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A COURSE IN MUSICAL COMPOSITION

BY

NORMAN DEMUTH

Hon. R.A.M., Hon. A.R.C.M.
Officier d'Académie
Professor of Composition, Royal Academy of Music, London

Part I.

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The Author with some of his pupils at the Royal Academy of Music, London

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PART ONE

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To my friend Peter Latham,
with whom I have discussed these matters
so often

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FOREWORD

Many years ago there appeared a series of booklets written on the "How to" principle. These professed, in all seriousness, to show the reader "How to write a Song, a Piano Piece, a Piece for Violin and Piano", etc. The series had a certain vogue, I believe, but no claim was ever made for the composition of a masterpiece written according to the "directions enclosed". This was not twentieth-century progress. Such "methods" have been written in scores from time almost immemorial. In the Pepysian Museum at Magdalene College, Cambridge, there may be seen a "composing machine" mentioned by Pepys. (1) In the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society for 1672 a Mr. John Birkenshaw (the teacher of Samuel Pepys) claimed that "An easy way is by this author inserted for making airy tunes of all sorts by a certain rule, which most men think impossible to be done, and the composing of two, three, four, five, six and seven parts, which by the learner may be done in a few months, *viz*: in two months he may exquisitely and with all the elegancies of Music, compose two parts; in three months, three parts; and so forward, as he affirms many persons of honour and worth have often experienced, which otherwise cannot be done in many years". (2). In the late eighteenth century a music publisher named Welcker issued a "Tabular System whereby any person without the least knowledge of music, may compose ten thousand Minuets in the most pleasing and correct manner" (3). Later there appeared a book showing how any number of German Waltzes could be composed by a system of throwing dice, again "without the least knowledge of music" The book was purported to have been written by—Mozart! (4); and so the swindle continued, and indeed, anyone who professes that he can teach a student "how to compose" is labouring under a big delusion.

Composition is something which must be learnt from the experience and practice of others. It is a gradual process. No composer can start without a full knowledge of how his musical fathers have carried the evolution of music through the course of years. It is impossible simply to tell a student to develop his material and leave it at that. One can show him a few points, but these must necessarily be related to earlier practices, and it is not enough merely to demonstrate with the composers of the *immediate* past; the matter must be taken from its seeding and the growth steadily followed. There are few problems to-day which have not worried composers of all generations at some time or another. Beethoven's difficulties in the problems of Sonata and Symphony were no less than those of the living composer; not even Beethoven approached them without careful study of his predecessors.

In the first place it is a question of technique acquired through the basic principles; these must be mastered. They need not remain as the guiding light to composition; indeed, it is better that they should not do so for an adherence to them causes the "dating" of so much music. On the other hand, deliberate flaunting of authority is just as bad as deliberate adherence to it on principle. The basic technique requires a complete overhaul, but even if this devoutly-to-be-wished consummation were effected, the new basic technique would still have to be mastered, and this includes not only harmony and counterpoint, but the form, style, and manner of all the genres.

If the basic training (of whatever kind) be complete it will instinctively apply and adapt itself to the composer's thoughts. It is not necessary to be absolutely original, but it *is* essential that each composer should say something by which he can be recognised.

---

(1) (3) and (4) Quoted in "The Oxford Companion of Music" (Scholes.)
(2) Quoted in "An Anthology of Musical Criticism" (Demuth—Eyre & Spottiswoode)

That "something" can be matured only after intensive study of the habits of others. The way the great composers broke away from the standards and processes of their time is part of their individuality as composers. Procedure has been laid down by the text-books, but the great composers differ from these rulings over and over again. To say that Fugue, for example, is such and such a formal process (the word "formal" being used in its musical and not in its political sense in this book) is but a starting point. It is hardly necessary to point out that the very first of the "Forty-Eight" denies many of the formal principles—but, at the same time, many of the other fugues conform to them. A grasp of Form in its aesthetic relationship to technique is absolutely necessary, and while every composer has complied with formal structure of some kind in some way or other, none worth their salt have ever written "to rule".

I assume for the purpose of this book that the student-composer will have mastered the basic technique of present day text-book harmony and counterpoint and the question of tonality and key-relationship. I take it for granted that he will have creative instincts and musical feeling; but A Course in Musical Composition does not preclude the study of THE Course OF Musical Composition, and for this reason the general reader will find that he will be able to follow the natural evolution of each genre in these pages.

The various styles, idioms, and even idiosyncracies of composers of all types are discussed. Certain genres may be said to have reached in certain composers what the French call the "Période de floraison". No one will deny that in Fugue that period was reached by Bach and in Sonata and Variation by Beethoven. These set the standard, and subsequent events have been expansions of the established idea. I do not maintain for one moment that the last word in anything has yet been said and I consider the latest expressions just as important and valuable as those which set the standard. I have, therefore, drawn from as wide an orbit of musical examples as possible and have not hesitated at quoting myself since a pennyworth of experience and practice is worth a poundsworth of preaching and theorising, and the works quoted illustrate some point or other.

The first part of the book deals with technique, and with the "-isms" and "-alities". Before deciding, so to speak, what he is going to write, the composer must know exactly how he is going to express himself. Several points of view have, therefore, been put forward and it is for the composer to fit himself into the picture; but he should be careful to distinguish between the *exercising* of a particular technique and the *practising* of it. He may elect to study Sixteenth Century Counterpoint as part of his basic training, and he will doubtless write Motets, Masses and Madrigals in accordance with the principles of the composers of that period; but these will be exercises in part-writing, for there is no more point in deliberately producing Sixteenth Century pastiche than quasi-French Impressionism. If the originals are available, there is no place for imitations. If he can use either technique as the basis for his thought and add something to it, differentiating himself from it to any significant degree, then he will have passed to his state of maturity.

I offer no apology for any opinions which, to the orthodox reader may seem heterodox, as I do not expect everyone to agree with me. I have not hesitated at giving my views on certain matters which I sincerely consider to be wrongly directed and liable to lead to half-truths and vain efforts. On the other hand I hope I am completely unbiassed and objective in my approach to things which musically do not appeal to me.

I have removed all the "C" clefs from the choral examples and I have transposed all the orchestral parts into their "concert" notes.

NORMAN DEMUTH

Paris, 7/1/50

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the under-mentioned publishers for so willingly giving me permission to quote from the works of which they hold the copyright or which they control. Without such generous co-operation on their part this book could hardly have been written.

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I have received individual help from Mr. Felix Aprahamian who copied out some examples for me, Mr. Peter Rorke, Mr. David Kettlewell and Mr. Barry Moss, three of my pupils at the Royal Academy of Music, London, who read the typescript for me in the light of students using it as a text book, and from my wife who, once again, has suffered many things in editing the typescript and reading the proofs.

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CHAPTER ONE

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

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Musical composition is a combination of Inspiration and Technique, the former supplying the matter, the latter the manner. The former, therefore, initiates the Idea and provides the necessary urge. There cannot be a single musician who in his early years has not felt sudden and unaccountable impulses; his head has been filled with nebulous musical sounds which he has longed to write down but has been unable to, because he did not know how to go about it. The sounds remained nebulous because he had no technique, for Technique is simply the word for the way a certain individual expresses himself and it embraces the complete equipment of the creative artist.

Unless there is instinctive facility (and this is extremely rare) there cannot be composition without a basic technique: this is given to the student by a study of harmony, counterpoint and form which exercise certain disciplinary restraints and allow his mind to become settled, giving him "the tools for the job". Without this basic technique there would not be complete anarchy but almost total incapacity. The student, therefore, no longer regards the basic study as a matter of amassing a number of rules and regulations which have to be learned through the process of adding parts to one given, usually an extremely dull affair, but is taught that even the construction of a simple four-bar phrase in accordance with the custom of the great composers is, in itself, "Composition". There are expediences which he should observe and in the early stages they are always justifiable.

The basic study also encourages the use of the inner ear and this is indispensable to the composer. There are many who compose "at the piano" by picking at the notes until they get the right ones,—that is to say, those which they think they are hearing. Bach called this type of composer a "Harpsichord Knight". On the other hand, there is not the slightest objection to a composer playing what he has written at any time during the process of composition. One of the chief objections to composing at the piano is that it tends to improvisation, and this means loss of formal balance. Another is a practical one; it entails the carrying about of a piano on all occasions, so that if an urge arises on an exceeding high mountain, the composer is quite incapable of writing it down. The basic study, therefore, should eradicate this if it is properly dealt with; but it is very distressing to find an eminent theorist encouraging the student to use the piano because he probably never will train the inner ear—a veritable example of escapist pessimism.

There are a great many who can extemporise at the piano with considerable skill but have no ability to carry anything to a logical conclusion; they are usually incapable of reading music. When they wish to have their thoughts set down on paper, they hire a musician to write the notes from dictation—they then pose as composers. One feature which I have noticed over and over again is their inability to play exactly the same thing twice. The technique appears to consist of certain chords which enjoy a temporary popularity in the lighter circles of music. When I protested once that a certain piece lacked harmonic variety, the reply was that the chord in question (the dominant ninth) was "the fashionable chord of the day" and that all such music was "now being founded upon the modern chords and harmonies used by Debussy and Ravel".

A knowledge of chords does not make a composer. "He knows all the chords" was the plaint of a parent disappointed because his son showed no signs of creative ability. Such knowledge is necessary, however, because the composer must know what he is hearing and writing and also must realise the right mass of sound for any particular moment. The laws of progression are at the composer's individual command once they have been mastered, but too much emphasis has been placed upon mere technical facility and efficiency. The question is often asked as to why

the majority of those holding the B. Mus. and D. Mus. degrees proceed no further with composition than their degree "exercise", a work surely contrived at the carpenter's bench and hardly to be considered "creative" in the light of the composers' later silence. How is it that so many die with this solitary "Op. 1" to their credit?

The following piece of two-part counterpoint would fail a candidate in any degree or diploma examination:

Ex. 1

It is chastening, therefore, to realise that John Sebastian Bach might not have qualified for the exclusive right to add certain letters after his name. Now, Bach did not do this every time; but he knew exactly what he was writing and why he wrote in that particular manner and unless examiners have telepathic communication with the candidates, they cannot tell whether the candidates in question know or do not know what they have written. The effect of this progression is to emphasise and give point to the progression of the music at that moment.

Bach :—Es ist das Heil uns kommen her

Ex. 2

However, it is difficult to see reason when confronted with the next examples:

Ex. 3

These are not extracts from Miss X's weekly harmony exercises. The composer of "A" adds D. Mus. (Cantuar) (1) to his name, and he of the others, D. Mus. (Oxon). In each case the progressions are downright ugly and could have been avoided. The leaps to and from the 6/4 in "A", the fifths in "B", and the doubled bass note in the first chord of "D" are all things for which no justification can be found. They do not beautify the music; they do not form the only way out of an *impasse*. The fifths in "C" may possibly be excused since they make for smoothness between the two bottom parts and move in motion contrary to the two upper, but nothing can excuse the whooping leap to the doubled middle C of the last bar.

---

(1) I am aware that this degree is given "honoris causa"

The theorists have laid down didactic principles so dogmatic that they refuse to permit challenge, no matter what the authority may be. For this reason the Fugues of J. S. Bach at one time were forbidden-study because they did not conform to the theoretical and scientific principles of the academic professors.

The bugbear of consecutive fifths follows the student into his compositions. Even at one time in the present century the first thing that many teachers did was to "look for fifths", no matter how considerable the work may have been. Vaughan Williams' Mass in G minor helped to put a stop to this habit. Although strictly grammarians, there have been some theorists who have genuinely used as examples the authority of the great composers, but with reservations. Ebenezer Prout, to his credit, tried this but found himself up against so many contradictions. It is reported that the late Dr James Higgs (1829-1902) used to say "It ain't 'appy". "It's a bit 'arsh: Bach and 'andel don't do it" when faced by a recalcitrant student; but both Bach and 'andel can so often be caught out in nefarious practice.

It is *possible* to build a musical work by means of technique alone, once the initial Idea has come to light. Technique is the working of a musical process based on some formative principle. It is a matter of letting one sound move to another and so on and so forth by applying certain laws of musical progression and compressing them into a certain framework. By following a prescribed formula or system, in due course a work will be completed, conforming to the rules and regulations, but growing from a mere mathematical process. This has been done over and over again by certain theorists.

It may not be generally known that Johann Fux (1660-1741) composed eighteen Operas, fifty Masses, ten Oratorios, and other works; that Johann Albrechstberger (1736-1809) composed several Symphonies; that François Fétis (1784-1871) wrote several Operas; that Ebenezer Prout (1835-1909) delivered himself of three Symphonies, Organ Concertos and much Chamber Music. Their works were stillborn because they paid attention to the letter at the expense of the spirit. They adapted their thoughts to their technique, not the other way round. Hence it became more important that the questions of melodic and harmonic progression and key relationship should be observed than that imagination should be allowed full play; and this adherence to the mechanics of music forbids use of imagination.

On the other hand, Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842), a pedant if ever there was one, left an undying opera-comique in "Les deux Journées" in addition to his learned book on Counterpoint; César Franck (1822-1890) was a great teacher; Vincent d'Indy (1851-1931) wrote a wonderful work on Composition in addition to being the leader of French symphonists. Max Reger (1873-1916) in many of his organ works showed the beauties obtainable through the technique which he taught as a basic training. The exception seems to have been Paul Dukas (1865-1935) whose popularity as a composer and writer has almost completely eclipsed his fame as a teacher. Among the living may be cited Charles Koechlin (1867) whose didactic works are the result of his having anticipated as a composer nearly every future "-ism and -ality" and consequently they have a rare humanism; Arnold Schoenberg (1874) and Paul Hindemith (1895) insist upon a traditional basic training, the latter regarding composition as a craft.

In this country Sir Charles Stanford (1852-1924), Frederick Corder (1852-1932) and R. O. Morris (1886-1949) are suffering eclipse as composers through their reputation as teachers.

All these viewed technique from the point of composition. The theorists view composition from the point of technique. It may be doubted, incidently, if Cherubini would have been such an academic stickler had he not held the position of Director of the Paris Conservatoire and therefore had to conform to academic principles which in those days were rigidly upheld.

In the words of Vincent d'Indy (which should be hung on the walls of the studios of all composers) "All processes are good provided that they are the means to an end (1) and not the end in themselves". There is no merit whatsoever in writing to any system or style. The merit lies in the result. Processes may be either tonal or non-tonal. They may rotate round a system of key relationship or work on a principle of transitory tonalities. They may eschew both of these and by a negative approach, deny their existence. Neither is right nor wrong in itself. The fact that the individual may not like the result is not sufficient to condemn a process, for the technique of the work may be impeccable. Destructive criticism is very easy. The discerning critic or reviewer can see the good points in everything and is quick to appreciate them. The composer and composition student are "critics" themselves. They have to appreciate the why and wherefore in order to determine their own way of thinking—not that they will deliberately copy any idiom or style if they have anything individual to say, but they will be drawn to the natural expansion of that which appeals to them. The composer with nothing to say and consequently no individuality will be content to become a copyist without in any way expanding his model.

(1) *i.e.* The making of music.

The normal progress of a composer is to grow increasingly complex (but not necessarily complicated) as he gets older and then become crystalized in the last period of his creative life, stripping himself bare of unessentials. His mature works will deny many, if not all, of his early principles. A composer starting his career upon traditional and established lines of tonality and key-relationship will probably finish by what appears to be a refutation of both, but is in reality an expansion. It might well be that one who started at the other end and worked backwards would find the non-tonal way of thinking too limited and repetitive. The progress forward is very much less noticeable than that backward, since the former is an evolution of traditional principles, while the latter is a retrograde movement. It is too early to say for certain, since the non-tonal school is not yet old enough to supply the evidence. It may be remarked, however, that the latest works of Arnold Schoenberg all show a definite drift towards tonality; Beethovan's Opus 110 is more debatable than his Opus 2, "Tristan" more so than "Rienzi". On the other hand, to come nearer our own time, Arthur Bliss' Piano Concerto and his opera "The Olympians" are less debatable than "Rout" or "A Colour Symphony" and Stravinsky's latest neo-classicism than "Petrouchka" or "Le Sacre"

Composers often reach an *impasse* when their technique seems unexpansible in the light of its own particular principles. In this case they either keep silent for a considerable time and gradually fulfil some kind of natural evolution or, like Schoenberg, they devise their own technique which may be quite contrary to their former outlook but will in course of time perfect them along an altogether individual means of expression —individual, but not necessarily new. This change, being abrupt and iconoclastic, completely outmodes everything which has gone before; listening to Schoenberg's "Pelleas und Melisande" and, for example, Delius' Piano Concerto are depressing and enervating experiences. Neither of these works is individual to its composer and neither makes what is called "a good introduction" to him, as is so often maintained by their disciples. The only really good introduction" to any composer is his most mature and individual work. I suggest, therefore, that the ideal way to study a composer is in reverse, to learn what he grew *from*, not *to*; but this is not always practicable.

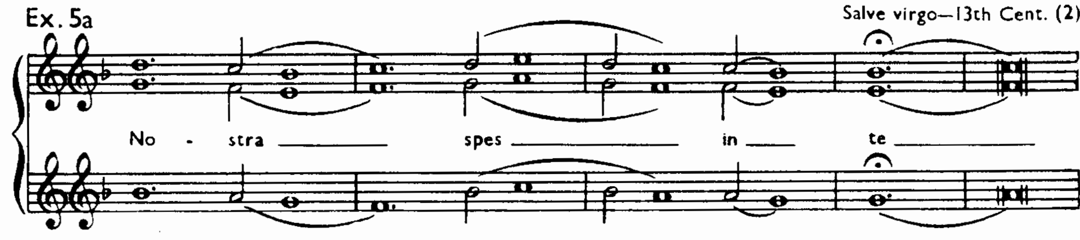
The question often arises as to why so few composers through the history of music have survived, for there are no more to-day in proportion to population than ever there have been. The answer lies in the fact that each of the survivors has added something to whatever genre he has touched and has thus said something different. The others were content to follow the traditions of their period. There is really no such thing as "Contemporary Music", for this implies a style or idiom generally representative of the actual moment, which is absurd because advanced technique and idiom cannot be universal or representative until some time has elapsed and the matter viewed in

retrospect. Every new or novel approach can be seen only in the light of experiment while it is actually being carried out. The composers contemporary with Beethoven viewed him with suspicion because he was *not* "contemporary"; he was in advance of his period—experimental, futurist if you like. The music of every period has a certain norm by which it is recognisable. Experiments may, at their time, cloud the issue, and later wield a certain influence; but there have been many so called "schools" and "movements" which have proved to be sterile. The contemporaries of the great composers were not swamped; they were left behind. Much of their music was admirable and set the contemporary standard; but it ended there and later generations followed the major prophets.

It is not correct to say that anyone has "invented" anything musical at any time, and it is possible to bring the most so-called revolutionary technique into traditional parallel and to find precedent for most things. What is often called "revolutionary" is simply "evolutionary", but it is true that retrospect shows certain evolutionary processes to have produced a revolutionary influence on music. Beethoven's final establishment of the principles of that loosely-termed style "Sonata Form", evolved from Haydn and Mozart, is found to have revolutionised that style because later composers took their starting point from him and not from the tentative moves of the two earlier composers. The Twelve-Note-Row system represents the principles of the eighteenth century theorists in reverse and it is even more uncompromising. Composers have long since thrown over all dogmatic consideration of key-relationship and no longer build their music round any key centre. The negation of tonality, however, is often visual rather than aural and even when there is patently no tonality, it is often only momentarily. The trouble involved in making music purposely non-tonal is immense, and the enharmonic change frequently gives the denial to non-tonality.

The use of successive open perfect fourths and fifths originated in the primitive "organum" of Hucbald (c. 840-930)—"You will see a suave harmony born of this combination" (De harmonica institutione),

The monotony of this principle in due course evolved a system of variety, but it was not until the fifteenth century that consecutive fifths and octaves received "official" veto. Meanwhile composers continued to use them, and the primitive approach may be seen in extracts from the thirteenth century.

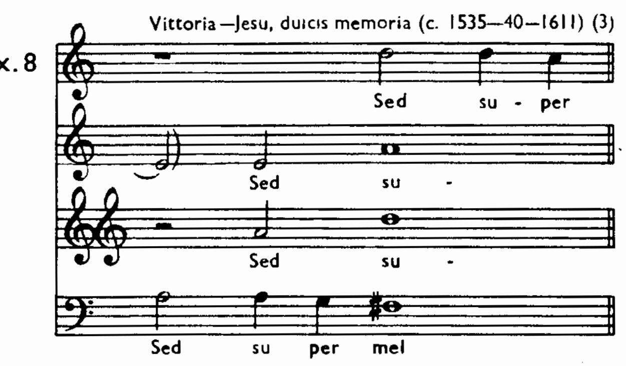


(1) Quoted in "A Study of Modern Harmony" (Lenormand—J. Williams.)
(2) Quoted in "The History of Music in England" (Walker—O.U.P.)

Lower the bottom part of "A" an octave and the twentieth century contact through the Mass in G minor Vaughan-Williams becomes apparent.

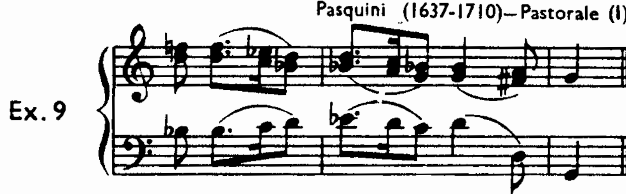
Casual fourths appear from time to time,

casual fifths,



(1) Quoted in "The History of Music in England" (Walker—O.U.P.)
(2) Quoted in "The Evolution of Music" (Casella—Chester)
(3) It is now fashionable to use the original Spanish "VICTORIA but since nearly all library and publishers' catalogues use the Italian, I have done so too, in order to prevent confusion and misunderstanding.

and casual sevenths.



These casual occurrences signify only that the composers did not place great importance on the appearance of the forbidden intervals, but Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) issued an apologia in the preface to his Sonatas, admitting their presence, seemingly lest he might be accused of carelessness—or ignorance.

The chromaticism of "Tannhäuser" and, to a certain extent that of "Tristan", appeared many years earlier in the madrigals of Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa (c. 1566-1615) (2)

(1) Quoted in "The Evolution of Music" (Casella—Chester)

(2) Compare also "Eternal Sleep" motiv in "Die Walkure (Wagner).

and later in Rameau (1683-1764)

The programmatic works of Liszt and Strauss (to mention only two composers) emanated from the "Bible Sonatas" of Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722), the harpsichord pieces of François Couperin (1668-1733) and the more ambitious attempts at descriptive symphony by Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739-1799). The earlier "Battell" by William Byrd (?1543-1623) could have played no direct part in the evolution, but it is separated from "The Battle of Prague" (1788)—composed by Franz Kotzwara (?-1791) and the "Pacific 231" by Arthur Honegger (1892) only in the matter of technique; its quality is, of course, higher than that of the second, but that work is no better and no worse than Beethoven's "Battle of Vittoria" (1) (1813). The evolution lies in the matter of wider formal design and improved instrumental resource.

Polymodality, Polytonality, Polyrhythm and Quarter Tones were practised in Europe long before the days when "Les Six" and Alois Hába (1893) drew attention to them. Antonin Reicha (1770-1836), Professor at the Paris Conservatoire and teacher of Berlioz, Liszt, Franck and Gounod, composed a book of piano sight-reading pieces, written on four staves with the "C" clefs and in the above "-alities". Reicha himself never used Quarter Tones in his many and not inconsiderable compositions, but he advocated their use as being the nearest approach in music to the inflections of the speaking voice. He also wrote a Double Quartet, one body (wind) being in the major and the other (string) in the minor mode. It can be played as one work, or the two bodies may separate and thus play two separate works. I do not suggest that this is a feat which should be imitated by all and sundry, or that it is even a musical achievement—actually, in this case, it *is* one.

Individuality can be found in the works of Sibelius (1865) and although he uses no chords which other and earlier composers have not used, he uses them in a way peculiarly his own. Individuality, however, cannot come all at once, although it may show itself early as in the case of Sibelius.. It developes from earlier technique. That of the earlier Mozart is that of his friend John Christian Bach (1735-1782). If Beethoven had not studied Haydn (he refused to acknowledge himself as Haydn's pupil) he would not have shown such a natural progress along Haydn's own lines. The Variations of Franck and Brahms were the result of the study of the great Variation of Beethoven, and not of the process of text-book reading and writing according to "rule". The devices of Variation to-day are precisely what they have always been, but they have the advantages of advanced scope and technique. The evolution of music is not something which just happens. Each generation studies its predecessors; this is what is meant by the term "founded on tradition" and it is but natural that each should find the preceding one limited in technique.

Exactly what causes Inspiration has never been decided and the reason why a sudden Idea will arise in terms of sound to one person and in design to another will never be satisfactorily explained. (2) Although it is mental and aural, the idea is also visual. The process of composition is not one long uninterrupted outburst. The original Idea has to be thought about, expanded and considerably altered before the work is finished. The true composer is he who can adapt the visual and technical possibilities of his material to his aesthetic feelings without making the listener aware of the processes. In his middle sections he must always realise that the "look" of a phrase is fraught

(1) Should we not refer to this as the "Battle of VICTORIA"? (see Note (3) Page 7)

(2) See "On Inspiration" (Chester)

with suggestiveness and in this way discloses potentialities which mental consideration alone may overlook. At the same time this entails considerable use of the imagination, which in itself is expressive.

Finally, there remains the question of sincerity. This amounts to writing what the heart dictates and the head decides. As I have said, there is nothing "clever" in writing in this or that style, system or idiom. Sincerity is a matter for the individual. It is the hall-mark of the creative artist. Insincerity does not lie, as is so often stated, in the writing of music outside or "beneath" the usual trend of the composer; the composer should be able to provide a required article in a required style, for he is a craftsmen and, indeed, a workman (if he were not, he could not be an artist). Insincerity lies in deliberately adopting some fashionable "-ism" or "-ality" because by so doing the composer may be able to obtain access to places where they talk and indulge in "le dernier cri".

Every artist should have strong convictions which must at the same time be plastic and pliable. He must be open to reason while strenuously maintaining his integrity. There is no easy way to success everywhere. In one place he may be received with acclamation; in another the same work may be hissed loudly and vehemently. However, he must pursue his way regardless of applause or hisses. As Weingartner said, it is not necessary to write a Ninth Symphony. The simplest song if it is written sincerely and from the heart carries as much satisfaction with it. The thirteen perfect songs of Henri Duparc (1848-1933) are just as high a claim to immortality as are a series of large-scale works.

The question always arises as to what extent the basic technique and training affect composition in the true sense of the word. Bluntly speaking, they simply form the directive. The composer hears certain sounds in his head. These sounds must remain nebulous until he learns what they are in terms of actual notes Without the trouble of working out each note of his thought in turn, the collection of sounds automatically presents itself in some association of simultaneous vibrations which his original training has taught him form such and such a chord or progression. Consequently the habit of thinking in terms of conglomeration of notes becomes instinctive. He knows in this way, for example, that a certain progression is in some quantity. His basic training has taught him something about these intervals and their particular treatment according to the laws of progression of musical sounds as propounded in the generation immediately preceding his own. Although there are exceptions to everything, he will have found out what the earlier composers *generally* did. In this manner his inner ear will be fully cultivated. If it is not, he will never be a true composer.

Having grasped the essentials of the basic training, having disciplined his musical mind to work under certain restrictions and along certain channels, he should know exactly what his thoughts are dictating. During the process of composition (which will often be exceedingly slow,) his eye will tell him certain directions and possibilities, for composition will be found to be a continuous expansion of first-thoughts. Large-scale works are never written at one stretch. Mozart always decided what he would write before actually putting it down on paper, but there is little doubt that even he altered his original intentions as he went along. Beethoven made copious notes before finally reaching his polished idea. Mendelssohn (who is generally credited with extreme facility), often found his thoughts in an *impasse*. The only really facile composer who wrote without any difficulty whatsoever was Camille Saint-Saens who, with the aid of the polished clarity of his technique, poured work after work into the same mould. Others claiming credit for facility can well take warning from the fate of this composer. There are signs that certain living composers to-day may well turn out to be the twentieth-century counterpart of Camille Saint-Saens.

The actual moment of inspiration can come from all kinds of sources, but no matter how "inspired" the composer may be, his work will probably be contrived with great travail and will certainly not finish in the way originally conceived. The composer's

head should be as cold as ice. Richard Strauss said that his condition was entirely frigid whenever he composed, and the same situation must have been Wagner's during the composition of "Tristan und Isolde". The fact is that composition entails complete control of the faculties. The heart may be hot and thus the impulse will be strong; but the head must be clear and far-thinking. In composition one thing leads to another and results, like Napoleon's definition of life, in "one damned thing after another". The composer who follows the example of "Little Johnny Head in Air" will soon find himself suffering a similar fate. It is true that he may live in a state of recurring abstraction, but that only means that for the moment he is thinking deeply. Experience has shown that the really great composers do their thinking when by themselves and, like Beethoven, withdraw into solitude. The composer must have temperament, but what is known as "the artistic temperament" is only an excuse for behaving badly. The true artistic temperament is an alternation of being either extremely "up" or extremely "down" in feeling; it has no relation to bad habits, bad temper, dirt or loose-living. The composer basically is a normal person with a kink.

According to the personal dictates of the individual, so will be the particular type or style of composition; but these things sometimes go by contraries. A composer of violent music may be the mildest of men. Albert Roussel is a good example of this. On the other hand, the neat precision of Ravel's personal appearance and habits fully reflects his music. There is no hard or fast rule about it and the individual's true personality is revealed in moments of relaxation rather than in those of travail, when walking casually down Regent Street rather than when walking on to a platform to make a bow. Personalities often attract their opposites, and wildness will react to quiet and serenity. Franck and Chabrier, Roussel and Satie, Dukas and Debussy; these are some instances which spring to mind. Composers with a far-away look too often betray a veneer of pose and insincerity which obtrudes into their music.

The composer to-day has opportunities unheard of at the beginning of the century. The field is almost unlimited and he can adopt any style with which his ideas may come into line; but he may easily fall into a mixture of them. The way he expresses these ideas is his own particular hall-mark, his autograph by which he is known without reference to a programme or catalogue. Even an unpredictable composer like Vaughan Williams, who never says the same thing twice, is recognisable during the first few bars. On the other hand there are composers (who shall be nameless here) who keep the ear in a state of uncertainty as their music progresses. At one time it appears to be by X, at another by Y, and at yet another by Z and finally it turns out to be by none of these. This is not the same thing as being "under the influence of" another composer. Such a state entails more than mere technical imitation. It covers a number of elements outside the ordinary manner of putting down and setting out the notes. However, in his early stages, a composer who ultimately shows complete individuality invariably starts by sub-consciously using the technique and style of any composer who immediately attracts him. Sammartini and Haydn, John Christian Bach and Mozart, Meyerbeer and Wagner are cases in point. All these had their own latent personality; others had none. The former perpetuate the panorama of music; the latter, however admirable their music may have been in its own time, merely stick fast and have nothing to say to succeeding generations.

It is no use forcing anything. The process must be slow and gradual. The composer must evolve. When it is said that a composer has been a "disappointment" it usually means that he has shown signs of individuality which have not developed or become fully manifested. A composer who is said to "show promise" in his early days has evidenced some twist or other which puts him momentarily out of relation with his forbears, no matter how strongly he may be under their technical attraction. Sometimes a complete abolition of pre-concieved and practised habits is necessary, as in the case of Arnold Schoenberg.

To-day there are some composers who feel that they cannot express themselves originally and that their basic technique has got too firm a hold on them. These turn to systems and processes quite different from the technical devices which occur all through everything conceived on a reasonably extended scale. One sees how the former have devised their music; one sees how the latter have contrived theirs, and the two are quite different.

It will be repeated over and over again in this book that there is no merit whatsoever in writing in this or that style, be it new or old. Attention to the "systems" and "processes" must be directed since composition in the early periods is emulation. No one can dictate as to "how" or in what "style" a composer should write. If he does so, the composer is hardly writing down his own thoughts. That is why it is impossible to teach composition or, in plain words, "to teach anyone how to compose". It is assumed that the student has imagination; if he has not, he will never be a composer, which is an additional reason why so many of the older theorists became theorists instead of remaining composers; but this, as has been pointed out, does not necessarily apply to everybody—certainly not to a man like Vincent d'Indy whose didactic work is as monumental and authoritative as his creative.

If a style is to be deliberatly cultivated, it should not be practised in public. Experiment is one thing; gaining experience is another. That is where the "-isms" and "-alities" are dangerous. Music has never been esoteric, but these fashionable techniques have enabled all and sundry to write music and to write about it with but scant reason or knowledge. To-day is the hey-day of the dilettante who thinks he knows a lot about "Art" and pontificates *ex cathedra* from second-hand information. The ideal would be to forbid anyone writing about music who has not made some kind of a success or become reasonably established as a composer or executant. Criticism has passed out of the hands of the early experts, through those of journalists to quasi-music lovers who have a command of language and a requisite skill in repeating other people's opinions in other words. This may be all to the good of music since it evinces a considerable attraction to, and interest in it; but it has become a "business". Taste has taken the place of standard, yet all the "-alities" and "-isms" actually have their own standards. Criticism does not lie entirely in saying whether a thing is right or wrong. "A" may think a certain work or composer fulfils an ideal; "B" may disagree, but this does not make the one any more right or wrong than the other and neither can be said to have made an outrageous statement. The composer is himself a critic, the best kind of critic, because he examines other people's music for the sake of learning and of studying the general progress of music. Vincent d'Indy truly said "that it is of no interest at all to know whether Mr. So-and-So likes or does not like such-and-such dramatic or musical work".(1) The composer criticises constructively for his own benifit and advantage. The opinions of other composers or of authoritative experienced musicians are always of value.

The composer who gradually evolves will acquire permanence sooner than he who suddenly blossoms out and enjoys a "Période de floraison" during his lifetime, contradictory though this may seem. He has all the wealth of Arabia, so to speak, at his finger-tips and his technique will expand as he grows older. His basic technique can be thrown over immediately it has been mastered because he will adapt it to his own needs, and in throwing it over he will sub-consciously absorb others, the various facets of which are suggested in the following pages. That he will be completely iconoclastic or commence his career by instinct is improbable.

(1) "Revue d'art dramatique"—Feb. 5th, 1899

CHAPTER TWO

MODES AND SCALES

Pentatonic Scale—Oriental Scales—Greek Modes—"Ecclesiastical" Modes—Whole-Tone Scale—Microtones—The Twelve-Note-Row—Other Scales.

MODES AND SCALES

In 1828 the French theoretician Dérode wrote an "Introduction à l'étude de l'harmonie" in which he stated that "the scale does not exist. It is only a conventional formula". The significance of this statement lies in its date. The matter of modes and scales has exercised musical minds ever since music became a living expression. It has moved to its present state of major and minor diatonicism through the music of the Orientals, the Greeks, and the so-called Ecclesiastical Modes which have never been the monopoly of any Church nor solely associated with Church music. European music has for so long been written in the major and minor diatonic scales and the duodecuple scale of twelve semitones that composers have come by force of habit to think almost entirely in their terms. Any departure has always struck the ear as artificial and unnatural.

The revival of interest in the old scales is of fairly recent origin. The Gregorian chant was taken for granted until Charles Bordes (1863-1909), Vincent d'Indy and Alexander Guilmant (1837-1911) founded Les Chanteurs de St Gervais and the Schola Cantorum in Paris for the primary purpose of studying it. As a student, Maurice Emmanuel (1862-1938) the eminent French musicologist, showed the ancient Greek modes to his professor, Théodore Dubois (1837-1924) who told him either to leave them alone or leave the Conservatoire. The progress was at first slow, but composers gradually became aware that in the old primitive music there was material at their disposal which had considerable potentiality, and the outlook on the scale became enlarged.

Among the earliest scales which have survived is the Chinese one of five notes called the

PENTATONIC SCALE

It can appear at differing pitches, but the intervals must always be the same—it will be noticed that there is the "gap" of a third and that there are no semitones.

It is frequently to be found in music to-day and when used by modern composers, is exploited for a special reason.

Here are three different aspects of it, the first piquant, the second distinctly modal in flavour and third giving a quasi-ecclesiastical bell-tone effect.

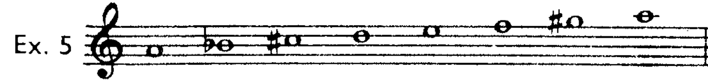
Transposed on to the "black notes" of the piano Ravel uses it happily in "Laideronnette, Impératrice des Pagodes" from the suite "Ma Mere de l'Oye".

Brought down to an elementary and barbaric level, the average schoolboy from time immemorial has enjoyed himself with his fists, thus:—

Its limitations make it essentially an "atmospheric" scale.

ORIENTAL SCALES

Most of these are impracticable in European music. The Hindus, for example, divided their octave into twenty-two "srouties", employing an interval rather wider than a quarter tone. However, Louis Bourgault-Ducoudray (1840-1910) in his "Mélodies populaires de la Gréce et de l'Orient" lays out a useful and interesting Oriental chromatic scale.



This, of course, is quite practicable to-day, but the Augmented Second has become too much associated with a Wardour Street type of Orientalism.

Nevertheless, the Hindu system offers certain possibilities. Here are a few within the tetrachord C—F.

Roussel used this system in his opera "Padmâvati" where one finds melodies conceived in these terms:

However, the use can never be complete and the composer should beware of putting out, under the guise of authenticity, something which is artificially contrived. (1)

GREEK MODES

Here the composer is on safer ground—but let it be stated at once that they are Modes and not Keys. The latter sound the same at any pitch; the former rely on the situation of the semitones and tones and are distinguishable by the acute ear. However, provided that the semitones come between the right degrees, the modes may be freely transposed.

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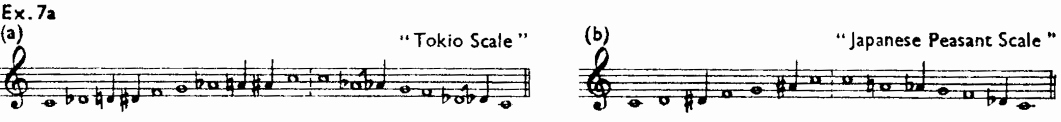
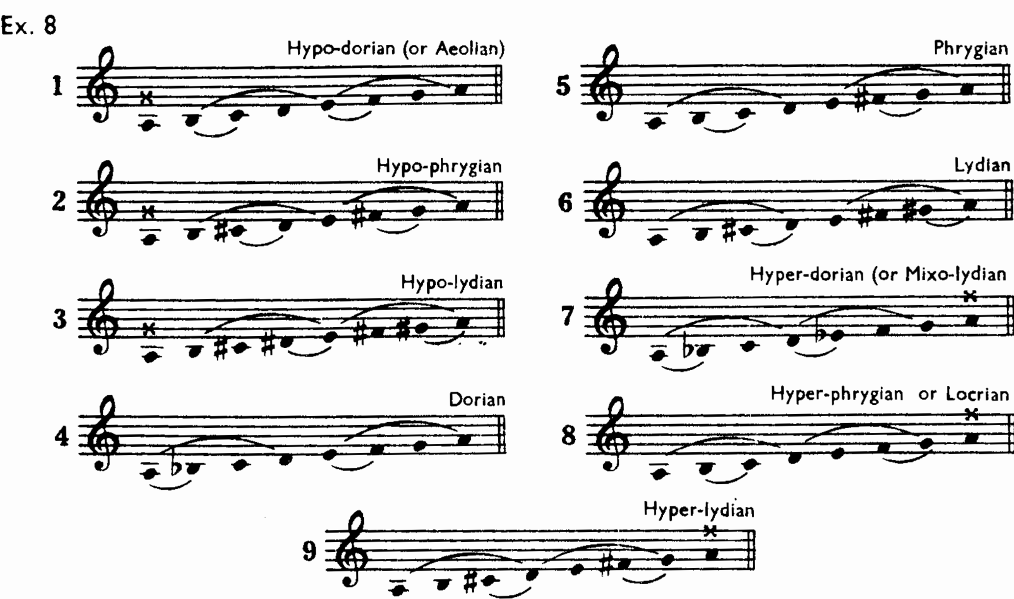
(1) At this point it will not be out of place to quote two Japanese scales and leave it to the reader to decide if they are translatable in terms of European music.



The sign ♭ means that the scale descends only a quarter-tone at these points (see Page 22 "Microtones") In "Music Survey" Vol. 2, No. 3-inter, 1950, Mr. Richard Arnell puts forward the interesting suggestion that "chromatic major" and "chromatic minor" might answer an otherwise vague nomenclature. Exactly how the scales under consideration at the moment could be so described shows the impossibility of this application becoming general with any degree of reliability. Coming, however, from a composer, this suggestion is worth consideration by theorists.

In the Greek modes the tetrachords sometimes overlap. When the lowest note is added to make the octave complete, the mode is described as "Hypo-" and when the higher, "Hyper-" These modes are nine in number, the added note being indicated thus x.

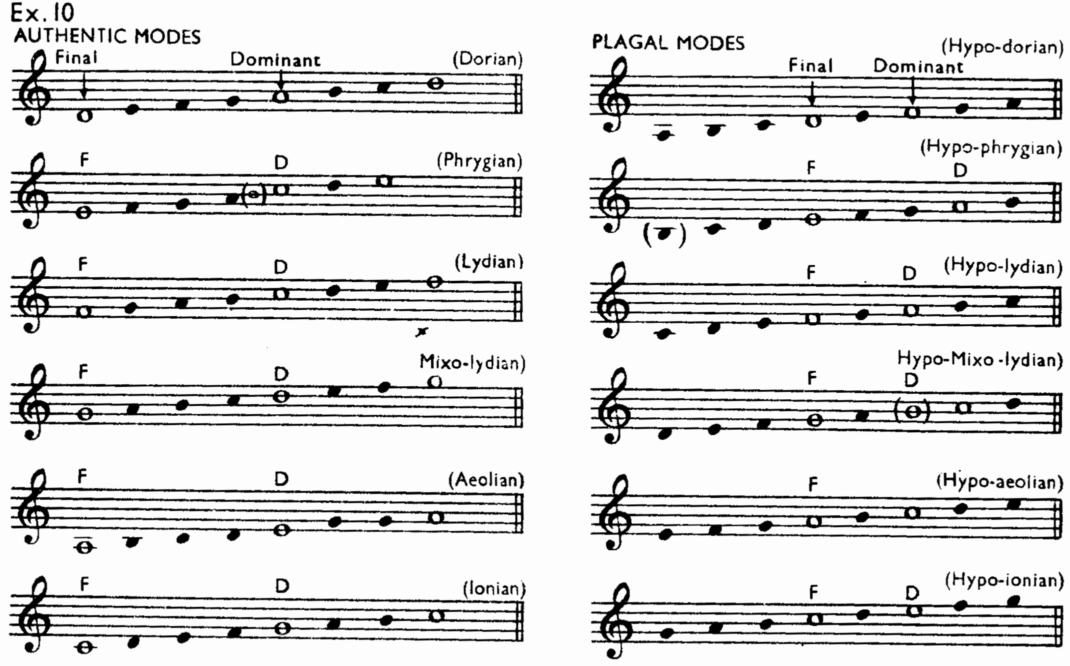


The composer must be careful to adhere to the notes of the mode he is using and must on no account harmonise a modal melody chromatically. To do so would be the equivalent of accompanying a Schubert melody with Debussyan chords.

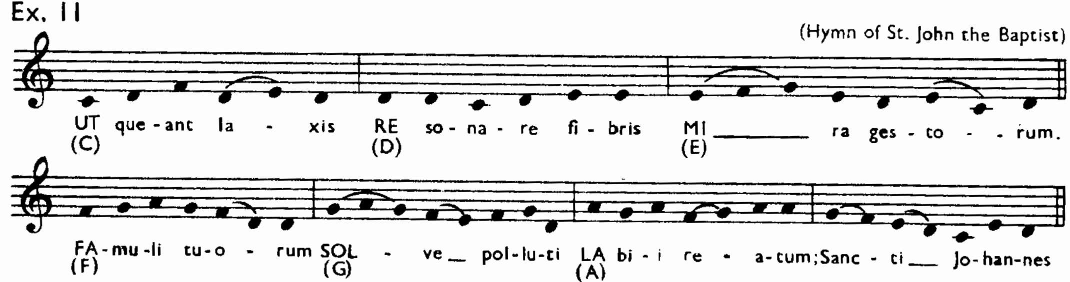
A consistent use of the modes suggests an artificial archaicism which tends to become "precious"; but with a mythological Greek subject, it fits perfectly into the picture.

ECCLESIASTICAL MODES

As I have said, this description has grown from habit and association. The Ambrosian modes, four in number, are the equivalent of playing an octave of white notes on the piano, commencing on D, E, F, or G. Later Pope Gregory added four more, and, later still, Henricus Glareanus (1488-1563) in his "Dodecachordon" (1547) advocated yet another four. The Twelve Modes in use are divided into two categories, Authentic and Plagal.



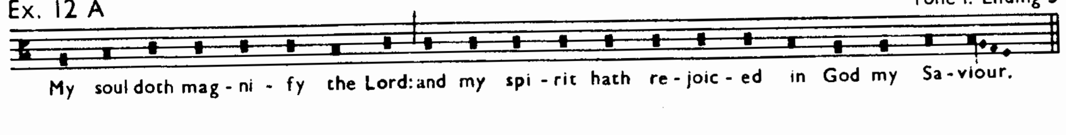
The application of letter-names to the notes of the scale is ascribed to Guido d'Arezzo (0995-1050) who chose the first letters of the first syllable of each line of the Hymn "Ut queant laxis" (the Hymn of St. John the Baptist) as forming a useful method of nomenclature as well as being a convenient way of deciding the pitch of each note.



It was not until the sixteenth century that the seventh degree was added from "Sancte Iohannes"—SI = B.

As in the case of the Greek modes, the composer must keep to that in which he is writing.

Music written in these Modes is known as "Plainsong" or certain Tones with varied endings which are applied to the Psalms and Canticles. Two examples can be seen below.



The monotony created by the repetition of this limited range and centralisation of notes produces a soporific effect on the listener. He is numbed by the sheer evenness of the music. It is, of course, within the scope of all, but it is placed too regularly in the middle part of the voice to encourage really hearty congregational singing.

Elsewhere, in the Offices, Hymns, Motets, etc., the Ecclesiastical Modes are remarkably faithful to the inflections of the speaking voice. Guido d'Arezzo in his "Micrologue". Chapter XV entitled "De commoda compenda modulatione" directs in Paragraph 12 that the purpose of the melody should be to underline the spirit of the text and the situations it sets up. Serious situations should be expressed by serious progressions, quiet situations by pleasant progressions, and happy, by joyful ones. The original Latin text is quoted here to confirm this rather free translation.

"12. Item ut rerum eventus sic cantionis imitetur effectus, ut in tristibus rebus graves sint neumae, in tranquillis rebus jucundae, in prosperis exsultantes, et rel." (1)

This, surely, is one of the earliest instances of the necessity for expression being dogmatically laid-down.

The music may be perfectly straight-forward—

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(1) Quoted in "Cours de Composition musicale" Vol. I. Vincent d'Indy—(Durand.)

(2) Quoted in "Histoire de la Musique" (Belgodere—Johannes) Laurens. I have used modern notation for the sake of clarity.

or elaborate—

Ex. 14 is a variation of Ex. 13.

Melodically, therefore, these Modes have their own characteristics. Composers within recent times have written music in the Modes which does not attempt to imitate any simple or decorated Plainsong principle, but simply confines itself to the modes in question. Of these, Charles Wood (1866-1926) has a notable example in a Communion Service. (2)

Merbecke (c. 1585) is a name which immediately comes to mind in connection with simplified Gregorian Chant, for it was in his "Boke of Common Praier Noted" that he laid down a standard for English Church music by the use of one note per syllable; this followed the enquiry of the Council of Trent into the question of elaboration, an enquiry answered by Palestrina (?1525-1594) who showed that the Mass Music could be decorated and still remain devotional.

The Gregorian Monody, therefore, controlled musical thought for many generations. Meanwhile Folk Song had progressed along the modal path. This idiom is recognisable anywhere. In simple language, the tunes revolve round a central note, the cadences always being a whole-tone and not a semi-tone; thus it is very easy to copy, and modern music written with these strictures is described as having a "Folk Song flavour".

It is not true to say that all Madrigals are written in some Mode or other, for the freedom which will be described in Chapter VI led to the adoption of the diatonic scales. Church music, however, remained limited in this degree for many years.

WHOLE - TONE SCALE

This scale is found on two planes

An early example of a partial use of this scale can be seen in the fugue subject from a "Largo and Fugue" for organ by William Russell (1777-1813), organist at the Foundling Hospital, London, and a composer of much Church music. This is quite outstanding for the period and aroused considerable interest when it was brought to light in 1912.

(1) Quoted in "Histoire de la Musique" (Belgodere—Johannes) Laurens.

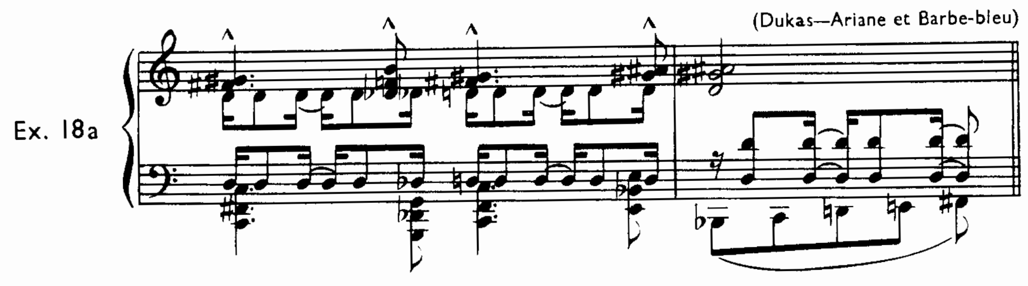
(2) This finds its authority in Tallis' setting of the complete Canticles in the Dorian Mode, a notable example of harmonic squareness.

The music does not continue in this whole tone style and therefore its scalic progression does not constitute any authority or precedent.

The vagueness of the Whole-Tone Scale makes it admirable for "Impressionism" (1). Melodic lines have a jagged edge, however, and require to be helped by the underlying harmonies since the augmented fifth removes all feeling of a dominant and the melodic progression is not smooth. Debussy contrived some of his loveliest music with it, but it is not correct to say that he used it exclusively as is sometimes loosely stated. He merely used it as occasion demanded when he wanted a vague and "impressionistic" effect. A combined harmonic and melodic use of it can be seen in—

but Debussy found that it was a dead-end and could not be used indefinitely. Certain elements of it, however, are of value and appear in unexpected composers, where aesthetic is far removed from the impressionistic ideal.

The most important of these elements is the Augmented triad which gives a foward "lift" to the music, since the aural effect of the interval tends to rise.



The first illustrates also the beautifully warm colour which this scale can suggest. The second superimposes a whole-tone element on to a tonal and classical thought, the raised fifth preventing undue solidity of entity.

(1) See Page 70

At a climax the interval has a shattering effect (piano reduction is quite inadequate in this respect).

Notation often offers a difficulty, but the enharmonic change can always be brought into use since to assume a tonal notation is pure affectation—for that matter, convenience of notation should always be considered, even in tonal music.

MICROTONES

The use of these in European music was, as I have said, first advocated by Reicha. Recently they have been used by another Czech composer, Alois Hába who has extended his researches to several sub-divisions of the semitone and has so trained his ear that he can accurately sing five divisions of the semitone.

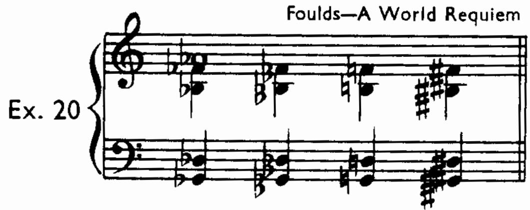
It is possible, therefore, for others to do the same. Hába requires quarter-tone wind instruments, so that a considerable outlay is called for when one of these works is performed.

Broadly speaking and with no attempt at deprecation or humour, the effect at the moment is one of bad intonation—many years ago Harold Bauer (the Pianist) found it necessary to explain that the strings were not playing out of tune in the Ernest Bloch Piano Quintet, but were playing in quarter- tones. The trouble is that unless the work is written entirely in the microtonal system, that particular section sounds completely out of the picture. The microtonal picture, however, is not yet a pleasant one. At the Paris Festival of Contemporary Music in 1937 Hába gave an entire concert of music in quarter-and sixth-tones. The effect of this was depressing to a degree and more than one listener fled the hall in a state of complete misery before the concert ended.

This does not condemn the system in any way because it was simply an individual reaction to what appeared to be a concert of music played consistently out of tune. It was observed, however, that the singer appeared to be in no state of discomfort and that the intonation offered no difficulties; but I do not know how long she had taken to become accustomed to it. It certainly did correspond very nearly to the inflexions of declamation and was more determinative in musical line than Schoenberg's "sprechgesang" as used in "Pierrot Lunaire".

Semitonal music is sugary enough in its natural state.

The reader must imagine how very much more so is the following passage in Quarter Tones.



The symbols will be noted.

Ex. 21

That the use of microtonal technique will become general is unlikely for some while, but it cannot simply be written off. Unless there is experiment, nothing can ever proceed along the normal course of evolution, and although microtones are of antique origin, their use forms one of the few techniques which sound really novel. The ear can become accustomed to most things in time, but this process will probably take longer than anything else.

THE TWELVE-NOTE-ROW

This amounts to regarding none of the twelve semitones as being either the tonic or dominant of any scale or key and, therefore, being entirely key-less. The principle was devised by Arnold Schoenberg for his own use. He himself has never regarded it as a "system" but calls it a "manner" of using the twelve semitones; it is the disciples who have systematised it and made it something personal to themselves, thus drawing further and further away from its originator and contriver. Schoenberg practised it for some while before it became his natural way of expression. One result has been that his thought is completely abstract in approach; nevertheless there is a strong feeling of subjective romanticism in the aesthetic resulting from the music itself and not from any deliberate design. Schoenberg never intended that it should be copied and has never taught it to his pupils. Indeed, anyone bringing him an exercise or composition written in the manner is severely reprimanded. (1) This does not altogether square with the several composers who call themselves "Pupils of Schoenberg" and write in their own systematised version of his manner. He maintains that it is not a starting-point since it took him twenty years to reach it.

The manner actually widens tonality instead of disposing of it. Of the disciples who do not hold with this view, the leader is Ernst Krenek (1900) who, in his book "Studies in Counterpoint", completly denudes music of any hint at subjectivism and rigidly forbids all suggestions of key and tonality. In France Olivier Messiaen (1908) has his own "system" which is not unsuccessful because it is not based upon a negation; his music is full of romantic feeling although differently impelled. The romanticism of Schoenberg, lying as it does in the normal progression and combinations of tones, avoids the heaviness of the German variety, for which purpose it was devised. The disciples, therefore, are more rigid in their approach than ever was their master.

The manner consists of choosing twelve notes to constitute the entire material of the work. There is more than one method of dealing with this, and although there is a certain amount of elasticity in two of them, the discipline is so strict that the early theorists appear almost merciful by comparison.

1. The order of the notes must on no account be altered, although the pitch can be as varied as as may be necessary. Once a transposition has been initiated, the whole Note-Row must be expended before another begins. The "row" can be inverted, retrogressed (*i.e.* played backwards) and then inverted in that form. There must be no repetition.

2. The order of the notes may be varied but there must be no repetition save by leap of an octave or more.

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(1) "Schoenberg in America" 1933-1948 (Dika Newlin)—Music Survey—Vol. I. No. 5.

3. If there is a chord in the bass consisting of, say the first to the fifth notes in the row, the treble must commence with the sixth and no matter in what direction the two parts may go, the next to move must be the seventh which, of course, may be played with the eighth, etc., and the Note Row completed in the simultaneous parts, no note appearing twice.

Only the second principle, therefore, allows much freedom of movement, but this is only an alleged freedom because the music is restricted to the row. It need hardly be said that unessential notes are absolutely taboo. The restriction to the notes of the row is really no different from the method of writing in the modes, but in the Twelve-Note-Row manner no heed need be taken of the vertical aspect of the matter. Here Krenek separates himself from Schoenberg and lacerates himself with scorpions because he forbids any old-fashioned consonance anywhere. Schoenberg does not object to incidental tonal moments since he is concerned with widening tonality, not with abolishing it.

There is a tendency to lay too great importance on the mere process which, in itself, is a denial of the principle that process should be simply the means to an end. The actual approach to composition of the Twelve-Toners is as old as the hills and they live dangerously near the academic professors whom they affect to despise. Talk about "out of date formulas" is nonsense because no music has ever been composed to any formula; such a process would result in mere constructivism of the type of the early Netherlandic canon writers. Krenek is emphatic that the process must not be obvious to the listener—but, once more, this has always been the case and the process has come to light only after careful examination in the study on the part of the student.

One can take a Tone-(or Note) Row such as this:

Ex. 22

and treat it rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically, having decided in advance which of the three processess will be observed. The quality of the intervals in inversion must be maintained and there can be no combination of pitches—in tonal language one would say that there cannot be two or more simultaneous keys. The composer can use what optical ingenuity he is possessed of, and it will be seen that only a little thought is required for the composition of a complete work. Use of the Note-Row as a scale with no restrictions is a different matter and is open to no objection.

Sometimes the Note-Row is of such a quality that it forbids canon or inversion; the following is an inversion of and in itself —

Webern : Symphony Op. 21

Ex. 23

This leaves only rhythm and tessitura, the latter offering contrast and variety of timbres; indeed, it is this concern for the placing of the timbres which pre-occupied Webern and placed him as the only really original composer of the century. The aesthetic effect of his beautiful sounds is directly opposed to the imitational Twelve-Noter who eschews "lovely tone" (as the late Sir Henry Wood used to say in another connection) like the plague, regarding it as mere sensuousness and therefore socially insignificant, romantically subjective, and completely demodé.

Systematic composition has always been referred to as "mannered", meaning that the composer is over-concerned with style and method. It is full of danger. In the case of the Twelve-Note-Row the composer need not have to hear what he is writing. As long as he obeys the rules of his system everything must be "right" and the only point which

can make it "wrong" is the breaking of a new rule. This is not very far from the tenets of the text books. It would appear that "anyone can do it". Its use precludes the use of all the imaginative qualities hitherto regarded as part of the very stuff of musical composition. It can rightly be regarded as twentieth-century academicism with all the strictures which the nineteenth century pedants imposed upon their contemporary technique. The manner of using the chosen series of notes is entirely cerebral, and the whole thing, therefore, is a short cut to composition at the hands of the imitators. However, in this, as in other techniques, one awaits the revelation which will be manifest in a feeling of complete spontaneity. Apart from Schoenberg and his two disciples this has not yet appeared, but one must refer the student to the symphonies of Krenek which are models of systematic continuity and to those of the Dutchman, Henk Badings (1907). Both represent the acme of musical austerity.

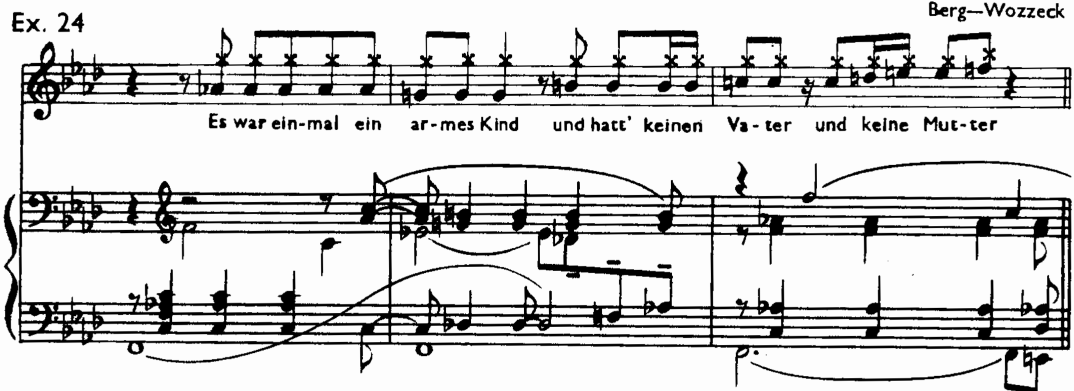
It may be argued with some justification that since Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Webern and Krenek, (in spite of his still severer strictures) are successful in it, there can be nothing seriously amiss with anyone else using it. There are some who do not consider that either Schoenberg or Krenek are particularly successful since their music is not always aesthetically satisfying, whereas that of Berg has an intensity of feeling which admirably combines abstract technique with subjective expression; this is apparent not only in works like "Wozzeck" and "Lulu" but in the Violin Concerto and in the Lyric Suite. It is worth mentioning that Berg's Op. 1. (the Piano Sonata) originally sounded like ordinary Germanic romanticism. Berg edited it, making it sound like Scriabin. The lesson of this is that music cannot be gingered-up from one technique to another without completely altering its first state, in which case a completely new work must result, bearing relation to the original only as regards theme and form.

Systematic composition has brought about a reorientation of values, since in certain quarters its use has become a virtue in itself, regardless of results. It will be noted that this is the first technique in which it is possible to show the reader "how to compose".

On the credit side, one is struck with the lucidity of this music when it moves slowly. When it is fast there is not so much the jumble of sound found in the traditional polyphony of a composer like Max Reger as too great a quantity of important thematic material to listen to and absorb all at once. Sir Henry Wood likened Schoenberg's manner to a sudden cascade of water clearing away the debris in a drain or gutter, the imposition of Schoenberg clarity upon an ever-thickening polyphonic and harmonic texture removing all the turgidity which was crowding up music. The greater the number of notes, the greater the music and the greater skill of the composer—all tended to a swollen grandiloquence which was rapidly becoming mere musical rant. True, the present day discipleship of the Twelve-Note-Row rants because it is held up as the final word and the only possible way out of the morass of thinking which abounds; but this morass is not muddled since it is indicative of an ever-increasing desire to solve problems along the natural evolutionary lines of tradition. Iconoclasm never solved anything and pure mathematics will never formulate any art-form. The abstract designs of Kandinsky (who finds his art closely related to music) are fascinating in their clarity, but they are, after all, but designs. They clear up the confusion so often experienced with some of the Surrealists, but they do nothing more. Schoenberg has cleared up musical confusion in the same way and he himself goes further; his disciples however, stick fast in the mire into which they have inadvisedly stepped.

It was Alban Berg who indicated the way out of the *impasse* and it is naturally pure conjecture which suggests in his few but great works the evidence that he himself could probably have gone no further. Berg was complex, but not complicated. His use of the Note-Row was not consistent. A passage such as the following from "Wozzeck" is quite out of the picture of much that has preceded it; yet there is no feeling of incongruity because it is preceded by a nebulous quiet passage whose lines are accordingly vague and uncertain. Further, he goes from one "-ality" to another, and not from one "ism" to another such style. There is not sufficient space to quote the whole passage,

but the first few bars will give a clear idea of how Berg turns to ordinary tonality in order to afford some relief. He thus clears the air with tonal music which has no relation to any Note-Row itself or the Note-Row manner. In this way also he show perfect genius for contrast.



Much Note-Row music lacks variety, although the initiated disclaim this. It is quite possible and feasible to have a tonal note-row, and the number "twelve" has no esoteric or caballistic musical necessity since it simply corresponds to the twelve semitones. A Note-Row can be describable by whatever number of notes it contains. (1)

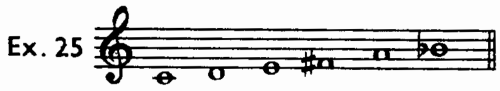
The Twelve-Note-Row, or any Note-Row must not be confused with the "Motto" theme upon which so much symphonic music is contrived. The Row is a *scale* and nothing else.

OTHER SCALES

The possibilities seem practically inexhaustible and the composer can use his imagination or scientific knowledge at will, but he must always *think naturally* in whatever scale he uses. It has already been pointed out how Roussel ripened his technique by thinking consistently in a certain style when writing his Hindu opera-ballet "Padmâvati"; this of course, was the case with Schoenberg, save that the former found himself faced with a practical problem while the latter disciplined himself to a new way of thinking.

Some of the scales used by various composers can be seen below. They can be used at any pitch and it is a question of arranging the semitones in relation to the whole-tones which will at any moment determine the scale-system. There is no tonic or dominant and, therefore, they cannot be quoted with any descriptive letter as can the ordinary major and minor scales, or by any name as in the case of the older Modes. They are in some ways similar to the Twelve-Note-Row insomuch as in some cases they can be used chordally in their entirety.

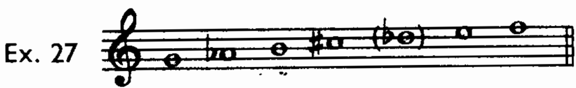
There is, however, no "process" in their usage. Some composers allow appoggiaturas; others adhere strictly to the notes of the scale, but do not restrict themselves by any law of order or repetition at higher or lower pitch. Enharmonic changes, too, are occasionally allowable.



(1) I do not know if the copyright of the Note-Row is included in that of the work.

Scriabin uses this scale, Ex. 25, by spacing it out into a chord which is built upon a system of superimposed fourths of varying quality. (Appoggiaturas marked + ; Passing Notes o.)

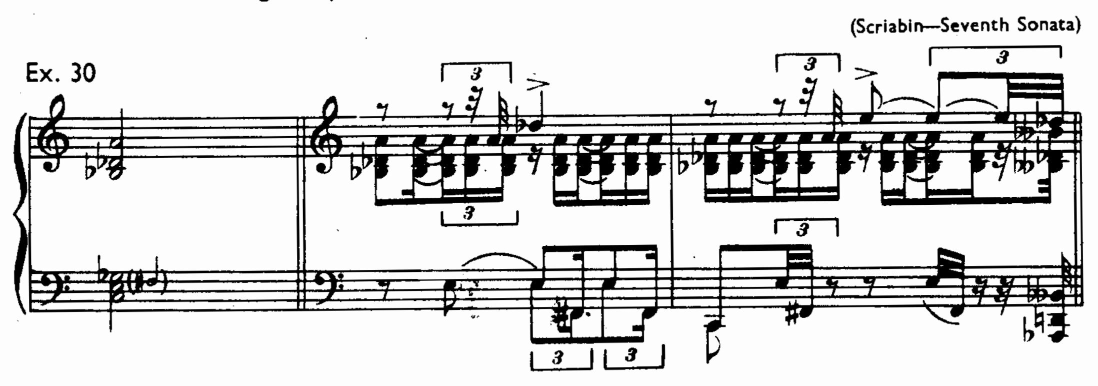
The next allows the enharmonic change of C sharp to D flat.



The B flat in its practical application is an appoggiatura in the first place and a passing note in the second.

A similar enharmonic change of F sharp to G flat occurs in the next.

Observe the change of pitch in the last chord.



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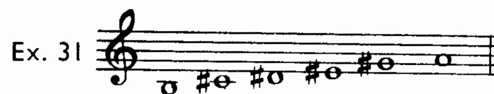
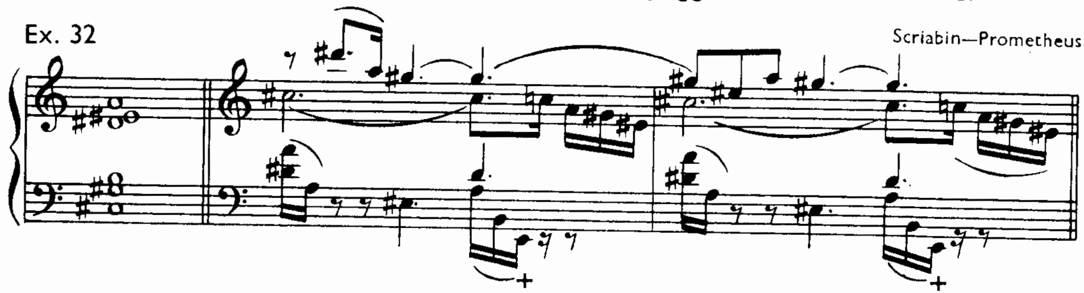
Similar processes are found in



and in practice Scriabin introduces an unresolved appoggiatura in the left hand.



No other composer has experimented so successfully with devised and derived scales as has Scriabin. The heavy romanticism of his music is caused by the inclusion of the augmented fifth and its inversion which tends to the harmonic and melodic use of the diminished seventh.

In "Mercury, the Winged Messenger" from "The Planets" Holst uses an interesting key signature, the flats applying to the first Violins and Violas, and the sharps to the second Harp, second Violins and Cellos, the other instruments using accidentals

The Dutch composer Willem Pijper (1894-1947) eventually came to the following scale, which appears to have been engendered by two chords of the diminished seventh. (1)

Ex. 34 (A) (B)

The following scale

Ex. 35

is used with no consideration for appoggiaturas or passing notes (for the convenience of the singer the E flat is enharmonically changed to D sharp, otherwise the notation remains unaltered).

(1) "William Pijper" by Karl Mengelberg ("Music of Today" —Dennis Dobson)

Ex. 36 (Demuth—Medée)

Sop. 1 (Ah) Ah Ah Ah
Sop. 2 (Ah) Ah Ah
Flute Clarinet
Harp

The point is sometimes raised as to how a composer brought up along the traditional diatonic paths can instinctively think in terms of derived or devised scale. The answer can be found in his application to exercise, but the student composer must be careful to keep his transitional period entirely to himself until he can manage the new technique with the ease that he formerly managed that which he has left behind. Few composers young in experience fully appreciate this; but realisation comes later.

I have said that such possibilities seem practically inexhaustible. Busoni describes a hundred different scales in his study of the subject, and with this stimulating thought the matter can be left to the composer himself.

NOTES

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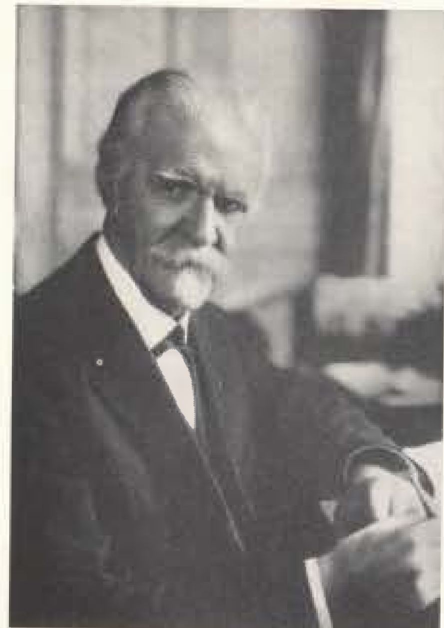


Henri Manuel

VINCENT D'INDY
(1851-1931)
Schola Cantorum

G. I. Manuel

GABRIEL FAURÉ
(1845-1924)
Le Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation, Paris

Elliott & Fry

FREDERICK CORDER
(1852-1932)
Royal Academy of Music, London

Herbert Lambert, Bath

SIR CHARLES STANFORD
(1852-1924)
Royal College of Music, London

CHAPTER THREE

Rhythm—Melodic Progression—Phrase Lenghts—

Time Signatures

RHYTHM

Rhythm is found in the ground pattern of melodic lines and in the structure of phrases. It lies in the constituent flow of the melody but may be superimposed arbitrarily on to the music itself; the melody, when it is what is known as a "subject", may itself consist of a rhythmic figure such as will be often found in Mozart and early Beethoven. It will be seen, therefore, that it is possible to have rhythm without any music (*i.e.* melody,) but the reverse is not possible if the music is to have any life. This may be seen in the four-square hymn tune which plods its way along stolidly with no variant of any kind, and is frequently a complete note-against-note process. Rhythm by itself is the most primitive form of expression. Its very insistence can rouse up intense passions which themselves are engendered by sheer nervous monotony. Civilised rhythm, however, eschews this monotony and regards it as a weakness unless intended for some temporary effect. The essential formative of music is variety in all respects, but this variety must be perfectly balanced.

MELODIC RHYTHM

Civilised rhythm may be said to have commenced with the Ancient Greeks who divided what we should call the long beat into two short ones, this being the equivalent of our ♩=♪♪. They assembled these into certain "feet", as follows:

Iambic	U —
Trochee	— U
Tribachis	U U U
Dactyl	— U U
Spondee	— —
Anapaest	U U —
Ionic	— — U U

These in turn were assembled into phrases or "colons" ("Kola".) Two "colons" made one phrase; a group of phrases, a period, and the whole set, as it were, formed a strophee. It will not take long to apply these "feet" to well-known themes, but music will not very often be made up of a regular measurement, in this way. European music has naturally far exceeded the bounds of Greek scansion, and the application of musical hexameters and pentameters, etc., plays little, if any, conscious part in the formation of a composer's thought, although his metres, that is to say his phrase-lengths, are as important with regard to balance as those of the poet.

The "feet" can be applied to quite a number of familiar themes. The most useful is the Dactyl which gives a forward thrust to the movement, while the least so is the Anapaest. Consider Brahms' Rhapsody in E flat, Op. 119, No. 4. As it stands, the first phrase consists of three Dactyls one Anapaest, and one Spondee.

This has all the drive and impulse which music requires and the dactylic measures force it onwards. Read it as an Anapaest.

There is no impulse whatsoever here. Each measure comes to a halt on the weak beat and no feeling of climax can be felt. On the other hand, Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) wrote a quaint organ piece which he called "Anapaest", and by placing the long note on the strong beat contrived to form a continuous movement which is thoroughly satisfactory.

The Anapaest, therefore, can only be really satisfactory for any length of time by using it anacrusically, this throwing the music strongly on to the first beat of the following bar. It is, however, so emphatic that it commands attention by its incisiveness. A well-known example of this is in the last movement of Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, the short notes having a remarkable snap about them.

It is best to use this rhythm incidentally and for but a short while.

The Tribachis appears all through compound time, as Mendelssohn and Sullivan amply showed. Its regularity makes it useful accompanimentally as well as melodically; this may give the music forward motion, but it soon becomes monotonous.

The Iambic and Trochee often overlap; the former is essentially anacrusic, while the Ionic can make pleasing ingenuity at the hands of a skilful composer who sees fit to combine it in its accents with other feet.

The Spondee is the strongest of all, but, like the Anapaest, cannot be used at length.

The alternation of two different feet is seen at its best in the Allegretto from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.

The composer, therefore, finds himself faced with the Dactyl as the most promising rhythm and in Dr. Charles Burney's words " there are unaccountable millions of them " (1). It is the only one which gives the requisite forward impulse to music thus making continuity and enabling the composer to take undue emphasis off the first beat of the bar. The tyranny of the barline tends to this stress since it places the accents on the same pulse throughout the movement. There is too much emphasis placed upon the "down-beat" which marks the beginning of each measure. It will be seen later that coupled with smooth melodic progression, the Dactyl maintains an easy flow from bar to bar, whether the melody is actually dactylic throughout or not; the progress over the bar-line by means of short notes prevents any suggestion of breaking up the phrase or interupting the movement.

Rhythm, however, must never be fidgety. It must not be varied for variety's sake and although contrast is necessary, it can easily be overdone. In their anxiety for movement

(1) History of Music" (1776)

composers often lose sight of the value of the long-held note. This gives poise. It is more frequently applicable to vocal than to instrumental music, of course, but an examination of the "Donna Anna" theme from Strauss' "Don Juan" will fully illustrate the wonderful hovering effect which a single note can delineate when held over quietly moving under-parts. (1). With vocal music the rhythm is naturally dictated by the syllables, and this can be determined by reading the lines aloud, slowly, noting the accents and noting also the patterned shape of the short syllables. This was advocated by Stanford and it never fails. A splendid example of the value of this rhythm-seeking lies in Sullivan's "Were I thy bride" from "The Yeoman of the Guard" where the ultimate result can be seen to have sprung from a multitude of sterile attempts. (2). The same opera illustrates the extreme simplicity of letting the words "say" themselves, in "I have a song to sing, Oh". This was achieved only after many weeks of anxious deliberation; Sullivan simply could not get a suitable idea until, with Gilbert's help (a help that was strangely lacking in musical feeling), he suddenly found that the obvious way to set the words was to allow them to *speak* themselves; till then he had thought in terms of the Aria. The rhythm of a text, therefore, decides itself and when there are doubts, the only solution is that obvious one which takes so long in enforcing itself because it *is* so obvious.

Melodic elaboration leads to rhythmic complication. The Baroque composers, who decorated their accents with so much arabeske, were wise enough to realise that this decoration was all-sufficing, and, therefore, they usually placed it in one part only, sometimes in two, duet fashion—but rarely, if ever, in more. Rhythm, however, remains the very backbone of music. Apart from the four-square chorale and hymn-tune, few composers have managed to convince without it. One of the few examples of this is the big tune in the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which, coming to fruition after great labour, impels itself by its very regularity, its simplicity making itself admirable for variation.

MELODIC PROGRESSION

The basic training places the weight on vocal technique, it being considered the medium which requires the strictest limitations and restraint to keep it within the bounds of practicability. Unfortunately not sufficient dividing line is drawn between it and instrumental technique, and the fact that vocal necessities are not necessarily at one with instrumental is not always indicated. The student finds that when his text-book calls for an instrumental exercise, he still has to apply vocal principles to the technique. Too many of these alleged instrumental exercises are thought in themselves upon vocal lines. They have little actual relation to string music and no composer worth his salt would consider writing them as part of a genuine composition. This is an inheritance from the early part of the century and gives the answer to the question as to why so many admirable choral works have such dull orchestral accompaniments. The wonderful choral writing in Parry's "At a Solemn Music" and "De Profundis" stands out as a model for all time. Parry, however, thought chorally when he wrote the instrumental "ritornelli" and if there was an instrumental streak in his mind, it applied itself to the organ more than to the orchestra. Orchestral players feel as if they are dragging a heavily-laden cart when they play music of the type of the introduction to the former work, for example, and the finer points of orchestral imitation are completely lost upon them.

It is useless to hold up Bach's harmonisation of chorales as examples when the student can see of his own accord that the great man perpetrated infractions of what the student has been lead to regard as infringeable rules. The text-book, having laid down the principles, should be used in conjunction with the finished article; but it is difficult to

(1) Page 40

(2) See "Sir Arthur Sullivan".—Lawrence—(Bowden)

convince flaming youth. The language of the text books may be "dead", as the late Professor C. H. Kitson said, (1) but nothing authoritative has as yet taken its place, and will not do so until the writing of such things becomes the job of the composer.

Yet a certain amount of enlightenment came from the late Dr. C. W. Pearce who tried to find a dividing line between precept and creation by writing books on *Student's* and *Composer's* Harmony and Counterpoint. The much reviled Ebenezer Prout in his text-books attempted to illustrate his points by quotation from established composers; but he was not so sure about the exceptions and naturally chose those which conformed with his point of view. The basic study has not yet been brought into full relation with music, and if the practices of Bach and Handel were carried into the Examination Room, there would be the devil to pay.

A complete revision of the text book principles seems indicated and in respect of melodic progression, a clear dividing line must be made between vocal and instrumental technique. This is not difficult; it simply means that students will have to think in two ways. The division between the class room and the concert room needs narrowing still more, even though considerable strides have been made in the last twenty years. Many teachers have been frustrated by this gap. César Franck used to say over and over again "They would not let you do that at the Conservatoire, but I like it". This is being echoed to-day; but something more is needed than the protests of individuals.

Nevertheless, the customs of melodic progression in their several applications are perfectly logical and practical within their own limitations. This not being a History of Music but only an attempt to suggest to the modern composer how he can apply the established traditions to his own modernity, he should consider melody first in its primitive state, then its ecclesiastical arabeske; from there, the decorations and ornamentations of J. S. Bach comparing them with the later melodic framework of Haydn, observing how Mozart in so many cases tried to combine the two, and seeing how Beethoven held up the decay of melodic rhapsody in his later Quartets and other works, loosening the general stilted squareness of rhythm. Proceeding to Schumann, notice that it then flowed along two parallel courses, that of the symphonic constructivist principle and that of the pure lyricism culminating in Chopin. Symphonic enlargement was then checked by Brahms, but the stream by-passed the obstruction with Bruckner and Mahler, the virtuosic element appearing with Richard Strauss. The re-action against inflation and elaboration came from the Viennese school of Schoenberg and Anton von Webern who were concerned with tonal expansions in the former case and with timbres in the latter, both becoming formalist in their outlook. The lyrical quality was maintained by Alban Berg whose melodic outlines were always perfectly clear and considerably rhapsodic. The stream of pure lyricism was continued in France by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) and Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), while the symphonic conception was pursued by Vincent d'Indy, Guy Ropartz (1864) and Albert Roussel (1869-1937), emanating from Franck and the Schola Cantorum. The easy-going neo-classicism of Camille Saint-Saens exercised no influence whatsoever upon his contemporaries or juniors. On the other side, yet parallel with Schoenberg in his avoidance of everything except the question of tonality or non-tonality, was Claude Debussy (1862-1918) whose maturity brought him to the position of making melody of any kind subservient to the harmony. He had genius enough, however, to make this sound perfectly spontaneous.

In this country British music followed first one, and then another, culture, striving to find some kind of individuality which would make it recognisable. English music, on the other hand, found its personality in the Folk Song, and English melody and harmony are distinctive in every way. English lyricism, with its strong modal tendency, is recognisable

(1) "Elementary Harmony." Bk. II (O.U.P.)

anywhere and its modal harmonies demonstrate perfect balance. While British melody leaps at every turn, English progresses smoothly and conjunctly, using the leap (and no very wide one at that) at special points and for special effect, the melody always returning to the focal note.

The basic principles governing melodic progression held good throughout the process of advancement and composers instinctively followed them, not because of any arbitrary rule or text-book insistency, but because they instinctively adopted the obvious. There are a few signs of a desire to return to the period of decoration, a reasonable re-action against the austerities of neo-classicism, but although decoration constantly appears in modern lyrical music, it is not of sufficient quality or quantity to warrant any serious relationship in technique to the Baroque period.

These basic principles lie chiefly in more conjunct than disjunct movement, the use of wide disjunct movement occurring only for special effect. Curve is obtained by smooth progress which culminates in a small leap and then returns to its first level by steady degrees. With the steady improvement of instruments and technique there is now a clear dividing line between vocal and instrumental melodic progression. In many instances Bach's melodies are "apt" for both media and he used the leap entirely for expressive purposes. Thus the following theme is "announced" by the violins before the voice enters.

Ex. 5 Bach— Ascensiontide Cantata. (1)

This is perfectly vocal although requiring some considerable thought in its performance. An illustration of this lies in the story of the Lay-Clerk at St George's, Windsor, who, after a wonderful performance of the part of Christ in the "St. Matthew Passion" was commended by a listener with the words "It must do you a lot of good to sing this music". "Yes", replied the singer. "It teaches you to mind your intervals".(2) This may well have been the natural and inherent embarrassment of an Englishman faced with the suggestion of spiritual grace, and expected to reply to it in the same manner; but it puts in a nutshell one of the great lessons which Bach's rhapsody instils into singers.

The minding of intervals, however, is not restricted to the decorated type of melody. The augmented fourth will always offer difficulties of intonation which are never completely overcome, even after constant repetition. The quite remarkable instance in the case of the single chant by the worthy Sir John Goss (1800-1880), who should have known better in his period, is a source of unconscious difficulty for hundreds of choirboys who, in their innocence of the niceties of melodic progression, do not realise it.

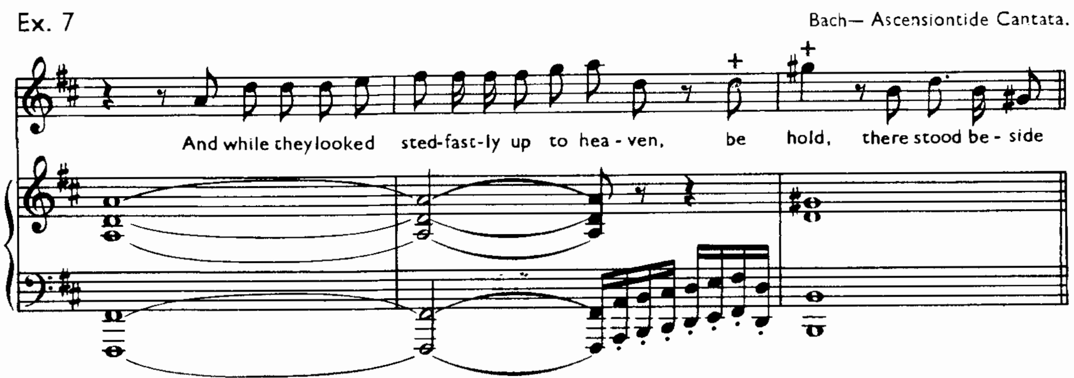
Ex. 6 Goss— Chant.

(1) Bach used a slight variant of this tune in the B minor Mass ("Agnus Dei")

(2) "Memoirs of an Amateur Musician"—Fellowes (Methuen).

Such an interval is best avoided when the music moves quickly since there is little time for thought. It may be said with truth that this leap is not acceptable in such a simple composition. After a few verses it becomes hideously monotonous and stands out by reason of its insistence on a long note. It is not only tiring to the listener but tiring to the singer, and by force of habitual listening and singing, becomes downright ugly. Bach, however, realised its value for experienced singers when he wished to emphasise some word or action.

Ex. 7 Bach— Ascensiontide Cantata.



Here the effect is one of surprise and wonder; the reader can find hundreds of others. Note that Bach helps the singer out by putting the G sharp on the top of the accompanying harmony, gives him time to prepare himself for the leap, and also allows him to get the note from the previous top "A".

There is no difficulty whatsoever in the case of wind instruments where the player simply "puts his fingers over the right holes, and blows", but strings may experience some discomfort, although experienced players face the problem every day.

The movement over the bar-line comes into some relief because, by its judicious use in lyrical melody, it prevents any undue accent on the first beat of the bar; not that every tune moves by step over the bar-line, of course, but it is a good generality and may be carried further in decorated or quickly moving music. Bach frequently leaps by a diminished interval, but it is always a stringency required by the text. This is most marked in the expressive recitatives where he, as no other composer has done, achieves the fullest emotional tension within a limited space. In the next short example we can see his "pathetic" use of the arpeggio of the diminished seventh, the plea on the perfect fourth, and the effect of weariness and depression on the minor third at the words "this heavy load of anguish.

Ex. 8 Bach— Ascensiontide Cantata.

Bach's musical word-painting has never been surpassed.

In other considerations composers have reserved the leap for those special occasions which emerge from the context. Sir Walford Davies (1869-1941) always called the next quotation "that most spacious tune" because of its wide sequential leaps and curves.

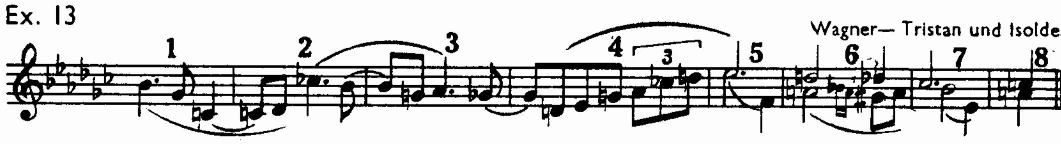
Play it in this way,

and all the life has gone out of it.
A similar process is shown in the following example from Rameau.

As an example of a theme being entirely "made" by one judicious leap, see the following :

Go up to the higher "A" at + and notice how it loses all its character; even with the original leap the tune is monotonously limited in range and scope.

Here is another example of climax obtained by downward movement, a process to be recommended only to experienced composers.



Here the whole emotional range and shape of the music lie entirely in the leaps at bars 1 and 2 and 5 and 7.

Whatever one may think of Saint-Saens as a man and as a composer, " Le Cygne " is a model of grace and elegance, whose climax is absolutely perfect.

Composers have taken characteristic intervals and used them to widen an ordinary conjunct rise, giving that poise and uncertainty which otherwise would not, and could not, be felt.

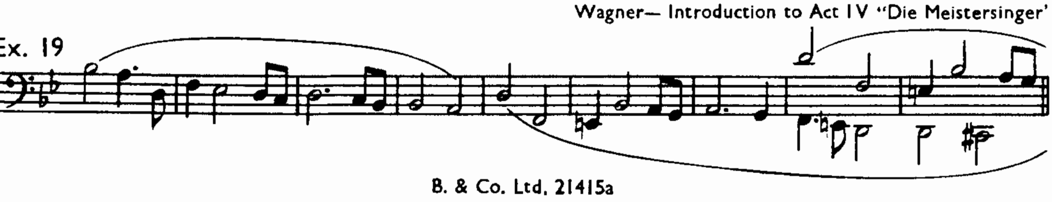
Join these notes together and see what they become :

However, this does not really come under the heading of normal progression because it was written for an effect.

For skilful use of combined conjunct and disjunct movements, Wagner and Strauss offer fine examples from music which, even if no longer " modern ", is reasonably near our own time.

This exquisitely shaped melody, in which the " A " marked + always " ravishes me " (as Samuel Pepys said), is a model of symphonic line and balance. Wagner obtains his ingratiating results with the appoggiatura, and stripped of this grace-note and, indeed, of the unessential notes, the melody becomes a poor thing.

The expressive power of the leap of a fifth when approached from above and the conjunct departure from that of a sixth in similar motion is admirably illustrated in the Introduction to Act III of " Die Meistersinger ".



Richard Strauss had the gift of the long tune developed to a remarkable degree of perfection. One of music's loveliest themes, and one containing nearly everything such a theme should contain, is that applicable to Donna Anna in "Don Juan". This theme, in ternary form within itself, has all the latent passion and expression which poise and balance can give it. It depends, without relying entirely, upon the accompaniment to give it motion, this being obtained by a caressing cello and viola figure which underlies the poised semibreves.

Ex. 20 Strauss— Don Juan. (1)

(1) Those owning the Universal Edition of the miniature score may care to note that the Clarinet part from Pages 65-69 is described wrongly as being in "A" instead of "B".

When forceful, Strauss takes his themes "all the way up and all the way down" climbing to the climax and precipitously leaving it.

Ex. 21 Strauss— Till Eulenspiegel.

Strauss appreciated the value of the anacrusis to mark a particularly strong effect.

Ex. 22 Strauss— Don Juan.

The rise of the octave on to the strong accent gives an unimaginable immensity to the conjunct movement of what follows and puts tremendous weight upon the semibreve. Omit the anacrusis and the resultant effect is completely different; this can actually be heard later in the work. The first state is defiant, the second, uncertain.

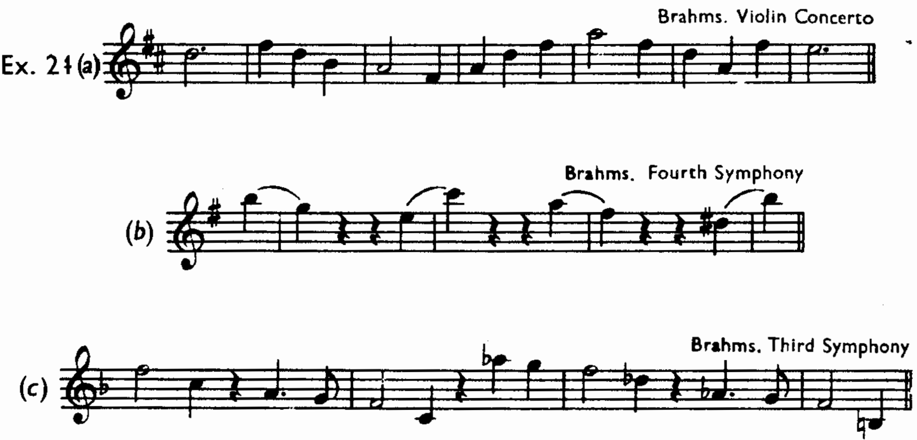
Continuous disjunct movement makes the music splay-footed and clumsy, unless of similar quantity. Two examples of this spring to mind, elementary perhaps, but none the less significant because they are in frequent use. I refer to the hymn tunes "St. Ann" and "London New". I have noticed that people invariably feel tired after singing them, and this is caused entirely by the effort of jumping about with little, if any, opportunity for poise and smoothness. That they are often heard, particularly the former, when massed singing is required does not alter the case. "St. Ann" has become so associated with "O God our help in ages past" that the two can never be separated. The words applied to "London New" could not have been more aptly chosen—"God moves in a mysterious way". These two examples are thoroughly bad tunes, and this cannot be gainsaid.

However, it can be conceded that these do not move consistently on the notes of an arpeggio. This was a characteristic of Mozart more than anyone else. Beethoven was not free from it during his first Period, but gradually eradicated it. Nevertheless, one of his greatest themes is founded upon it, and herein lies the difference between his thought and that of Mozart, who used the same figure, ⌐‾‾‾‾‾‾¬ in the overture "Bastien und Bastienne".

Ex. 23 Beethoven— Eroica Symphony

Observe that Beethoven's saving grace lies in the note + and the moving of the theme to a higher tessitura for its second element.

The gradual elimination of this practice as music progressed was suddenly halted by Brahms who acquired the knack of giving the arpeggio theme considerable shape through rhythm. It will suffice to quote but a few examples.



Symphonically this enabled him to " present his material " in the Development Section in many rhythmic ways. The composer who adopts this thematic principle has but to think rhythmically. Wagner also found it useful, but in addition to the short and snappy fragments which occur in " The Ring ", notably that associated with " The Sword "

the well-spread out arpeggio figure allows the panorama on the stage to unfold itself undisturbed. The Rhine flows magnificently and evenly along the ordinary common chord. Later, when the Gods enter Valhalla, the castle in the clouds has solidity, the clouds themselves rolling back to allow the entry along a constantly climbing and descending arpeggio figure which is more an " effect " than a theme.

However, he did not rely entirely on this type of theme and when Siegfried blows his horn, Wagner combines the arpeggio with conjunct progress up and down. This enables him to expand it when Siegfried journeys to the Rhine, although in this case it consists largely of rising sequential repetitions. (1)

Moving onwards, Sibelius in his fifth Symphony finds a remarkable leaping theme from a mere germ which has previously appeared in an unobtrusive moment during the progress of the work.

(1) Page 45

The " Alberti " qualities of this theme do not impel it forward. Such impulse one finds in Albert Roussel, whose melodic quality consists of magnificent curves of bounding vitality.

Roussel— Symphony in G minor.

Ex. 27

This impresses itself through its chordal nature. Where a definite harmonic basis is obvious, a theme has conviction, but when it can only be applied to this foundation by a re-arrangement of the notes, it sounds somewhat strained and artificial. Hence the following theme, from a Cadenza in a Bassoon Concerto, lacks aesthetic qualities and endeavours to justify itself through constructional channels.

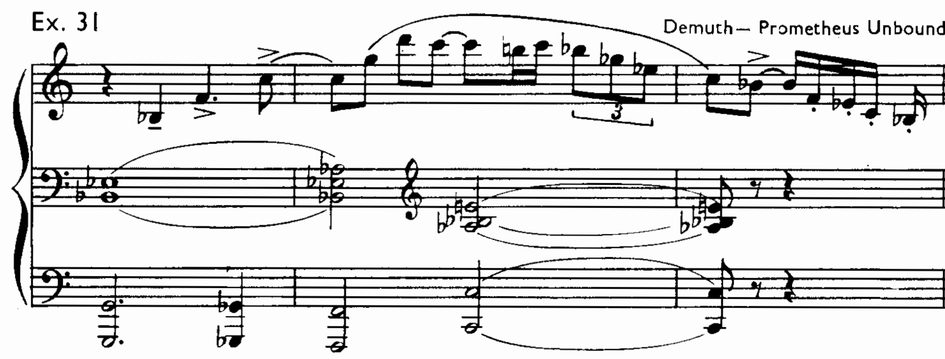
The only thing that can be said for this theme is that it comes in a Cadenza, but it in no way exploits the technique of the player or the resources of the instrument. Constructionally the notes go all the way down and all the way up without touching the extreme limits in either direction. It carries a certain spurious nobility quite out of keeping with the qualities of the bassoon, although not out of those of the trombone (upon which it would sound horrible). Its construction is angular and although the second strain attempts some rhythmic variety, it lacks the climax which can be found in Ex. 32. Page 44 where Holst attains his object by more concise means (the similarity of interval will be noted). It may well be that Miss Lutyens deliberately avoided this sense of climax, but one asks by what manner of thinking this theme was impelled. It is a good example of a " made tune ". It is easy to see how Miss Lutyens argues the issues of perfect, diminished, and augmented intervals, but contradictory qualities by themselves are not enough.

This brings us to my remark on Page 41, that unless the disjunct movement is similar in quantity, the music becomes splay-footed. Some hundreds of years ago Jean Phillippe Rameau showed how a theme could fulfil itself in terms of descending thirds (the text describes a descent to hell).

This principle remained with French composers, becoming part and parcel of the French technique. An example can be seen in Ex. 37c Page 47 by Franck, but an even more pronounced use appears in the fugal first movement of Saint-Saens Symphony in A minor.

The use of the descending series of thirds is a characteristic of Latin and Gallic composers. Nordic cultures affect the rising fourth. Whether this contrast between the warm third and the austere fourth has anything to do with physiology I cannot say, but in the wide mass of score reading, the situation is as I have stated. Occasionally one comes across the basis of the perfect fifth, as in the Second Piano Sonatina of Willem Pijper (1) and the opening to the "Ode to a Grecian Urn" of Holst, where a veiled mystery is obtained by building up and sustaining a series of perfect fifths. In order to give spaciousness to an immeasurable subject, the following theme suggested itself to the author.

Ex. 31



Curiously enough, the oft-resorted-to basis of the perfect fourth does not give any feeling of similarity or plagiarism. It can be seen at a most convincing moment when used as a stepping stone to a climax.

Ex. 32

Here the music takes a fresh start for its run and finally achieves its end in its third breath—had Miss Lutyens this effect in mind when she wrote the second strain in Ex. 28?

The manufacture of tunes is no new process. There are many instances where the vocal melody appears to have been superimposed upon the orchestral harmonies, like the following:

Ex. 33

(1) See Ex. 14, Chapter 5.

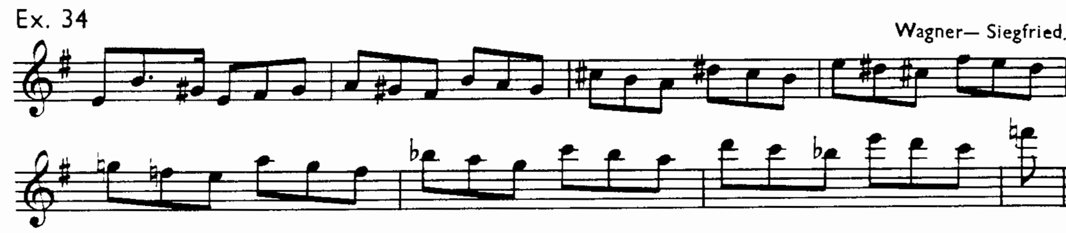
Another instance appears during the "Fire Music" in "Die Walküre" where Wotan sings a magnificently sustained string theme which is doubled from start to finish. The vocal effect is one of intense strain and the ear is more convinced when it hears it on the strings. This is one of those moments when Wagner appears to have been handicapped by the voice.

Melodic progression must be considered in relation to its medium and context. The composer must at all times think in terms of the former—this is not the obvious suggestion it seems. The melodic technique can spread itself over a wide field and must be a happy compromise between too much of either kind of motion. It is not sufficient that it should be "apt" for the medium whatever its quality, neither should conveniency to the performer be regarded as the sole justification for its style. The composer must naturally keep within the bounds of practicability, but it must be remembered that what one generation regards as almost impossible of execution, succeeding ones will achieve with comparative ease. At the beginning of the century the technical difficulties of the virtuoso composers—Strauss, Bantock, Holbrooke—seemed to their contemporaries to be almost insuperable. To-day they merely make the players sit up and take a little care. At the same time, there is no need to be deliberately awkward. Elasticity of line is essential but every wide or technically difficult leap should be justifiable and unavoidable.

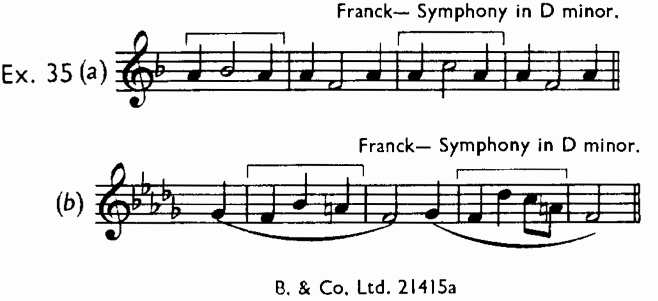
PHRASE LENGTHS

The tyranny of the bar-line is equalled by that of the "normal four-bar phrase". This tyranny can be put under control by means of the irregularly measured phrase, so measured within itself and not by the usual means of technical extension. Even the longest phrases of Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) can always be subdivided into divisions and extensions. These form the shape of the music and it would be wrong to assume that their abolition would result automatically in the "infinite melody" regarded as being the composer's ideal. The Sequence will never be discarded because, through its close relationship with the melody itself, it gives poise and affects a convincing manner of modulation. It has, of course, been overdone by nearly every composer since the beginning of the last century; as a rule one sequential repetition alone should be sufficient, but some composers, like Gounod, often write more. This is all right when the repeated figure is a figure and nothing else, such as this:

Ex. 34



Literal repetition in itself is something which many composers have successfully avoided, and Franck has some shining examples of widening an interval on repetition.

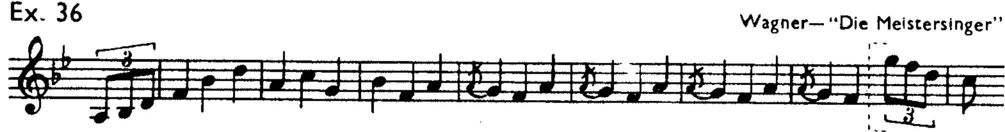


In "A" the harmonies are different each time; in "B" they are the same. "A", therefore, can be regarded as a four-bar phrase if taken in toto.

A complete theme, however, can be made of an irregular number of bars without the use of any device at all. The subject of Brahms' Rhapsody in E flat, Op. 119, No. 4 is a complete five-bar phrase in itself, the fifth bar breaking the monotony of the dactylic rhythm with a Spondee which serves to emphasise the force of the responsive phrase.(1)

There are not many instances of so successful a use of this irregularity. Even the "Dance of the Apprentices" from "Die Meistersingers" acquires its seven-bar quantity by means of repetition.

Ex. 36 Wagner—"Die Meistersinger"



but this does not give any feeling of unnatural growth or tiresome redundancy, because the repeated figure is narrow in range. However, it is but right to say that while some commentators regard this as an extended phrase because of the repetition, others view it as a complete seven-bar shape because of its masterly continuity; but even if the repetition were omitted it would be a five-bar phrase. It is one of those small details which demonstrate the genius who was Richard Wagner and the greatness which was "Die Meistersinger" in that such beautiful proportion is acquired within small compass, and by means which, though constructivist, sound perfectly spontaneous.

In order to decide the rhythmic shape and structure of a phrase it is only necessary to eliminate all literal, decorated, and sequential repetitions (these constituting the extensions), noting any overlap. The result denudes the music of all expressive qualities because the expression lies not only in the rise and fall of the notes but in the shape of the phrase itself, which contains its own climax achieved by means of the extensional devices. These repetitions add length but nothing textual to the phrase. The end of successive phrases can be determined first of all by their cadences and then by the musical feeling, which latter will always be the prompting light to the composer and, indeed, should be sought for first. Having ascertained the complete rhythmic structure, it is then necessary to note any "cellule" or germ from which the future movement grows. This may well be the slightest and most insignificant figure, characterised in some way or other, which has appeared unobtrusively in the texture. It may have appeared instinctively or have been introduced deliberately by the composer who visualised its potentialities at the time and wanted to justify its future use in full. Sibelius is the shining example of this germinal growth from little to much, while Franck set the standard for cyclical progress and growth out of a fragment of melody.

Taking three very differing examples, their construction can be decided in this manner:

Ex. 37 (*a*) Bach— Sleepers, Wake.

(1) Ex. 1 Page 32

Another phrase-growth can be studied with profit in the "Prélude, Choral, et Fugue" of César Franck where the "infinite melody" alternating with the theme of the "Choral" will be found to grow entirely from itself.(1) This process should be applied also to Ex. 17 Page 39 where Wagner's exquisite sense of phrase-shape and balance can be regarded as a model of melodic continuity. (The underlying melodies should be studied similarly in the full context.)

(1) This I have fully analysed—"César Franck" (Dennis Dobson)—but the student should also study the Prélude, Aria et Final" which is germinal throughout. (Op. cit.)

TIME-SIGNATURES

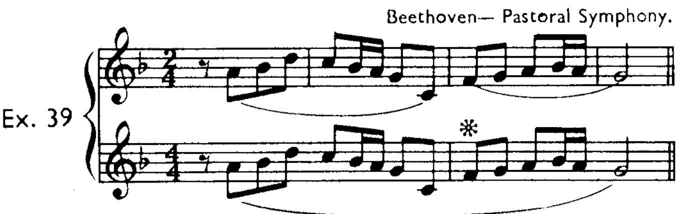
The days when each bar was dogmatically laid out in sets of two, three, four, six, nine or twelve pulses are now completely ended and composers have no hesitation in using odd or irregular pulse-sums and in changing their time-signatures at will. The time-signature decides the position of the accents or "strong beats" and when it is required to shift the strong beat, it becomes necessary to distort the flow of the music. This "strong accent" or "down beat" is one of the curses of music, for it emphasises point instead of line. Conductors are the most culpable in this respect since they tend to give a "good down beat" to hold things together. In this they are successful, but at the expense of common-sense which does not lie in putting this weight on the same spot in each successive bar. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that composers are very largely to blame since they do not take everything into consideration. Doubtless this arose in the first place owing to over-confidence in the musicianship and musicality of performers. A composer hears his material in one way and the performer is liable to hear it in another. This is another aspect of what is known as "interpretation" and it is not till the later nineteenth century that composers like Franck, Ravel, and Debussy "edited" their music sufficiently minutely to make their meaning perfectly obvious—and in spite of this one hears distortions over and over again from most distinguished hands, which often go in direct contradiction to the composer's indications (the Franck Symphony in D minor is a particular martyr in this respect). (1)

Time-signature is concerned, therefore, with both rhythm and accent, and composers' carelessness can cause considerable misunderstanding. The tyranny of the bar-line holds them in a vice-like grip. Once a time-signature has been established at the beginning of a work, it seems to be made to hold good until the end and when some alteration of rhythm is required, it is necessary to indicate it with some such direction as "Ritmo di quattro battute", when 12/8 would solve the whole problem and give perfect line. One of the most flagrant examples of this is Dukas' "L'Apprenti Sorcier" which is written in 3/8, but shapes itself throughout in 9/8. The conductor either beats three beats of three quavers each, leaving it to the rhythmic sense of the players, or works his arm up and down like a pump handle; when the tremendous accelerando arrives he becomes incoherent. A steady swinging "three-in-a-bar" beat allows every latitude and it is surprising that Dukas' acumen did not suggest this automatic 9/8 signature in the first place—the number of bar-lines he was compelled to draw must have been exceedingly wearisome.

A regular rhythm does not always explain the composer's intention. The second subject of the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in regular two beats in each bar removes the obvious accent, if the conductor beats a steady two-in-bar.
This is really in *alla breve* time, starting with an Anacrusis.

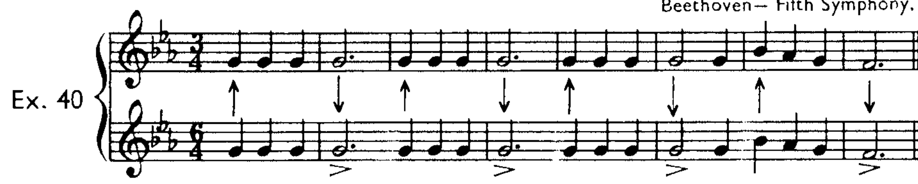
(1) Page 52

Another doubtful case is the opening of the Pastoral Symphony:



Here the first strong accent seems to come on the opening quaver rest, the theme being in one long line. A not-so-strong (feminine) accent falls automatically through the rise of the notes by the leap at the point marked ✻. The conductor who beats a solid two-in-a-bar emphasises the first beat of the second bar and that of the third and fourth as well. I have noted elsewhere (1) that this theme is a French popular song in free rhythm and, therefore, to cut it up into segments alters its natural free shape—where or how Beethoven came across it is not disclosed; it is too long and too exact to have been a coincidence, but since it is a peasant tune, it seems only natural that he should have used it in his "Pastoral Symphony". The time-signature is really 8/4 (2) but this is too long a stretch for orchestral players—this difficulty is seen to a very marked degree in the "St Matthew Passion" where the first chorus is written in 12/8 time and the distance so great as to make memory of accidentals extremely difficult. (An edition is available in 6/8). This is one of those instances where the player's convenience must be considered.

Who can deny that the Scherzo in the Fifth Symphony gains additional significance if it is considered as in 6/4 time, commencing with an Anacrusis.



Scrupulous attention to the printed word here reduces the power of the work and if it is said that had Beethoven intended the extra weight on the second (printed) bar he would have written it as suggested above or placed an accent over the weight, the answer lies in the casual attitude to these things which characterised the earlier composers and that in the heat of creation the composer does not realise that he may not be conveying his exact meaning to the outsider. It may also be found in the fact that many of them did not revise their MSS., a fault not uncommon to-day.

The next example is a line which, if written in quavers and semiquavers, would eradicate the sudden flop which so often characterises this strong accent.

(1) "The Symphony: Its History and Development" (Dennis Dobson).
(2) Many disagree with me on these points.

The difference between 4/4 and 2/4 is not always fully appreciated by composers and music which really presents a masculine and a feminine accent is often carelessly written so that two masculines are indicated. This usually happens in the case of a line where to play the theme in its written duple time would be to break it up into segments. That the performer understands exactly what the composer means does not make it any better; one may as well justify a badly constructed prose sentence by claiming that "the reader knows what I mean". Fully alive as he was to all problems of this nature, and gifted with the integrity of the true artist, Vincent d'Indy in his Second String Quartet was careful to put down exactly what he meant when he wrote thus:

Ex. 42

d'Indy— String Quartet (No. 2) in E.

The meticulousness of this cannot be too highly commended to composers who should learn to punctuate their music in the same careful manner as they would their sentences when writing an ordinary letter.

Accents, however, fall naturally in their proper places in straightforward music, but even then there are often doubtful instances, doubtful, that is, to the listener. Strongly rhythmic music depends on the performer to clarify its accents and although the performer may be perfectly certain that he is doing this, it often happens that the actual rhythmic impacts are not as marked as he thinks. This is but natural since he is mentally inside the music, while the listener unacquainted with the work has to take what his ear receives, and in these days of radio listening he cannot see what the conductor is doing. Two examples of this can be experienced in two works by Dvorak (1841-1904).

Ex. 43

Dvorak— Symphony in E minor "From the New World".

Over and over again this rhythm comes over as:

Ex. 44

Dvorak— Symphony in E minor "From the New World".

The absurdity of this soon becomes apparent because it will not "work" throughout the movement; but it is none the less disturbing. This requires extreme nicety of accent; the Anacrusis has to be extremely detached and the first beat cleanly accented.

The other instance is a less important one since misunderstanding does not obscure the rhythm but actually widens it.

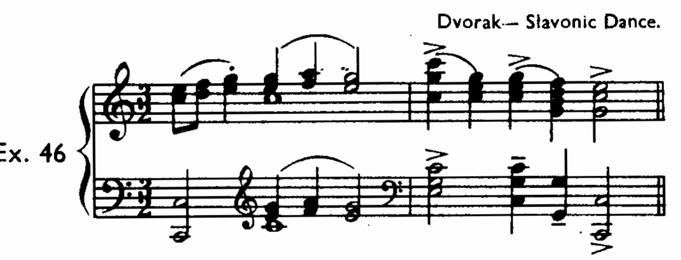
Dvorak— Slavonic Dance.

Ex. 45

ch time after time is received aurally like this:

Dvorak— Slavonic Dance.

Ex. 46



Here the difficulty arises because the staccato chords must be highly exaggerated, and this conductors fear to do.

What can be said about the celebrated passage in the finale of the Piano Concerto of Schumann (1810-1856), described by one commentator as a "March in triple time"? Here the lilt is perfectly obvious provided that the beat has a regular one-in-a-bar swing in the first place. The accents should be well and truly marked in all their shifting positions.

Ex. 47

Schumann— Piano Concerto.

It is almost unnecessary to say that this invariably results in:

Ex. 48

Schumann— Piano Concerto.

Naturally it sorts itself in due course but the passage is robbed of all its charm in the meantime. It could have been written in no other way if the composer intended to maintain the triple swing and it is a remarkable example of extended syncopation.

These examples will encourage the composer to say what he means and not leave it to his "interpreter" to do so. The use of "rubato" is the root of the trouble and in this respect pianists are greater sinners than conductors, for many adopt a perpetual rubato which is as annoying as it is inartistic. Some do not appear able to move from bar to bar without making a perceptible break. This completely ruins line and appears with depressing regularity in a moment such as the middle section of the "Rigaudon" from Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin". The composer has indicated nothing in this respect save that it should be played a little slower. Conductors massacre the César Franck Symphony with unfailing regularity and in spite of the fact that the composer states that the note-values are exactly the same, they make them almost twice their length on the assumption, presumably, that the composer really did not know what he wanted. It must be realised that from the time of Franck composers became, as I have said, more and more meticulous in their "editing" and for performers to depart from the written direction or to impose their own ideas is impertinent.

Considerable elasticity can be obtained by sub-dividing the bar: thus in "The Dream of Gerontius", Elgar (1857-1934) avoids a steady flow of equal quavers at the top in this way.

Elgar— The Dream of Gerontius.

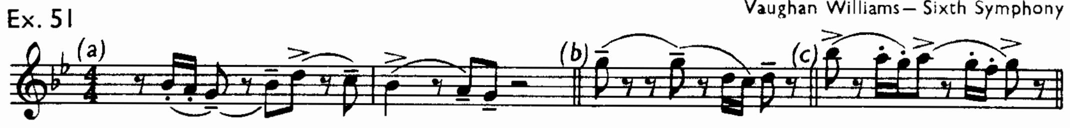
Ex. 49

In one of his "Quatres Fantaisies rythmiques" Charles Bordes (1863-1909) subdivides the 8/8 measure into Three-Two-Three-quavers.

Ex. 50 Bordes—Quatre Fantaises rythmiques.

In his sixth Symphony, Vaughan Williams uses the following sub-division of pulses, giving an effect of compound time.

Ex. 51 Vaughan Williams— Sixth Symphony



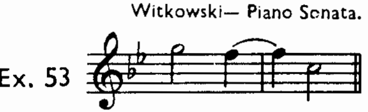
The disciples of César Franck often remove the enforced masculine accent in 3/4 time by thinking melodically in this rhythm.

Ex. 52

This is a valuable way of maintaining melodic flow without any of the inevitability of the triple stringency.

Witkowski— Piano Sonata.

Ex. 53



Careful editing will ensure perfect shape.

Chausson— Symphony in B♭

Ex. 54

The need for wider scope within the confines of the two bar-lines has been felt for many years and composers do not hesitate to divide their measures into five and seven beats; these are the limits of practicability. Sir Henry Wood was stymied only once in his life and that was when faced with some measures in 17/8 time, marked "Presto". The music was so even that to sub-divide the bars without disturbing the flow of the line was impossible. The work was a Piano Concerto.

Only in Chamber music is it possible to indulge in anything over seven-pulse measures, and even these are to be avoided as much as possible. The difficulty is to get smooth progress sliding ever forwards and avoiding undue accentuation. Quintuple time is nothing new. The ancient Greeks, the Negroes, Turks, and Basques, and Bohemian folk-dances abound with it. In European music it can be found in Handel ("Orlando"), William Shield (1748-1829) in his String Trio, the movement being described as "Alla Slavonia tempo-straniere" and in Michael William Balfe (1808-1870) who achieves this smoothness in a Cello Sonata.

Balfe— Cello Sonata

Ex. 55

Well-known examples are to be found in Chopin's Sonata in C minor, Wagner's "Tristan" and, most familiar of all, in Tchaikowsky's "Pathétique" which is usually held up as the standard example. Yet this is not an actual 5/4 because it subdivides itself into ONE-two ONE-two-three throughout; but such is its regularity and smoothness that it plays itself, as it were, and although Richter is said to have disapproved on principle and refused to move the stick during performance, he knew perfectly well that it was quite unnecessary to do so and that a glance in the direction of the players would ensure safety of entry.

Brahms frequently used five-and seven-pulse measures, but changed the time-signatures.

In his lovely song "Agnes" the 5/4 is extended by an echo of the last two beats to 7/4 in a charming manner.

Here there is no attempt to achieve regularity or smoothness because the music is subservient to the poetry.

The tyranny of the bar-line runs in both ways. Either it places undue stress on the first beat and restricts composers to so regarding it, or it imposes a rigid necessity for time-changing when the composer's thought is rhythmically elastic. Constant changes of this nature have a disturbing effect on performers who must count carefully through many bars of silence, and orchestral players need to relax as often as possible. In opera the situation is different owing to the frequent and rapid changes of condition on the stage. The acme of difficulty is reached with works like Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" and "Le Sacre de Printemps" where the time-signatures are perpetually changing. At one time William Walton became attracted to the freedom of rhythm which the principle suggested, and his rollicking Overture "Portsmouth Point" contains some pages of alternating 3/8 and 2/4 which fall into a perfectly even 7/8. Walton, however, is not as insistent or as complicated as Stravinsky. A typical page from the first Act of "Petrouchka" reads like this

this {5/8 2/4, {8/8 3/4, 7/8, {5/8 2/4, {7/8 3/4, {5/8 2/4, {8/8 3/4, 7/8, {5/8 2/4, {8/8 3/4,

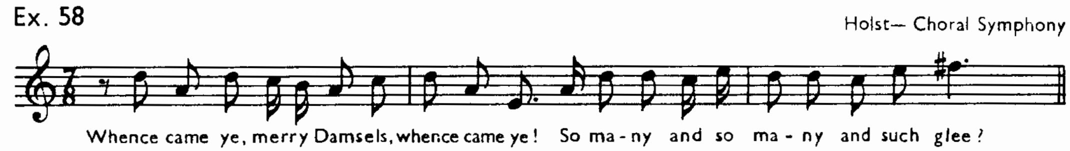
In some circumstances this procedure may be unavoidable, but the composer should endeavour to consider his performers as much as possible and resort to the practice only where it seems absolutely necessary.

Irregular bars are perfectly reasonable and it does not take long for the rhythmic sense of the players to become settled. The only one who need be unduly bothered is the conductor. He has to go through rapid motions which must be clear and concise, otherwise confusion will reign among the orchestral players, who may decide, after all, to follow his beat. It is better to aim for regularity of measure, no matter of what quantity, and the five and seven-pulse measures are capable of great variety.

In certain isolated instances one comes across eleven. This is found in solo music only (for obvious reasons) and one example from an organ "Pastel" by the German composer Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933), who, in addition to writing some beautiful chorale-preludes in the traditional German style, composed several pieces of which the basic impulse is pure French Impressionism.

Compound quintuple time is often found, although many composers prefer to use Simple with the triplet sign; this makes the long measures still more crowded and it seems pointless to try and simplify what is already perfectly simple. Such an example can be found in "Quatre Fantasies rhythmiques" by Charles Bordes (the middle section is in 7/8 time).

One of the most successful users of the irregular bar was Gustav Holst (1874-1934) who in many cases quite overcame the difficulty of subdivision; but it is noticeable that he is most convincing when setting a text. Here, of course, much of the work is already done by the normal declamatory emphasis, but it is no less an achievement.



Instrumentally, the effect he obtained was often self-conscious and angular.

The regular insistence of the ONE-two-three ONE-two in "Mars, the Bringer of War" from "The Planets" serves its own end and the gradual slimy climbing of the brass on this rhythm carries its own delineation of the horrible insistence of evil. It is significant that he used quintuple time for another "War" piece, the "Battle Hymn" from the First Group of the "Choral Hymns from the Rig-Veda". Here the accent in the pounding accompaniment is on the second and fourth beats, the voice parts being perfectly smooth in accordance with the text. In the third of the group, "Funeral Hymn",

he uses 7/4 and sub-divides it in the first place into ONE-two-three-four ONE-two-three, and later into three-plus-four. I noticed when rehearsing this with a choral society that if I beat deliberately four-plus-three, the choir automatically emphasised the fifth beat, but when I beat the normal seven the effect was perfectly smooth.

Composers sometimes still further subdivide the quintuple measure into ten quavers, which is not so complicated as it sounds.

Here the first half of the bar appears as compound duple and the second half as simple duple. In performance it is perfectly smooth.

In the next example the same sub-division is observed but under a free-rhythmed theme. This is an instance of over-emphasis because it is in a ballet whose particular situation at that moment is one of inebriatic uncertainty. The bass maintains equilibrium against the unsteady and jerky principal figure, the effect being to underline the staggering movements of the dancers which would otherwise consist of short spasms.

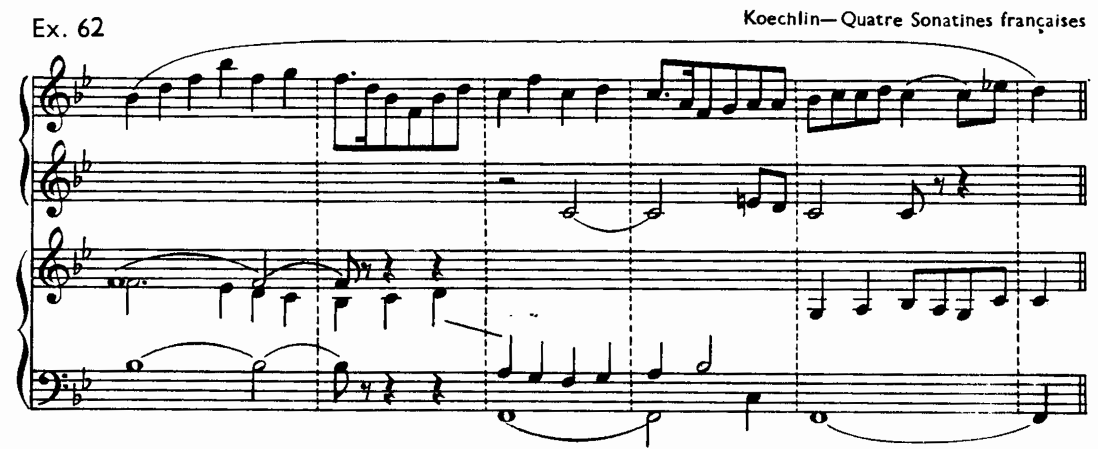
Ex. 61

Demuth— Le Bal des Vanités.

In Chamber Music it is better to dispense with a time signature altogether than have a constantly changing one. The former can be satisfactory and practicable only with solo or duet works. Many composers dispense with the time-signature and indicate the measures with dotted lines, thus showing the irregularity. Charles Koechlin does this in his Sonatinas for Piano Duet.

Ex. 62

Koechlin— Quatre Sonatines françaises



In his Violin Sonata the rhythmic structure is shown in terms of complete phrases set in single bars. Accidentals apply only to the notes they indicate.

Ex. 63

Koechlin— Violin Sonata.

Since accidentals are used freely there is no trouble about the players having to remember them ; perfect flexibility of rhythm and accent are ensured.

The question of unbarred music arose some years ago, but the objection to it was that so much barred itself, as it were. This principle was shown in Church music, the argument being that it approximated to the early primitive speech-rhythm; but an approximation is, after all, only the nearest one can get to a certain style or expression, not an exact reproduction of it. Much excellent bastard-plainsong appeared, modal in spirit and technique, which, like the "Folk Mass" of Martin Shaw (1876), forbade any measuring and was deeply religious in spirit. However, the effect was generally vague and uncertain although carrying a kind of implied ecclesiastical atmosphere.. The natural barring of itself was more obvious when the music was not modal, and the practice soon fell into neglect, if not disuse.

The principle. of course, is that of the unbarred Concerto Cadenza which is in the nature of a Free Fantasia. However, in his Piano Sonatas in B flat, Op. 106, and in A flat, Op. 110, Beethoven wrote two short Cadenza-like passages of unbarred music, although the sign "C" is placed at the beginning of each. These are an echo of the unique quasi-recitative passages in the Piano Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2. In a solo or duet work the performer should allow that the modern composer has so written his music that the rise and fall of the notes and the shape of the phrases let the music speak for itself.

Whether regularly or irregularly barred, or not barred at all, the contemporary idea has added nothing new to the technique of phrase-rhythm. Freedom simply allows fact that the great classical composers did not vary their initial time-signatures signifies nothing at all; but this does not forbid the modern composer doing so, provided that he can justify himself. The actual principles of composition have hardly altered at all. Their application to newer ideas has changed their shape.

CHAPTER FOUR

"-ISMS"

The Rules and All That—Classicism—Romanticism—Impressionism—Expressionism—Realism—Formalism—Nationalism

THE RULES AND ALL THAT

It stands to reason that the use of scales other than the diatonic precludes obedience to the expediences which tradition has formulated. This opens the question, therefore, as to how far a composer can go before laying himself open to the charge of unjustifiable iconoclasm. Many have attempted to supply a half-answer by putting forward suggestions establishing their authority by quotation from both well-known and not-so-well known works. Among these, one may single out a few books which the student can consider with profit, regarding them as authoritative in some respects, but in no case taking them as more than pointers. In some cases the authors include "exercises" and it may be remarked that there is nothing like the old dogmatism; indeed, there is often a slightly apologetic air about them. Many merely attempt to show what twentieth century composers have done and leave it at that. This is probably the best approach. Conversations with colleagues have shown that in no single instance has any book drawn forth unqualified praise.

There has been much too much vague and loose thinking and too much generalisation about this matter. In his masterly book "Unfigured Harmony" the late Sir Percy Buck became defiant over some points, but it is no use stating baldly that the introduction to Parry's "Blest Pair of Sirens" is a typical example of "modern" thought. This does not go far enough, especially as the work in question is "modern" only in so far as its date and technique go; it is now "old fashioned", but—and let this be noted—it is still remarkably fine in conception and broad in effect in spite of its squareness of manner and its unconvincing orchestral technique. (Incidentally, I have not seen it remarked anywhere that the use of suspensions here forms a striking parallel with Elgar). Similarly, it will not do for a teacher simply to say about a process that he "likes it". One must go still further. It becomes necessary, therefore, to regard all harmonic usage from within its own context. If the result is satisfying, then the processes are fully justified. If not, the composer is plainly incompetent, not because he has broken the "rules" but because he has not proved his ability to make his processes convincing. No matter how *outré* the technique may be, if it is insincere it will sound clumsy, and this reproach cannot be levelled against the most *outré* of established composers.

The need for justification having become apparent, one turns to almost the first book of its kind, "Modern Harmony: Its Technique and Expression" (A.E. Hull) (1) Here one finds a good deal of thought expended over trivial matters which beg questions, but it undoubtedly does penetrate certain polemical points. If anything, there is too much justification, and the delving into the roots of many matters is open to question. Dr. Hull, however, wrote a book which gives one furiously to think and, as I have said, it was almost the first attempt to bring things up-to-date. The few exercises do not *teach* anything, but they show how processes can be practised. A more valuable book is "A Study of Modern Harmony" (Lenormand) (2).

This draws on French composers, as well as it might, and should, seeing that so much modern thought emanated from France (3). M. Lenormand was a composer and therefore able to write from experience. He takes various text-book customs and nomenclatures

(1) Augener.

(2) Joseph Williams—trans. Herbert Antcliffe.

(3) There are one or two from other sources.

and applies them to music which is not always comparatively new. Some of his examples are found in works written in the 1880's; these, of course, prove nothing, but offer a small amount of authority. He cleverly draws up a list of deductions at the end of each chapter which suggest possibilities for a re-orientation of text-book rules; a scholar could well write a harmony text book based on these deductions. The trouble is that while many are perfectly prepared to accept the French authority, many more are not, for musical law here is still subservient to the Teutonic tradition. There are no exercises in this book and the author simply gives his evidence at some length by means of copious examples, and then sums up for the jury's verdict on each chapter.

A book which does attempt to set out a new standard is "Practice in Modern Harmony" (Barnes) (1). This is a text book and nothing else, and is confined within easy limits. There is a lot of wisdom contained within its forty pages, and a good number of exercises. Dr. Barnes is apologetic and while his explanations are lucid they do not ring with the authority which carries the necessary weight. There are no examples from published works. The trouble is that Dr. Barnes (and this is not confined to him alone) finds it necessary to quote traditional customs and thus makes much of his little work into a negation. A book of this nature should start from nothing, the writer putting all prejudice behind him. An extension of M. Lenormand's book on the lines of that by Dr. Barnes would be extremely useful.

The didactic works of Schoenberg and Hindemith emphasise the traditional aspect of harmony and counterpoint and make no attempt at compromise. They are, therefore, valuable books for the basic technique.

"Introduction à la Musique Contemporaine" (Maurice Le Roux) (2) puts forward certain principles which are based on the Twelve-Note-Row Manner and that of his teacher Olivier Messiaen. The author deals with rhythm as well as harmony, and within the confines of his slender book gives much food for thought, fully justifying his arguments. The Preface is written by Claude Delvincourt, the Director of the Paris Conservatoire, and himself a composer. This gives some authority, for the Paris Conservatoire has not been noted in the past for its advanced tendencies and it was only when Gabriel Fauré held the position of Director that things began to move forward; but even then the teaching principles were those based upon the established text-books.

Alfredo Casella (1883-1947), a composer of note and enterprise, attempted to explain "The Evolution of Music" (3) in a book published in 1919—in three languages under one cover. This erudite study covers the whole gamut of music from the 13th century to Schoenberg. It consists of a scholarly and readable, if somewhat obscure in places, Introduction and one hundred musical examples, each one concluding with a commentary stated in a few words. The emphasis is upon the "full close" and suggests in the Introduction that it will concern itself solely with showing how composers have written their final cadences. This object is very early lost sight of but the student can find in the book a miniature history of harmony. Many of the examples are obvious enough and some of the explanations seem a trifle airy; but the work is valuable within its own scope even if it does not altogether achieve its full purpose with any powers of conviction.

A plea for some kind of recognition of the problems of to-day can be read in "Les Postulats de la Musique Contemporaine" by the distinguished Belgian composer, Jean Absil (4). This does nothing but put forward certain arguments in principle but it is worth reading.

The many admirable books on technique which have appeared during the last fifteen years or so do little but touch the fringe of things and until academic acknowledgement

(1) Oxford University Press.

(2) Les Editions du Grenier A Sel.

(3) Chester.

(4) Editions "Orientations" La Sarte.

is restricted to original composition, there is little chance of any alteration in approach, and present-day text book principles will remain the standard.

The composer, therefore, may find himself in a dilemma if he is concerned with what he may or may not "do". He should not so concern himself; but he should be able to explain what he is doing. Composition is not just a hit or miss affair. Basic technique ends once it has been mastered, and the future of that technique depends on the composers themselves, and not on technicians and mathematicians. A composer should be able to write a text book upon his own practice; but composers are usually too occupied with composing to undertake this.

By the term "explain what he is doing" I do not mean a social or political explanation. The inner purport of his work is not important in every case. I insist, however, that he should be able to explain his technique. This the adherents to the Twelve-Note-Manner certainly succeed in doing; but the explanation must sound convincing and, above all, be dictated by musical and not mathematical principles.

It would appear that the most convenient and broadest starting principle is that there is no such thing as discord and resolution. Having realised this, the way is clearer. How the composer deals with this principle in terms of harmony, counterpoint, and all the rest is something which his compositions alone can show; but no "method" of composition is convincing. Actual composition must be instinctive in the first place and explanatory in the second. What is of primary importance is Form; not the pouring of ideas "into a ready-made mould" (as the "Radio Times" once put it)—no *composer* has ever done this—but the arrangement of opposing ideas into due relationship so that there is no feeling of improvisation about the thought. All Forms have expanded in the natural course of events and the course of musical composition shows few signs of destruction in this respect. Present-day tendencies are not nearly so open to question of ancestry in the formal procedures as they are in the harmonic, which very often strain one's credulity and conviction. There should be no excuse necessary in music, and harmonic tendencies are full of excuses. I doubt if any composer to-day self-consciously thinks in terms of phrase lengths and key relationships any more than a novelist thinks in terms of clauses; these things simply happen of their own accord.

When considering the several methods and systems upon which some composers work, it is necessary to remember that such methods should be the means to the end and not the end in themselves. Any such approach to composition can become entirely mathematical and cerebral and this applies equally well to an adherence to "rule" and "tradition". The enormous amount of music which lies dormant and forgotten consists almost entirely of period works which followed too closely the letter at the expense of the spirit. One type of academicism has always given place to another; what has originally been a novelty only too often becomes a cliché with succeeding generations. No matter how small the innovations and departures, the innovators have invariably won through in the end and the history of music shows that few composers who have been in every way immediately acceptable are alive to-day in concert programmes. Indeed, even the elementary breaking of a few customs must in some way have contributed to permanency, but it must be strongly emphasised that there is no merit in breaking away from tradition. The merit lies in the results which must always have their aesthetic justification. That justification, however, is rarely apparent at the actual moment, and what posterity has realised to be the natural rebellion of genius has in the first place always called for censure. Taking a few cases at random, Dr. Charles Burney (1726 *or* 8 - 1814) wrote of Dr John Blow (1649-1708) in this wise: (1)

> "There are so many wanton violations of rule, particularly in the last chorus, that it would be endless to point them out; but they seem such as no rule, authority, or effect can justify; 7ths resolve on the 8th ascending and descending, 2nds

(1) Quoted in "An Anthology of Musical Criticism" (Demuth—Eyre & Spottiswoode).

> treated with as little ceremony as 3rds. Indeed I never saw so slovenly a score in print; and it may in general be said of his faults in counterpoint, that there are unaccountable millions of them to be found in his works".

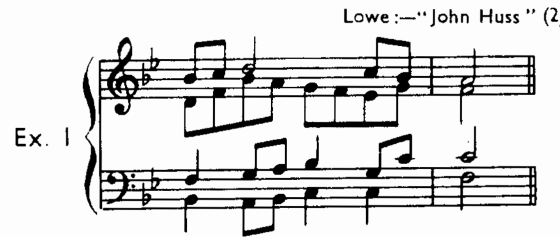
Of Henry Purcell (1656 or 9-1695) Dr Burney wrote:

> —"and then crudities of the sharp 3rd, 4th, and 5th, as have been elsewhere censured, occur; which I hope in spite of my reverence for Purcell, the organists of our cathedrals scruple not to change for better harmony". (1)

Not so very long after the realisation of Bach's genius came to this country, Sir George Macfarren (1813-1887) delivered himself of this censure, to the Musical Association (March 2nd, 1885) "From time to time, since musical laws were first inaugurated, there has been forbidden the progression of two parts in perfect intervals, one with another, from fifth to fifth, from eighth to eighth, and fourth to fourth. From eighth to eighth one will not find in Bach's music, but fifths and fourths are not of seldom occurrence, and still worse, and still more often, one finds that his parts proceed in seconds or in sevenths, progressions so hideous that the early law-givers never deemed it necessary to prohibit them, believing, one may conjecture, that nobody could be seduced to write what would be repugnant to himself and to everybody else to hear. Will you think from this that I disparage the master? Will you think that from this that I slight the genius of the man who, more than anyone else, proved the capabilities of counterpoint, proved the boundless resources of fundamental harmony? Oh, no."

All five musicians were composers. Bach, Blow and Purcell have survived in this respect; neither Burney nor Macfarren are even thought of. These are but two instances, and there are "unaccountable millions" to be found.

On the other hand, some composers who have themselves been innovators (if not iconoclasts) have censured others for minor infringement of the "rules". Thus Robert Schumann calls to order a Dr. C. Lowe for certain progressive licences and attributes them to a "kind of pedantry and intellectual indolence in art matters such as is most frequently to be found among thorough-bassists"—but at the same time he does not consider them a "mortal sin". The faults indicated by Schumann are as follows, the work itself being an oratorio "John Huss".



(1) Quoted in "An Anthology of Musical Criticism" (Demuth—Eyre & Spottiswoode)

(2) Purcell had previously written

However, there is nothing "clever" in this kind of thing when it is done deliberately. Sir Charles Stanford described certain composers who defiantly wrote consecutive fifths as "dirty dogs", and I do not suggest that the more a composer breaks away from tradition or the more *outré* he makes his style, the greater he will be.

All -isms have been the normal evolution from simplicity to complexity. Not all have permanence—indeed, some have already passed into disuse because any systematic adherence to a process eventually results in sterility through lack of variety. One of the depressing features of such thought is that in time it leads to an academicism of its own kind which, from being in the first place iconoclastic, becomes hide-bound and frustrative, since many of the tenets are merely direct negations of existing customs. One cancels another. Systematic composition tends to be a short cut. The music is either "right" or "wrong" and no compromise is possible. Further, it is not always possible to decide whether the resultant sound is exactly what was in the composer's mind or whether it is the result of the systematic working.

The limitations, therefore, of certain -isms forbid freedom of thought and movement, but this applies more to the latter than the former. "Classicism" and "Romanticism" are each governed by certain principles.

CLASSICISM

There is always considerable confusion over the application of this word to music, and its alignment with "classic" and "classical". None of them have any musical reference to their original meaning (which was concerned with the literature of the Ancient Greeks and Romans), since the music of these cultures is not in use to-day in its purest forms. Certain applications of them can be justified and are fully explanatory, but others remain vague and have come into usage through custom.

"Classic," however, can apply to everything artistic. It implies a work or a composer who after the course of time has become a standard example. It stands to reason, therefore, that no works or composers can be so established during the latter's lifetime. They may set an example, but it is impossible to regard them as the standards of the period unless everybody else is writing in the same way which, fortunately, is never the case. Styles and idioms may be different, but they will always be *of* a certain period. A classic therefore, is someone or something viewed retrospectively.

The same thing applies to "classical" and this word has two different meanings. Any creative artist whom time has established is "classical," but many classical composers have been romantics. In this connection, therefore, the word would seem to be entirely fallacious and explains nothing at all save that it serves to form a convenient distinction between those composers who have lived to posterity and those who have disappeared into oblivion either because they have been lacking in some essential quality characterising the survivors or because they may have experimented along lines which have not received any acceptation.

As far as musical expression is concerned, the word "classical" is applied in its broadest sense to composers up to the time of Schumann and Berlioz, but in the narrowest to the early Italians, French and Germans of the pre-and immediate-Bach era. This implies that these composers wrote their music from the point of view of formalistic design and balance rather than from any subjective or objective impulse. In other words, the principle was that of note-spinning. Here enters the term "classicism" which means that although the composer's particular style and idiom are not "classical" because they are not yet established (they are not 'classics"), their music appears to be entirely extrovert and "absolute."

It is maintained strongly by many that there is no such thing as music contrived upon a system of note-spinning; but the other view has some justification since superficially it appears that there is no emotional aspect whatsoever to some music. On the other hand, because Scarlatti and the early Italian composers called their works simply "Sonata", meaning "Sound" for clavier or other instruments, it does not imply that the music is

entirely lacking in everything subjective or, for that matter, objective. Human feelings now are exactly what they have always been, but what became known as "Romanticism" was not avowed by them save objectively in some cases, and this objectivity often bordered upon realism.

Scarlatti's Sonatas in many instances suggest certain facets of life, the most common being the Pastoral quality. This quality can be found in Sonatas 13 and 27. (1)

On the other hand, there are the "Ordres" and other pieces by François Couperin which have descriptive titles; but their composer is considered as "classical". Music has become so cluttered up with "-isms" and "-alities" that the vocabulary is now stretched to its uttermost.

"Classical" is bound up in the term "abstract" which to-day has come to be called "classicism". There are many composers whose music is in the category of "classicism" and whose idiom has been whittled down to the barest of essentials. Stravinsky is one of the leaders of "Neo-Classicism", which implies contemporary technique with the adoption of the so-called classical point of view of the pre-Romantics. Romanticism was avowed first and foremost by Schumann, but can it be denied that all through Beethoven there is a strong feeling for it? Can it be argued that there is no feeling of any kind in Bach and that his Fugues and other instrumental works (when not dictated by Dance forms) are the result of a cold-blooded process of note-spinning in accordance with certain "rules"?. I find it impossible to believe this. The feeling is not declared as the be-all of the music but the melodic swerves and the harmonic warmth which are uppermost in Bach's thought are obvious to all. It may be that the early Canons of the Netherlandic composers were derived entirely in this cold-blooded way; they certainly sound so, and here lies the answer to the question. If the listener is unaware of any subjective feeling or objective thought, the music will certainly have been contrived according to plan; in fact, the "form" will have dictated the material.

When one speaks of the form of a work being "classical" it means that the work is designed along traditional and established lines, lines which have been the common ground of generations of composers. They may be extended, compressed, and otherwise altered, but basically they will be the same. The heaviest romantic Symphonic music will be found to deviate very little from this generalisation. The classicist is concerned primarily with form and the mathematical relationships and permutations of melodic lines. The only thing he concedes to-day is key-relationship and key-sequence. This can be seen in the use of the Tone-Row and the systematic "-ism" which goes with it. As long as this or that theme can be answered invertedly in another part, honour is satisfied at the expense of human feeling and emotion. If the latter can be obtained only at the expense of the invertibility of the theme, then in all costs sacrifice the emotion (I omit for the moment the consideration of a text, which will be discussed later and am concerned only with instrumental music). The neo-classicists, therefore, have thrown over everything which music has come to mean. A fairly recent example of this was disclosed when Stravinsky upbraided Koussevitsky for putting "expression" into his "Symphonies for Wind Instruments", written in memory of Debussy. Koussevitsky declared that the "expression" lay in the rise and fall of the music itself. Stravinsky made the rejoinder that this had no rise or fall and that the notes were all level. At that time Stravinsky was making his early break-away from the romanticism of the early ballets, a process which is always rather difficult for any composer and which Arnold Schoenberg accomplished through the use of his own particular technical manner. It is not a matter of failing inspiration or lack of ability to express new thoughts in the old manner, but simply that the old manner becomes exhausted.

(1) Augener Ed: No 5900a.

The composer whose name is most familiar in this respect and who appears to have succeeded better than most others is Paul Hindemith (1895). Hindemith started his career along classical or absolute lines with his "gebrauchsmusik", setting out to provide music for any occasion requiring it. Later he turned to another type of expression and his climax in the classical style is the piano "Ludus Tonalis", a set of twelve Fugues with Prelude and Postlude contrived upon a process of note-spinning along formalistic and tonal principles; this may possibly be regarded as a twentieth-century counterpart of the "Forty-Eight". Less important but no less admirable composers are also trying to find their solutions in "pure" or "absolute" music along the lines of classicism. Of these Michael Tippett (1905) is a good example. His works fulfil themselves by a process of interweaving. The themes combine and go in all directions, and the music is held together by its rhythm which is contained in the themes themselves and is not in any way arbitrarily imposed. The music requires an intellectual approach and suggests nothing at all—except pure music. Unlike the Neo-Classicism of Stravinsky, it does not attain its end through self-discipline and self-abnegation. Tippett takes every advantage offered by his material for "classical" device. Stravinsky avoids all such suggestions. The result is that while Tippett's texture is rich but clear, that of Stravinsky is clear but bloodless. Both are in the tradition of the "classical" composers, which means that the basis of their music lies in counterpoint rather than harmony. Stravinsky is iconoclastic; he would destroy by implication all tradition and return to stark Primitivism. Tippett, on the other hand, is firmly rooted in "The wodes so wylde" type of Englishry, and in spite of certain freedoms, falls into line with respectable tradition.

Across the Channel, Camille Saint-Saens preached a different kind of Neo-Classicism which tried to combine the Teutonic mould with Gallic lightness. Contrapuntal music being the easiest type to write, his Neo-Classicism degenerated into slick facility and there is nothing to point to as being essentially "Saint-Saens". This may well be a failure with Tippett, whose Englishry bids fair to become a standardised article.

Neo-Classicism must not be confused with Anti-Classicism which eschews all the processes and procedures of the established forms. It foreswears the principles of the Beethoven Sonata in that it entirely refutes all emotional states which may be contained within the context and also the principle of development and extension. It also denies the fugal principle of rotating round a subject. It would pare music down to simple statement alone; consequently nothing can be of any considerable duration since, if it were, it would either entail thematic extension and development or result in complete incoherence. Stravinsky is not an Anti-Classicist because, in spite of his return to Primitivism, his primitively inspired works have thematic cohesion and extension, and are perfectly formal. To be an Anti-Classicist does not imply a whole-hearted devotion to Romanticism; it merely calls for the complete abolition of formal beauty and balance, and of intellectual appeal. The movement has not made very much headway and is confined to a minority of lesser composers who thus find justification for their lack of spontaneity and technical equipment.

As regards the use of the three terms, we may say that "classic" does not enter into discussion here, that "classical" concerns the approach to form and texture and that "classicism" is the state of mind of the composer. The classical forms are still in use in various shapes. The contrapuntal foundations have been extended and brought outside the canons of the old theorists. Neo-Classicism applies to those who would go right back, even to the jungle as it were, and write simply "sound" for musical instruments. The difference is easy to see with contemporary composers. With the preceding generation it is harder to define. To choose at random from a very mixed bag, Vincent d'Indy, Albert Roussel, Hubert Parry, and Max Reger were all classical in their symphonic music in that they used the classical technique and forms, and the orchestra in a traditional manner, writing music "apt" for the instruments. Their music is intellectual, but none the worse for that in its own way, even if the intellectualism of Parry was derived and that of Reger is now almost dead.

ROMANTICISM

This is easier to define and deal with because it is obvious and undebateable. Romantic music is either subjective or objective. It may express the state of the soul or it may take its starting point on a literary, pictorial, or scenic angle. When subjective it seems more often to reflect a state of passion than one of repose or happiness. This can be said of nearly all heavily romantic music, particularly that from Germany which culminated in the turgidity of Richard Strauss' "Tod und Verklärung".

Pictorial Romanticism is not always clear, but it is more so than literary. Music can paint to a certain extent when objective, but it is quite impossible to get an exact reflection of an episode unless it happens to have something pointed about it. The Symphonic Poems of Richard Strauss are masterpieces in this respect. In the cases of "Till Eulenspiegel" and "Don Quixote", everything is perfectly clear because of the graphic delineation. "Don Juan" is perfectly understandable in general, but not in detail. So well knit is the form that it is quite appreciable as a movement symphonically contrived. Imagination pictures what in some cases is inaccurate. Donna Anna for example, has one of the loveliest tunes in music, but it neither delineates Donna Anna or any other woman, nor does it indicate the colour of her hair—when Strauss in a whimsical moment said that the music did this he was promptly taken seriously. It does, however, suggest a state of mind. The literary impulse has to be discovered separately. The same applies to Debussy's "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune".

Pictorial romanticism stands a better chance. The music of the "Hebrides" Overture does not imply these or any other particular islands or caves, but it does suggest the sea and the beating waves. Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloe" and Bruckner's Romantic Symphony are different aspects of nature, the one being local in character and the other seemingly embracing the whole universe.

Subjective Romanticism is altogether different and is very much clearer in delineation. There is little doubt as to the state of Tchaikowsky's mind in the "Pathétique" or of Mahler's misery and despair in his Ninth. When at his most poignant, Beethoven is subjectively romantic. The slow movements of some of the Piano Sonatas, that of the Fourth Symphony and those of the Piano Concertos are obvious proofs of this; and still more the Adagio in the Piano Sonata, Op. 109. Omitting the "Pastoral Symphony"—for it is still debateable as to whether Beethoven really did mean it as an expression of feelings or said so, being doubtful of the contemporary re-action to an avowed programme, which was not a generally excepted idea at the time—it is impossible to see anything but a romantic expression in the "Sonata Pastorale" for example, and this is apparent without any reference to the title of work, which was not applied to it by Beethoven himself. Beethoven said that he who would understand the "Piano Sonata in D minor" Op. 31 No. 2 should read Shakespeare's "The Tempest". (1) The standard histories of music, however, have insisted upon regarding Schumann as the "first of the Romantics" because he was the first openly to avow his romantic impulses.

If the reader will look at some of the musical examples, he will find that Ex. 26 Page 91 from Dukas' "La Péri" is Romanticism, and Ex. 28, Page 43 from Elizabeth Lutyens' Bassoon Concerto is Classicism. Ex. 12, Page 84 from Ferranti's "Mattino in porto" is a combination of the two; the bi-tonality here is purely cerebral but the final chords are warmly romantic. The word "warmly" may provide a clue. A careful analytical listening to "La Péri" will show that the re-action is coming from the senses; similar treatment applied to the complete Lutyens Concerto will show it to be coming from the mind. While the mind can often transfer to or combine its reactions with the senses, it does not happen the other way round. Romanticism is conjured up by means of warmth or bitterness of harmony. Classicism in its purest form is cold and calculating. The difference is the same as that between claret with the chill off, and cold water.

(1) Tovey suggests that this was loose-speaking on Beethoven's part—"A Companion to Beethoven's Piano Sonatas." (Associated Board).

Later reading will reveal further facets of this question. For the moment it may be said that Romanticism is under a cloud because of the fear of sentimentalisation. However, this is not a very convincing argument because it is put forward by those who have not sufficient technique to avoid what they have learnt in the works of Liszt and Scriabin, and other subjective composers. Politics appear to have entered the arena (1) and personal feelings are said to be of individual interest only and not the concern of others. The possibility of excluding personal feelings has not yet been proved and the pendulum which swings the other way is regarded askance as being too purely formal. The composer often has to choose a middle course, with the result that far too many attempt what is outside their own particular orbit. Paradoxically enough, it is often the most formal composers who protest the most vehemently against formalism.

It would appear, therefore, that Tchaikowsky should be anathema in those socially-significant circles who advocate music with no subjective romanticism. However, Tchaikowsky is a national hero (or monument) in those places, both in the symphonies and the ballets. The former are the quintessence of subjective romanticism; the latter that of pure fantasy and unreality; so the situation is involved and contradictory, to say the least.

The composer must choose his own path and he will do that instinctively. He cannot deliberately decide for himself nor can anyone decide for him. If he is brought up on a diet of Hindemith and "Ludus Tonalis", he will probably follow that direction. If he is nurtured on Liszt, Scriabin and Debussy, he will undoubtedly become romantic. This will always occur during the stages of youthful enthusiasms and is all to the good. In my student days we queued to hear "L'Aprés—Midi" and the "Pathétique" Symphony, and that was no longer ago than 1914. In the case of the Symphony, history is repeating itself. The natural and normal swing away from this type of music led to a severe Classicism, but the advent and advocacy of Rachmaninoff put a brake upon it. However, while there must be classicism and the abstract outlook in romantic music, (strange though it may seem) the reverse cannot apply. Classicism and the classical outlook imply workmanship, device, and all the elements which make well-contrived music. In themselves they may make romantic music; but romantic thought and impulse cannot, theoretically speaking, be obtruded into abstract music. In illustration of these points take Ex. 2, Chap. 5. Here there is a certain amount of rhythmic vitality, but otherwise the Canon is simply—a Canon and nothing else. It so happens that in "The Art of Fugue" and "A Musical Offering" Bach does in many places impinge an emotional state on the cerebral lines, but not everybody is Bach and few "classroom fugues" are anything but musical mathematics, with a certain amount of rhythmic stimulation inevitable in fast-moving contrapuntal music. For the other illustration take any middle section of almost any Symphony, be it by Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, or Brahms, and the symphonic devices will be seen to express several emotional (romantic) conditions.

The Anti-Romantic movement naturally eschews all the principles of Romanticism, but does not necessarily return to Classicism. Indeed, it would abolish the classical forms of Sonata, Symphony, etc., as being altogether too redundant. It advocates instrumental contrast rather than balance, and anything which may be said to combine or "match" is vetoed for that very reason. Programmatic impulses, emotional technique and all feeling must go by the board, not because the return to classical forms is necessary but because the romantic principle is utterly outmoded and too personal to the composer himself. Rhythm has to be brought out of its thematic context and placed in relief for its own sake, and instead of being incidental, must be radical. There is not very much difference, therefore, between the Anti-Classicist and the Anti-Romanticist save that, of the two, the former is the more destructive since he does not seek to build; the latter does admit the growth of an idea. Many composers who maintain that they are in the ranks of the Anti-Romanticists do not verify that claim in their music, and while their sincerity is not

(1) and spoilt everything.

in question, they do not appear to have very much consistency—they do not hesitate to write both operas and ballets, for example. However, their tenets do not seek to justify any deficiency in themselves with regard to their musical and technical equipment.

There is nothing "right" or "wrong" in all these expressions, if the end justifies itself. To attempt to dictate to a composer in what "-ism" he should or should not write is pure impertinence.

Conviction is one thing, but the preaching of an arbitrary doctrine is another. The zealot has no tolerance, and without tolerance, music finds her democracy sorely assailed. This democracy implies the right to write and think as the individual wishes. The history of music has passed from the classicism of formal and intellectual beauty to the romanticism of avowed human feeling. That it is returning to the former principle is not reactionary because there is no sign of a return to earlier techniques. If this were to happen, then the term "reactionary" would be faithfully applied.

There is, however, good in most things. One may not like a particular expression but that does not mean that the expression is necessarily mis-directed. Certain "-isms", to the mind of the writer, are mis-directed, but he anxiously awaits the refutation of this theory. The "-isms" have long ceased to arouse excitement and demonstration. It may be interesting to quote the extract from "The Times" of some years ago with which Dr. Percy Scholes concludes the third volume of "The Listener's History of Music" (1). The scene is laid in Italy and it should be said that Marinetti was an Italian propagandist of the *avant-garde* movement which he propagated there as far back as 1907.

> "Small wonder that the audience grew so furious that towards the end the actors could hardly be persuaded to come on the stage at all. Marinetti himself, who fought well for Italy during the war (that was, in the First World War), supported the bombardment almost without flinching, although he was hit on the head several times by apples and tomatos and his dress shirt was spotted with tomato juice, but the company was not quite so brave. When Futurist artists came on the stage carrying paintings they had achieved, they used their masterpieces quite frankly as shields.
>
> At one time when the curtain was down a member of the audience dashed on to the stage to fill his pockets with ammunition that was lying there, but one of the younger Futurists, saw him and pursued him, giving him a mighty kick as he jumped into the nearest box, and thereafter the audience was definitely hostile (*sic*). A vase, several saucers, and five and ten centisimi pieces were hurled at the actors, and the leading lady received a severe blow over the eye from an unripe tomato. The occupants of the orchestra stalls suffered considerably from tomato juice and beans. And the performance came to a premature end when the actors themselves began to hurl vegetables and fruit back at the audience.
>
> After the theatre had closed, Marinetti himself was badly handled by the mob in the street because he refused to return their money and he had to be rescued by troops. He had certainly succeeded in rousing the crowd, but it is doubtful if anybody drew any profit from the performance except Marinetti himself, who obviously understands the art of advertising.
>
> There would appear to be little future for Futurism, and readers may sleep quietly in their beds".

The moral of this, of course, is that if one goes to this type of production, one must expect something rather out of the ordinary! Anyhow, fruit and vegetables are not usually sold in theatres, not even in Italy; the persecution, therefore, was pre-arranged.

We do not have this kind of thing nowadays, but it may be as well to conclude this section with two extracts, one from Arnold Haskell's "Diaghileff" (2), and the other

(1) O.U.P. (2) Gollancz.

from Romola Nijinsky's "Nijinsky" (1).

"The smart crowd behaved like hooligans and pandemonium was let loose. Stravinsky, in the wings, hung on to Nijinsky's collar to prevent him rushing on to the stage, while Diaghileff in a frenzy ordered the lights first off and then on, and Astruc shouted, 'first listen, then hiss'. The Dowager Countess de Pourtales informed Astruc, as she swept out, that if he repeated such foolery it was the last time she would be seen in his theatre".

Romola Nijinsky says:

"People whistled, insulted the performers and the composer, shouted, laughed. Monteux threw desperate glances towards Diaghileff, who sat in Astruc's box and made signs to him to keep on playing. Astruc in this indescribable noise ordered the lights turned on, and the fights and controversy did not remain in the domain of sound, but actually culminated in bodily conflict. One beautifully dressed lady in an orchestra box stood up and slapped the face of a young man, who was hissing in the next box. Her escort rose, and cards were exchanged between the men. A duel followed next day. Another Society lady spat in the face of one of the demonstrators. La Princesse de P. left her box saying 'I am sixty years old, but this is the first time anyone has dared to make a fool of me'. At this moment Diaghileff, who was standing livid in his box, shouted 'Je vous en prie, laissez achever le spectacle'. And a temporary quieting-down followed, but only temporary. As soon as the first tableau was finished the fight was resumed. I was deafened by this indescribable noise, and rushed back stage as fast as I could. There it was as bad as in the auditorium. The dancers were trembling, almost crying; they did not even return to their dressing rooms".

The cause of all this pother? "Le Sacré de Printemps". This kind of thing happened often in the past with works as different as Ravel "Valses nobles et sentimentales" and Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire". Nowadays nobody seems to be roused by anything and these three works in question are all accepted and played in the normal course of concert giving. (2)

There is a lesson in all this; but it must be pointed out that these three works were all sincere and were not written with the tongue in the cheek. Such spoofing of the public as composers may attempt will surely be found out and commented upon, for the genuine expression has a ring about it which the spurious lacks, no matter how distasteful the former may be at the time.

IMPRESSIONISM

This is purely imaginative. It may find its impulse from landscape painting or it may be a vague stretch of sound which gives the "impression" of something or other not always clear to the listener. In this respect Debussy's "Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune" is a case in point, for its application to Mallarmé's poem cannot be realised without previous knowledge. On the other hand, the same composer's "La Mer" is perfectly understandable and realisable. The word itself is a misnomer in music, but no one has as yet found a substitute.

Although it is convenient to describe Debussy as the first of the musical Impressionists, Impressionism itself made its appearance much earlier. One instance of this is Berlioz' "Scéne aux Champs" in the "Symphonie Fantastique", while, later, César Franck's "Les Eolides" suggests its subject through semitonal melodies and chromatic harmony. The distance between Franck and Debussy is not great. Franck advocated complete freedom of progression within the bounds of tonality. Debussy denied tonality. Franck used

(1) Gollancz.

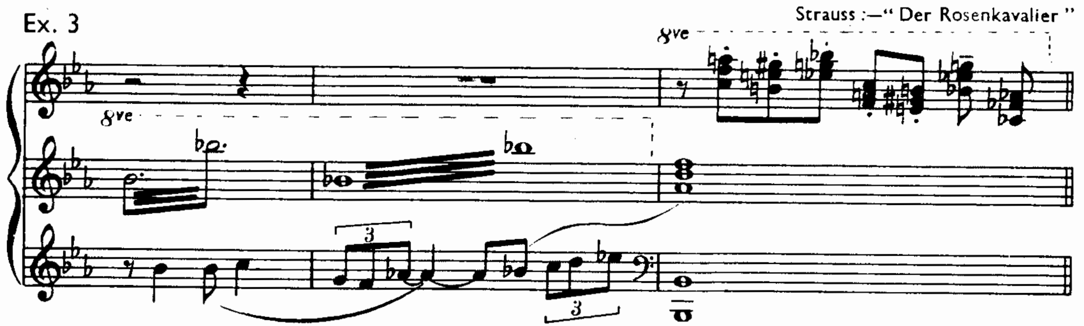
(2) I believe there is only one instance of a British composer requiring police protection after a concert of his works; so perhaps British music is not really adventuresome.

successive dominant ninths as a means of modulation; Debussy used the same chord with no thought of modulation because he denied key—yet Debussy did not completely eschew tonality in practice because his harmonies fall into definite tonal entities and are not as "key-free" as is maintained in certain quarters. In this way Debussy extended the Franck principle. The emancipation of the dominant ninth was suggested by Franck and established by Debussy. In between times there was Erik Satie (1866-1925) who accomplished the emancipation by using it as a concord; but he frequently followed it by another, affording a text book resolution. This inter-relation of three widely divergent personalities is something quite remarkable, and not enough emphasis is made on it in histories of music.

Debussy found himself in an *impasse* because of the limitations of scope of the whole-tone scale which precludes variety. The ear undergoes a pleasant sensation, but the harmonic limitations very quickly pall.

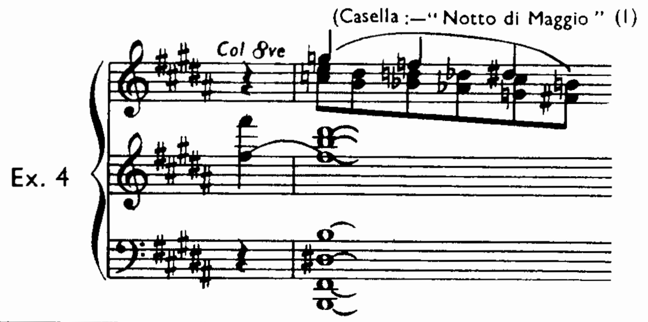
Impressionism has disappeared to-day as a living impulse. It is still loosely applied to works of an objective character. Albert Roussel's triptych "Evocations" (of India) are certainly impressionistic but far too clearly defined for sheer Impressionism. The nearest approach to an Impressionist Symphony is Vinçent d'Indy's "Jour d'Eté sur la Montagne" but this is more nearly related to Beethoven's conception of the "Pastoral Symphony" than to Impressionism as generally understood. In this country one can point to two works which show facets of the principle. Holst's "Neptune, the Mystic" from "The Planets" is pure Impressionism and nothing more than a series of nebulous sounds. The other one can be found in certain moments in "The Garden of Fand" by Sir Arnold Bax (1883).

However, one often finds impressionistic chords in unexpected places. These are used to give a splash of colour and are suggestive rather than evocative.



The glockenspiel chords appear whenever mention of the Silver Rose is made. They evoke a silver rose no more than anything else, but the glockenspiel tinkle suggests glitter. In this example there is a striking use of two traditions and the superimposition of the impressionistic chords lightens the rather ordinary music underneath them.

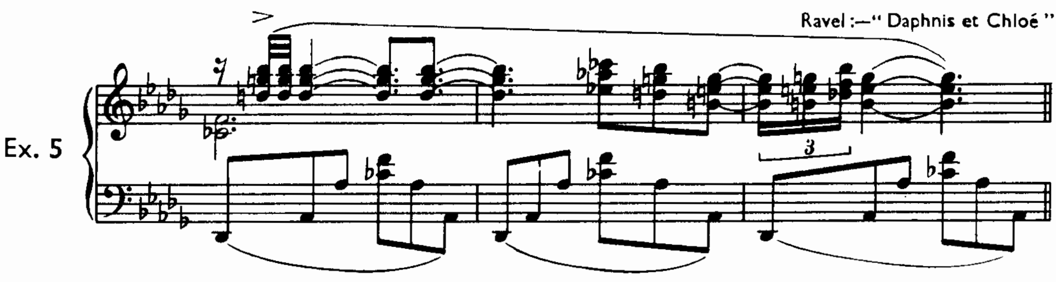
In the next example, by Alfredo Casella the wind instruments wind their way through the harmonic pedal point, eventually coming to roost on a concord.



(1) Quoted in "The Evolution of Music" (Casella)

Among the composers to whom the word "Impressionist" has been wrongly applied is Maurice Ravel. His music is not in the least vague or indeterminate, and is distinctly tonal in quality—it was only towards the end of his life that he began to experiment in bi-tonality and then not with any great success. The next passage is clearly in the key of G flat, the harmonic pedal maintaining close hold upon that tonality until the moment of resolution.

Ex. 5



It will be noticed that it is the insistence of the harmonic pedal which binds the evocative chromaticism of the upper parts together.

Every composer goes through a period of quasi-Impressionism. The stepping stone from classical to "modern" harmonic freedom still seems to be that of the whole-tone-scale; but they pass through it, and do not remain in it because of the restrictions and limitations.

EXPRESSIONISM

This is the opposite approach of Impressionism, since it is concerned with the innermost feelings of the composer. It is, therefore, an elaborate expression of Romanticism. It bears little relation to its sister-art, painting, although the expressionist painter Kandinsky claims a definite urge from and parallel with music. Schoenberg has painted some striking phantasms which stand quite apart from his musical technique and impulse.

Expressionism began to make itself felt at the beginning of the second decade of this century. Its life was not long enough to make any very deep impression or impact because the abstract endeavours of the immediate post-first-war years were something so novel in the experience of musicians at that time that they drew attention away from any other expression. It may be doubted if the term is anything but an excuse to avoid "romanticism" or "subjective romanticism" and should be used with care. Examples can be found in any subjective composer from Tchaikowsky onwards.

REALISM

This originated with those composers who tried to reproduce concrete mobile objects in terms of musical sounds. It has lately taken an ideological turn and has become an ideal with certain politically-conscious composers who see social politics in every art expression.

The two most celebrated and, indeed, notorious works in this "—ism" are "Pacific 231" by Arthur Honegger and "The Music of the Machines" by Alexander Mossolov (1900). These works reproduce the nearest approach in musical sound to the noises made by the objects in question. This is not the same as evocative music which brings up a picture or circumstance to the listener; the composer of the former deliberately set out to imitate an enormous CPR Engine and of the latter, an Iron Foundry. Evocative music constantly appears in Film scores which do not pretend or attempt to transfer the incidental noises to the orchestra but help to speed on the picture and tighten the emotion of the moment by music of hard regular pulsation. Such music is not intended for performance away from the picture for which it was written. The two works quoted above,

however, are intended for concert use. The argument against this is that it is outside the function of music to imitate anything for the mere purpose of so doing, and that if a listener wants to hear the noises of a railway engine or of heavy machinery, he should go to a railway station or foundry and listen to the originals. This is perfectly logical and not unreasonable; but if the works are satisfactory in themselves as music, then no one can gainsay them.

In the case of "Pacific 231" we have a well-balanced and exciting symphonic poem which is satisfactory both as symphonic and as objective music. In "The Music of the Machines" the composer has succeeded in reproducing the sounds but has gone no further. Written during the early period of the Soviet revolution, when artists of all kinds were required to take their inspiration from the "good earth round them" and the achievements of the workers, together with the hymning of the new system, it was misdirected owing to the vague nature of the official doctrinaires. Mossolov, therefore, fell into disgrace and in spite of his operas, sonatas and other works, does not seem to have risen to favour again.

It is true to say that the work is a remarkable transfer of the noises of the foundry to the orchestra, but once one has heard it, the novelty disappears, and for what purpose and to what end save to extol the energies of the People, remains obscure.

Honegger tried to do much the same thing in his symphonic poem "Rugby," but this was indefinite for it translated into music nothing which could be recognised as any aspect of a game of Rugger except considerable excitement, which is an easy effect to get and cannot be pinned down to any particular object. In the theatre he was extremely successful in his music to "The Tempest," in which the Prelude is as good a piece of dirty weather as can be found anywhere; but the intention here was to prelude the play and not to write a storm piece.

Richard Strauss in "Don Quixote" realistically reproduced the bleating of the sheep on stopped horns. In his "Alpine Symphony" he used a wind machine, which is outside the realm of music. Such effects were very fashionable at one time.

The American composer George Antheil (1900) went as far as may be considered practically reasonable by scoring his "Ballet Mécanique" for anvils, aeroplane propellers, two octaves of electric bells, motor horns, sixteen player-pianos controlled from a single switchboard, and pieces of tin and steel. This in 1927, was considered the very last thing in up-to-dateness and forward progress. The effects are easy to obtain, since they are mainly rhythmic, and with electric bells of different pitches, one can have some fine games. (I do not propose to devote a chapter to these ultra-musical instruments). When Hindemith wrote his opera "News of the Day" he incorporated typewriters in the score; this can be justified because the work was concerned with newspapers and perhaps it is better to have a well-regulated rhythm of typewriters than to let the typists cry havoc at their will. (I have been unable to see a score of this work). Similarly, in his opera "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges" Ravel imitates on clarinets the meowing of cats, and imitates it well. This being a necessity in the opera, he cannot be gainsaid because it is surely better to translate the noise through orchestral instruments than to trust to luck that two cats will make suitable protest at the right moment when their tails are pulled.

It would appear that Realism is necessary in the theatre but *de trop* in the concert hall.

The other aspect of Realism, its politicial application, is a different and a serious matter because those who aim at it strike at some of the world's greatest music.

Social Realism has invaded the realm of music where it is considered to be a reflection of the community, but be it noted, of one side only, that side not including the composer himself whose duty is, apparently, to provide music extolling life around him which everyone can understand all at once and which has no subjective taint about it. This immediately wipes off such little things as "The Forty-Eight" and Beethoven's late String Quartets because they are regarded as mere formalism, which is an abomination;

but music constructed solely upon a formal basis with no aesthetic considerations at all never has lived a long life and these particular works are very much alive.

Composers who believe in this system must mix with the People. They usually do so in any case, but they have to undertake the task with grim earnestness and the realisation that they are contributing to a mighty effort to "give the People what they like". Anything which does not meet with the approval of the authorities is music basically unpopular with the masses. The masses, therefore, appear to be more than inordinately naïve. This strikes down all the "light music" which has ever been written, in addition to those works which time has established as among the greatest monuments of human musical achievement. Under the illusion that they are progressive, the advocates of this principle prove that they are reactionaries of the worst kind. It was one of Hitler's tenets that as much light music as possible, understandable by all and sundry, who dope the People into oblivion of the facts of life around them. Although decrying this actual music, the present advocates of the principle simply urge for another equally understandable type, written on worn-out formulas and in outmoded technique which preclude any kind of individuality. This ridiculous nonsense brings music into a kind of "free for all" and woe betide any composer who writes anything beyond the comprehension of the controlling individuals who condescend to think for the unfortunate People incapable of thinking for themselves. In other words, a complete new technique and repertoire is required; this should give an enormous amount of work to those who must necessarily write it.

Alas, this is nothing new. It all happened to a lesser degree during the French Revolution and the music of that period died immediately at its close. The twentieth-century musical Dictators take themselves very seriously. They are of no great note themselves and although they declaim against the B.B.C. Third Programme as "a closed shop for the decadent few", none have as yet forbidden performance of their works in that programme.

The composer who is attracted to this form of Realism must realise that he is liable to censure from some self-appointed body competent in its own right to decide if he is anti-social or not. He must sacrifice his freedom of thought on the altar of social idealism and write in strict accordance with the "official directive". This vetoes the use of "bourgeois discords", so perhaps nothing further need be said.

Musical Realism had a short life. In the course of musical composition it played an exciting part and was always intriguing and provocative. It called for consummate skill on the part of the composer but it was not long before it was realised to be a completely unnecessary "-ism".

FORMALISM

Musical formalism is concerned with music which maintains its architecture as its sole "raison d'être". It is not necessary to dwell upon it for long because, as I have pointed out, such a principle has never resulted in a living art. To quote Vincent d'Indy again (and he has been quoted many times during the course of this book), "it is the material which decides the form, not the form the material". Composers cannot help but find their ideas falling into some framework or other, and this framework is determined as the work progresses through the composer's ordinary technique. Much music which is a model of form is of first-rate quality but is not necessarily purely formal; this simply means that the ideas are well-balanced, not that the composer put d'Indy's dictum into reverse.

NATIONALISM

This plays an important role in the spirit as well as in the technique of music. Technically it influences the style of the music, for cultures with pronounced characteristics cannot keep them out of their art; indeed, they should not try to do so. It is often maintained that there is no nationalistic music and that there is simply *music* by composers of all nationalities. This is not entirely true. It is impossible to overlook the particular traits of certain composers, and to understand their circumstances is to understand their music more fully. There are many composers whose origin is apparent only in the nature of their technique; their music contains little trace of any cultural characteristic. It has been said that Teutonic music is not really distinguishable for any feature of technique or of spirit, and that its qualities are noticeable from certain vague and indefinable elements which lie mostly in traditional harmony. With this view it is possible to agree only up to a point. It depends on the composer. It is the cheerful gaiety of Schubert which points to him as a Viennese, and this gaiety is something which can be defined only in sound and not in words. In his book "Sixteen Symphonies" [1] Mr Bernard Shore, the viola player, suggests that Mendelssohn might be mistaken for a superior Saint-Saens, and Schubert a superior Dvorak. Neither of these hypotheses is accurate. Mr Shore also describes Schubert as a German, which is untrue; he was an Austrian, and in comparison with German composers, the difference becomes obvious. Schubert rings with a clearer tone than Mendelssohn, who in turn rings more genuinely than Saint-Saens. He also says that it is impossible to guess from his music that Mendelssohn was a Jew. If Mendelssohn is placed next to Saint-Saens, the similarity is quite plain in so far as both were slick; but Mendelssohn was the more polished of the two. Place Meyerbeer alongside them, and the garishness lacking in both Mendelssohn and Saint-Saens is at once supplied; all three were Jewish. I do not propose to follow this Semitic problem because we are concerned with the technique of musical expression, and the Hebrew race, being nomadic, claims its own culture from the various nationalities of its composers. If anything, one would say that the music has a warmth and colour which reflects the Orient somewhat palely sometimes but none the less surely; this can be found in Ernest Bloch (1880). I am not prepared to say that there is anything more clearly definable about it. It is one of those things of which one has an inkling. Both Mendelssohn and Saint-Saens were wealthy; one can realise this in the care-free fluency of their music which lacks the humanities conjured up into art by human suffering, privations, or material difficulties of any sort.

One recognises a French composer by his ineffable charm and polish and his super-refinement. Now and again there are exceptions. Hector Berlioz has no charm and no refinement. Vincent d'Indy has polish and refinement, but little charm. Albert Roussel has the vigour so often lacking in French music, and considerable polish. Debussy and Ravel have exquisite refinement, and Gabriel Fauré everything except strength. A characteristic feature of French music is the felinity of the melodic line; but this is not an element to which one can point with concrete certainty French music is the most variable and eclectic culture of all. It is hard to resist a smile when the well-worn tag of reproach is handed to Edouard Lalo (1823-1892) and his "Symphonie espagnole" for Violin and Orchestra as being "Spanish music through French eyes," because Lalo was half Spanish himself. When Chabrier (1841-1894) wrote his "Espäna," he used Spanish folk tunes and rhythms. He did not essay any other nationalism. Lalo, however, wrote a "Norwegian Rhapsody" and a "Concerto Russe," so he may perhaps be credited with considerable cosmopolitanism.

Spanish nationalism in all its different regional cultures is perfectly easy to copy, but Spaniards tell me that no matter how close the copy, the native can always detect it.

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(1) Longman's

Bohemianism is also apparent, but the qualities of Bohemia and Moravia are quite different. The latter sometimes goes to the East for his culture, like Leoš Janăcek (1854-1928) but two aspects of national life are apparent in the folk music used by Smetana and the national rhythms and romances by Dvorak.

Hungarian music is usually confused with that of the nomadic gypsy. Zoltán Kodály (1882) and Béla Bartók (1881-1945) are very different expressions and it is doubtful if the nationalistic qualities are very observable by the uninitiated.

Russian nationalism as propagated by Glinka (1803-1857) and "The Five" is again formulated on a basis of folk melody and national colour, this being reflected in the orchestration. Soviet nationalism is not yet formed and until allowed to evolve on its own without official guidance, it never will be; but its principles are a reflection of those of Glinka.

The Italians are recognisable mostly by their love of opera of a particular kind. Their symphonic music holds traces of traditionalism of a cosmopolitan character not far removed from late Ninteenth Century French Romanticism.

What is British Music? It is as indefinable as the British race (1). On the other hand *English* Music is clear for all to see. It is based modally on Folk Songs and a discreet use of diatonic discords. Even this has more than one facet—the Englishry of Vaughan Williams differs by being simpler than that of E. J. Moeran (1894-1951) and Gordon Jacob (1895), the latter often being held up as a typical example (although personally I would emphasise the former); but there is no gainsaying Vaughan Williams who has formulated his own technique and revived and established the true English way of music. Too many British composers go a-whoring after foreign models. Some now look to Schoenberg, having passed through a long influence of Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Strauss. Others bend the knee to Stravinsky. From this confusion of models nothing absolutely concrete has, or can be, evolved. If the worship of the foreign article were not so pervervid something might result; but too many of the leaders of so-called contemporary thought seem incapable of evolving themselves. Fortunately their influence is slight and in due course of (a very long) time it will be the English tradition which will survive. We still await the great figures from those regions which have great traditions and wonderful history; I refer to Scotland and Wales.

It is given to few so to absorb an alien culture that origin is completely forgotten if, indeed, it was ever realised, as did Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) who was born a Czech and who spent his early life in Moravia. His music suggests this in no single instance and it is that of a true Austrian. To separate Germany and Austria, think of Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and Anton Bruckner (1824-1896). These two alone will give a clue, and if Richard Strauss is added, then the difference at once becomes obvious.

The composer must stick to his own culture. If he is alien-born, he should not make any pathetic attempt to write in the style of his adopted culture, particularly when it is one marked with any strong characteristic.

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(1) and Constitution.

CHAPTER FIVE

"-ALITIES"

Polytonality—Pantonality (or Omnitonality)—Atonality—Polymodality—Polyrhythm

-ALITIES

The "-alities" which will now be discussed all spring from the older Tonality which has always been in the process of widening itself. Many years ago composers began to realise that key relationship was not a crucial argument of music and that music can go where it will in that respect, although there should be some definite tonality somewhere all the time. Key relationship and tonality are not the same thing, in spite of what some expert critics may say. A phrase in A major followed by one in D flat has no key relationship whatsoever except a pedantic one of the latter being the flattened sub-dominant of the former; but each phrase has a definite tonality. César Franck emphasised this; earlier, Beethoven had no scruples about writing the second subject of the first movement of the "Waldstein Sonata" in the key of E major, the work in question being centred in that of C; to maintain that the second subject, therefore, is in the key of the mediant with the major third is purely theoretical, for otherwise all keys can be co-related—on paper.

The present day tendency, therefore, has gone further and further away from a system of relationship through dominants, but this has not yet resulted in any complete overthrow of tonality. The whole thing has been expanded and although superficially there appears to be tonality only by courtesy, as it were, closer examination shows in nine cases out of ten that very, very few composers have convincingly and successfully eliminated it, for tonality is the means with which the composer obtains variety and contrast although there is a theory that modulation simply lifts the music on to another, plane and the ear registers it either higher or lower, and then only temporarily. It would appear, therefore, that extreme contrast of tonality is a *sine qua non*—the Beethoven Sonata cited earlier is some testimony to this. Consequently, men's minds have always stretched out forward and in the course of time have postulated many "-alities", some of which have passed into oblivion through their sterility while others are still the arena of argument and theory. Viewing them all objectively, one may say that everything is feasible which is constructive; that which is destructive and negative cannot form the basis of art in any shape or form. It must not be thought, however, that all these "-alities" are necessarily new; most of them in fact, are exceedingly old but when put forward, seemed too iconoclastic and unnecessary at that time. Music has steadily grown more complex and the older respect for tradition and custom has only within the last fifty years been broken through, if not yet broken down. However, the interesting point is that everything has its roots in tradition and even the most violent departures from respectability have in the end been found to be simply expansions.

Dicta by two distinguished French composers should again be quoted and borne in mind during the reading of the following pages: Vincent d'Indy:—"All processes are good, provided that they are the means to an end (1) and not the end in themselves" meaning that there is no merit at all in writing in any "-ism" or "-ality" *per se*: Paul Dukas:—"There is no new music; there are only new composers", meaning that there is no absolutely novel technique or expression.

POLYTONALITY

This implies a mixture of tonalities, each melodic line having its own unquestioned tonality. The extremist maintains that there should not at any time be any suggestion of collective tonal correspondence between any of the lines. Many, however, permit an occasional and incidental occurrence of this kind, but a moment of tonal harmony in an

(1) i.e. to making music.

otherwise non-tonal thought unless properly prepared sounds just as much out of the picture as does such a moment when the tonal thought is interrupted by a non-tonal one. In both cases the effect is of someone playing a wrong note. A mixture of styles, therefore, must be carefully avoided.

Polytonality in two or more vertical parts is often referred to as Bi-tonal or Tri-tonal (etc.) Harmony. Such would be the description of the following passage:

The authority for polyphonic polytonality is often claimed in a two-part Canon by J. S. Bach—

but although this certainly provides a precedent it does not provide any full authority. It merely suggests possibilities; but in the texture of its own day, it "ain't 'appy" and if played slowly is also "a bit 'arsh". Dr. Percy Scholes points out that Bach took many points into consideration (1). The fact that the top part is in D minor and the bottom in A minor, with appropriate modulations, gives a tonic and dominant bias. It is organised in such a way that the lines go reasonably "together" if played quickly, rather than slowly (not, of course, in order to make it end sooner); but Bach did not make a practice of polytonality in this manner.

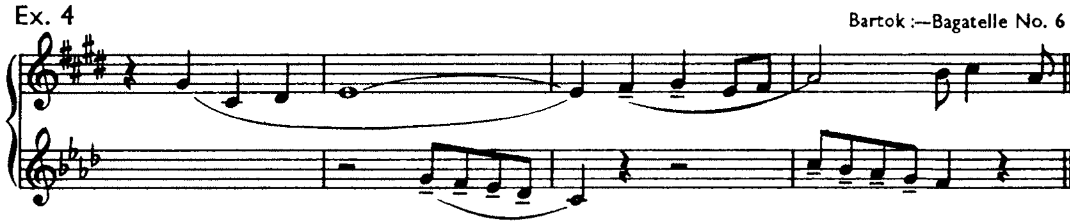
(1) "Oxford Companion to Music" (O.U.P.)

The following passage by Darius Milhaud (1892) shows the process in slender polyphonic texture.

It will be noticed that the second bar of the viola part is a version in diminution of the first bar of the flute, while the only point of real contact lies between the first bar of the viola and the second of the violin. The rising semitones of the clarinet successfully break up any tonal relationship which might occur incidentally in passing. This may possibly raise doubts, as these semitones are quite outside the essentially melodic thought of the other parts.

The harmonic streams of Ex. I sound perfectly acceptable, firstly because of the similar quantities and qualities in the several parts and secondly because of the contrary motion which finds its final achievement not, it is true, in consonance but in less stringent dissonance. The voice has a dangerous entry, but by the time it enters, the ear has become thoroughly assimilated to the idiom. It should be remarked that since everything is placed in contrapuntal relief and contradictory movement, the music is perfectly lucid.

Some composers deliberately write with contradictory key-signatures. This saves accidentals but inflicts some mental strain on the performer. This is not so marked in two slowly moving parts—

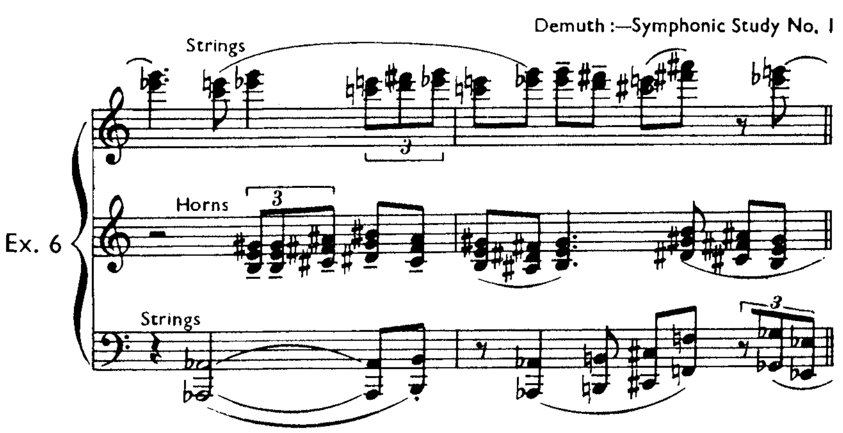


but when the music is pianistically harmonic, the player has to exercise considerable concentration.

Ex. 5 Goossens :—Dance Memories ("Four Conceits")

This, of course, lines up with the Piano Sight-Reading pieces of Antonin Reicha.

In general it may be said that Polytonality is most satisfactory and convincing when the parts are widely separated or distributed. The following passage would sound a confused jumble if the upper parts were lowered an octave. As it is, the planes serve to give edge to each other, assisted, of course, by the orchestral colours.

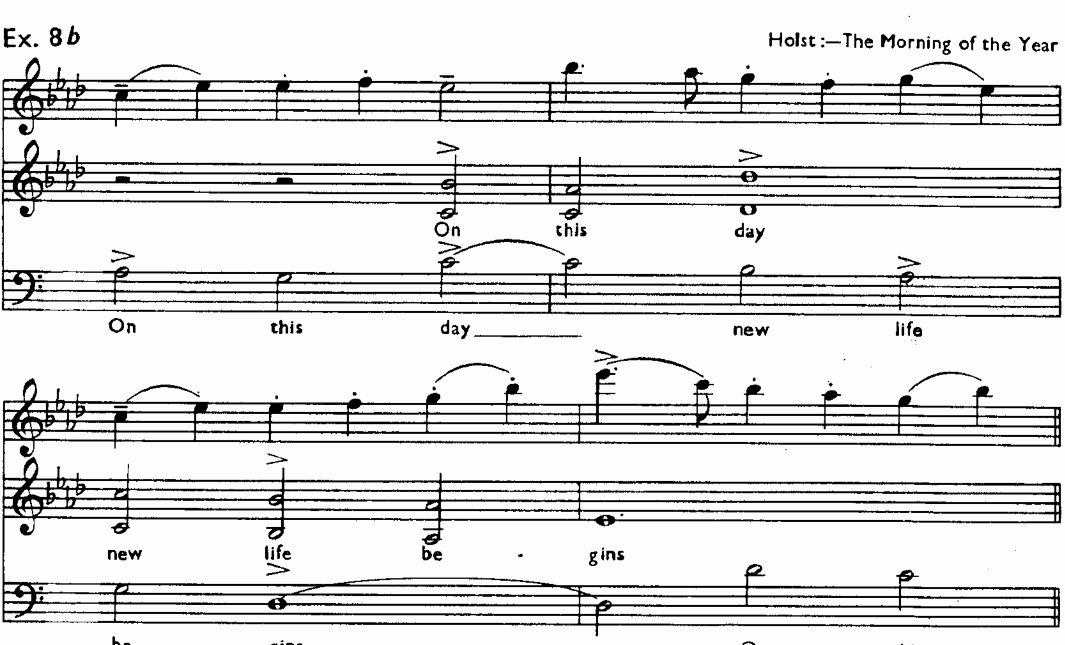


Much depends on the medium. The time has long since passed when Stanford's "black and white test" counted for anything, and it is no longer necessary that an orchestral work should sound convincing on the piano.

This separation of the parts is explained by what is known as the "juxta-position of tones". "A" of the next example is only a compression of "B"—

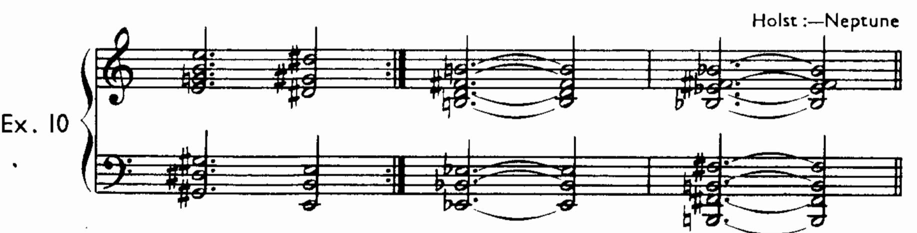
the result being a perfect ordinary diatonic ninth. The polytonal principle can be similarly applied.

If there is this wide distance between the lines, the composer can take care that the conflicting notes do not occur simultaneously; but this is not absolutely necessary, as an occasional clash is not unpleasing.



The Bi-Tonality of the Holst example shows how by this process a melodic line can be made to stand out prominently within the context of the technique rather than by the use of a higher dynamic. Even if the basses were singing and playing quietly against the *forte* of the other parts, the theme would still cut through the opposing tonality (this was proved some years ago in an experiment I made when rehearsing the work with a choral society in West Sussex). It is not safe for the inexperienced composer to dabble too closely with choral Bi-Tonality unless he is certain that his work will be performed by expert singers. Holst's touch in this respect was sure and he knew exactly how far it was practicable to go. The descending semitonal passage in the next extract is perfectly easy since the singers all begin on the same tonality. The difficulty lies not with the descending semitones but with the ability of the sustained voices to keep the pitch.

Instrumentally one is on safer ground, particularly with wind instruments. When Holst wished to delineate something unearthly and completely nebulous in "Neptune, the Mystic" from "The Planets", he used an combined alternation of tonalities.



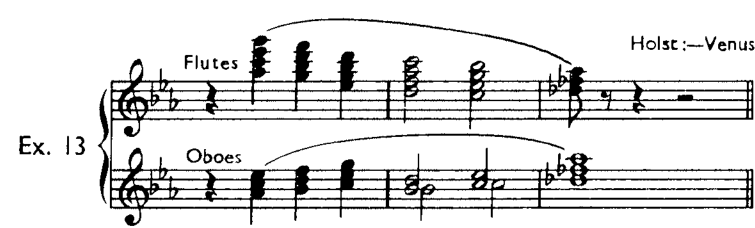
Observe here that the first chord combines G sharp and E minor. On the second impact it becomes an ordinary diatonic seventh on E; but the process becomes more involved and bi-tonal with the third and fourth chords. The second, therefore, is distinctly tonal, the bi-tonal situation being saved, as it were, by the contradictory "G's" in the first.

The required nebulous effect is established right from the first when the two harmonies are alternated as follows:

As the picture becomes increasingly vague, so are the two harmonies telescoped.

An unconvincing example of two-part Polytonality can be found in a piano work by an Italian composer unknown in this country, Giuseppe Ferranti (1890).

This is injudicious Polytonality because it is not consistent, tonal contact being established at the points marked +. The justification lies in the fact that the parts move in contrary motion to a given point. This may or may not have been directed by the subject of the piece, as is the case in "Venus, the Bringer of Peace" from "The Planets" where the union of the approaching dissidents is happily and peacefully consummated.



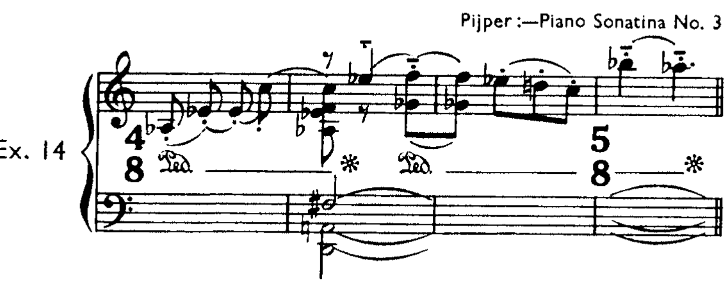
This obviously was intentional, One is not so convinced in the Ferranti example. The impressionistic chords marked ┌──────┐ are simply a series of displaced semitonal appoggiatura resolutions.

More convincing and more consistent is the use of bi-planal harmony and polytonal melody by the important Dutch composer Willam Pijper, whose exploiting of sonorities is based on a system of pure logic. Pijper's Piano Sonatinas and Piano Concerto show the value of slender texture. The momentary clash of dissident harmonies is fascinating to the ear, but the general scholastic approach, abstract to a degree, shows that it is but an extension of tradition. Pijper is careful to keep to bi-tonality. At times the notes in each clef are placed in the same position on the stave and being widely spaced come

(1) Quoted in "The Evolution of Music" (Casella).

within the principle of the juxta-position of tones mentioned in Example 7, but no text-book chord results.

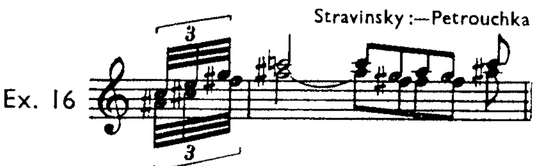
The difference between this slender outlook



and one which is utterly uncompromising

is seen immediately. Casella does not exploit sonorities as much as combine contradictory harmonies. It will be seen that it is necessary to place accidentals against every note—this is more a feature of Atonality. The above example is clearly in two keys, the right hand being in C and the left in C sharp. The work comes off in performance because the bi-planal harmony is consistent; the ear absorbs the two elements without any difficulty, for this reason. However, as much care is needed in this style as in any other.

Close position is admirable for a special effect, such as the shriek of anguish in the following example:

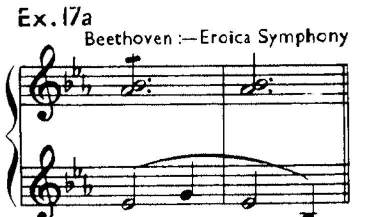


Harmonically this brief passage is a combination of C major and its sharpened sub-dominant. It is successively a diminished third, a minor third, a minor second and another diminished third: The ear hears it as an alternation of a minor and major second, with one intervening minor third. When the passage is used in arpeggio, one harmony following the other, the theorist explains it as F sharp harmony resolving appoggiatura-wise on to C, a convenient way of explaining what the composer himself heard without having recourse to technical thinking. (1)

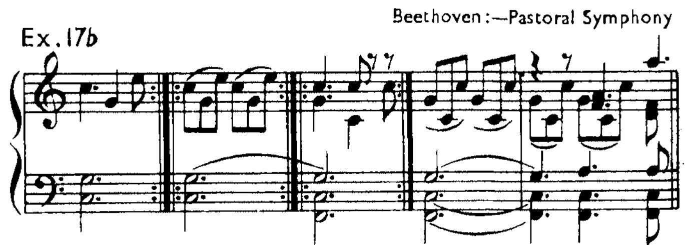
(1) See Ex. 18 Page 86

It must not be regarded as a useful musical "gadget" for similar circumstances. In any case the simultaneous use of dissident harmonies is nothing new. In classical music it is found in

Ex. 17a



Ex. 17b



This combination of tonic and dominant stands out in an otherwise mono-tonal thought. The difference between Beethoven and the twentieth century is that the former used it only incidentally, while it is part of the technique of the latter. It is no more the full authority than is the Bach canon (Ex. 2). It serves simply to show that the idea is not novel. That it did not become generally adopted in the time of Bach and Beethoven indicates only that ears at those periods were not attuned to contradictory sounds any more than are ours to-day (as yet) to Microtonal technique. Authority, however, can be found in the writings and works of Antonin Reicha, but unfortunately Reicha has not survived as a composer and his didactic works have been superseded by others more orthodox.

Polytonality offers many possibilities for a vivid imagination, but the tendency to emphasise the process at the expense of the matter must be carefully avoided. "Visual Counterpoint" is as fatuous as "Aural Painting", both being complete paradoxes, since one is meant to be heard and the other seen—yet at one time there was quite a following for the former. It is recorded that only two things roused Vincent d'Indy to anger, one being the singer who persisted in putting in ornaments and rubato, the other, this afore-mentioned "Visual Counterpoint".

Polytonality is not unrelated to

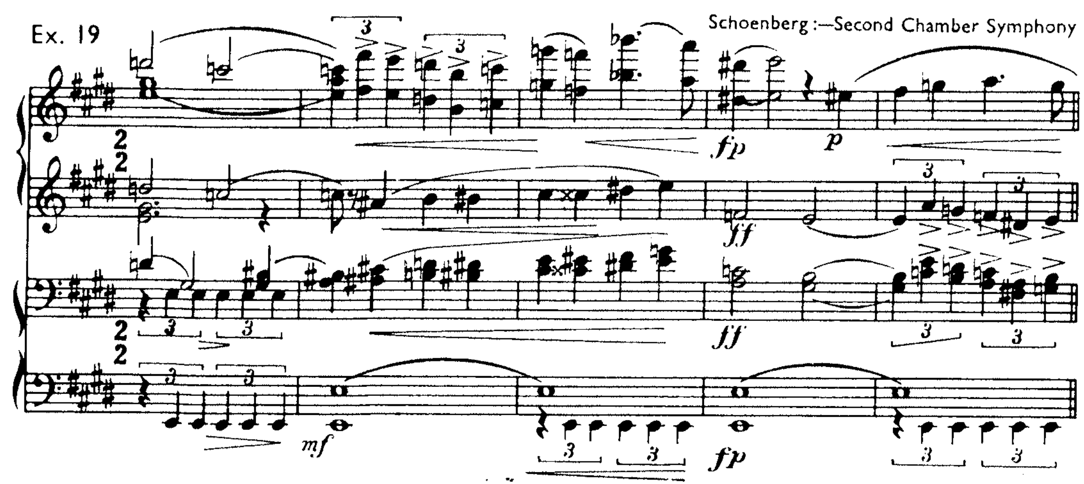
PANTONALITY
or
OMNITONALITY

which imply tonality of entity with no sense of key-relationship.

Ex. 16 is Polytonal; in its next state it is Pantonal.

Ex. 18

Pantonal music may or not be written upon a Twelve-Note-Row; it depends entirely on the Row itself. Schoenberg prefers PANTONALITY, to the more general ATONALITY, for he has never abolished tonality but has extended it. The following extract will illustrate this:



Here the general effect is extremely romantic and emotional, two elements which the followers of Schoenberg try to eliminate. An early example of Pantonality may be seen in this well-known example.

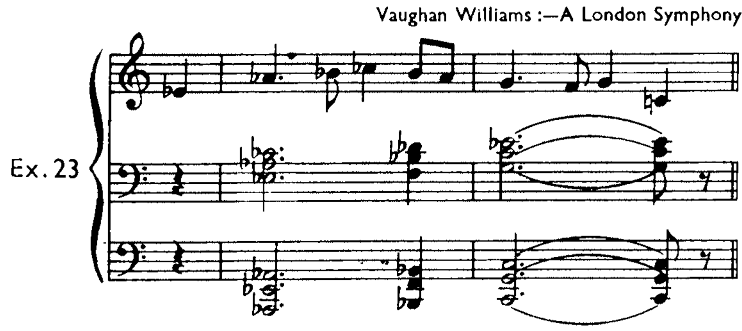
The difference between the outlook of Franck and that of the twentieth century is that Franck deliberately sets out to reach a key, while the twentieth century uses each chord in a vertical position regardless of where it is going. Ultimately it may reach a goal, but that is not the primary intention. Franck's contemporaries complained of his chromaticism and what they thought to be lack of key-relationship; in other words, Franck was too PANTONAL or OMNITONAL for their ears. If there is no key, there can be no chromaticism. Pantonal passages, therefore, deny key relationship but adhere to tonality. Chromatic passages claim key relationship but deny tonality in their semi-tonal progress to their ultimate end. The distance between Ex. 12 and 13 is not really very great; it is the outlook which differs, as I have said.

The most remarkable work ever written in this style is, of course, the opera "Wozzek" by Alban Berg (1885-1935) which would seem to have exhausted all the resources of Pantonality, Omnitonality, and Form. Berg uses all the keys perfectly freely and such is the semitonal generality of the technique that on the few occasions when all twelve semitones are used simultaneously, they are the more impressive. However, the distance between the non-tonal aspect of a moment and the general multi-tonal feeling is not very wide, and, consequently, there is none of the clash of elements which would be felt if the omnitonal writing were monotonal. Berg was a rare genius. He knew exactly how his technique could adapt itself to circumstances. When the depths of human despair are being plumbed to their limits, he temporarily forsakes Omnitonality and for a few bars becomes perfectly tonal and, consequently, almost, unbearably moving. As the music progresses it grows increasingly polytonal until at the climax the thought is completely tortuous. The next example will give a slight

hint of this. No other composer has such power to move us through a change of technique in this manner.

It is not necessary to be semitonal or "chromatic" in Pantonal music and this can be seen in the works of Vaughan Williams especially in the "Pastoral Symphony" where the harmonic streams of perfect triads with their definite tonics and dominants offer constant changes of tonality, each vertical case being a tonal entity.

The serenity and peace which this "black-note-less" writing suggests is opposed to a similar process in "A London Symphony", where the triadic progress is suggestive of another kind of serenity and one which is not so peaceful as directly objective. The succession of three whole-tones gives an atmosphere of mystery and the theme at the top seems to have fitted fortuitously.



A similar instance can be found in the "Romanze" of the fifth Symphony.

Those who feel that Pantonality and the use of common chords lack variety of feeling can find their answer in the rural beauty of Ex. 22, the eerie mystery of Ex. 23 and the spirituality of Ex. 24. This contrast is obtained by the placing of the notes. In the "Pastoral Symphony" the chordal theme appears under the moving triads. In "A London Symphony" it is over the harmonies, while in the Fifth it is in the middle. It is but just to add that the orchestration of Exs. 23 and 24 is similar, which serves to confirm that the placing of notes is of more importance than actual tone colour.

The foundation of all this Pantonal thinking can be seen in Schoenberg's "Five Orchestral Pieces" Op. 16, composed in 1909. Here placing of notes according to tone-colour is the primary factor; it finds its final state in the works of Anton von Webern (1883-1945) which eschew all line and concentrate on pitch and timbre. The clarity of Pantonality is very well shown in this example.

Schoenberg:—No. 2 "Five Orchestral Pieces"

Categorisation is occasionally difficult because the elements of Poly- and Pantonality are so closely allied. Generally speaking it may be said that Polytonality is horizontal, and Pantonality, vertical tonality. However, the question is open with regard to the

beautiful aethereal and mysterious effect of this passage:

The pedal point definitely establishes a tonality. The inner chords are clearly ranged round its centre, but they are not all related. The upper tremolos sometimes afford a point of contact, but taken within the vertical context are mainly away from the harmonic implications of the material. Since the music is clearly evocative, it could come under the heading of Impressionism. Its progress is away from its key centre, the pedal point being the mediant; but this does not give the clue to the particular "-ality" and it provides an interesting example of a combination of the best in all worlds. Its musical beauty is beyond question.

ATONALITY

To the unitiated the word "atonality" represents everything which is horrible. At one time any music which seemed obscure was immediately given this label, regardless of its fitness, and regardless also of the fact that nearly all the now established works, the "classics", were obscure in their time before anyone had ever heard of atonality. Atonality represents the direct negation of everything which has been held to make up music. While it is possible to view Polytonality in terms of bi- or triplanal harmony or counterpoint, such elasticity is impossible with Atonality because it denies and literally forbids any tonality or suggestion of key whatsoever. Thus it is an extremely rigid form of academicism and, at its lowest level is a short cut to composition, since it is not in the least necessary that the contriver should hear what he is writing. The note-row is taken as it stands and in itself must have no tonal implications. It is pure musical carpentry. Unless a note or notes happen to form a tonality, it is impossible to know whether a wrong note is being played without looking at the score. Years ago a well-meaning Clarinettist postulated a problem when he used the wrong clarinet in a chamber work by Gavriel Popov (1904) and no one was any the wiser except the player, and he, only when he happened to notice his mistake after the performance. This is an extreme case and it happened at the time when ears had not become fully attuned to the "new thought". In its simplest form Atonality suggests a badly worked harmony exercise in which the student put down what he *thought* was right. In its more extended usage it convinces by reason of its consistency, but in actual fact there is very little really non-tonal music in existence.

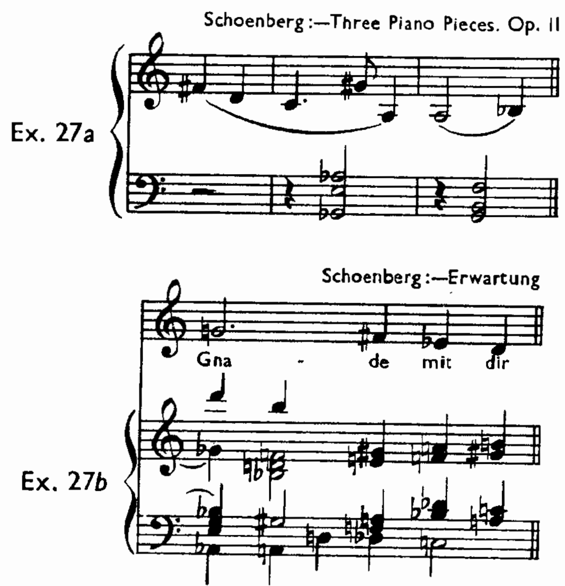
usic which lacked any key-centre and was not based upon
Consequently, its use was rather loose and in the light of
found to have been altogether wrongly applied to many
use it was Matthias Hauer (1883), but much of his music is
"Sinfonietta", which although based on a note-row, is
es. More generally it was applied to Paul Hindemith
stract, composed for the need of a moment, in a state
g was also tarred with it, and in the very early days of
was a deliberate method of throwing over tradition)

Ex. 25

as:—La Peri

91

ne nearly succe... te iconoclasm. I say "nearly" because every now and again the music actually touches a tonal point; but the process is the momentary culmination of the natural progress of the parts. Such points of tonal contact may be seen here

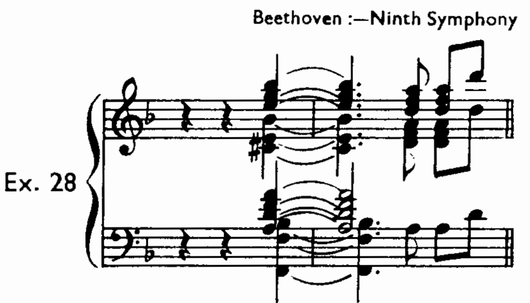


The extension of tonality which Schoenberg maintains he has accomplished may well be found in such passages as these.

The breath of Atonality is its use of canon and other polyphonic devices which have their roots in the very early Canon Cancrizan in which the use of the device carried more weight than the actual musical result. Atonality is not horizontal but vertical, and in this respect it is related to Polytonality in its strictest form, thus forbidding any tonality anywhere at any price. However, the two positions contradict each other, as well they must in the case of Polytonality. Much of Stravinsky's "Le Sacre de Printemps" is more Poly- than Atonal and a good deal is definitely tonal—yet this was one of the first works to be stigmatised as "Atonal"; to-day it is taken in the ordinary stride of music. At first it seemed the complete iconoclasm but much Atonality is visual rather than aural and an enharmonic change may indicate a definite tonality. On the key-board and on wind instruments, it would seem a fallacy. On strings it becomes a matter for the acute ear.

(1) The term "ATONICALITY" (*i.e.* no Tonic) best fits these early attempts.

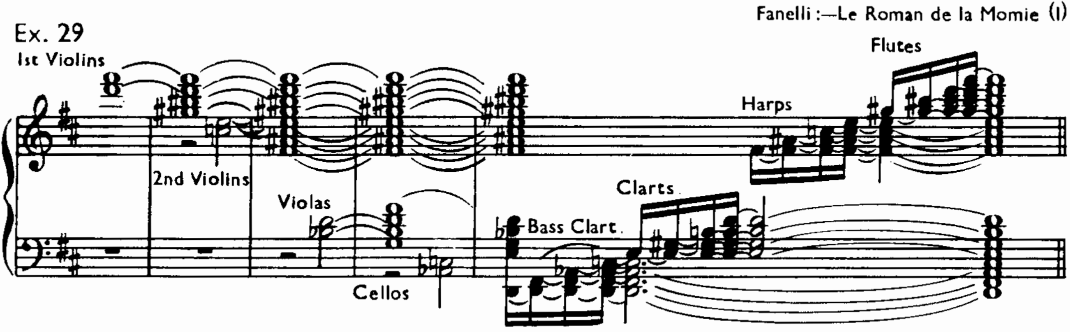
Tonal music can naturally sound as hideous, for the sake of a word, as Atonal. Often the charge of Atonality is laid against something which is absolutely tonal. The following chord



is simply an assemblage of all the notes of the scale of D minor. It is used at a moment of impatience, when Beethoven seems to be trying to find the best material for the finale and had reached a state of desperation with everything that had gone before. Thus it is symbolical as well as musical.

A succession of similar chords would be horrible, and Beethoven does not attempt it. The twentieth century composer would continue along that principle and thus crystalise it as a style.

A chord built in the following manner is certainly Atonal.



The system of thirds will be seen to resolve itself into a series of superimposed sevenths of varying qualities which are determined by the orchestration. For 1886 this is quite remarkable and is as prophetic as the music of Eric Satie who anticipated much of Debussy's technique, and of Charles Koechlin who also anticipated many of these "-isms" and "-alities". Its composer was born in 1860 and died in 1917. A pupil of Alkan (1813-1888) and Léo Delibes (1836-1891), he lived in extreme poverty and obscurity, earning a meagre living as a café pianist. Here he resembles Erik Satie, but Satie was approachable and practical, propagating his views, eccentric though they may seem, through his friends and disciples. Fanelli had none of these advantages and appears to have been content to remain unplayed and unsung. It would be interesting to hear his "Suite rabelaisienne".

The disciples of the Twelve-Note-Row system go further than the master. They eschew feeling in principle but cannot completely avoid it in practice. Rightly or wrongly those who heard the "Three Symphonic Preludes" by Elizabeth Lutyens—one of the Note-Row's most

(1) Quoted in "A Study of Modern Harmony" (Lenormand).

ardent followers—at the 1946 Festival of Contempary Music in London found that they were redolent of "Tristan und Isolde" and the romanticism of that period, being impressed with the beauty of some of the sounds. It would appear that as long as the music moves there is always the "danger" of romantic feeling creeping in, but when it is static nothing but pure sound remains. Some very moving and beautiful sounds have been contrived by Anton von Webern, especially in his works for String Quartet. I have already referred to his technique of placing the notes according to pitch and timbres and the following example will illustrate this, provided that the reader will use his inner ear and imagination.

Webern :—No. II—5 pieces for String Orchestra

Ex. 30

SEHR LANGSAM Rit. Tempo.

1 VIOLINS 2

SOLO VIOLA

VIOLAS arco pizz.

SOLO CELLO

CELLOS arco pizz.

BASSES arco pizz.

Webern appears to be the only consistent atonalist. He and Debussy are the contrivers of some of the most beautiful sounds in music, but of the two, Debussy is the composer.

It is difficult to see how anything can arise or develop from a negative principle, and Atonality has not made much progress since its early advocacy. The composers who use it must either break away from it altogether or become sterile,

POLYMODALITY

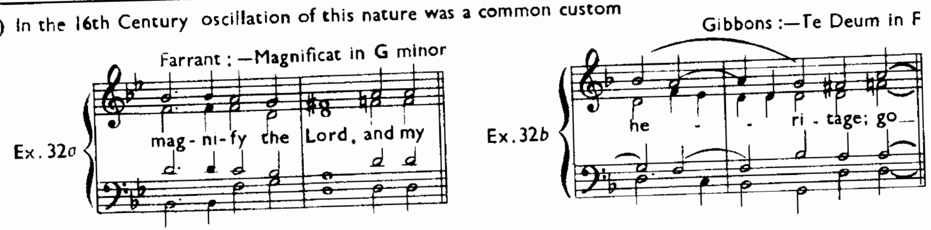
This can mean a combination of major and minor modes in the same or in different keys, or an oscillation between the two. In the older composers there are many instances of modal uncertainty (1).

It is not a new idea.

The next two examples are amazing strokes of genius. Berlioz interrupts the scene on the scaffold at the moment before decapitation with the "Idée Fixe" in G major, returning to the minor for the descent of the knife, finally deciding on the major.

Mahler suddenly changes the whole mood by a modal change.

(1) In the 16th Century oscillation of this nature was a common custom



The Double Quartet of Reicha has already been mentioned.
The oscillating principle is frequently to be found in his pupil, César Franck.

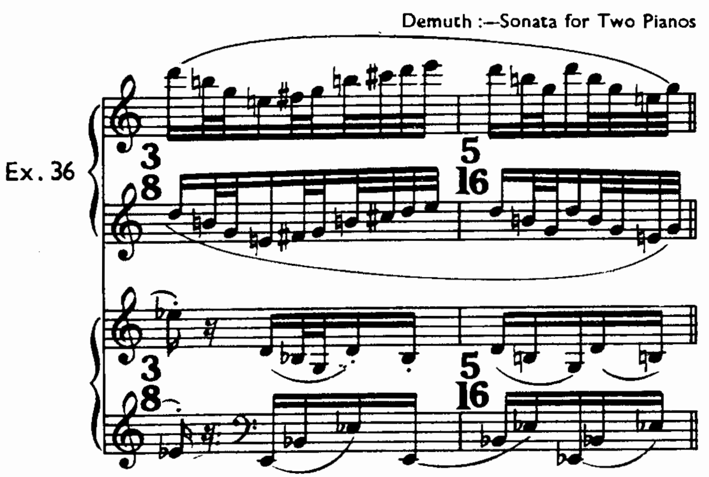
A similar indecision comes at the end of Vaughan Williams' sixth Symphony, where the conflict rages for some considerable time. It is here an oscillation of two tonics.

The convenient notation here has already been remarked upon as being an expedient which should be adopted as often as possible. Were the chords an alternation of written E flat and E minor, the contradictory accidentals would, in time, become intolerably fussy for the eye. The theorist would explain the D sharp and A sharp as appoggiaturas resolving under an inverted pedal point. Of this particular passage. and indeed, movement, the composer himself said in his programme note for the first performance that "the music drifts about contrapuntally with occasional whiffs of themes; at the very end the strings cannot make up their minds whether to finish in E flat major or E minor. They finally decide on E minor, which is, after all, the home key". This is perfectly logical in its conclusion and like so many seemingly abstruse devices, has its text book explanation for those who like such things.

This must not be confused with the Tierce de Picardie which is governed entirely by the laws of the harmonic series and by itself does not constitute Polymodality.

The effect of Polymodality is often whimsical, and the feeling of waywardness is not without its own charm. Like everything else, it must be judiciously used. Walton (1902) uses Polymodality in a masterly manner in his Concerto for Viola and Orchestra which should be studied in detail since a single short illustration here would be quite inadequate. He has preserved perfect balance of technique without writing in the Polymodal style throughout the work. This is one of the few instances which seem to succeed in this respect. Simultaneous polymodal moments are of less frequent occurence than those

which oscillate. In the next example the conflict momentarily sorts itself out in the second bar, the major prevailing over the minor at the point of contact.



This kind of Polymodality is fascinating if used in small doses; but it quickly palls; not so the oscillating kind which imports to the music a gentle swaying uncertainty. As regards notation, the effect of writing two different notes is purely visual, as was seen in Ex. 35. To a lesser degree the same thing applies here.

This, in terms of sound, is an alternation of D flat minor and major; the justification on paper lies in the convenience to the player, and the saving in accidentals.

POLYRHYTHM

This appears constantly in music of all periods. It may be a combination of two or more time-signatures or an alternation of simple with its corresponding compound time. The Elizabethan Madrigalists realised this and followed the elasticity of the text in a graphic and rhythmic manner.

Similar oscillating processes are found in the string "Fantasies" of the period. The most common of the simultaneous process is

where the accents of the individual parts fall naturally in their own positions without any undue or deliberate emphasis being placed on them. The most notable example is in Mozart's "Don Giovanni" where the sounds of simultaneous dance bands weave their accents all round each other.

Ex. 40

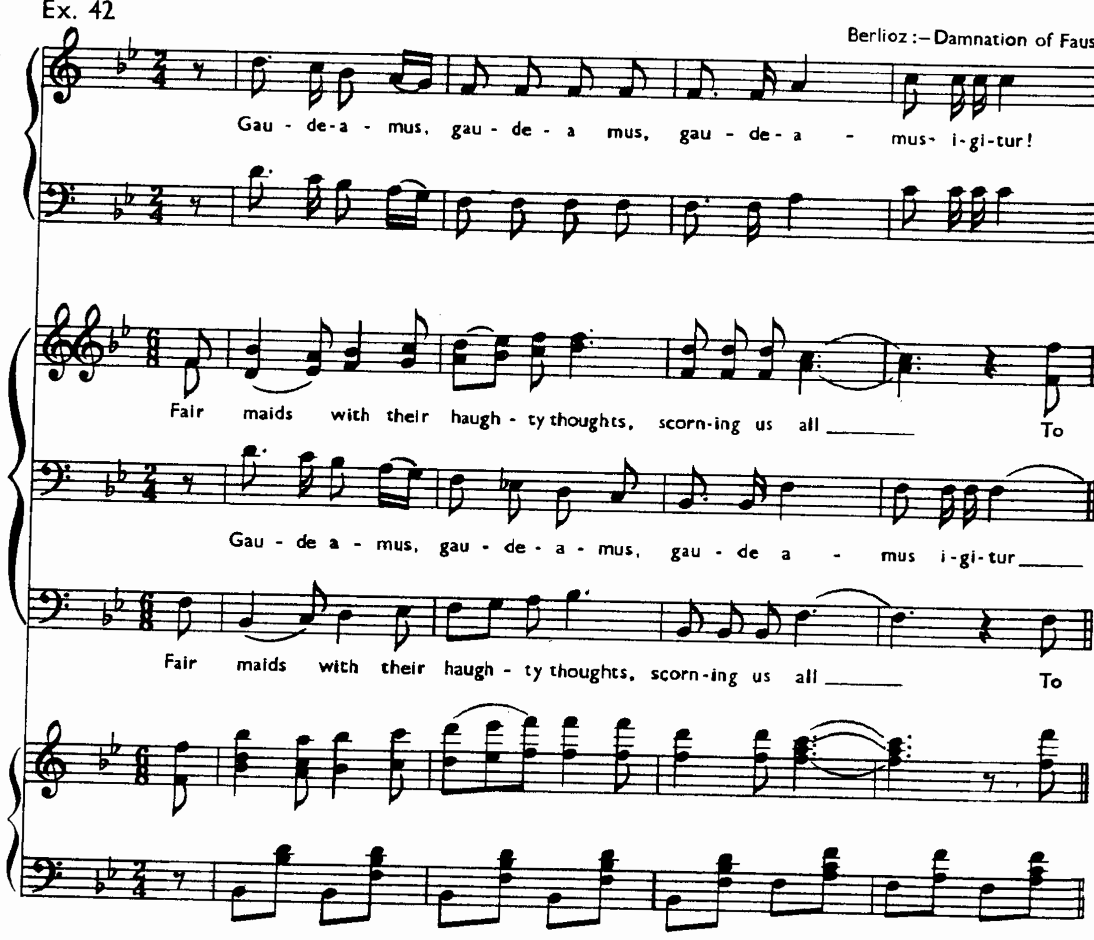
In his "Trente-six Fugues pour le Piano-forte composées après un nouveau système", dedicated to Haydn. Reicha in the thirtieth Fugue has the left hand in 2/1 and the right in 3/4, later reversing them, and then superimposing 4/2 and 3/4 (1).

(1) In his book "Sixteen Symphonies" (Longmans) Mr. Bernard Shore describes Reicha as "academic".

This is an extreme case, but Reicha's pupil Hector Berlioz did not scorn to learn from him in this respect, as in nearly every other.

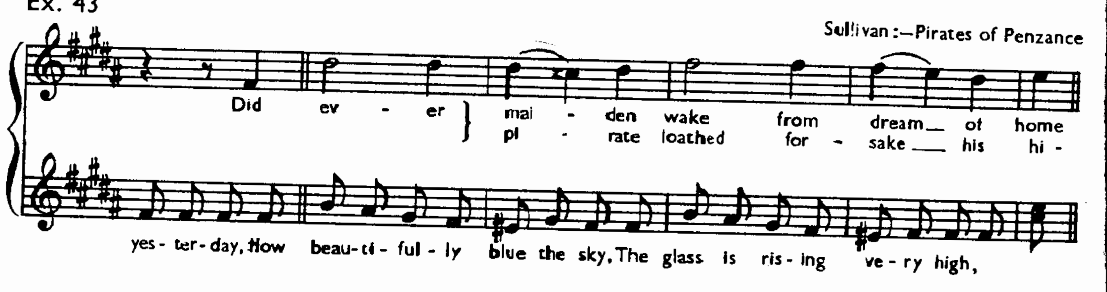
(1) In a note on the score Reicha warns the player not to give any impression of triplet quavers or 6/8 time.

Ex. 42

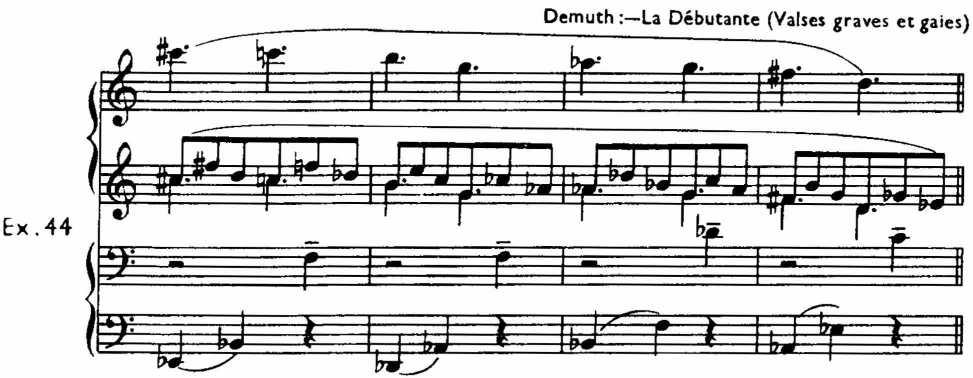


The next is familiar to nearly everybody.

Ex. 43

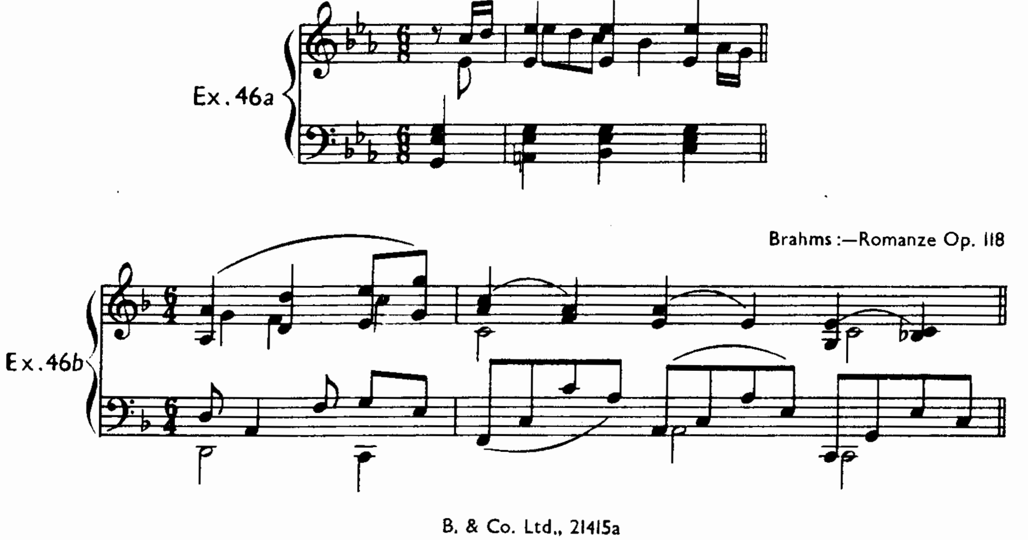


Here is the opening of a complete polyrhythmed variation.



Brahms affords many instances of Polyrhythm, and the following shows a happy combination, the striding bass giving a strong forward impulse.

His piano pieces abound in examples of this combination of duple and triple rhythm and it will suffice to quote two of them.



Reference to Ex. 8*b*, Page 81 will show that Holst writes what is virtually 5/4 in the voice parts against the 3/2 in the orchestra, sub-dividing by means of an accent mark into ONE-two-ONE-two-three.

The shifting of the accent from duple to triple rhythm is called in France the "Hemiole". The mental disturbance of this change of diaresis is not as marked in slow music as in quick.

This presents the opening idea in augmentation.

It will be noted that in each of these examples the change is from duple to triple rhythm; this process the other way round is not nearly so smooth.

An ingenious use of Polyrhythm occurs in the Rhapsodic Quintet for Clarinet and Strings by Herbert Howells (1892), where, in order to keep the smoothness of the main theme and at the same time contrast it with the countersubject, the bars are combined in this manner.

Everything falls into place here with the utmost precision and is the music of a well-ordered mind.

The device is one which can be used in opera to underline a state of excitement. The 2/4 theme in the next extract is played off-stage on a fife band and the combined 6/8 and 3/4 accumulate the movement and excitement on the stage.

It should be reserved for some special effect proper to a situation since it tends to become a mechanised process. There is nothing "clever" about it. One objection raised by purists is that eventually it must sort itself out and the final accents fall simultaneously on the final chord. They maintain, therefore, that such meticulousness is unnecessary and merely worries the players. From the point of view of the latter it offers quite surmountable difficulties and if it is necessary to the composer's expression, then not too much consideration need be given to the question of execution, provided that the result is practicable and clear.

NOTES

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CHAPTER SIX

POLYPHONY

Motet—Madrigal—Fancy

POLYPHONY

It is at this point that we discuss briefly the three styles which form the basis of instrumental music and which must be considered for a clear understanding and practical application of texture; the polyphonic manner is not tied by any kind of form in itself (although polyphonic works may fall into some formal framework) since it is texture. The polyphonic textures evolved as did the classical forms, these not manifesting themselves in any mature state until many eras after those which may rightly be regarded as the foundation of all later musical expression.

In his "Traité de fugue," André Gédalge (1858-1926) coined the word "Polymelody" in connection with what is known as the polyphonic style. This explains the principle of the technique but suggests a combination of different melodies which have no thematic bearing upon one another. Polyphonic music as generally understood deals with the interweaving of melodic lines which are based upon a common theme and appear as a combination of lines rather than of themes. The newer term, however, certainly does give an explicit definition of the principle.

Reference to the plan in Appendix 2 will show how all musical forms and manners have descended from the sacred Motet and secular Madrigal whose musical quality differs only in spirit. The Motet is usually described as "an unaccompanied choral work written to sacred words (in Latin) and in a contrapuntal style". For "sacred" read "secular", omit the language, and the same applies to the Madrigal.

That Motets are written to Latin texts is but a half-truth although it is the case with the majority. There are many instances of Motets with English words, for Motet in musical parlance means a "style". These English texts do not in any way cause the style to deviate from the Motet principles. The term "Anthem", which came into being in this country in the Prayer Book, led to an extreme extension of the Motet and it quite soon put aside all the earlier strictures. There is a world of difference between the Motet and the Anthem, but the contrapuntal and sacred elements in the former have remained paramount to this day. When Sir Richard Terry (1865-1938) maintained (1) that every Motet was a translation of an original Latin text, he was regarding the matter entirely from the theological and sectarian angle; the Motet is not and never has been a monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church any more than have the so-called "Eccleciastical Modes" (2). Byrd's "Haec dies" is no more a Motet than is Gibbons' "Hosanna to the Son of David"; conversely, the former's "Bow Thine ear" does not immediately become an Anthem because it is a translation of the Latin "Domine, exaudi me"; "Sing joyfully" is a Motet purely and simply, with English words.

The various textures used by the Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Century composers and their instrumental applications must be considered by the student. For the moment we will occupy ourselves with the Motet and Madrigal manner and both will be found to be constructed upon a clearly defined formal and technical process.

(1) "Our Church Music" (London Catholic Truth Society). (2) See Chapter Two, Page 18

MOTET

Being a contrapuntal composition controlled by a text, the music of the Motet must correspond in phrase and sentence with its literary parallel. Each musical phrase must be complete in itself and must end simultaneously with its literary counterpoint. The fresh phrase or sentence will carry fresh music. For an example we may look at the comparatively well-known motet by Palestrina (? 1545-1594), "Super flumina Babylonis".

The full text is as follows:

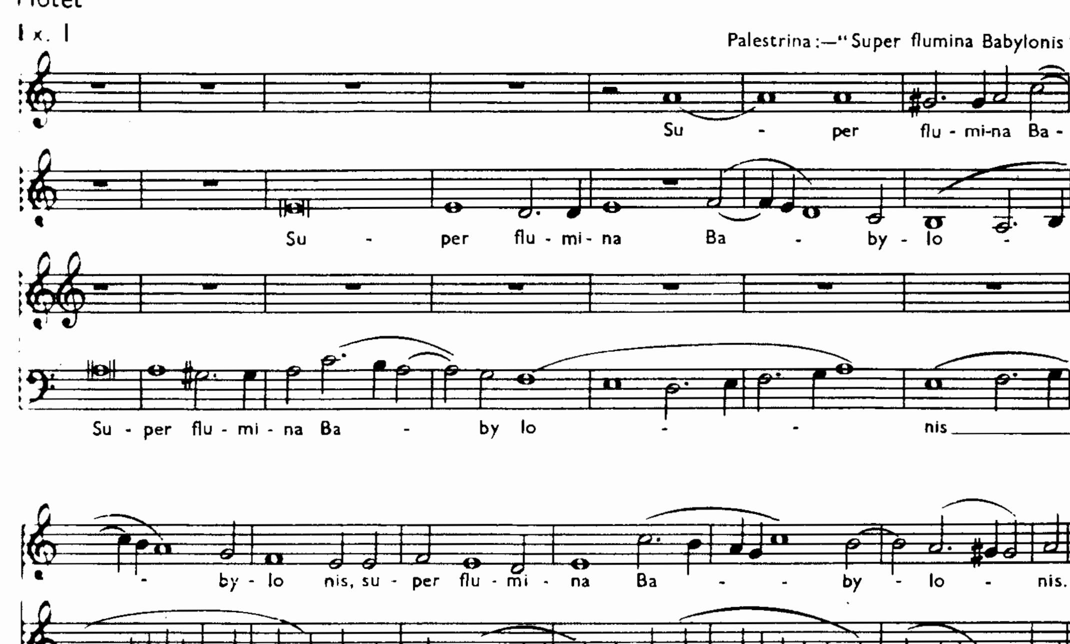
"Super flumina Babylonis, illic sedimus et flevimus: dum recordaremur.

In salicibus in medio ejus: suspendimus organa nostra".

Note first the colons which divide the sentences into two parts, regardless of the sense. This was an exigency for the purposes of antiphonal singing which, in the days of the early Church, took place in the middle of each verse (or sentence) instead of in alternate odd and even numbers. Each of these parts represents a phrase of music, although in a long half-sentence like the first in this case, the composer may split it up into three musical phrases. The phrases themselves as a general rule appear in the first statement, but this is by no means universal.

The succession of these statements forms what may be called the "canto continuo" of the work. This, however, is not as easy and simple as it sounds because it is necessary to distinguish between the "cellule" and its extension. The "canto continuo" itself should be a perfectly balanced and singable "tune". Take the first phrase of this particular Motet

Ex. 1 Palestrina:—"Super flumina Babylonis"



For the first four bars the Bass line has all the elements of melody, but after the fifth bar it appears to fulfil the functions more of a bass line than a pure melody; rhythmically it is rather monotonous and it loses its thematic interest. Clearly, therefore, it does not appear to be a convincing cellule of the "canto continuo" in itself. The Alto part after its second bar bears scant reference to the Bass. This leaves us the Treble (1) and Tenor. Comparing the two, the latter is found to contain an exact imitation of the former which continues its own line until the Tenor has completed his phrase. Here, therefore, is the first cellule of the "canto continuo".

However, this is not the only point to examine. In the first place the cellule must be sufficiently melodic to justify itself and, in this respect, attention must be paid to the emotional (of any kind) quality of the theme. It is enough to observe the touch of pathos which Palestrina obtains with the rising third on the first syllable of "Babylonis". In addition to the first proviso, the cellule will be determined in accordance with its imitational qualities.

The Motet manner is either imitative or canonic, and few composers have ever tied themselves down to a rigid and strict imitation throughout the work. One voice, therefore, will always be ahead of the others and this voice may not necessarily announce the line to be imitated by the other parts. In order to prevent the music constantly stopping and re-starting, the phrases overlap, although the cadences are well-defined and close the separate phrases. This overlapping impels the music forward; it may amount to but one syllable or one note. The entries will usually be at close distance but there is no need for the voices to enter in the same order every time. This also prevents the work from being too sectional although it may be argued that it is a false type of continuity.

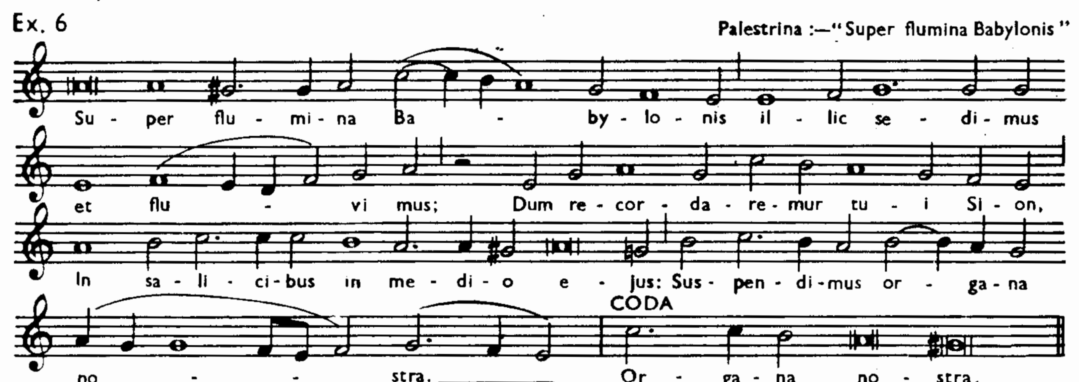
The first voice to enter with the phrase is known as "dux" ("leader") and each of the others in succession, as "comes" ("companion"); in an odd number of parts, therefore, there are always more of the former than the latter. The rôles, as I have said, may be interchanged or not throughout the work according to the composer's whim, thus making for variety.

The cellule of the "canto continuo" will depend on which melodic strain is treated most imitationally by the other parts. In the Palestrina work at the words "Dum recordaremur", "dux" is in the Alto part,

(1) It is time that the affected term "Boy-Soprano" be brought into disuse. Boys have always been Trebles, and will remain such. The former term applies to "castrati".

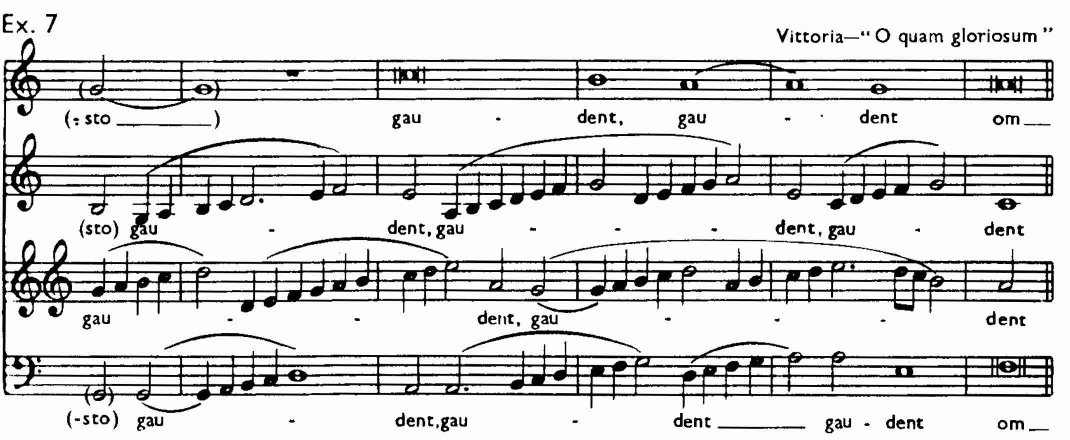
but this is not a very convincing melodic line, and, indeed, the first "comes", in the Treble part, is not only a more convincing "tune" but is closely imitated.

We may, therefore, tabulate the "canto continuo" of this Motet as follows:



The final cadence I have marked "Coda" as it is of peculiar interest. Not only has the musical phrase already appeared, but the progression itself is one which others have used in the same situation, notably Richard Farrant (? -1581) in his beautiful little anthem "Call to remembrance".

The general rule remains now as ever it did, that it is better to break the canon or stop the imitation than to have a crude result. The scalic passages in the next example are not all continued to their fullest range; the Tenor here carries his line up to a ninth above the first note, the others being within this limit, varying from the seventh to the fifth.



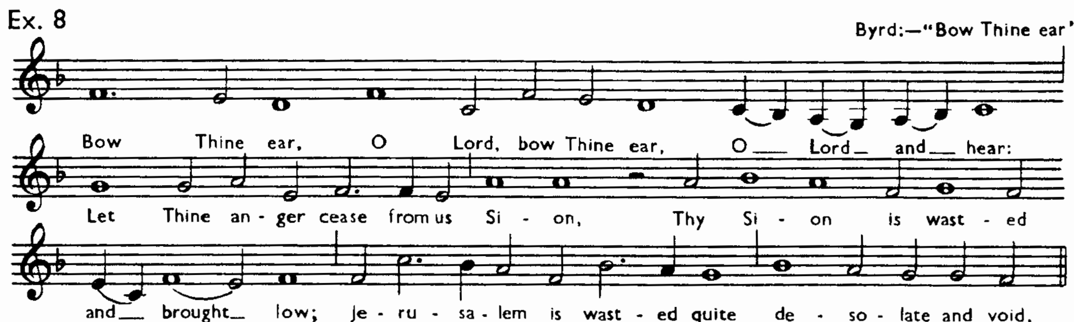
The sixteenth and early seventeenth century manner did not regard music as visual and would not have considered combining several melodies with no regard to their resultant sound. They claimed no merit for writing in strict canon when it was necessary. Of the three leading schools, the Dutch were the most serious and sober, the Italian most spiritually passionate, while the English spread their ideas over a wider range. They indulged in repetition of phrases in order to spin out the music. This makes it difficult to determine the actual "canto continuo", but there is no need for it to be long since it depends mainly on the length of the literary phrase (although the word "Amen" has been known to spin itself out to prodigious lengths.).

Consider, in the light of everything which has been said, the "cellules" which make up the "canto continuo" of the well-known "Bow thine ear" by William Byrd. Here is the text:

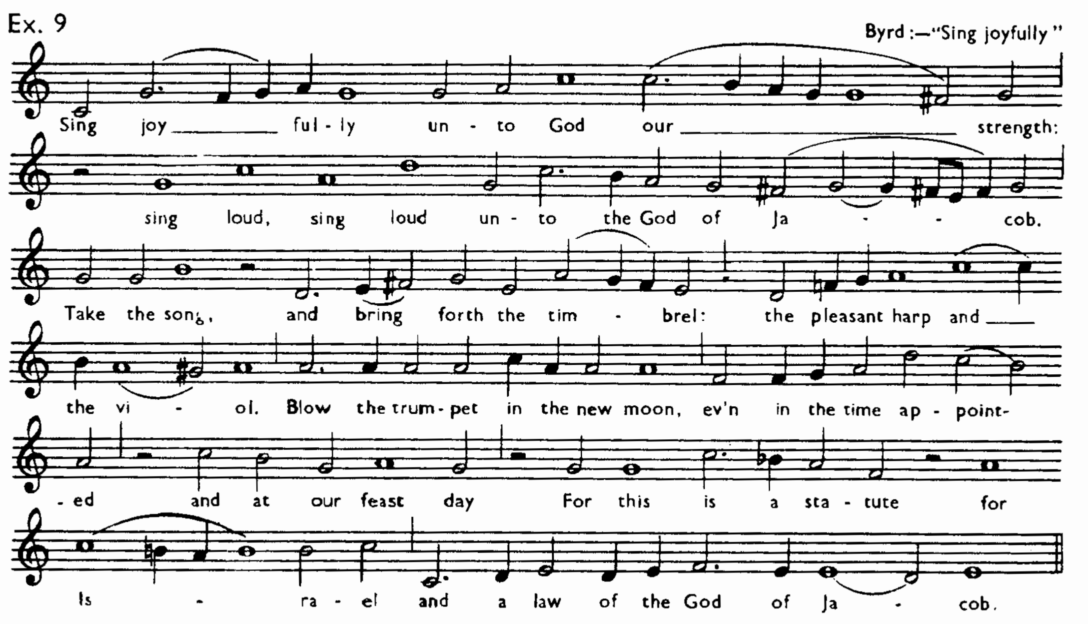
"Bow thine ear O Lord and hear: let thine anger cease from us.

Sion, Thy Sion, is wasted and brought low: Jerusalem is wasted quite, desolate and void".

This is not a long text for so much music and Byrd draws things out by means of close and flowing imitational polyphony.

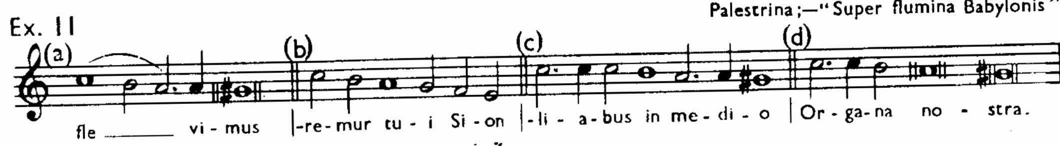


An equally familiar one, of a different character, is the same composer's "Sing joyfully".



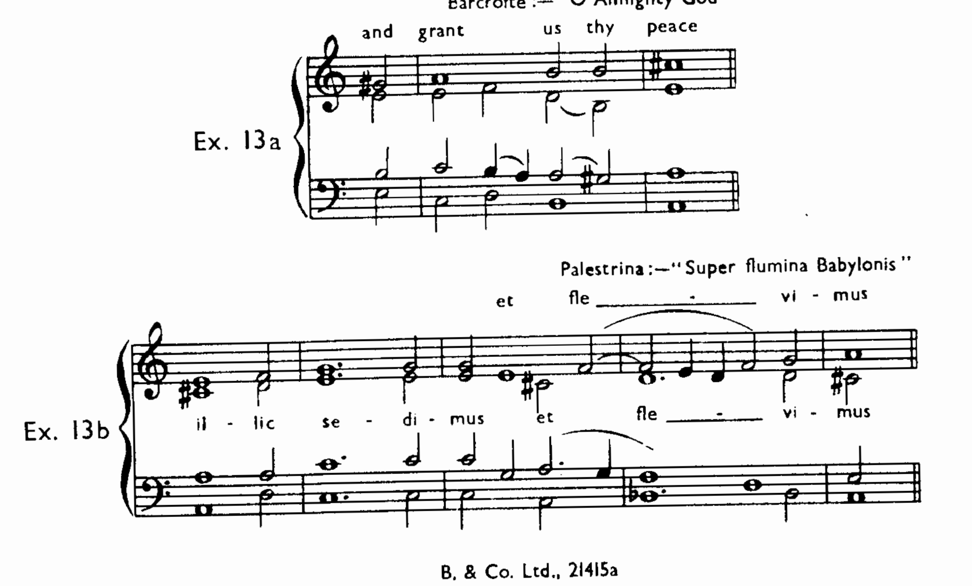
Another feature of the melodic construction of the Motet may be noted, and that is the tendency to take a characteristic progression from the statement of each phrase and work upon it repetitively, introducing it throughout the work. This can be seen very clearly in the Palestrina "Super flumina Babylonis".

These fragments are used constantly in the context.



The next instance may have been entirely accidental.

Although the Motet is basically contrapuntal, this does not preclude the use of a plain, square harmony when the text demands it. Indeed, the composers of the period under discussion were fully alive to the value of this change of mood, and such a passage is fraught with the utmost dignity, pathos and expression. From the works already quoted the following are illuminating examples—Barcrofte emphasises the static attitude of prayer, Palestrina that of sitting in dust and ashes, while Byrd paints a picture of utter desolation.



Ex. 13c

For sheer "expressionism" the following extract from Byrd's "Sing joyfully" is brilliant,

Ex. 14

These principles apply equally to the Mass, the Respond, and other moments in the Roman Catholic Liturgy as well as those in the Book of Common Prayer. There are passages which composers have always found to be particularly inspiring for dramatic treatment in the Mass, these being principally "Crucifixus" and "Et resurrexit" in the "Credo". There is no instance to my knowledge, at any rate, where a composer has failed in creating an atmosphere of awe and reverence by means of polyphony in the setting of "Sanctus". It is not until the Mass in B minor that a new outlook of dignity and grandeur can be found and this particular setting was the first to shed the light of glory instead of prayer upon the attitude of worship at that moment. (1)

The Motets of J. S. Bach and the earlier works such as the big "O Bone Jesu" by Robert Carver (*c.* 1491—after 1546) and the still bigger "Spem in alium non habui" by Thomas Tallis (*c.* 1505-1585)—in forty parts—will come into close examination in the choral section of this Course. This will naturally cover the ground through the later "In exitu Israel" and "Exultate Deo" (Samuel Wesley 1766-1837) to the "Songs of Farewell" (Parry, 1848-1918) and the elaborate Motets of Sir Arnold Bax (1883). It is not anticipated that any student-composer will want to try his hand at something of this calibre for the moment.

(1) It may not be out of place here to refer to Palestrina and the Council of Trent mentioned on Page 22 —In his "Missa Papae Marcelli" Palestrina "announces" each phrase and clause squarely and then proceeds to polyphonic treatment. In this way there is no obscuring of the applied "themes" and the "canto continuo" is perfectly clear. The faithful, therefore, can follow the course of the Mass Music quite easily since the tune, so to speak, is at the top.

MADRIGAL

The Madrigal followed the Motet very closely. It is, therefore, one of the earliest forms of domestic music. Since concerned with secular texts it is naturally capable of more variety than the Motet. The texts cover a vast range, from serious philosophical ruminations to amatory addresses and pastoral invocations. The god of Love took the place of the Love of God, and Phyllis and Flora, to say nothing of Fair Oriana, occupied the minds of the poets and composers; in the case of Fair Oriana the madrigal became a tactful political document addressed with all flattery (but with no servility) to Queen Elizabeth, who probably saw through most of it but enjoyed it all.

The spirit of the text insists on flexibility of rhythm. This can be seen in "On the plains" by Thomas Weelkes (*c.* 1575-1623) and "Though Amaryllis dance in green" by William Byrd; the student should read them in this connection at this moment. The change of diaresis is freely used and the accents are thrown to and fro with delightful elasticity. There being no strictures whatsoever, as many repetitions of words as the composer may deem necessary can be indulged in, thus giving additional scope to the illustration of certain features of the text. This illustration may touch the boundaries of realism, like the delicious fluttering of the bird's wings in Thomas Vautor's (16th and 17th century) "Sweet Suffolk Owl" and the hovering of the birds in "All creatures now are merry minded" by John Bennet (*c.* 1576-?). In this way there is complete unity between text and music, but the result in the hands of any but the most experienced and wary composers can be exceedingly jejeune and even stupid.

It will be well worth while to consider in detail Weelkes' "As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending" not only from the point of view of this unity (1) but from it being a model of vocal polyphony in the secular style. The full text is as follows:

"As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending,
She spy'd a maiden Queen the same ascending,
Attended on by ev'ry shepherd's swain,
To whom Diana's darlings came running down a-main:
First two by two,
Then three by three together,
Leaving their Goddess all alone
Hasted thither,
And mingling with the shepherds of her train,
With mirthful tunes, her presence entertain.

Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana:
"Long live fair Oriana".

from which it will be seen that this is one of the collection known as "The Triumphs of Oriana".

(The bars should be numbered in order that there may be no confusion of editions and differing pagination.)

The text itself is of no great moment as poetry. It simply describes a situation, and two conditions are suggested, the one of the dignity of the maiden Queen's procession and the other of the excitement of Diana's darlings who were driven to forsake their own Goddess to greet the Queen—and their subsequent song of praise. The former is delineated by square harmonic writing.

(1) It will be remembered that such musical illustration appeared in two of the Motets considered in this chapter.

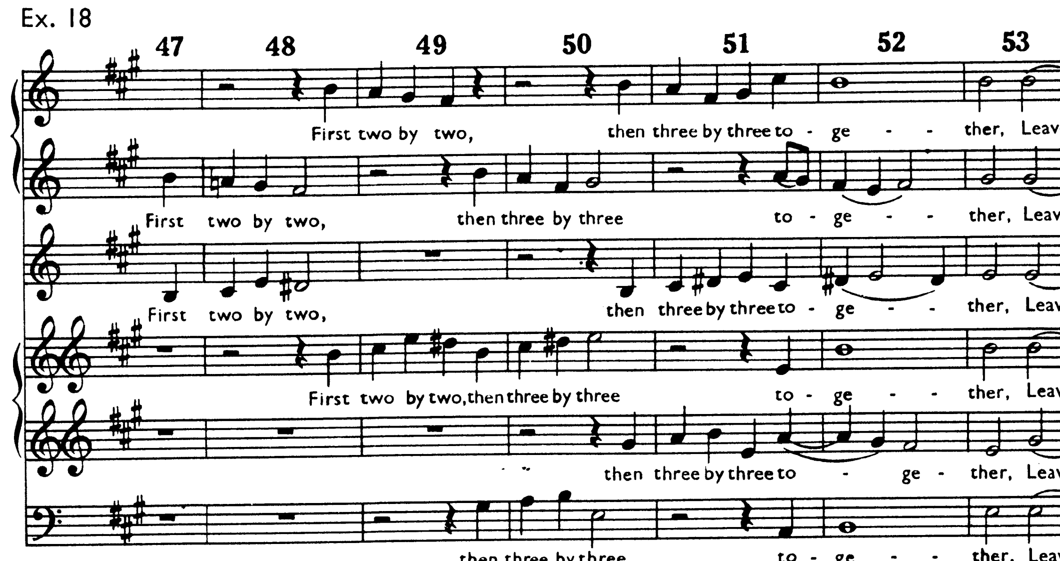
Ex. 15

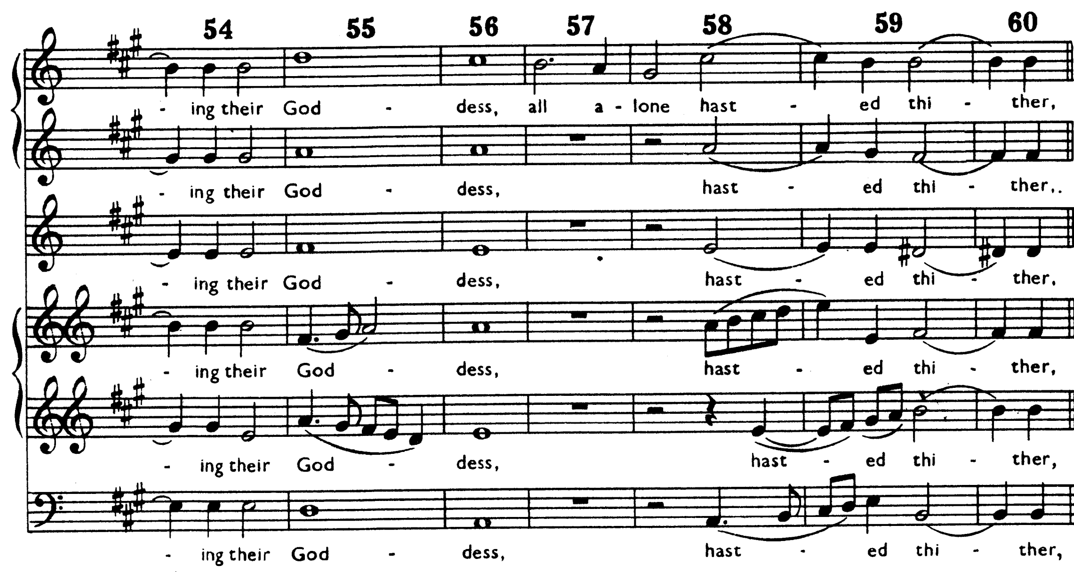
(This was done in other works contained in the collection—see "All creatures now are merry-minded" at the words "See where she comes with flow'ry garlands crowned").

The first "key words", so to speak, are "descending" and "ascending", both suggesting obvious musical delineation. The excitement is conjured up immediately in the fourth bar where the contraltos conveniently omit the words "from Latmos Hill".

This is the only musical descent, for the important feature of the situation is the ascent of the maiden Queen. The feeling of suddenly noticing the ascending procession is given in bars 9 and 10 and at once the polyphony is concerned with this situation, although not in as dignified a manner as might be expected. This carries on from bars 12 to 22. The harmonic procession continues from bars 23 to 32. "Diana's darlings" run down "a-main" in strict canon from bars 36-47, the main music being as follows, as naif a piece of musical thought as could be imagined—but notice that the verbal syllables give the effect of quickly moving feet.

Following this there is a passage bars (47—60) which must be quoted in full.





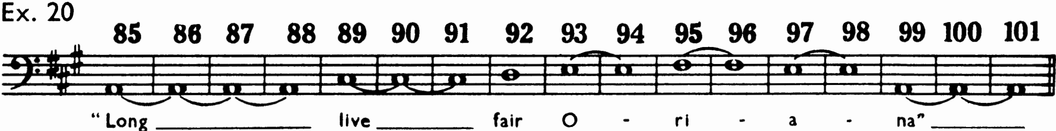
The two processions intermingle. The refrain common to all the works in the collection is dignified and enthusiastic. If this is considered paradoxical, it should be said that the former state is maintained by the basses who exercise control over the noisy ebullience of the youngsters.

The actual musical content and technique are models of polyphonic writing, and the best example of this can be found in the refrain.

The main line

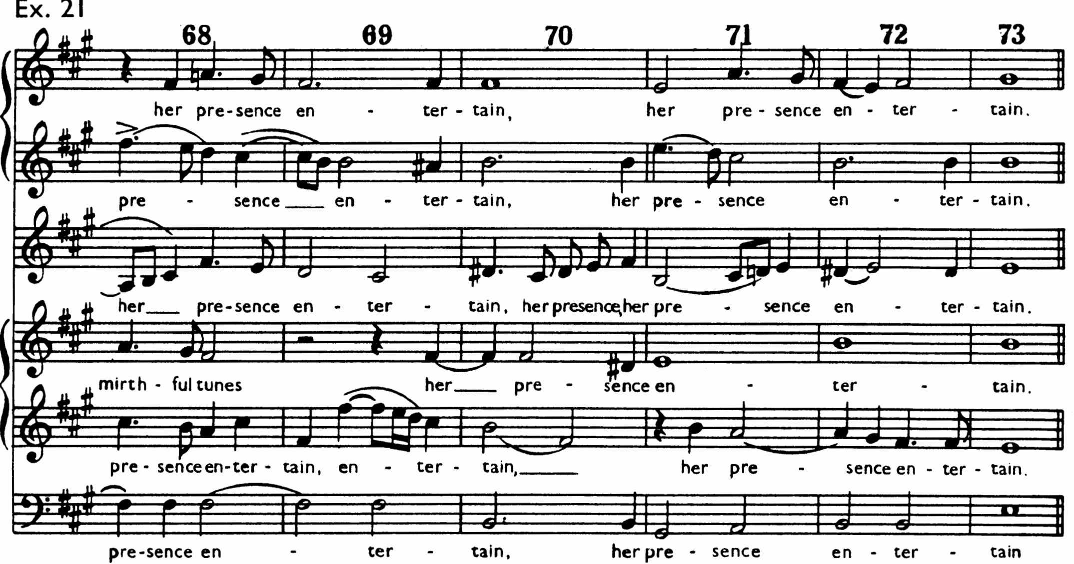
Ex. 19

is treated canonically throughout; the strength of the bass line is enormous as it thunders out Ex. 19 in semibreves spread under the other voices in this manner, from bars 85—101.

Ex. 20


The same idea is compressed from bars 104—110 and then, finally, the "heavies" can contain themselves no longer and in bars 111 and 112 deliver the phrase as in Ex. 19.

There is perfect clarity throughout, and bars 68—73 may be quoted to show how this is maintained when for the moment enthusiasm seems to have got out of hand.

Ex. 21


It should be mentioned that the second tenors and basses are silent until bar 23 when the second tenors enter, to be followed at bar 28 by the basses. This would appear to contradict the principle that a work should be either in six parts or four, and not both; but Weelkes required a sense of extreme lightness. The dignity of the maiden Queen's procession becomes enhanced at bar 28 when the basses add their weight.

The student should study the part-writing very carefully and note how and when the parts cross, the range of the contralto part, and the delightful timpani effect of the bass tonic and dominant at bars 65 and 66, unintentional, of course, but none the less present. False relations such as appear at bars 65 and 66 should also be noted; these were a characteristic of the period and will be found in innumerable instances. (1)

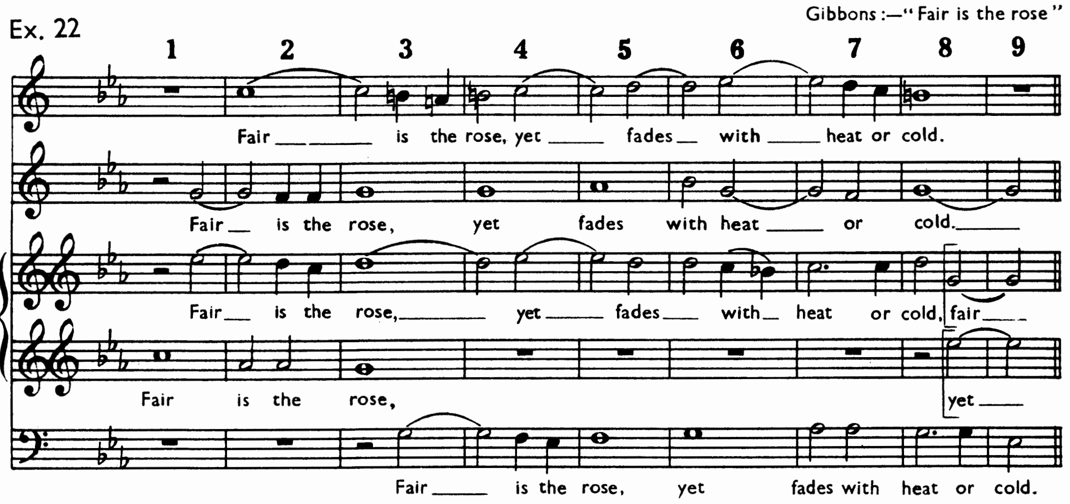
(1) The superior commentator of to-day persists in regarding them as "remarkable *for* the period"!

The pathetic and sentimental text naturally offers possibilities for more harmonic writing since there is no necessity to delineate a situation, and the condition is of a ruminative quality. It is here that the composer indulges all his subjective feelings and a shining example of this can be found in "Fair is the Rose" by Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625). Here the music shows the aesthetic value of suspensions and the steady continuity of slow conjunct movement which emphasises the harmonic aspect of the counterpoint.

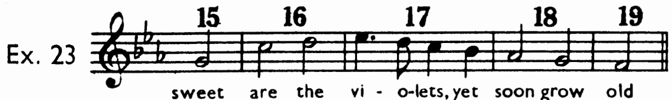
The text of the published work is as follows:

> "Fair is the Rose, yet fades with heat and cold;
> Sweet are the violets, yet soon grow old,
> The lily's white, yet in one day is done,
> White is the snow, yet melts against the sun.
> So white, so sweet was my fair mistress' face,
> Yet altered quite in one short hour's space,
> So short-lived beauty a vain gloss doth borrow,
> Breathing delight to-day, but none to-morrow."

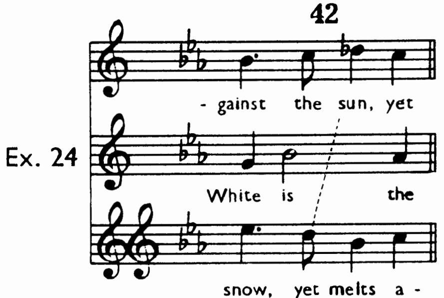
Upon this tragic simile Gibbons writes music which for sheer beauty of feeling far transcends the merits of the text. It must be noted that Gibbons carefully takes the final of the poem as his guiding spirit. There is nothing but heaviness of emotion in the opening phrase which by no means suggests the beauty of its subject. (The bars must be numbered once more).

Ex. 22 Gibbons:—"Fair is the rose"


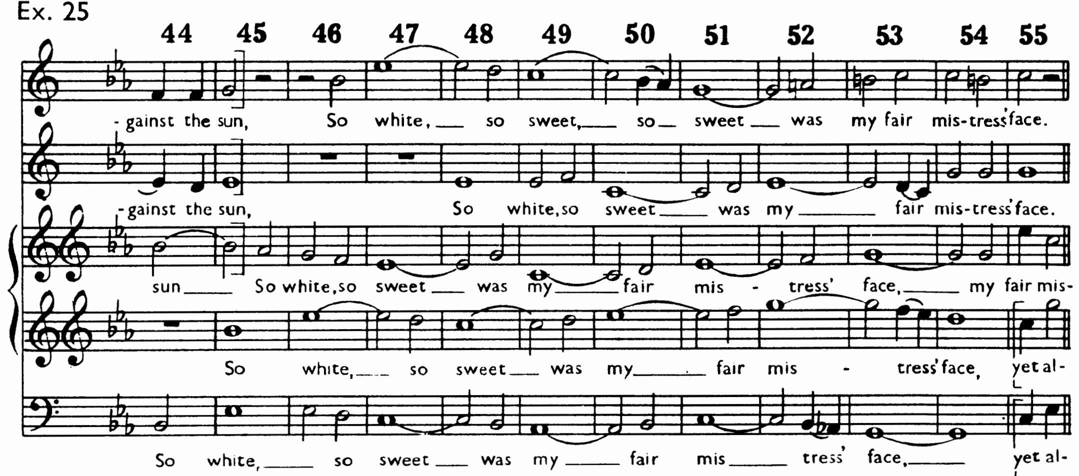
The gentle melancholy of the violet is beautifully drawn by the conjunct movement of the main line (bars 15—19).

Ex. 23 

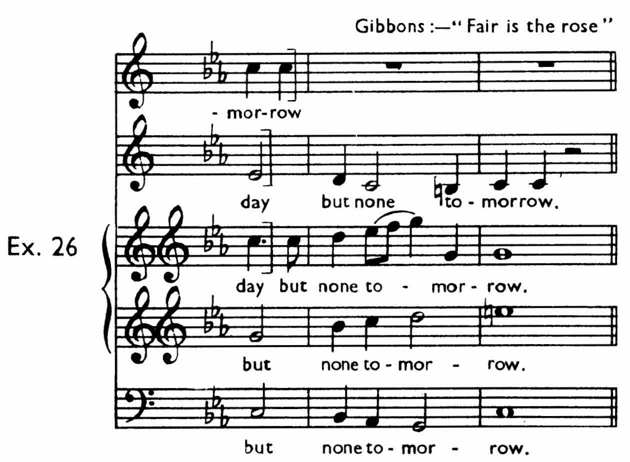
The lily has more chaste motion and from this point (bar 32) the music becomes less static, the snow melting in the same moving manner (bars 37—45)—note the false relations as in bar 42.



The human parallel is static with ever-descending movement (bars 44—55)—note the clash between Soprano and Bass at bar 52,



and the rest of the work is again mobile. The words "breathing delight" are given the rhythm (breath - ing de - light) each time. For pathos and regret the final cadence is hard to equal.



When the music is mainly conjunct in this manner it is altogether too great an assumption to see thematic cohesion in certain similarities of line. The analytical mind may well be betrayed into false premises in passages like the following: (1)

On the other hand, there is not the slightest reason why a composer should not derive his material if he so wishes, provided he remembers that each phrase of the text must have its own particular music and any derivation should be unapparent and dissimilar in mood in accordance with the text. There is little extension or development of the music and the phrases are carried along entirely by means of imitational or canonic sequence.

This first appearance of civilised polyphony as exemplified in the Tudor music is capable of every kind of emotion and is obtained with the simplest of means. The technique is obvious but extremely difficult to achieve since the composers of the period appear to have exhausted the resources. The passion of works like "Fair is the rose" and "The Silver Swan" (the latter also by Orlando Gibbons) is deeply moving and is achieved through due consideration of the harmonic underlay of the counterpoint. In terms of harmony the basis is the common chord, but there are innumerable instances of the diminished seventh and other discords which occur incidentally through the counterpoint. It is altogether wrong to assume that the twentieth century madrigal must or can be an imitation of the Tudor period, as Dr. Fellowes points out. (2) The technique must be of the composer's own period. Imitation is but a means of acquiring a free and easy polyphonic style, it is based on actual music and not upon the generalisations of theorists.

The rhythm principally decides the flow of the music. This, dictated entirely by the verbal accentuation, makes its own freedom, for the Elizabethan composers used no barlines. Their polyphony was more concerned with the grace and beauty of the individual parts than with any incidental harmonic clashes. Byrd himself was not afraid of writing what he called "jarre and dissonance". Consecutive fifths and octaves were forbidden by Thomas Morley (1557-? 1603) in his "Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke", but this did not preclude the use of them when separated by a single chord on similar beats. The rule forbidding these progressions came very much later, in the eighteenth-century, and does not square with the practice of the Elizabethan composers. In the twentieth century Vaughan Williams went back to earlier authority in the "Mass in G minor", and in the "Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis" proved the inherent emotion and passion obtainable with free use of common chords. Incidentally, the emotional state arrived at in this work by these means far surpasses the chromatic strivings of many of the nineteenth century subjectively romantic composers.

The revelation of this music when first sung must have been wonderful, considering the circumstances. The singers, of course, did not sing from the complete score but from

(1) The constant search after something new to say which characterises so much "Musicology" to-day makes this a real danger to the student. (2) "The English Madrigal" (O.U.P.)

"part books", like instrumental players. In the case of the Madrigal and Ballet each voice had his own part only, but with the Ayre the parts were printed in the same volume and on the same page like this:

BASS
ALTO
TENOR

The "ayre" itself was sung from a separate copy. The writer was shown a part-book in the Groote Kerk in Haarlem (Holland), which was written thus:

TREBLE	BASS
TENOR	ALTO

This arrangement made each individual singer mind his own business, count his own bars instead of following the others visually, and listen carefully all the time.(1)

FANCY

The essentially vocal drawing of melodic lines in due course made them unsatisfactory to string players who required something more than music "apt for voices or viols". The composers, however, had become thoroughly imbued with the spirit of polyphony and it was not difficult for them to adapt the principle to instrumental technique, the result being the peculiarly English style known as the "Fancy" (in Italian "Fantasia" and in French "Fantasie"). That queer mixture of knowledge and ignorance, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) suggests that the term is inapplicable to written-down music, for in his "Dictionnaire de Musique", published in 1767, he defined the term as a species of extemporisation, saying that once it has been written down, it ceases to be a Fantasie (or Fancy) and becomes a set piece. The polyphonic style was found to be extremely "apt" for string instruments and composers soon learnt to differentiate between the vocal and instrumental manner. In these early Fancy's, therefore, we find the first germ of classical chamber music.

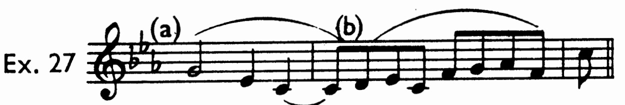
(1) When the writer was in the choir of St. George's, Windsor, he remembers some weighty MS. volumes of great antiquity which contained only the individual parts (but not, of course, arranged in either of the two above-mentioned methods). These were as clear to read then as when they were originally written. At no time was there any anxiety or doubt felt by the choir as a whole because we were taught to count and listen, sight-reading playing a most important part in our training. There was never any question of being "conducted" (this was anathema to Parratt who regarded it as the sign of a badly-trained choir,) whether the music was a double-choir Motet or four-part unaccompanied anthem. Occasionally we had these single line parts for new MS. anthems and services which were sung at St. George's before publication. "O Living Will" (Stanford) is an example which the writer will always remember as both the organist and the sub-organist (Sir Walter Parratt and Martin Akerman—the latter being responsible for our sight singing) had thought the other had taught it us and for some unknown reason there had been no full rehearsal of it. On arrival in the choir stalls we found a single sheet of MS. paper on which was written something we had never heard of. Such was the Elizabethan standard of our sight-singing in those days that we never faltered, and the writer found himself suddenly faced with a few bars "solo"—there were no "solo boys"; we simply took it in turns as the solos came along. The whole thing became increasingly interesting as the new anthem gradually unfolded itself. Not the least intriguing moment came the next day when the two organists mutually congratulated each other on the work of preparation for the anthem (which Stanford had come to hear), and their respective faces when they found out the truth presented a study. This may betoken a certain casual attitude and even a careless one, but the circumstances did not often arise. Unfortunately, the publication of complete vocal scores has made this high standard of sight singing unnecessary and the passion for conducting even a simple four-part anthem has caused choirs to lose a lot of their self-reliance. The polyphonic standard of singing has suffered and the ideal has completely vanished.

The style of these works consisted of clearly defined sections of a contrasted nature with constant changes of time-signature in each of the sections, wherever necessary. These, however, appear more in the abstract flowing sections than in those which line-up with some dance style.

The flow of the lines not being controlled by any literary consideration shows them to be fragmentary, and it is not possible to trace a "canto continuo". The continuity, therefore, lies in the composer's ingenuity and one can see in these pleasant works the first dawning of the symphonic principle. Imitation rather than canon is the ruling approach, with a great deal of conjunct motion, and it soon becomes apparent that the invention of the composers was allowed full play. The melodic lines show the difference between the vocal and string processes because vocally the instrumental ones are as unsatisfactory as are the instrumental, vocally. The Fancy themes are more fluent, gracious, and rhythmically pithy than any vocal lines could be.

Taking the "Fantazia" for six strings by William Byrd, approximating in its modern form to the key of C minor (it was originally a fourth lower), the general manner of the style can be closely examined.

The first section is based upon a graceful theme:—



At the seventeenth bar in 4/4 time, "A" fades out and "B" becomes the main material after the interpolation of a bar in 3/2 time. A fresh little figure is made a good deal of,

giving place in another 3/2 bar to the following, which has previously been suggested.

After seven more bars of 4/4, a completely new rhythm is introduced

which leads to the second main section, after dealing with many of the previous rhythms.

The second section is a delicate Gigue-like movement, strictly imitational throughout and leading straight into the final Minuet-type section; this has more squareness of harmony than either of the other two. The work ends with a gracious Coda, again interpolating a bar of 3/2, and closing with three 4/4 bars and a "tierce de Picardie".

Of the three "movements" the first is the most sustained and most clearly extended; its several little strands of melody are always apparent and clear to hear. The music is thrown from one instrument to another. Examine the following extract.

Ex. 31

Notice how the strands of Ex. 28 (A and B) are interwoven and also how the gap between the top and third instruments is filled by the repeated "C" and "G". The parts cross easily—cellos at bars 3 and 4, 2nd viola and 2nd cello at bars 2 and 3, both violas at bar 5, violins at bars 6 and 7. The whole texture is free and supple and complete continuity is maintained. This is the essence of instrumental polyphony in its purest style, yet there is no feeling of mere cerebrality. The style may be a little severe since the feeling is contained within the course of the music itself. The researches of the Rev. Dr. E. H. Fellowes into the music of the period revealed beauties and marvels which had previously been but dimly realised. Truly did Dr. Fellowes claim Byrd as the "Father of instrumental music"; but the full appreciation was long in being completely realised. This half-ignorance, so to speak, undoubtedly was the cause of Parry writing thus in 1902, as regards the early string technique. (1)

> ". . . . . these English composers who turned their attention to music for instruments cultivated with great assiduity the form of art called the "Fancy", which from accidental causes rather perversity prepense had come, at the time of its maturity, to be one of the most unfanciful artistic products ever devised by man. Fancies were written for groups of instruments of various kinds, and were in a sense the precursors of modern chamber music, though not its ancestors (*sic.*) Fancies were much too respectable and complacent to admit of development for any useful or ornamental purpose. The whole branch of art might be spared consideration, but for its being such an extensive futility. The utmost it did for the progress of instrumental music was to teach composers how to write more free, lively, and characteristic passages for their several instruments, and to discover that counterpoint, even of an instrumental kind, was not an all-sufficient reason of existence for music without words."

(1) "The Music of the XVII Century" (Oxford History of Music).

IN NOMINE

This style ran parallel with the "Fancy". Its basis was the plainsong Antiphon for Trinity Sunday "Gloria Tibi Trinitas Aequalis".

Ex. 32

The origin of this use and the reason why it remained in vogue until Henry Purcell have never been satisfactorily explained. The use of the "canto firmo" and its derivations in the counterpoint find their ultimate realisation in the Chorale-Prelude which decorates a basic theme in much the same manner. However, it is not essential that this thematic relationship should hold good throughout the work or even that it should be present at all. The "In Nomine" (in three parts) of Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656) may be examined because it throws a wide light upon the question of harmony, tonality and false relations.

Tonality is present all through the work even if vague and sometimes indeterminate, and Tomkins often appears uncertain as to whether he is in the major or minor mode. This disproves the modal (in the older sense) tendencies and principles which are often claimed for music of this period. Two passages will suffice.

It may be that this is not a particularly interesting piece of work, but it should be studied in detail by the student for its imitational qualities and for the clarity of its two-part writing, the "Canto firmo" not providing anything interesting to the Viola player. The insipient counterpoint indicates that music suffered greatly when it later became organised according to rule and expedient. It emphasises the theory that chamber music is intended to be played and not to be listened to.

From this type of music, from the Motet, the Madrigal, the Fancy and the "In Nomine" sprang the whole gamut of choral and instrumental symphonic music. Each style will be studied in turn, in due course. Our next step is to consider the various textures and forms which composers have used from the time of the establishment of civilised music.

METHOD OF USING THIS BOOK

Chapter Two.

The student should practise writing short pieces on the scales quoted. This will be a deliberately cerebral process and he will find that some will interest him more than others. The former will prove to be his natural expression, but interest must not be allowed to step in the way of difficulty. These efforts will be *exercises* and nothing else; maturity will become evident as soon as the expression comes reasonably easily. He should also devise his own scales. Comparison with music already written on each scale should be made in every case, and examples other than those quoted should be sought after. In any case the quotation here must necessarily be a brief one and the continuation of the works in question should be studied. (1) Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the value of trying-out experiments with live performers—a student rarely hears his harmony or counterpoint exercises actually performed on the medium for which they are written. In this connection the student is warmly recommended to take into consideration available resources when writing his "exercises"

Chapter Three.

The student should devise his own melodies by means of experiment in various styles. The old idea of writing out the rhythmic framework first is still to be recommended. Words should be chosen which offer opportunities for both regular and irregular barring. The differing qualities of vocal and instrumental technique should be taken into careful consideration and each melody conceived as for some particular voice or instrument.

Chapter Four.

Music in the several "-isms" should be read for their qualities and the particular outlook of each carefully noted. The student will thus learn from experience how to recognise various idioms.

Chapter Five.

It is likely that the student will find himself cramped by the restrictions of the text-books he has studied and the exercises he has written. He should here experiment in each of the "-alities" until he finds the one which appears to be the most spontaneous. Such work will, naturally, be deliberate but it will be *composition* and in conjunction with the music of others should soon result in his determining his own natural means of expression. He should take care that his music (when he thinks it to have become personal) does not resemble in effect that of other composers. This can only be surely determined by means of other people and he should not hesitate to try its effect on friendly critics. As has been said, (2) it is better to be stupid in front of a few friends than in front of a large audience of strangers.

(1) This applies to all quotations throughout the Course.
(2) "The Music of the XVII Century"—Parry (Oxford History of Music, Vol. 3).

Chapter Six.

Here the student is composing in direct forms and manners. He should first of all study as varied a number of Motets as he can find, tracing their "canto continuo" and noting how the composers extend their vocal lines. When fully conversant with the process, he should set to work himself on the "blue print" principle. (1). Choose a suitable text—the Psalms of David have not yet been exhausted—consisting of two sentences, making four phrases in all. Think out the "canto continuo" which must correspond with the emotional spirit of the text, and then decide upon the order of entry. Rule out a ground plan and write down the first entry as it stands in the "canto continuo"; then decide upon the point of the second entry. The first voice will need to be extended, the second likewise, the third, but not the last (naturally). Endeavour to make each extension as thematic as possible, using some short characteristic figure from the "canto continuo" for this purpose. Do not deliberately imitate any other composer or period but keep the music as diatonic as possible, venturing not far away from the home-key, for the moment. Bring the first phrase to a satisfactory close and then decide the most suitable voice to commence the overlapping second; in the early days it will be better to keep the order of entry regular. It may not be possible to reach a final cadence simultaneously with the voices; in this case do not hesitate to introduce the succeeding phrase before the actual termination of the preceding one. The notes, however, should in themselves be part of the closing cadence.

Keep everthing as imitative as possible; break it where necessary, but do not wander off into extraneous strands which may have too much personality of their own. The bass part will be the hardest, so keep it as flowing as possible. Do not be in a hurry to cover the ground of the text and refrain from too much repetition; avoid convenient repetition of single words, and do not omit one or two here and there for the purpose of drawing the phrases to an end. Cross the parts when necessary, and at no other time.

If the finished article sounds dreary on the piano, do not worry. The "canto continuo" should contain a sufficiency of feeling to make the result convincingly musical on voices. Find out what voices are available for running through the work and write accordingly.

Do not try to write a pastiche Madrigal. Keep it contrapuntal and within a limited key-range. Set to work by getting the accents and spirit of the text. Be careful of literal illustration as it takes a genius to avoid being absurd in this respect.

Keep in mind the value of antiphonal writing. Repeat words when necessary provided that they make sense, but try and reserve this for those which require emphasise. Write it unbarred in the first instance, taking care that simultaneous notes are written exactly above and below each other. In this way perfect freedom of elasticity becomes assured and the accents will fall in their right places. Avoid padding as much as possible. Do not keep any voice waiting for something to do. If the work is in five parts, be in five parts and not four or less.

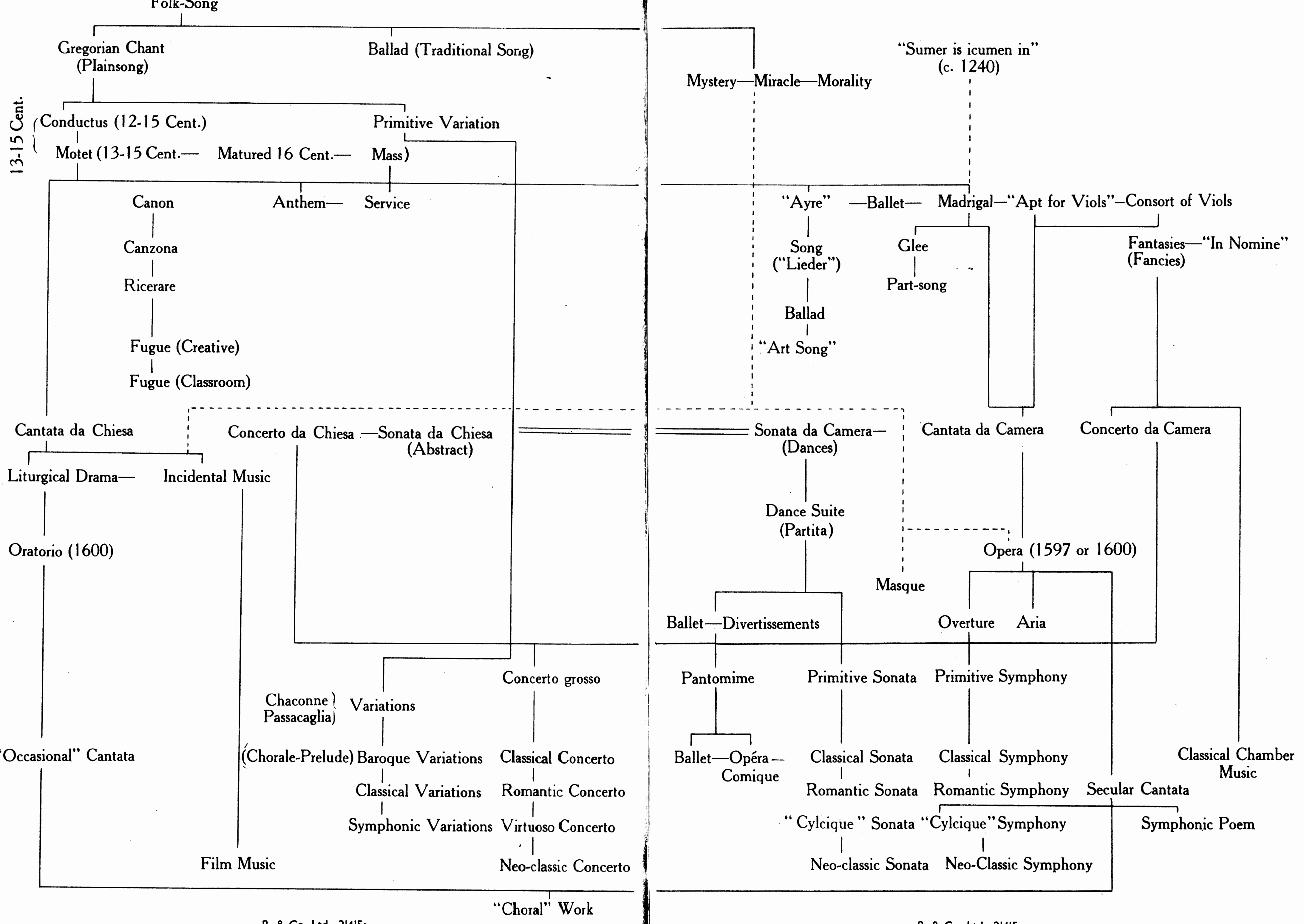
Read the scores of as many "Fancy's" as possible and take one as a model. Rule the page with the number of bars in the original, keeping strictly to the sections. Without in any way copying or following any "key system" or order of entry, write a movement "in the style of" the model. The parts should be written down as they occur—do not attempt a "canto continuo" as the material must be terse and fragmentary. Remember that vocal exigencies are non-existent in the main in instrumental music, but let the lines flow easily.

(1) He need not worry about the cerebrality of this. Composers have often done it. Ravel, for example, would draw out a kind of plan, ruling a number of bars which would contain his themes, etc., then determine what keys the music would go to and mark the particular places. He would then begin to think of the music itself, his invention having been stirred by the "ground plan". (see "Ravel"—Demuth (Master Musicians—Dent). Here the inclination to write a certain type of work would lead naturally to the writing of the work. With all this process Ravel always sounds completely spontaneous. Other composers have other methods but all great music has been the result of great travail, both mental and physical.

Be as diatonic as possible in the first place; the music will sound tame, in all probability, until sufficent experience has been obtained. Bear in mind that the common chord has not yet been exhausted—Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis" is a model of what can be done with this harmonic simplicity. "Fancy's" can be written in any of the "-alities" that appeal to the student; it is for him to decide which one comes most naturally to his pen.

The Elizabethan "Fancy" technique is more useful as an example and model than that of the later classical String Quartet because there is more uniformity of style. The "Fancy" technique is a judicious blending of that of the Motet and Madrigal and what the composer needs first of all in this field is a naturally expressive string idiom.

APPENDIX II



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