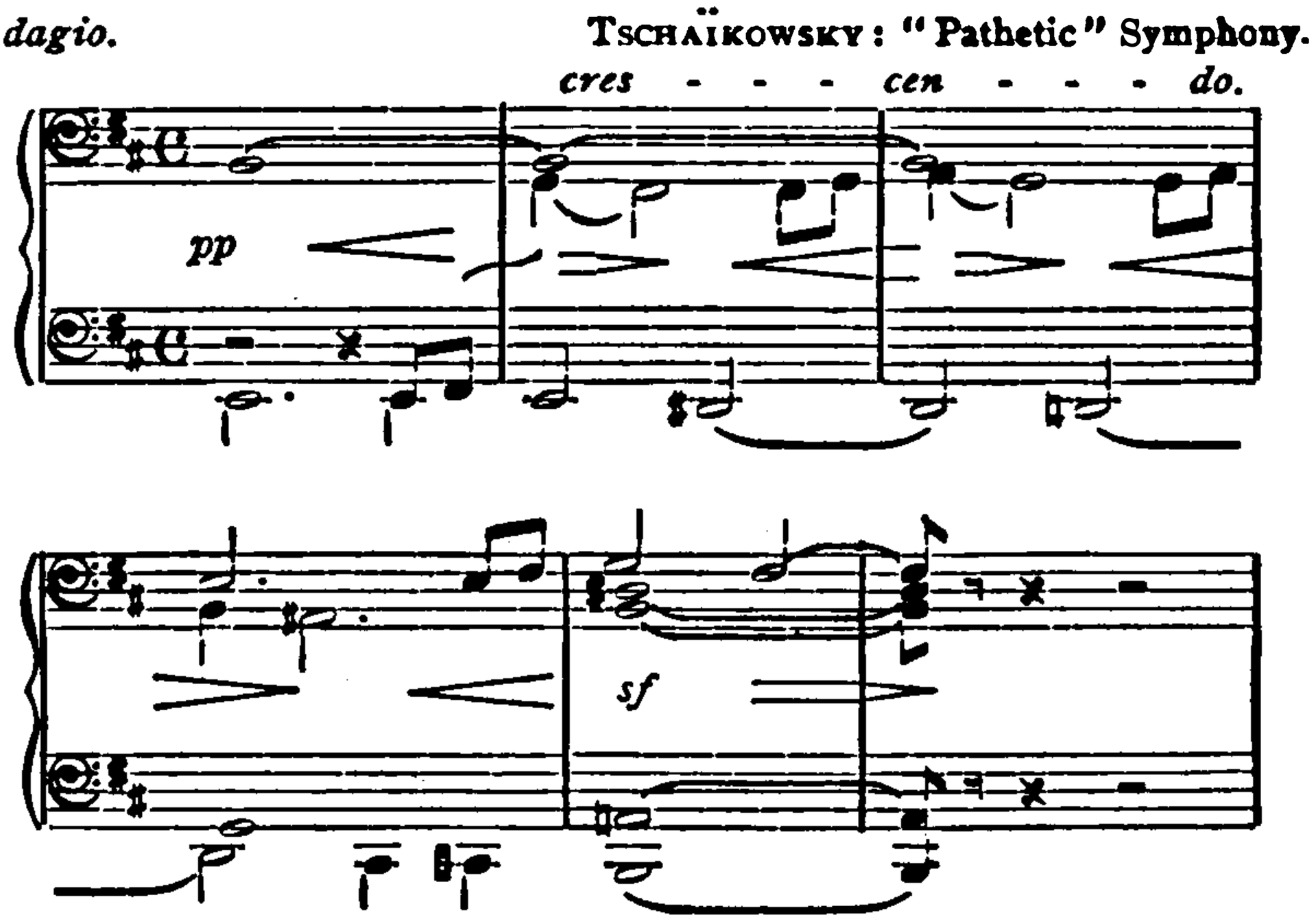
acquainted with; they appeal to us more quickly and at first more strongly; their ideas are simpler, their coloring richer, and they are less interested in the intellectual than in the emotional side of music.

Peter Ilyitch Tschaïkowsky, the greatest of Russian composers, was born in 1840, and died in 1893. To a love of graceful melody such as we find in the Italian operas, he joined a fondness for the monotonously repeated rhythms and the minor strains of the melancholy Russian folk-songs, and a passionate intensity of feeling which fills his music, now with the deepest gloom, now with slow climaxes leading to wild outbursts of unrestrained excitement. Many opposing elements enter into his musical nature. There is the love of pure and simple tunefulness which we see in such a melody as the second theme of his "Pathetic" Symphony; there is an almost unhealthy melancholy, a "luxury of grief," which we feel particularly in the same work, in the first and last movements; there is a delight in sheer noise and fury, like the delight of savages in crude colors, which is shown most clearly in the ear-wounding din of the "1812" Overture.

His fondness for deep gloom led Tschaïkowsky to use the lower tones of the bass instruments in the orchestra in a highly original way. Such a use of the bassoon, the bass clarinet, the violoncello and double-bass, gives a characteristic somber coloring to many passages in his scores. Take, for instance, the impressive opening of the "Pathetic" Symphony (Figure XXII). Against held tones in the double-

basses, the first bassoon plays three times a motive of intense sadness (the main motive of the symphony) the phrase being completed by the same motive played once again in the more intense tone of the violas. This eloquent phrase at once establishes the mood of gloom which is never long relieved throughout the work.

FIGURE XXII.



Yet as I said Tschaïkowsky's despair is always lashing itself into wild fury; and at such times he is as overpoweringly strong and brilliant as at others he is dark and forbidding. One of his great climaxes, in which a steady advance of trumpets or trombones, often against a persistently held bass-tone like the pedal of an organ, and bursting at last into all the gorgeousness of flashing strings, screaming woodwind, and blaring brass, brings the tears to one's eyes and sends thrills coursing up one's spine. Such

mastery of the resources of the orchestra is marvelous; all its colors charm us in turn at the command of this magician. Only after the excitement is over do we wonder if there is not something unwholesome, something almost mad, in this whirlwind of feeling. As we calmly go over the music in memory we miss the tranquil beauty, the perfect balance of form, the gradual, orderly advance of the musical thought, that is so satisfying in the music of Brahms.

Antonin Dvořák, a Bohemian by birth (born 1841, died 1904), though less sensational than Tschaïkowsky, is no less a master of the orchestra. Simplicity and grace, a childlike innocence, a sweetness and melting beauty of tone, rich harmony and the elastic rhythms of the dance, we find in his music. Of his many works for orchestra the best known are the Slavonic Dances and the Fifth Symphony, called "From the New World," because it was written in America, and on themes suggested by the melodies of the American negroes. This symphony, a favorite with our audiences, is a splendid example of its composer's art. Its melodies are tuneful, sprightly, easily followed; its harmony is both clear and rich; its rhythms full of "swing" and sparkle. In expression it ranges from the joyous freshness of the first and last movements, and the bubbling gayety of the scherzo, to the appealing sadness of the exquisite Largo, said to voice the homesickness of the composer among foreign scenes and people.

The musicians we have studied in this chapter are



TSCHAÏKOWSKY

so various, both in their ideals and in their methods, that I am afraid you may be bewildered, here at the end of it, to know just what you have really learned, just what is the *moral* of it all. The moral, I think, is this: While we should try, at a symphony concert, to feel these differences, to see how Brahms, say, is more concerned with what we called in Chapter I the "æsthetic appeal" of music, and Tschaïkowsky with what we called the "sensuous" and the "emotional" appeals, all good symphonies can be listened to, and ought to be, chiefly for the beauty of the music itself, and not for any story they tell or pictures they call up. We should learn above all to follow attentively the themes, and their development, which are to a symphony what the characters and the plot are to a story. The question is often asked: What does such-and-such a piece of music "mean"? —as if the meaning of it could possibly be put into words! If it could be, there would be no need of the music. Music cannot be translated; the attempt to translate it, as when we say: "This piece is a pair of lovers walking through a forest," only befuddles our minds. Say rather, if you like, that it is a pair of melodies going through a series of tonal adventures, and follow them so closely that you know just what happens to them at every turn. Only thus can you understand them not as vague emotions vaguely expressed, but as a work of musical art, clear, definite, orderly, and beautiful.

CHAPTER XVI

AT A SYMPHONY CONCERT (*Continued*)

PROGRAMME MUSIC

WE have already seen, in the chapter on "Music that Tells Stories," that in addition to arousing certain states of feeling or moods in us by what we called "subjective" expression, music can suggest by "objective" expression the objects of the outside world, horses, waterfalls, thunder, the ocean, and so on, and can even, by showing us these things in order, tell us stories, though much more vaguely than words. We saw what its methods were for doing this: first, definite titles such as "Pastoral" Symphony or "Manfred" Overture, and even little stories printed out complete, called "programmes"; second, suggestions by the music itself of motions and speech, of disagreeable things by dissonances and of agreeable things by consonances, of "light" or "heavy" things by high or low tones, and so on; third, actual imitations of the sounds of the outside world, such as the songs of birds or the whistling of wind; and fourth, by the use of *leit-motive* or "leading motives," themes which we connect with particular persons or ideas, such as are used constantly in Wagner's music-dramas.

We also saw that this descriptive kind of music was called "programme music," and that the composers who have done most to make it popular are Berlioz, Liszt, Richard Strauss, and some others. The names most frequently used for pieces in this style are "overture" and "symphonic poem." The latter is rather inaccurate. The word "poem" is used, I suppose, to suggest that the music is poetic in the sense that it describes or paints, as words do. As for "symphonic," it means strictly "on the plan of a symphony or sonata," and that is just what the symphonic poem is not, being, as we saw, perfectly free in form, and consisting of a single movement instead of three or four. What the word is meant to suggest is merely that the work is written for orchestra, and is based on definite themes first simply presented and later developed; but the order in which they appear is decided not by any fixed scheme, but by the "programme."

Although Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony and one or two of his other works opened up the path to programme-music, the real pioneer, the first composer who devoted himself almost entirely to this way of working, was Hector Berlioz (1803–69), a Frenchman. Like most of his countrymen, he had a keener sense of the dramatic or story-telling side of art than of general expression and formal beauty. His melodies are odd, distorted, rambling, his harmony is often thin and strained—the chords do not flow naturally one into another; almost the only branch of pure music in which he shows mastery is

orchestration, for which he had a delicate and sure instinct. His chief importance lies in his having shown, in such works as his overtures "The Corsair," "King Lear" and "Roman Carnival," his "Harold in Italy" and "Romeo and Juliet" symphonies, and above all in his "Fantastic Symphony," how the dramatic vividness of opera could be introduced into the concert hall.
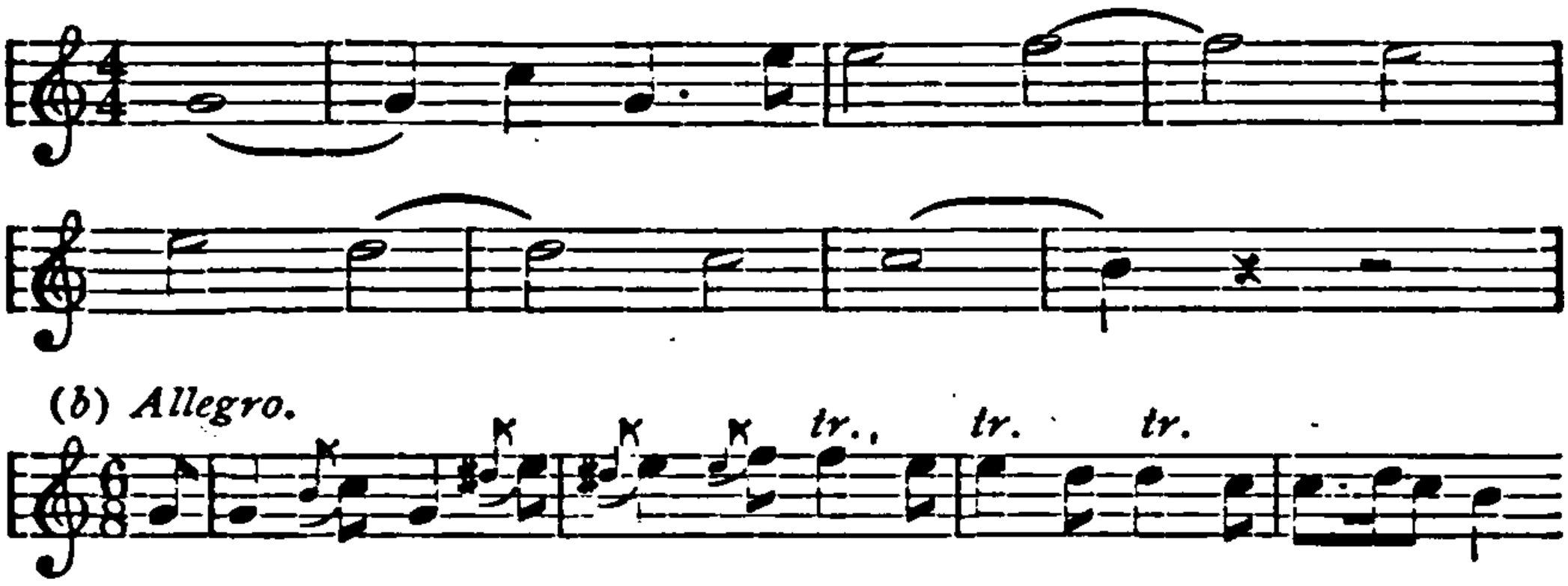
The object of his "Symphonie Fantastique," which is in five movements, is to tell the adventures of "a young musician of unhealthily sensitive nature, who has poisoned himself with opium in love-sick despair"—a story, you see, in which the agonies are piled up in a way that makes us smile, but which Berlioz, who was nothing if not in earnest, took seriously enough. In the first movement we see the hero in love, maddened by jealousy, but for a time comforted by religion; in the second he is in a ball-room, indifferent to the whirl of the dancers, dreaming of his ladylove; in the third he goes to the country, and hears the piping of shepherds and the rumble of a summer thunderstorm; in the fourth he dreams that he has killed his beloved and is marching to be beheaded at the stake; and in the fifth and last he fancies himself dead and in the spirit world, surrounded by shrieking witches, among whom he sees his lady once more, horribly changed.

The most interesting point about this curious jumble of the frightful and the ridiculous is the use made of a "leading theme" which stands for the lady, and is heard whenever the thought of her occurs

to her lover, which, I hardly need tell you, is very often indeed. The beginning of this theme, called "l'idée fixe," or the "fixed idea," is shown in Figure XXIII, *a*: not a melody of any great beauty, you

FIGURE XXIII.

(*a*) *Allegro agitato.* BERLIOZ: "Fantastic" Symphony.

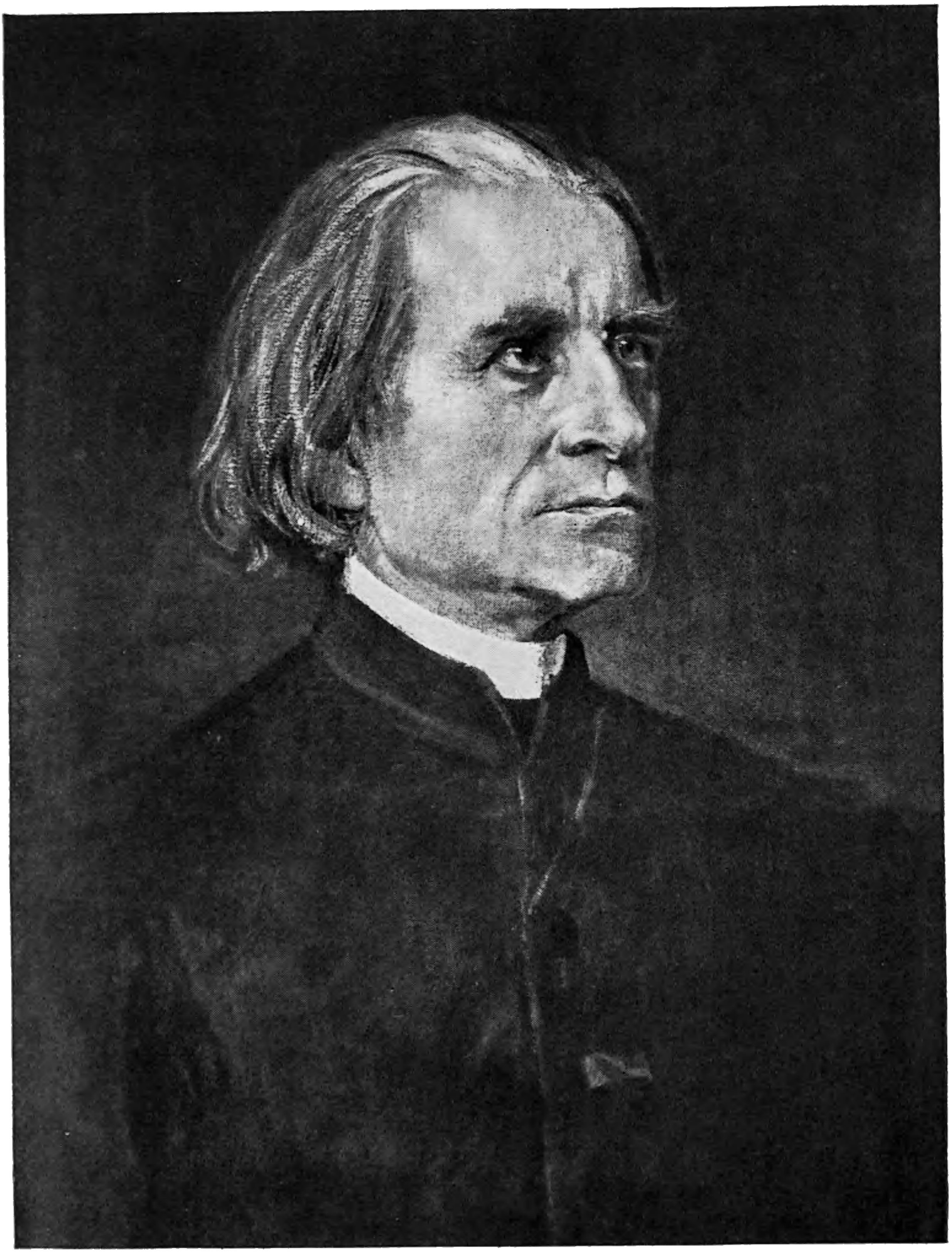


notice, but striking enough to be remembered, and to serve as a label. Berlioz develops it very little, merely repeats it whenever it is needed by the story. For instance, when, in the fourth movement, our hero has finished his march to the stake and stands with his head upon the block, we hear four measures of the theme. Alas! it is the last time he will think of her in this world; for down comes the ax (a tremendons crashing chord of the full orchestra) and the death rattle follows on three kettledrums! The only real change in the theme comes when the lady is transformed into a witch; this is shown in Figure XXIII, *b*.

Franz Liszt, whose piano music we have already considered, used in his orchestral works, most important among which are the "Faust" and "Dante" symphonies and the series of thirteen Symphonic

Poems, the method of Berlioz, but applied it with less crudeness and with more musical skill. His "programmes" are less realistic and laughably matter-of-fact than Berlioz's: they deal chiefly with strikingly contrasted characters, ideas, or moods, which music can satisfactorily suggest. In the "Faust Symphony," for example, which is rather a series of three symphonic poems than a single work, each movement bears the name of one of the three characters in Goethe's poem: Faust, Gretchen, Mephistopheles. The first presents in four themes a picture of Faust; his despair and loneliness (Lento), his strivings and hopes (Allegro agitato), his ideals (Andante), and his pride and energy (Grandioso). The second is a musical sketch of the gentle Gretchen. In the third, Mephistopheles, the evil one, appears and makes sport of Faust—an idea suggested by using in a distorted form the theme of Faust's ideals from the first movement.

Liszt thus not only carries further Berlioz's idea of connecting a leading theme with each character of his drama, but by making the musical treatment of these themes follow the course of the story he secures a "thematic development" which adds much to the interest of the music as music. This we see clearly in such a work as his symphonic poem, "Les Préludes." The programme here is from a poem of Lamartine beginning "What is our life but a series of Preludes to that unknown song of which death strikes the first solemn note?" "Love," the poet goes on, "is the enchanted dawn of every life"; but later,



LISZT

he says, comes some storm, some misfortune, which drives us to seek comfort in the peace of country life. From this we are roused by a call to war, to struggle and strife, and in this fight with the world we regain a feeling of our own power. Following the plan thus suggested, the composer divides his "poem" into six sections, thus: I. Introduction; II. Love; III. Storm; IV. Country life; V. War; VI. Conclusion.

The most remarkable thing about the music itself is the way in which Liszt makes it all out of two simple themes, transforming them in all manner of ways to get just the expression he needs. In Figure XXIV I have set down the chief forms of these themes, noting the sections in which they occur. Let us run through them, admiring the skill with which they are adapted to all uses.

I. (*a*). Andante. The first three notes form the main motive of the entire composition. This passage, which opens the work, strikes at once the right mood of solemnity.

(*b*). The same motive forms the basis of a pompous passage in the low strings and brass.

(*c*). The 'cellos sing a new motive, the second root-idea of the piece. In the fourth measure you will notice echoes of the first motive in the bass.

II. (*d*). The second motive, suggesting "Love," richly orchestrated with horns, strings, and harp.
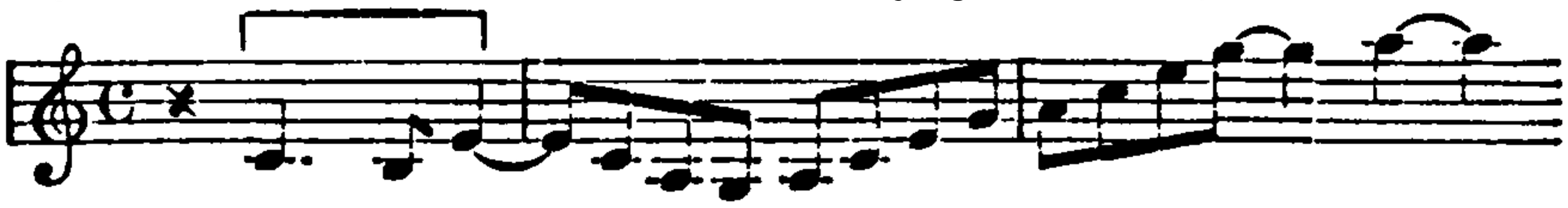
III. (*e*). Motive I, so changed as to suggest the approaching storm.

IV. (*f*). A new motive, hinting at the peaceful-

ness and charm of the country. This is later combined with the "love"-theme in (*g*).

FIGURE XXIV.
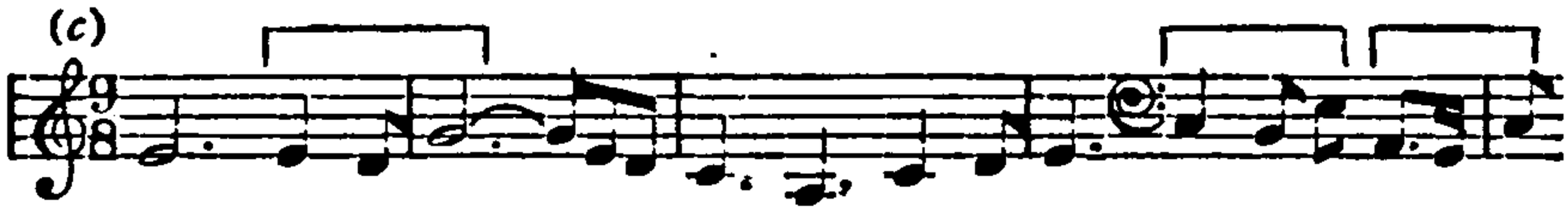
(*a*) *Andante.* LISZT: Symphonic Poem, "LesPreludes."



(*b*) *Andante maestoso.*
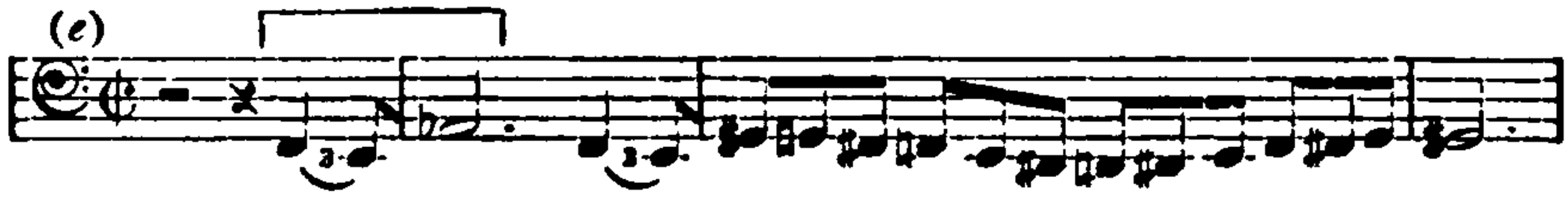


(*c*)



(*d*)



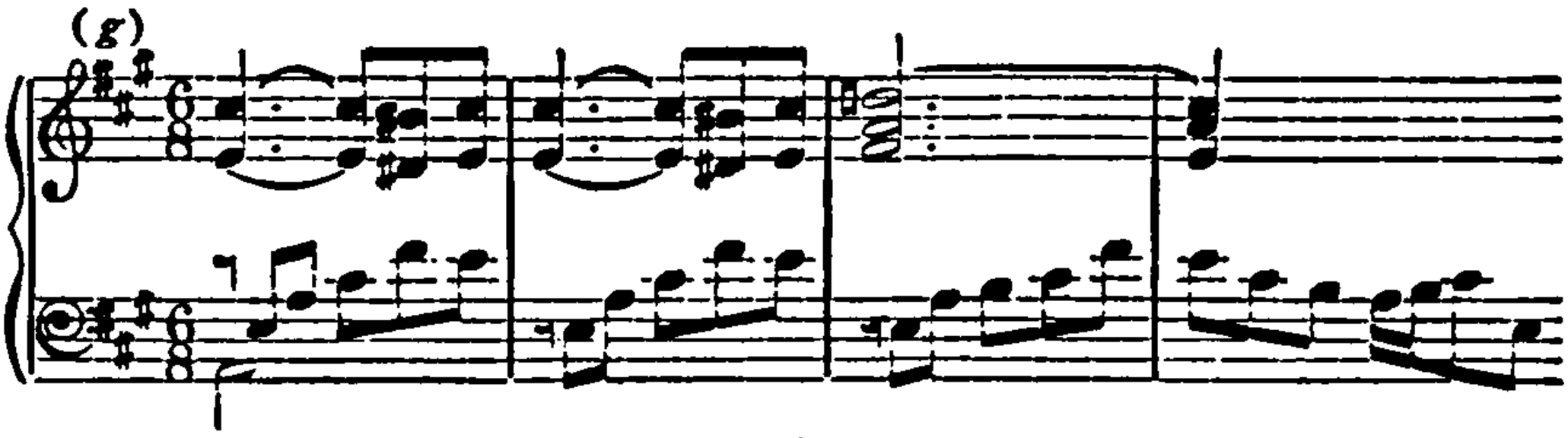
(*e*)
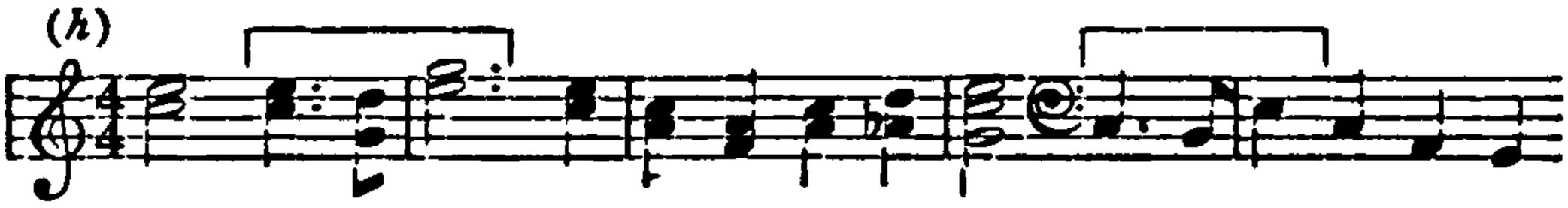


(*f*)



(*g*)



(*h*)



(*i*)



V. (*h*). Warlike trumpets blare forth another form of the first motive, and later the second is heard, similarly transformed.

VI. (*i*). The work ends noisily with a lengthy treatment of the first theme as at (*b*).

There is, of course, a good deal of trickery and mere cleverness about these changes of the themes. The transformations, especially (*h*) and (*i*), seem more "thought out" than natural, and the original character of the theme is often quite lost. Nevertheless, such a method results in far greater musical interest than Berlioz's mere repetitions, and in the hands of an even greater musician than Liszt—Richard Strauss—it has produced some fine works.

Strauss, who was born at Munich in Germany in 1864, and is thus still a comparatively young man, has already written such a remarkable series of symphonic poems that he has overshadowed all other composers of programme music, such as Tschaïkowsky, Saint-Saëns, and Dvořák. He has made the programmistic style so much his own that programme music to-day practically means Richard Strauss's music. His most important programme pieces are "In Italy" (1886), "Don Juan" (1888), "Macbeth" (1886–87), "Death and Transfiguration" (1889), "Till Eulenspiegel" (1894), "Thus Spake Zarathustra" (1894), "Don Quixote" (1897), "A Hero's Life" (1898), and the "Domestic Symphony" (1903).

These works are extraordinary in many ways. They all show, in the first place, a positive genius

for hitting off in brief themes, often mere fragments of a few notes, an idea, mood, or character. Such themes are as different as possible from the graceful, balanced melodies of classical music; they abound in odd and even ugly turns, in wide jumps impossible to sing and hard to play, in highly striking, unforgettable rhythms. Secondly, Strauss's harmony is as original as his melody; he is constantly sliding about restlessly from key to key; he is fond of the most frightful discords, and in the later works seems to revel in absolute noise; he closes "Zarathustra" in two keys at once! In the third place, he uses a gigantic orchestra (more than a hundred players), with a perfect regiment of blaring trombones and trumpets, and though he understands all the instruments perfectly he likes to use them in queer ways, making them scream and snarl. Finally, while he does not care to use the classic sonata and other forms, preferring to follow freely the order of events in his programmes, he is a great master of form, so that his works are well balanced and of good proportion, with plenty of contrast, and yet not sacrificing unity.

For the purpose of study, for those who are either not familiar with his style or not in sympathy with the extremes of ugliness and noise to which he has forced it in the "Hero's Life" and the "Domestic Symphony," we may choose an early work like "Death and Transfiguration," of which one of his best critics, Mr. Ernest Newman, has said that "As regards the union of pure form with unalloyed purity
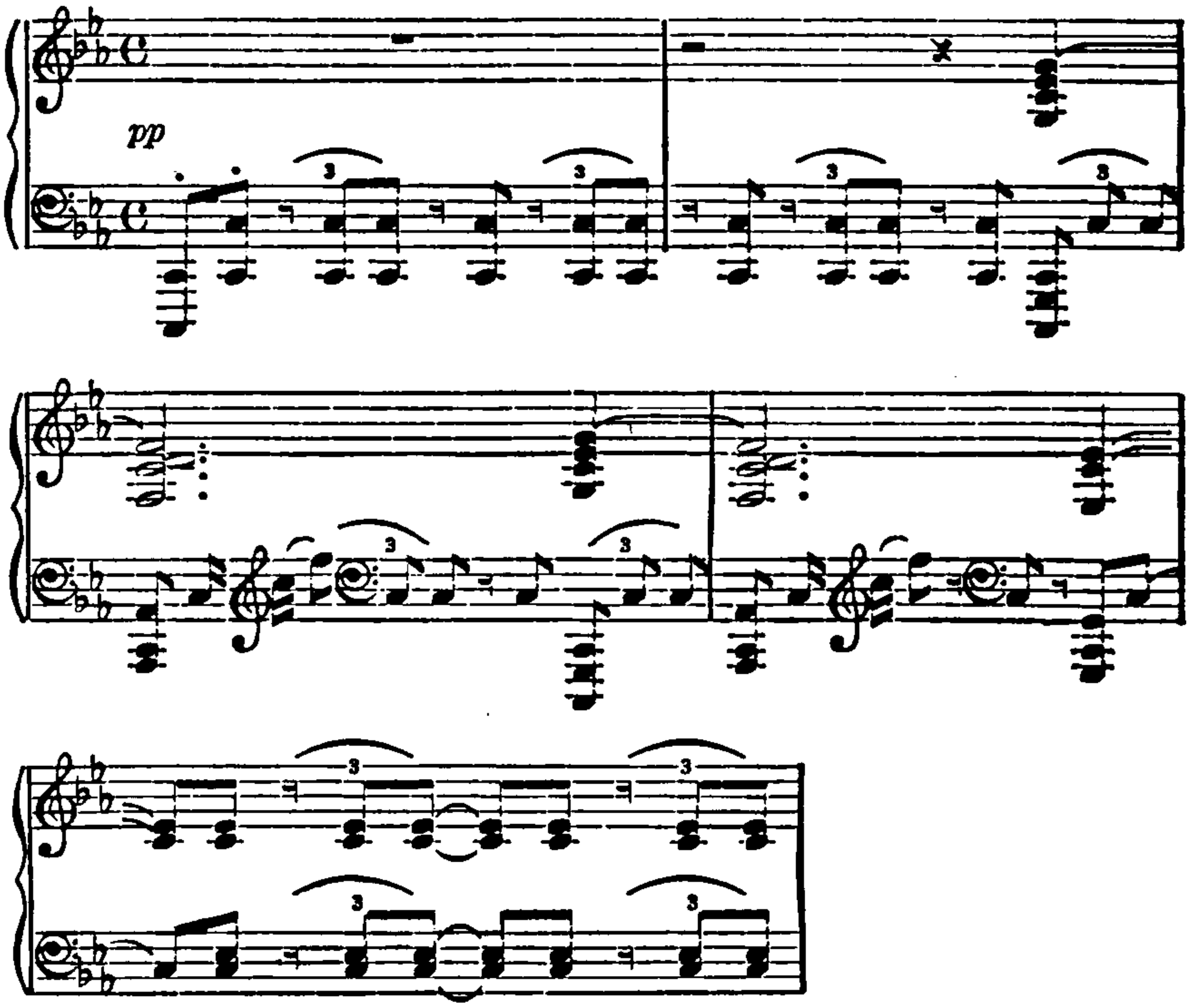
of material this is perhaps the most perfect thing he has done."

The programme, a poem by the composer's friend, Alexander Ritter, describes a dying man in his small, dimly lighted room. There is no sound but the ticking of the clock. He dreams of his childhood. He awakens to fight once more with death. Exhansted, feverish, he remembers the days of his fresh youth, and of his later struggle to reach his ideals. But in the midst of these thoughts of the victories over the world that he has never been able to make "clangs the last stroke of Death's iron hammer." Then at last "from the heavenly spaces sounds mightily to greet him what he yearningly sought for here: deliverance from the world, transfiguration of the world."
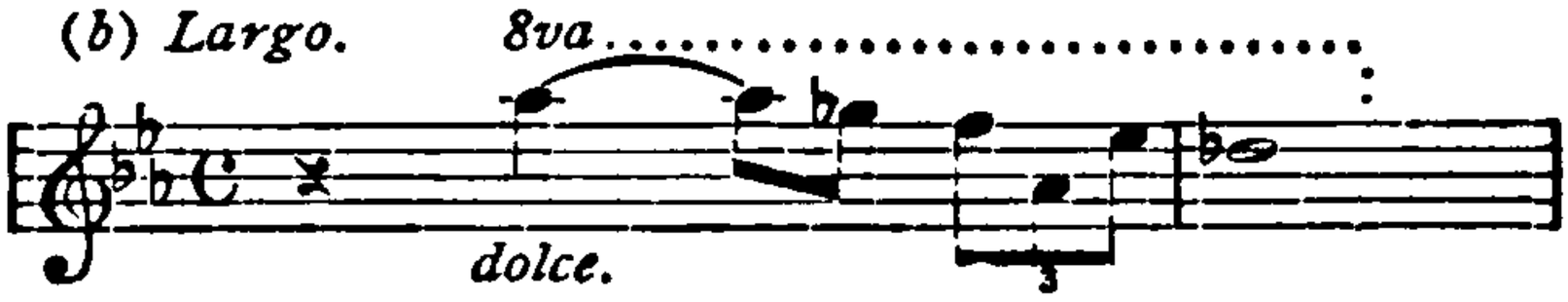
The music begins with a steady pulsating rhythm, against which soon sounds the Death-motive, heavy, weary, somber (Figure XXV, *a*). To this are added, in the same section, the motive of Memory (*b*) and of Childhood (*c*), both wonderfully expressive. Suddenly, however, Death attacks the sick man, and in the second section (Allegro molto agitato) there is a fierce struggle until, exhausted, he sinks back just after the first phrase of the theme of Transfiguration has been heard (Figure XXV, *d*). In the third section (Meno mosso) he sees visions of his past life (the Childhood and other motives). The struggle comes on again, and this time ends in a wild climax, and the strokes of a gong and the sound of harps suggest the passing of his soul.

FIGURE XXV.
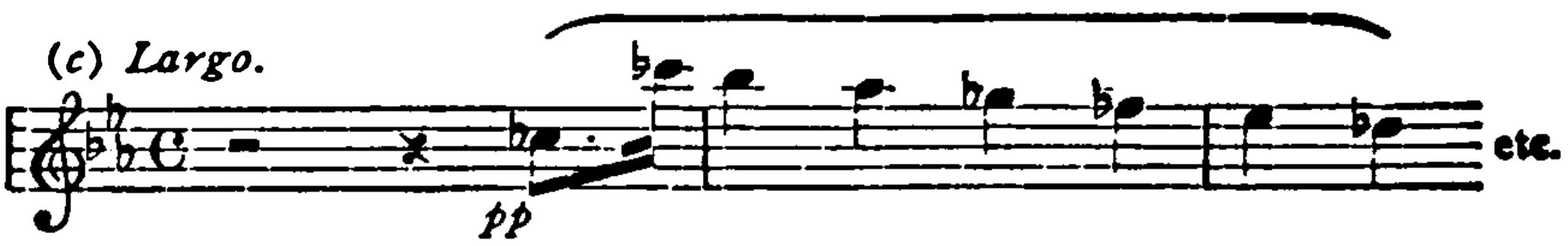
(*a*) *Largo.* STRAUSS: "Death and Transfiguration."



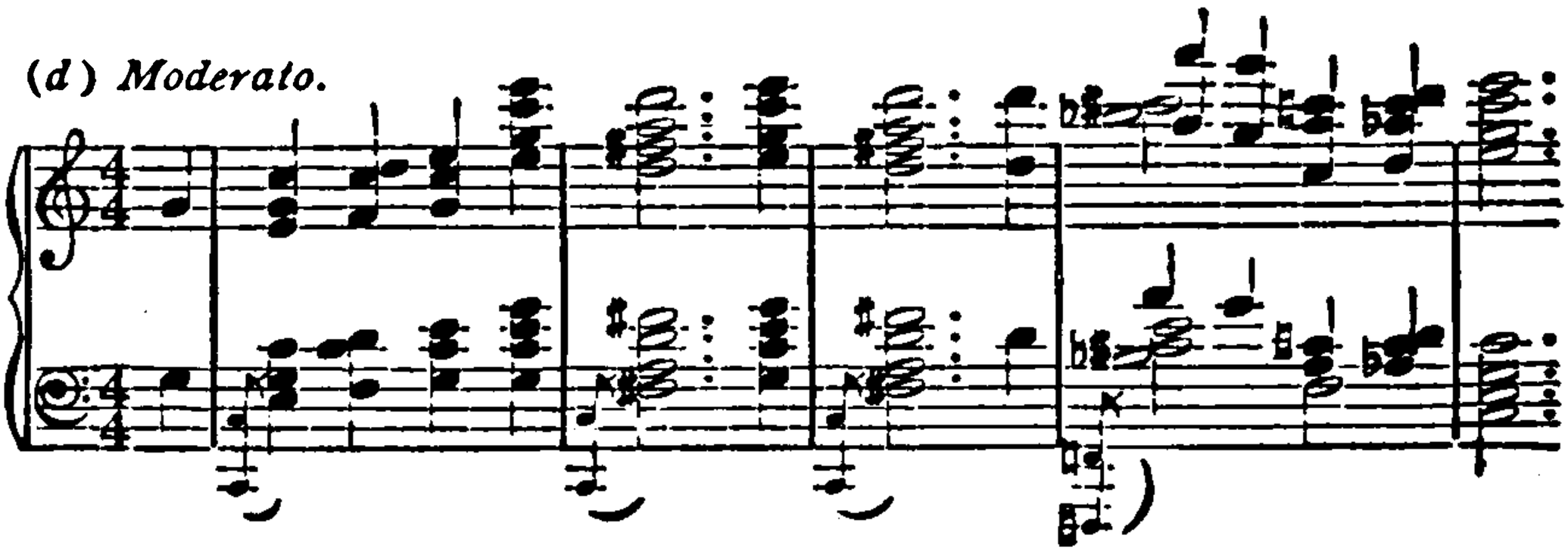
(*b*) *Largo.*



(*c*) *Largo.*



(*d*) *Moderato.*

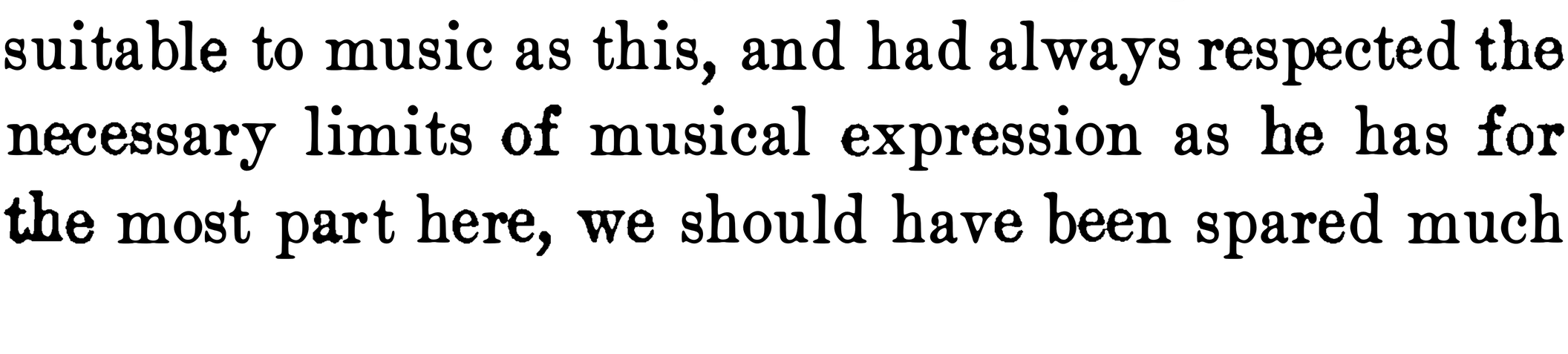


So far, mingled with much expressive and beautiful music, there has been a great deal that is noisy and over-realistic. But now, in the fourth and last section, the transfiguring of the man after death, his deliverance from pain and his entrance into peace and divine joy, is depicted in the broad, noble, and solemn music beginning with the Transfiguration theme in C-major (moderato). Brass, wind, and harps, and later strings, work up this theme with splendid power; bits of the Childhood theme are interwoven, with Strauss's wonderful skill (Figure XXVI, *a*); a magnificent climax is reached; it dies away, and in pianissimo the Transfiguration theme is heard still again in horns, trumpets, and strings (Figure XXVI, *b*), as if wafted across the heavenly spaces. This entire passage deserves careful study; it is one of the most exalted in feeling, the most stoutly built in form, in all orchestral music.

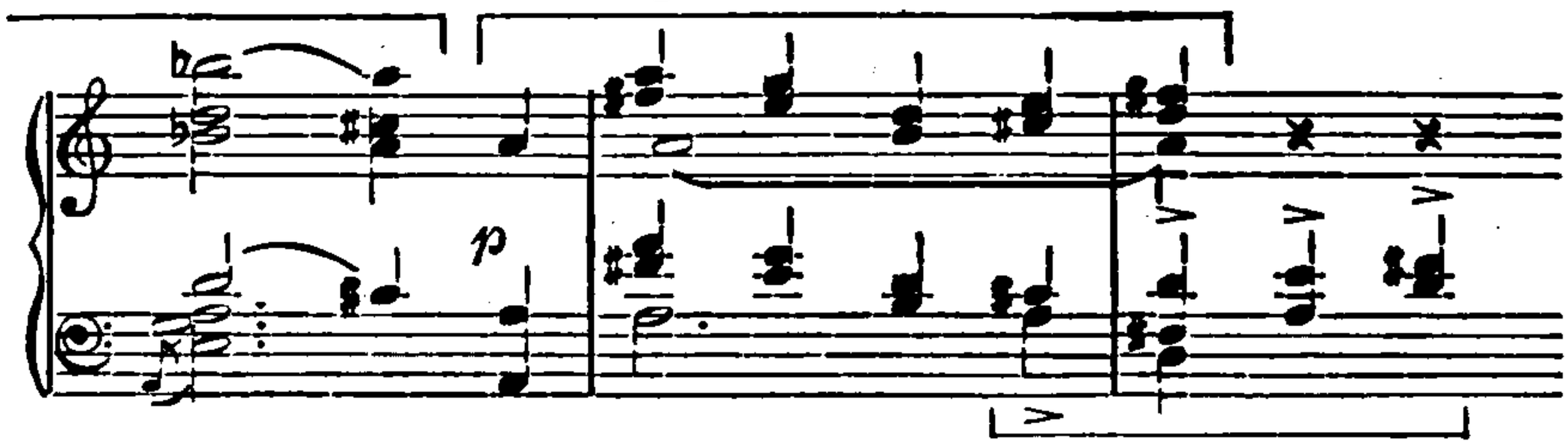
If Strauss had always chosen "programmes" as suitable to music as this, and had always respected the necessary limits of musical expression as he has for the most part here, we should have been spared much

FIGURE XXVI.

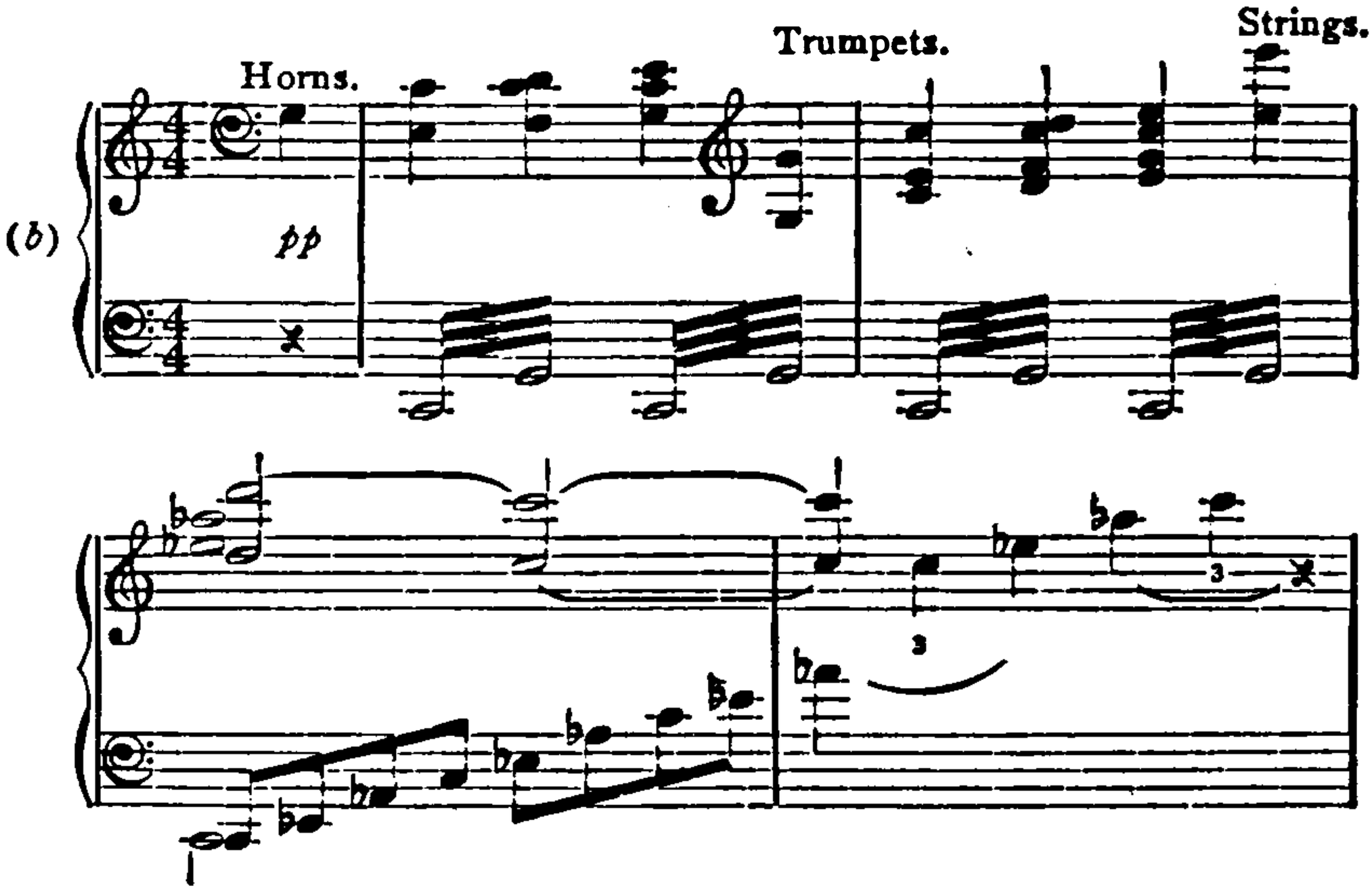
STRAUSS: "Death and Transfiguration."



"Transfiguration" (2d half).



"Transfiguration."



that is petty, ugly, and repulsive. But once a musician has turned away from voicing feelings, and tried to paint the outside world, especially if he is a man as fond of experiment as Strauss, there is no telling where he will end. Thus in "Don Quixote" we have a "wind-machine" introduced into the orchestra, and we have the bleating of the sheep imitated; in "A Hero's Life" we have shrill ugly phrases on the wood-wind instruments to represent the chattering of the hero's enemies; and in the "Domestic Symphony" we see the musician using his vast orchestra to produce the squalling of a baby!



STRAUSS

Such things, which seem rather the abuse than the use of genius, together with the fact that the melody of Strauss becomes more scrappy and uninspired with each new work, has suggested to many critics the question whether music is to-day really moving forward or backward.

This is too large a question for us to consider here. All we can do is to ask ourselves a few questions, which very likely each one of us will answer differently. What music *wears* the best: the music of Beethoven, with its classic forms treated with the independence and yet the reverence for great natural laws of the master, and its general expression of moods; that of the "romanticists," with its less perfect structure and its appeal to our imaginations; or that of the "realists," with its forms determined entirely by programmes and its interest in outside objects rather than inner emotions? Is the great enlargement of the modern orchestra, with the prominence of the brass instruments and their tendency to overpower the more varied wood-wind, especially in our large concert halls, an unmixed advantage? Can music deal with a matter-of-fact story without losing some of its ideal beauty, or, on the other hand, can it preserve this beauty without sacrificing vividness and accuracy in illustrating the programme? Is "melody" the "soul of music," or is it merely the toy of artistic babies?

Each of us must answer these questions for himself, as seriously and yet as open-mindedly as possible. We may know beforehand that, however

we answer them, somebody will disagree with us. We shall do well, therefore, to realize that in a world where there are many kinds of people there must be many kinds of art; yet this knowledge need not interfere with our clinging with all our love and devotion to the particular kind, whichever it is, that best satisfies our own instinct of what is most deeply expressive and most richly beautiful.

CHAPTER XVII

AT A SONG RECITAL

IN reading the last few chapters you must, I think, have felt it growing more and more clear that even in "pure" or "absolute" music—that is, in music without words—there are two qualities more or less opposed to each other, qualities either of which is apt to thrive at the expense of the other. They may, perhaps, be combined without loss on either side in the greatest masterpieces of the greatest masters; but in lesser works one or the other is apt to suffer. Compositions of the most exquisite musical beauty—beauty of melody and that architecture of different melodies which we call form—are often lacking in vividness of expression: or at least the general expression is what strikes us more than the details of the expression. This is the case in most classical music. On the other hand, pieces which stick closely to their programmes, illustrating each step in detail (Liszt's symphonic poems, for example), are apt to lack unity, balance, and symmetry as a whole. The ideals of "musical beauty" and "dramatic truth," as we may name them, are hard to follow successfully at the same time.

In all music with words, of which the solo song

and the opera are the most important branches, this struggle between the two ideals is even more fierce; for here the programme runs along hand in hand with the music, never leaving it free for a moment. Most of the famous quarrels in the history of opera, such as that between Gluck and Piccinni, or that over Italian and German opera, have arisen from this conflict of ideals. Nor has the history of song, which is, so to speak, opera in little, been free from similar differences of opinion, often bitter.

The songs in which the ideal of musical beauty is most singly followed are perhaps the folk-songs, or songs growing up naturally among the common people, and not written by any one composer, such as are found in great numbers in all countries. The Germans are particularly rich in such songs, as you may see by looking at any good collection such as that of Erk in the Peters Edition, in which are found also many songs by great composers in the style of folk-songs. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, and others did not scorn to cast their ideas sometimes in this simple mold, any more than the great German poets, Goethe, Schiller, and Heine, scorned to write equally simple songs and ballads.

One of the best-known of these folk-style songs is "Lorelei" ("The Loreley"), the poem by Heinrich Heine, the music by Friedrich Silcher.[1] If you will study this, you will find that the composer's aim has not been to give the expression of each word or line, but rather to make a charming melody. The

[1] Erk's collection, Peters Edition, page 64.

form is most simple: eight phrases of equal length, the first two pairs balancing each other, the third giving the contrast, the fourth restating the original idea, with a slight climax to make an effective ending. Exactly the same music is used for each stanza. The accompaniment is not striking in any way—merely a series of harmonies to support the tune.

Now there is no doubt that from one point of view Silcher's setting of the words is unsatisfying. Heine's poem is very dramatic—it is a complete little drama or story. Beginning by telling how he is haunted by an old legend of the Rhine, going on to a description of the calm beauty of the river as he sees it in the waning light, the poet then suddenly imagines himself back in the old days, and recounts how the Loreley, a lovely maiden, sits combing her hair with a golden comb and singing a "wondrous song"; how the boatman, fascinated, does not see the reef toward which he drifts; and how the billows, surrounding him, swallow him up. Yet for all this varied and thrilling tale we have the same graceful melody and quiet accompaniment, over and over again! So it is in thousands of folk-songs, and songs in the folk-style, of all nations. Such songs are seldom "dramatic," in the sense of trying to illustrate their story in detail, like a set of moving pictures. They are "lyrical"; their aim is to arouse in us a single vivid mood; and this they can best do by musical beauty. If either the words or the music have to be sacrificed, then so much the worse for the words!

As music constantly advanced in expressive power, however, and as musicians came to be men of more taste and education in matters outside of music, they sought, and found, ways in which they could pay greater attention to the poetic and dramatic part of their work, and thus created another kind of song, the "artistic" song. In the best of such songs musical beauty and dramatic truth are equally striking; in the less successful ones the music suffers.
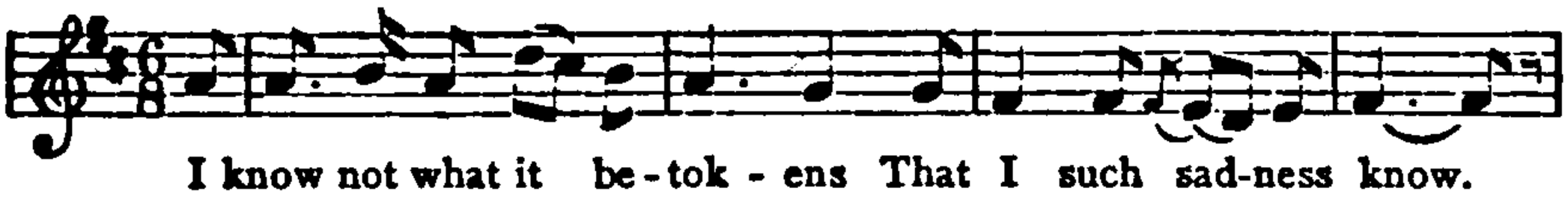
One of the first signs of the change was that composers began to pay more attention to what is called "declamation"—that is, to giving the right accent and amount of time to the important words, and not making unimportant ones stand out. It is remarkable how careless the old composers (as well as some more modern ones) were in this matter; and unless they took particular pains the poetic rhythm and the musical rhythm were almost sure to be at sixes and sevens, because all good poetry has many varieties of rhythm, as we saw in Chapter IV, while musical phrases are apt to have their accents in the same places. Take, for instance, the first two lines of "The Loreley," which may be translated:

I know not what it betokens
That I such sadness know.
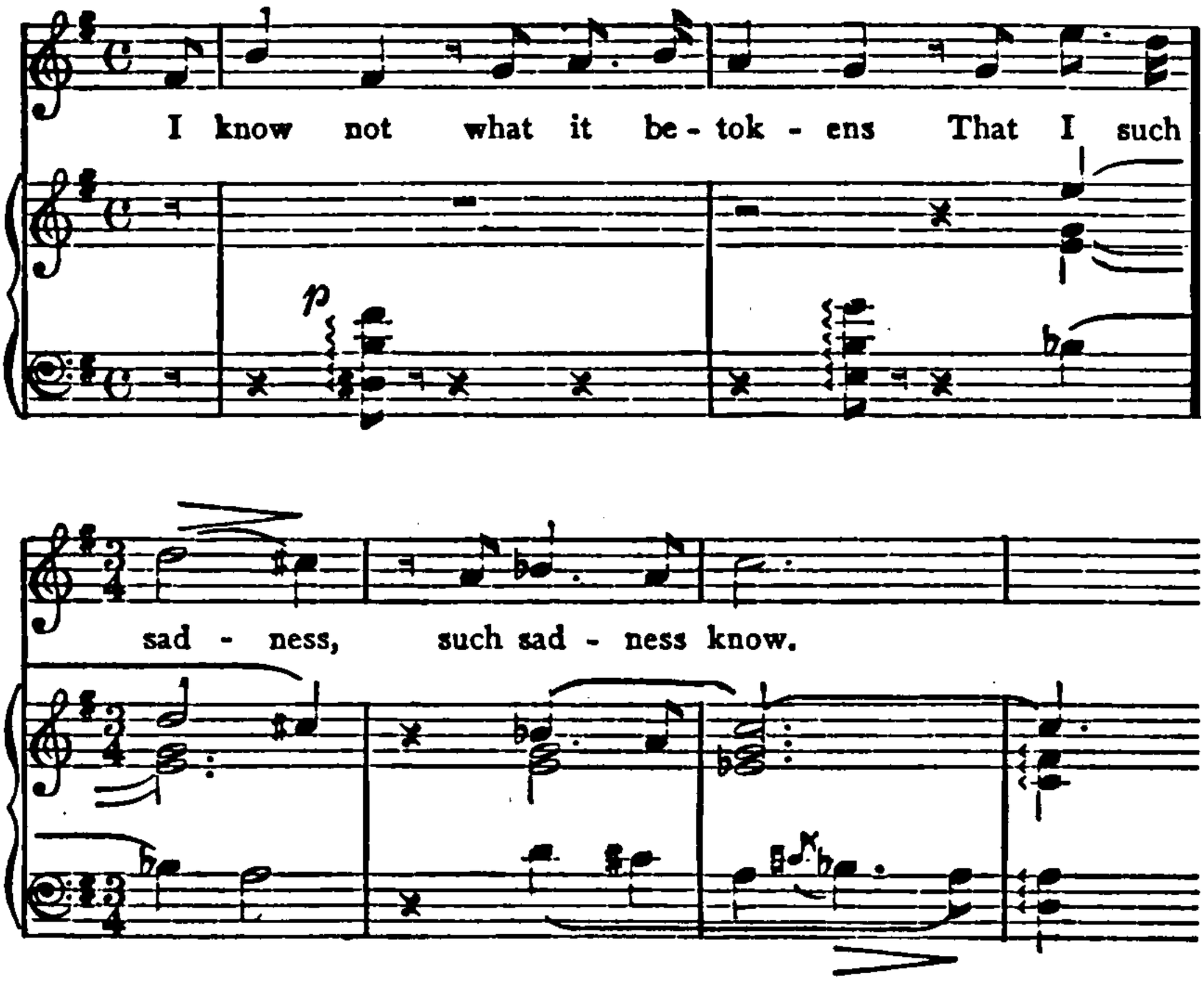
The words that should be most accented here, to bring out the sense, are "know not" and "sadness"; but in Silcher's tune, the opening phrases of which are shown in Figure XXVII, *a*, no attention

FIGURE XXVII.

(*a*) *Andante.* SILCHER: "The Loreley."



(*b*) *Moderato: Parlando.* LISZT: "The Loreley."



is paid to the fact; the tune goes at its own sweet will, emphasizing "know . . . betokens, I . . . know," and leaving "sadness," the key word of the whole sentence, quite buried.

Now compare with this the same part of Liszt's setting (Figure XXVII, *b*), and see how much truer his "declamation" is. Just the right prominence is given to "I know not" and to the "I" that follows, and "sadness" comes out clearly as the chief idea, even being repeated to make it more emphatic. In-

deed, the effect is almost as if the lines were spoken instead of sung, and Liszt marks them "*parlando*" —"spoken." The music is not a tune at all; it has not the musical charm of Silcher's; it is a speaking or reciting in musical tones, called "recitative."

These brief examples show us a great deal as to the differing effects of the folk-style and the dramatic style. The first is more beautiful, more tuneful; the second is more realistic, it throws the words into the front at the expense of the music. It is a suggestive fact that the composers richest in melody are exactly the ones most apt to ride roughshod over the words. Even Schubert, in many ways the greatest of song-composers, frequently does so, as in those lines of "Death and the Maiden," which he turns into nonsense by making them read:

"Go, *wild* and bloodless *man!*
I *am* still *young.*"

But let us, returning to Liszt's "Loreley," see what more we can learn from it of the "dramatic" way of composing, of which it is a fine example.[1] One thing we notice at once is that the same music is not made to do duty over and over again, but there is different music for each stanza of the poem. The song is what the Germans call "durchcomponirt" —"composed right through." This is usually the case with "artistic" songs. Furthermore, the accompaniment is much more important than in the

[1] See Mr. Henry T. Finck's collection of "Fifty Mastersongs," in the "Musicians' Library," page 69.



SCHUBERT

Silcher, in many places quite as important as the voice part, or even more so, as where in the stanza about the boat being swallowed up it paints the stormy sea. Harmony is skillfully used to intensify the expression, as at the word "sadness" near the beginning, and later at the words "he sees but the height." Finally, effects of "tone-color" are similarly used, as where the "comb of bright gold" is suggested by the thin, pure color of the high treble.

All these means of making music dramatically expressive came first into systematic use in the settings of Schubert, appropriately called the "Father of the Song." Among his more than four hundred songs are, to be sure, many lovely examples of the simpler lyrical style, such as "Hark, Hark! the Lark," "Who is Sylvia?" and the famous "Serenade"; but it was in his dramatic "Erl-King," "Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel," "The Phantom Double," and others, that he opened up a new path. Who that has ever heard "The Erl-King" can forget the unceasing excitement of the accompaniment, the agonized dissonances at the child's cry, and the thrill of horror in the recitative at the end: "Clasped in his arms the child was dead."

Schubert is at his most appealing, however, in the comparatively few songs in which the dramatic and the melodious are perfectly wedded. The dramatic style has its own dangers. In the Liszt "Loreley" there is but one passage that is thoroughly charming as music—the setting of "The air is cool, day is waning," repeated in the last stanza. This stays in

our memory, because it is a tune. So the songs of Schubert which wear best are, I think, either those, like "Hark, Hark! the Lark," which have the magic of perfect melody, or those, like "By the Sea," in which lovely melody is combined with, but not overwhelmed by, dramatic effects like the opening chords that so vividly suggest the solemn rise and fall of the ocean. The best songs of all are neither merely lyric nor merely dramatic, but both.

Robert Schumann, though he wrote one song, "The Two Grenadiers," which stands high in the dramatic class, was first of all a lyric writer, a singer of the simpler feelings of joy and grief, hope and despair. More than a hundred of his best songs were composed in the year of his marriage, 1840, and were the outpouring of his happiness after the long years of love that had not run smooth. They are more personal and intimate than Schubert's; there runs through them that imaginative, meditative quality so strongly felt in all Schumann's music, and there is in all of them his fine manliness, his perfect sincerity. And what variety! Headlong passion, sweeping all before it, in "Spring Night," and "He, the Best of All"; gentle faith in "When Thy Sweet Eyes" and the too little known "Serenade"; tragic sorrow in "The Poet's Love," with its steadily advancing rhythm and its magnificent solidity of harmony; and the perfect joy of happy love in "Dedication."

To know these is to love them; and to love them is to love the man of whose noble and generous nature they are such a direct expression. Here are a few

sentences from the letters he wrote when he was composing them:

"22d February.

"Since yesterday morning I have written about twenty-seven pages of music [the 'Myrthen' songs, opus 25], and I can tell you nothing about it, except that I laughed and cried over it with delight. Ah, Clara, what bliss it is writing for the voice!

"13th March.

"Here are . . . my first published songs. While I was composing them I was quite lost in thoughts of you. If I were not engaged to such a girl, I could not write such music—and I mean that as a special compliment to you."

"15th May.

"I have been composing so much that it really seems uncanny at times. I cannot help it, and should like to sing myself to death, like a nightingale. There are twelve songs of Eichendorff's, but I have nearly forgotten them, and begun something else."

A composer whose songs—though he wrote little else—deserve a place not far below that of Schubert's and Schumann's is Robert Franz (1815–92). His songs, nearly three hundred in number, though less dramatic than Schubert's and less impassioned, perhaps less inspired, than Schumann's, are almost perfect of their kind. Their peculiar qualities are, first, tender, graceful, lyrical melody, flowing along smoothly without any especially striking "effects" and with almost none of those recitative-like passages we noticed in Liszt's "Loreley"; second, a tendency to the quietly meditative and thoughtful in expres-

sion, tinged often with sadness; third, carefully worked out accompaniments, containing many delightful melodies running alongside the main melody of the voice part, something in the "polyphonic" style of Bach, of whom Franz was a loving student.

In order to feel the delicate charm of Franz, you should study carefully such a song as his "For Music." [1] Little attempt is made here at expressing each line or word separately. The three stanzas of the poem are not "through-composed," but set to practically the same music. There are no noisy climaxes—all is subdued, restrained. Yet the earnest, almost religious feeling of the lover's evening thoughts is perfectly caught, and the gentle swell of the music as its melody rises higher and higher in each phrase, and subsides in the last, is finely expressive. A most delightful and characteristic touch is the little counter-melody in the left hand in the third stanza.

Franz's fame has grown very slowly, and he will probably never be popular. This is partly because of the reserve of his style; he does not wear his heart on his sleeve, he never blusters or rants, and only those who love sincerity and the quietness of real feeling understand him. Moreover, he gives singers so little chance to show off with long high notes and other claptrap effects, and his songs depend so much on a perfect balance between singer and accompanist, which calls for skill and genuine artistic feeling, that inferior singers avoid him. This is unfortunate; for

[1] "Fifty Mastersongs," page 91.

there are no songs more perfect in their own way, more sincerely felt, or more classically pure in style, than Franz's.

Since the song was raised to the position of an independent art-form by Schubert and Schumann, many composers have used it for the expression of some of their finest ideas. In general plan they have all followed the leader; but each has also, of course, put his own individuality into his work. Brahms's songs, of which there are over two hundred, are, like everything he wrote, strong, noble, full of deep and manly feeling. The broad curves and long-sustained phrases of his melodies are supported by solid and often wonderfully expressive harmony. He is never stagey or sentimental, always direct, simple, sincere. Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) the composer of the well-known piano pieces and the delightful "Peer Gynt Suite," has written many romantic, delicately graceful songs that ought to be oftener heard than they are. Rubinstein, Tschaïkowsky, Dvořák, Jensen, have all made real additions to the rich treasures of song. The French Fauré has created a kind of song all his own: delicate, shot through with soft color like a landscape on a hazy day. The songs of two Germans of our own time, Richard Strauss and Hugo Wolf, follow the more dramatic style of Liszt.

It is a pity that all these various beauties are so seldom given to us pure, as the composers made them, unadulterated by the changes or additions of the singers who "interpret" them. No branch of music

suffers more from its performers. The reason may be partly that anyone may be a singer, simply by the accident of being born with a good voice, and without the long hard work and earnest thought that is needed to become a good violinist or pianist; and therefore there are many singers who have more voice than taste or good sense. Fortunately it is within the power of all of us to help a little toward making singers realize what are the true ideals they ought to strive toward, by not applauding their high notes and their "expression" of everything but the beauty of the melody, and by encouraging the few true artists who honestly try to humble themselves, in order to exalt the music.

GRIEG

CHAPTER XVIII

AT THE OPERA

AN opera is like a song in combining music with words that give it definite meaning; but in opera the dramatic element is even further emphasized by the actors, costumes, and scenery. We not only hear the story unfolded side by side with the music; we actually see it going on before our eyes, acted by real people, among scenes that seem almost real. Opera is thus a combination of a play, or acted story, with music intended to impress upon us as only music can the states of feeling—the loves, hates, hopes, and fears—of the actors; and it ought, you would think, to have all the vividness of a play, and all the intensity of feeling of pure music. In few operas, however, if in any, has this ideal been realized. What usually happens is that the musical and the dramatic elements struggle against each other just as they do in the song, only more fiercely, and one conquers only by partly disabling the other. What makes the fight even harder for music is that in opera it has against it not only the needs of the dramatic element, but the vanity of singers, each one of whom, flattered by the audience, wishes to be the center of the whole performance. No wonder it has taken the efforts

of the greatest geniuses, like Gluck, Mozart, and Wagner, to keep true the balance between all these elements of operatic effect.

Taking its rise in Italy about the year 1600, opera spread rapidly during the seventeenth century through the chief countries of Europe. The general plan early became practically as we have it now. The parts of the chief persons in the story were taken by half a dozen "principals," all skillful singers. There was a chorus to add bustle to the scene and volume to the sound in the climaxes, though at first it was little used. The people expressed their feelings at the moments of excitement, either singly in songs called "arias," or together in duets, trios, quartets, etc., called *ensemble* or "concerted" pieces; the arias had the balanced phrases of true music, and were often in three-part form. Ordinary talk was either spoken (as in the kind of opera called *opera comique*) or sung in the rambling, unbalanced melody called recitative (as in the *opera seria*). Each nation made prominent what specially appealed to its taste: the Italians made much of the solo singing, enjoying the display of the voice in rapid runs and scales; the Germans cared more for the simple lyrical melody expressive of inner feelings, and for part-songs by several singers together; the French, fond of dancing, developed the *ballet*, an elaborate series of dances made dazzling by many-colored costumes and lights.

During the eighteenth century the scheme of the opera became set in hard-and-fast rules, planned

chiefly for show, and paying almost no attention to truth of dramatic effect. The principal singers, especially the soprano and tenor, had become so spoiled by the public, who went wild over their trills and high notes, that they ran everything to suit themselves, having the poor composers and librettists quite under their thumbs. Each opera, no matter what it was about, must have just so many arias for the soprano and so many for the tenor. They must follow in a certain order, and there must be just three acts, and they must end in certain ways, as, for instance, there must be a "grand duet" near the end, no matter what the story. No wonder good poets were disgusted with such an artificial arrangement, and the librettos were written by cheap hack-writers, who worked only for their pay. Operas became little more than concerts sung in costume.

Thus things went on from bad to worse until the first great reformer of the opera, Gluck (1714–87) came upon the scene. In his "Orpheus and Eurydice," produced in 1762, and in later works, he swept the old rules aside, and showed that the aim of opera should be not to show off the singers, but to illustrate the story. He carried out this aim in many ways: by insisting that the libretto should be not merely a string for the musician to run his beads on, but a well-made drama; by making the aria a truly expressive song instead of a series of vocal fireworks; by increasing the number and importance of the *ensemble* pieces and the choruses; by making the

orchestra take a part of its own instead of merely supporting the voices.

Gluck's genius was stronger on the dramatic than on the musical side, however, and his works are somewhat lacking in variety and charm of melody. It was on this side that his work was filled out by that of one of the most tuneful of all composers, Mozart, whose operas "The Marriage of Figaro," "Don Giovanni" and "The Magic Flute," are as fresh today as when they first fascinated the world. They are full of the flowing graceful melody of the Italian type, in strong contrast with Gluck's noble but rather severe style; and instead of his ancient Greek and Roman heroes they present to us people with our own virtues and failings. Yet they do this with a truth to life, a vivid sense of the differences in characters and the ways they may be brought out by the music, that shows the wholesome influence of Gluck's reform, and removes them far from the unreality and empty showiness of the early eighteenth-century operas.

Mozart and Gluck were both, however, ahead of their time: one because he was a great musical genius whose instinct led him to effects that did not become the common property of musicians until much later, the other because his sense of what an opera should be as a drama carried him beyond what music was in his time able to do. His ideals were fine and true, but he lacked the tools to carry them out with complete success. The technique of music, its resources of melody, harmony, rhythm, and or-

chestral color, needed to be developed to a greater perfection before any one but a Mozart could use them in a thoroughly dramatic way.

It was here that the work of the composers of the early nineteenth century, above all of Beethoven, came in as a powerful aid to opera. Beethoven himself, it is true, was not by nature an opera composer. His single opera, "Fidelio," is a noble work because he was a noble musician; but he was first of all a composer for instruments, he himself said that his melodies always came to him as if played by instruments rather than sung, and his intense earnestness made the show and artifice of the theater disagreeable to him, while his sense of humor showed him only too clearly the absurdity of making people sing what they would naturally say. His influence was therefore indirect, and depended on the marvelous advance he made, in his symphonies, in directness and force of expression, through both melody and harmony, and in orchestration.

He thus opened up the way for the "romantic" type of opera which appeared in Germany in the early part of the century, and of which the most important single figure is Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826). In his well-known and still popular operas "Der Freischütz," "Euryanthe," and "Oberon," Weber uses, instead of the well-worn Greek and Latin stories, subjects of a more romantic kind, based on legends of the middle ages, and spiced with mystery and magic. To the charm of gypsies, ghosts, monsters, and fairies he adds the musical

beauty of melodies of the folk-song style, more free and full of sentiment than the old arias, of impressive *ensembles* and of his richly varied orchestration, with its mellow horns, its brilliant violins, its pleading clarinets. His overtures, so poetically felt, so richly colored, are like those of Wagner true introductions to the dramas, not mere noisy hotchpotches to open an evening's entertainment.

But notwithstanding all these fine qualities of Weber's work, it made at first but little impression on the growth of opera in general, which was long held back by the trivial taste of the Italians, quite contented as they were with the tinsel and glitter of the old style. The truth is that the audiences, especially in Italy, cared not a whit for truth to real life, for genuine expression of feeling, or for artistic delicacy; all they wanted was their idolized singers and the sentimental commonplace tunes, dressed up with brilliant runs and trills and all kind of musical gimcracks. And to make matters worse, a school of composers arose, with Rossini (1792–1868) at their head, who instead of trying to educate them to better things, fell in with what they wanted, and with a skill worthy of a better cause, fed them with a more sugary diet than ever. "Rossini," says Mr. Edward Dickinson, "had the spirit of a showman, not of a teacher or reformer. His aim was immediate success before an unreflecting public, and he cared little for the lasting value of the means employed. For about twenty years he was entertainer-in-chief for all Western Europe."

Yet even Rossini had his merits. To "give the devil his due," we must admit that he raised the standards in some ways. For one thing, he curbed a little the power of the singers, who had been so long adored by the public that they had grown to think they could have the say about everything. He no longer allowed them to decorate their arias to suit themselves: he insisted that they sing what he wrote, though this was usually just as emptily showy as anything they could have put in. He removed the sopranos and tenors from their thrones, and gave the altos and basses a chance. He increased the number, importance, and dramatic interest of the concerted numbers. Above all he took more pains with the orchestral part, giving it some individuality and strength of its own. In his two masterpieces, "The Barber of Seville" and "William Tell," which are still played, he made his people more real and his plots more interesting.

Bellini (1802–35) and Donizetti (1798–1848) wrote in the same style as Rossini, but in place of his empty brilliancy and claptrap sensationalism we find in them more sentiment. This sentiment is usually of that shallow kind which is better called "sentimentality," but so far as it goes it shows a tendency to make music for the sake of expressing feeling rather than of merely tickling the ears and dazzling the eyes. But even in Bellini and Donizetti opera was sunk to a pretty low state.

In France matters were somewhat better—not very much. Paris became the chief operatic center of

the world through the labors of Gluck, and attracted to it men of so many different nationalities and musical styles, such as the Germans, Meyerbeer and Offenbach, and the Italians, Cherubini, Rossini, and Spontini, that it was like a seething pot into which a little of everything is stirred. No one style takes the lead as in Italy. And although the French have naturally more dramatic sense than the Italians, they will put up with just about as much artificial glitter and surface display, of a slightly different kind. Instead of sentimental melody and vocal flourishes they demanded elaborate scenery, gorgeous ballets, and subjects drawn from history, but treated with a pompous grandeur through which sincere feeling could hardly make itself felt.

Of this pompous style are the operas of Spontini (1774–1851), of which "The Vestal" made a great success in Paris in 1807. Spontini seems to have really tried to improve the taste of the public, both musically and dramatically, but his music was too hollow, too strained and artificial, to enjoy long life. His example was followed by Rossini in his "William Tell," and by others, of whom the most successful was the clever German Jew, Meyerbeer (1791–1864), famous for his operas "Robert the Devil," "The Huguenots," and "The Prophet." While he possessed real instinct for dramatic effect, and particularly for the dramatic use of the orchestra, knowing how to picture the horrible and grewsome in a way to make the flesh creep, Meyerbeer was too fond of gaudy spectacle, and too willing to come

down to his audiences' level of taste instead of drawing them up to a higher one. He lacked refined feeling, and preferred surface glitter to genuine beauty.

The fatal defect of grand or serious opera in France was its pretentiousness and insincerity. Its composers made a display of heroic feeling, but in their hearts they were working not to express themselves, but to gain money. Art would have been in a bad way had not the lighter type of opera comique brought into play all that is best in the French character—its gayety, delicacy, and wit—while discouraging its tendency to pose and swagger. The spoken dialogue which used to be the special mark of the comic opera gave way in time to recitative, and in other ways its outer form approached that of grand opera; but its spirit was distinct, for it treated stories of a romantic or humorous kind rather than "battle, murder, and sudden death," and it cared more for charm than for impressiveness. In the hands of Boieldieu (1775–1834), and later of Auber (1782–1871) and Hérold (1791–1833) it became a formidable rival of grand opera. Still later it was made even more pungent and sparkling, if rather trivial, by Offenbach (1819–80) and others.

Opera thus spread from Italy all over Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It became so enormously popular that not only the geniuses, but all the middling good composers who longed for wealth or fame made it their business to write for the stage. The results, as we have seen, were not entirely good. The need of pleasing the

public, a public in which those who merely wished to be entertained far outnumbered the true music-lovers, led the Italians into sacrificing everything to the singers, and the French into caring chiefly for magnificence of outward effect. Yet even the most "popular" composers had done much by the way toward increasing the resources of the musician, especially in the matter of orchestration; and at least one type of opera, the romantic opera of Weber, had opened a path toward more human subjects and a more sincere way of treating them. What was now needed was a great genius who could take all the means that had been gathered together, and use them in the service of a finer ideal. He must have a keen sense of both dramatic and musical effect. He must be a master of the orchestra. He must be an earnest and understanding student of the new means of musical expression that had grown up outside the opera, through the work chiefly of Beethoven.

Above all, he must be a man sure enough of his aims to stick to them through years of misunderstanding; he must have courage and patience to fight poverty, contempt, envy, and the indifference of the careless crowd. He must combine the skill of a genius with the devotion of a martyr. . . . Such a man now appeared. His name, as you have probably guessed, was Richard Wagner.

CHAPTER XIX

AT THE OPERA (*Continued*)

WAGNER'S vast life work is so various and many-sided, it contains in itself such different and often conflicting elements, and his endless theorizing about it in his letters and articles have raised about it such a cloud of problems, that a clear idea of it as a whole is exceedingly hard to get. We cannot attempt here to touch on his theories, frequently vague, of politics, religion, and other phases of life only indirectly connected with music. All we can do is to get some notion of the new ways in which he sought to combine drama and music in his operas, or, as he preferred to call them, music-dramas.

Even here there are many contradictions. Most of these can be traced to the fact that while he himself believed that his aim was to make the drama the main thing, the master, and music the servant, yet his greatest powers were after all musical. From this we may start, and to this we shall return.

In criticising the Italian, French, and German schools of opera that we have been studying, Wagner says in one of his books that in them the musical effect was always the *end*, and the dramatic effect the *means*, whereas the dramatic effect ought to be

the end, and the music the means. It was in order to bring about this new balance (similar, you see, to that for which Gluck worked) that he made his sweeping reforms.

First, he wrote his own librettos, in order to have all the materials of his art in his own hands. These he based not on historical events, which he thought contained too many commonplace doings that would not mix well with music, nor on incidents of his own time, which were so near at hand that the audience would take them for themselves merely, and not see their lessons, their poetic suggestiveness, by which Wagner set much store. Instead he took the stories of life in the middle ages, containing gods and goddesses, fairies and monsters, as well as men and women, which he found in the old German legends. These he valued not only for their dramatic interest as exciting stories, but because they could be taken as *allegories,* representing the deepest facts of men's life in all ages. He was intensely earnest in his belief that the musical drama should be not merely an entertainment, but a lesson, an inspiration to nobler living.

Secondly, feeling that the persons of the drama were important only as bringing out its meaning, he swept away all the customs that had made the singers the main thing. More and more as he went on he replaced the old series of separate musical numbers —arias, duets, choruses—by a continuous flowing musical speech, without stops and without definite "tunes," a kind of declaiming which adapted itself



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with absolute freedom to the feeling to be brought out, and which he called "infinite" or "endless melody." He wanted his characters to seem to be talking, rather than singing set pieces as if in a concert. With the same purpose he did away with the repeating of words, and with the many trills and runs of the Italian style.

He never seems to have realized clearly that in thus giving up melody (for "infinite melody" is as impossible as a square circle, since balance of phrases complete in themselves is what gives melody its form) he was sacrificing musical beauty to dramatic appropriateness. But if he did not confess this in his theories, he was too good a musician not to be aware of it, and it was largely in order to restore the musical element that he developed his plan of putting the real melodies in the orchestra.

With him the orchestra becomes in a sense more important than the singers. As we have seen, the powers of orchestral expression had been wonderfully developed by Beethoven and Weber; and Wagner, building on them, was himself one of the greatest of orchestral masters. His plan, then, was to make the orchestral part no longer an accompaniment, but a marvelously rich tapestry of interweaving themes or "leading motives," each of which had moreover a dramatic as well as a musical reason for being, in that it was associated with some particular person or idea in the story (for example, the motive of the ring). Leading motives in themselves were nothing new, having been used by Weber in "Der Freischütz,"

by Berlioz in his programme music, and even by Mozart. What was new was the importance Wagner gave to them as the musical threads binding together what without them would have been vague and formless, and the wondrous skill with which he makes them grow, just as Beethoven does in his symphonies. He himself said that his music was the Beethovenian music "developed, expanded, and applied to dramatic purposes."

Finally, Wagner tried to make the scenery and all that appealed to the eye in the stage spectacle, serve the story as obediently as the music. The display of Meyerbeer for its own sake gave place to equally or even more elaborate effects intended to strengthen through the eye the impressions made upon the ear by the music, and on the mind by the poetry. We may not go so far as Wagner in thinking that his "composite art," of which music, poetry, painting, sculpture, and so on are only minor parts, is more perfect than any one of these arts alone, but at least we must admit that with this composite art he has accomplished wonders. How skillfully does he enhance the effect of scenery by music in such a passage as the famous fire scene!

One of the most wonderful things about Wagner is the patient experimenting by which, beginning in the manner of the Spontini and Meyerbeer French opera in his "Rienzi," in 1838, he gradually felt his way, not without many false steps, to his own mode of writing, which was not thoroughly developed until sixteen years later, in "Rhinegold." He had no

models to go by; he had to be, as someone has vividly expressed it, "his own ancestor." Thus in "Rienzi" there is much of the hollow glitter, the pompous pretentiousness of the French grand opera; in "The Flying Dutchman," which came next (1841–43), the use of leading motives is foreshadowed, but they are merely repeated rather than developed; in "Tannhäuser" (1843–45) there are still musical numbers, such as Elizabeth's prayer, the pilgrims' choruses, and so on, that are complete in themselves; and in "Lohengrin" (1846–48) for the first time the music is an almost unbroken stream, and the leading motives are used with complete mastery.

During all this early time, too (he was born in 1813, and was thus thirty-four when he finished "Lohengrin") Wagner had to face not only these artistic problems, but the indifference of the public and the contempt, later growing into jealousy, of other musicians. His ideas were so new, and he followed them so doggedly, using little tact with those who did not sympathize with him, that he made bitter enemies. His vast creations were so expensive to put on the stage that even friendly managers were frightened off. In Paris, in 1839, where he had gone to try to get "Rienzi" performed, he was reduced to such poverty that he had to make arrangements of popular operettas for publishers and write articles for the musical papers in order to keep himself and his wife from starving. And after "Rienzi" had been successfully given in Dresden, and he had been given the post of operatic conductor

there, matters were not much better; for his duties kept him so busy that he could find little time for his own work, and when he did produce "Tannhäuser" it was not understood. In 1849, moreover, he got into political difficulties, and was exiled from Germany.

At this time he was in despair at the failure of the public to understand his aims. "I was thoroughly disheartened," he says, "from undertaking any new artistic scheme. I had had proofs of the impossibility of making my art intelligible to the public. . . . I thought everything was at an end with my artistic creativeness." Changing his tactics, he devoted much of his time during his exile to explaining his aims in a series of books and articles. But nothing could long keep him from his music, and becoming fascinated by the old legends of the Nibelung dwarfs, the Rhine maidens, and the gods and goddesses of Valhalla, he now began work on what finally became his great "Ring" tetralogy, or group of four dramas—"Rhinegold," "Siegfried," "The Valkyries," and "The Dusk of the Gods."

The composition of these was interrupted in 1857 by work on "Tristan and Isolde," considered by many his masterpiece. It was written in response to a tempting invitation from the Emperor of Brazil to compose an opera for the theater of Rio de Janeiro. As usual, the immediate result was bitter disappointment, the work proving so difficult that it was refused for performance, and remained many years in his desk. For a while there seemed a chance of getting

"Tannhäuser" produced in Paris, but this, too, ended in failure. Poor and discouraged as he was, Wagner now wrote the most joyous and delightful of all his music-dramas, the immortal "Mastersingers"—a wonderful instance of the way genius rises above its worldly surroundings.

Nevertheless at this time Wagner was desperate. He had made up his mind to give up the long struggle, to abandon composing and retire to Switzerland, when at last his luck turned, and he was invited by the young King of Bavaria to go to Munich, and continue his great work in peace. Though his troubles were not quite ended, this was the beginning of better times which he had amply earned. A splendid theater was especially built for him in Bayreuth, and in 1874 the "Ring" cycle of dramas, which he had finished two years before, was given with great splendor at the first of those Festivals of Bayreuth which have since become such an important part of the musical life of all Europe. The master, now admired as much as formerly he had been ridiculed, completed his work with the deeply religious "Parsifal" in 1882, and died a year later.

A noble life it was, and as stupendous a work as was ever done by one man. Of course, like all human work, it is not flawless. In spite of Wagner's high ideal of truth to life in the drama, he was fond of stagy theatrical effects that jar on the best modern taste. His dragons, and swans, and other elaborate machinery often verge, to our eyes, on the ridiculous. He seems to have been curiously unimaginative, and

to have had to have every element of his drama actually visible on the stage. On this side, as Mr. Newman points out, "the modern world is undoubtedly moving away from him." The morals or lessons of his dramas, too, the truths of human life that they are meant to suggest, are often forced and false—in a word, sentimental. His talk about "regeneration through love," "redemption," the "turning of the Willed-not into the Non-existing," and "man in the myth," is more and more felt to be what the same keen critic calls "moonshine."

A still more serious difficulty is that with all his genius Wagner could not quite solve that old problem of the perfect union of music with the drama—probably because it is insoluble. His *aria parlante*, or spoken song, for the voices, was a makeshift, a compromise between the dramatic untruthfulness of making people sing tunes by way of conversing together and the musical ugliness of letting them talk. It was a far better plan than anyone else had thought of, especially when musically strengthened by the leading motives in the orchestra, but that it was after all a makeshift is shown by the fact that in the very finest passages of Wagner such as Isolde's great love-scene over Tristan's body, the voice part is not essential to the music, it is, so to speak, stuck on afterwards. The orchestra is the main thing, precisely because the orchestra has those phrases of definite balanced melody that Wagner sought to abolish.

The contradiction at the root of Wagner's work

is indeed just this: that its supreme strength and beauty is due to exactly those musical elements that he thought ought to be not the end but the means. As a thinker, a philosopher, his importance is steadily waning; as a dramatist he has serious shortcomings; it is as a musician that he lives and will live. He is one of the greatest melodists of the world; think of the variety of expression, the beauty of line, in his great melodies; in the Pilgrim's Chorus, in the love duet of "Tristan," in the massive "Meistersinger" Overture, in the lovely spring song in "The Valkyries."

As a master of harmony he is almost more remarkable, and his influence is to be found in all modern music. When he wishes he can be as strong and as simple as Beethoven, using the common chords of our ordinary scale with overwhelming effect in the wedding march of "Lohengrin," and on page after page of the "Mastersingers." On the other hand, he did more than any other single musician to show the expressive power of those groping harmonies moving along the "chromatic" scale of half-tones and passing freely and yet firmly from key to key, which give "Tristan and Isolde" an atmosphere all its own.

In the mingling of several melodies at once in a complex web, with a skill equal to that of Bach and yet with a splendor of effect thoroughly modern, as in the famous passage in the "Meistersinger" Overture, he is unique. His rhythms are so various that each of his hundreds of leading motives has its own

distinct "profile." His treatment of these motives, the way they are made to grow and change, introduce into opera the living, breathing music of the Beethoven symphony. He handled the orchestra with absolute mastery, and so enlarged it that it became rather a group of orchestras, of contrasting tone colors, than a single one. In short, Wagner has passed all the elements of music through the crucible of his marvelous mind, and they have come forth possessed of strange powers and new possibilities which are not yet exhausted. With Bach and Beethoven he must always stand as one of the supreme musical creators.

The only serious rival of Wagner is that most remarkable of Italians, Verdi, who was born in the same year, 1813, and died in 1901, producing one of his finest works, "Falstaff," when he was eighty years old. Beginning with works in the shallow and flowery style of Rossini, though of greater dramatic force, such as "Ernani," (1844), "Rigoletto" (1851), "Il Trovatore" (1853) and "La Traviata" (1853), Verdi constantly deepened and refined his way of writing, until in his "Aïda" (1871), "Otello" (1887), and "Falstaff" (1893), he produced music-dramas as closely wrought as Wagner's, though in no sense imitations of them.

In recent years operas have been produced in great abundance and in a bewildering variety of styles by German, French, and Italian composers, comparatively few of them uninfluenced by Wagner in one way or another. The most popular of all these are

undoubtedly Gounod's "Faust," which with its sugary melody went straight to the public heart and has been heard one thousand times in France alone, and the musically much finer "Carmen" of the unfortunate Frenchman, Bizet, who died unappreciated the very year it appeared (1875). The highly skilled Saint-Saëns and Massenet have also made successes with "Samson and Delilah," and "Manon Lescaut," respectively, as well as with many others. Charpentier has sprung into fame with his "Louise," a picture of life in Paris to-day, highly realistic, and Debussy with his "Pelleas et Melisande," an opera as far removed from the real as possible.

The Germans have naturally imitated Wagner more closely, especially Humperdinck in his delightful "Hänsel und Gretel," based on the fairy tale of Grimm and making free use of German folk-songs. Richard Strauss has increased Wagner's already gigantic orchestra, and has chosen, in his much-talked-of "Salome" and "Elektra," subjects full of horror and crime. People have such a strange fondness for being shocked that they have rushed to see them, but in spite of the great musical and dramatic skill they show it seems doubtful whether they will live.

The younger Italians, too, have profited by the fondness for the horrible, the exciting, and even the coarse. Mascagni's most popular "Cavalleria Rusticana" makes up in "thrills" for what it lacks in musical beauty; it moves swiftly, it shows the fierce loves and hates of uncontrolled natures, and it

ends with a murder. Leoncavallo's "Il Pagliacci," though more worth while musically, belongs to the same so-called "realistic" school, as do also Puccini's "La Bohême" and "Madame Butterfly." The popularity of such crude and sensational methods suggests that opera is in danger of relapsing into the low state from which Wagner temporarily rescued it. Will some new genius come to raise it again? We cannot tell; but at least we may prepare ourselves to give him, if he does appear, our intelligent support.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSION

IN the early chapters of this book we took a view of the most general qualities of all music, with the object of seeing what were its most characteristic effects, found in all its branches, and marking it off from the other arts. Next, by fancying ourselves at concerts of various kinds, we got a nearer view of some of the more important special departments of music—piano and orchestral music, the song, the opera. In all this study our aim was to sharpen our attention by finding out differences, and to cultivate our taste by distinguishing the better effects from the poorer. It now remains to gather up the threads, to sum up very briefly what we have learned, perhaps adding a touch here and there where our mode of study has left gaps.

I think it has come out pretty clearly as we have progressed that the division of musical effects we made in the first chapter was a sound one. Music, we said —all music—appeals to us in three ways: it appeals to our ears by the sensuous beauty of its sounds, to our minds by the beauty of its shape, both in single melodies and in the forms into which they are built, and to our feelings by its power to arouse moods,

and also to some extent to suggest the actual surroundings of our everyday lives. Anything more which it may seem to do we shall usually find on examination to be due not to itself, but to some other art with which it is coupled.

In opera, for example, music is coupled with poetry and with drama, and in Wagner's music-dramas even with painting, sculpture, dancing, and other arts. In the oratorio a similar use is made of poetic and dramatic help in the illustration of religious stories. In song, poetry alone is the companion of music. We should try to see clearly in all these cases what part of the effect is due to the music itself, and what part to other elements.

We may also go a step further now, and state a truth that I hope has been becoming gradually clearer —that those forms of music are the finest in which the purely musical elements count most, and other elements least; and that moreover among these purely musical elements some are more important than others, the one we can least afford to spare being that beauty of form which appeals to the mind. And this at once explains the need of educating our taste, since precisely this most musical of qualities is the one hardest to appreciate, while everybody is more or less sensitive to pleasant sounds and to the appeal to the feelings, and even absolutely unmusical people find much to enjoy in opera, oratorio, and song. What we as music lovers wish is to grow ever more sensitive to the rarest, most spiritual part of music, to enter each day more completely into the com-

panionship of the finest thoughts of the greatest minds.

How necessary study is to such progress we can see on every hand. What is the most "popular" branch of music? Undoubtedly it is the opera. And what are the most popular operas? Either those of the flowery Italian school that by their vocal ornament tickle our ears, that is to say, make the sensuous appeal more than any other, or those that through exciting stories, as in "Cavalleria Rusticana," or gorgeous spectacles, as in much of Meyerbeer, appeal to instincts in us which are not musical at all. Indeed, my point is amply proved by the fact that the ordinary man or woman, on coming out of the opera, talks not of the drama, still less of the music, but of the singers! As if after reading a great poem we should talk only of the paper and the type.

In songs the usual taste is no better. The singer is still in the foreground, and the favorite songs of, say, Schubert, are not those of perfect musical beauty like "Hark, Hark! the Lark," but those which, like the "Erl-King," tell an exciting story. All this is of course perfectly natural. We all, as human beings, like a story, while comparatively few appreciate a perfect melody or a well-rounded form.

In orchestral music, even of the "programme" kind, outside elements take a less important part, and the music is the main thing. Yet even here we find some of the same conditions. In the first place, there is a strong tendency to read into even a symphony a story of some kind, or at least a series of pictures,

which really have nothing to do with it. This would do no great harm if it did not distract our attention from the music itself, and lead us to forget that music is a language, so to speak, that cannot be translated. A melody by a great composer *means* just that melody, just those tones, and nothing else. Let us not spoil it by cloaking its immortal beauty under our rag-tags of "interpretations." In the second place, the marvelous richness and variety of tone in the orchestra is in itself a danger. The composer without ideas seeks to cover his poverty by a gorgeous robe of sound, and the thoughtless hearer is too willing to let him. Good taste, on the contrary, insists that there must be beauty of melody and harmony, and that even when an orchestral work is robbed of its color by being arranged for piano, as when a painting is photographed, something must remain. A composer said to me recently: "I am writing piano pieces now. It is good practice, for it can't be done without ideas."

Yet even piano music has its own dangers. Though the piano has less variety of color than the orchestra, it is capable of many effects, such as pearly runs, dazzling feats of rapidity, and the magic of the pedal, which delight the ear more than the mind. It was the fondness for these that led the pianist-composers of about 1830 to write all those shallow "fantasias" on operatic airs, enveloped in sparkling scale-passages, that have now happily gone out of fashion. Even the masterly Liszt was not superior to such tricks.

The prominence of a single person is also a danger of piano music. Just as the average concert-goer thinks only of the singers, the average recital-goer is apt to think too much of the personality of the pianist, of his hair, his necktie, or his wrist action. Some famous virtuosos have unfortunately not thought it beneath them to encourage and profit by this curiosity about their persons, degrading as it is to their art. Such men choose for their programmes only pieces that will show off their dexterity or their "temperament," with the result that many of the purest gems of piano literature, such as Brahms's noble intermezzos, capriccios, and rhapsodies, are hardly ever heard in recitals at all. But there is a pleasanter side to this as to all pictures. A few really great pianists lose themselves entirely in their work, and play with quiet sincerity what they know to be worth while. And if the public does not understand them at first, it comes round to them in time, and adds admiration to respect.

If we look for the type of music in which all these lower elements of appeal to the ear alone, or to the interest of a story, heard or imagined, or to curiosity about the personalities of performers, are reduced to their minimum, we shall find it, I think, in chamber music, or music for small combinations of instruments of which the string quartet of two violins, a viola, and a violoncello is the standard group. While there is plenty of variety of tone color here, the overwhelming effects of the orchestra, which drown thought in sound, are impossible; pieces with "pro-

grammes," though occasionally met with, as in the Bohemian Smetana's beautiful quartet "Aus meinem Leben"—"From My Life"—are rare; and the players, instead of standing out as individuals, are merged in their common work.

All the great masters of pure music have contributed to this purest of its forms, the string quartet, of which Haydn is called the father. What wealth of unalloyed musical delight is to be found in the ever-springing melody, the intricate yet clear tissue of interweaving voices, the deep yet quiet feeling, of the quartets of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Dvořák, Tschaïkowsky, Brahms! And if one wants a little more variety of tone color there are the quintets in which the piano is added to the strings, of which Schumann's is a famous example, and there are, for smaller groups, trios for piano, violin, and violoncello, and sonatas for violin or violoncello with piano. The older one gets, the more familiar with it one grows, the more delightful does chamber music become. It is almost the only form of music that never grows wearisome.

Another high type of music, now unfortunately little cultivated, is that found in the noble organ works of Bach and Handel, and in later times of Mendelssohn, Rheinberger, César Franck, and the French organists of to-day like Widor. Although the organ is played by a single man, it has the voices of a multitude; and owing to the nature of its mechanism it is less minutely expressive than the piano, less responsive to the player's touch, and for

that very reason more grand and superhuman. If we were to try to get as near as we could to our idea of "the music of the spheres," we should probably have to choose one of Bach's great organ fugues. But at present our average taste, at least in America, is not fine enough for such a severe style; we prefer sentimental anthems, and even arrangements of operatic and orchestral pieces, with plenty of "tremolo" and solos for fancy stops.

We should not, however, speak contemptuously of any musical taste which is sincere and open-minded. It is far better to have a real love for Sousa's marches and the waltzes in the latest light operas, yes, even for "rag-time," than to rave over Debussy because he is the fashion. The best qualities we can have in our relation to music are honesty and open-mindedness: honesty that keeps our taste true and wholesome, however crude; open-mindedness that is willing to learn better standards when they are pointed out. Wherever we start, we shall advance, I think, provided we have these qualities, in the direction of preferring pure music to that which is alloyed, and of loving best not what most deliciously or most richly feeds our ears, or what most violently stirs our feelings, but what gently thrills us with its divine beauty.