

FORM IN MUSIC

THE fifth of a series of brief articles by BESSIE POLLARD, Mus. Bac., on "Form in Music." These articles are closely related to a series of programmes on the same topic now being heard from 2YC on Friday evenings. Each of our articles is illustrated by a few bars of the music under discussion.

5. The Scherzo

SCHERZO is derived from the Italian for "joke" or "jest."

The 17th Century Italian composer Monteverdi gave the title "Scherzi Musicali" to two embryo cycles of light fanciful songs for two and three voices. In the 18th Century, composers tagged certain

movements "scherzando" to specify a sportive vivacious style. The form evolved from, and eventually superseded, the courtly old Minuet.

Although Bach named one of the movements of his No. 3 Partita, a Scherzo, Haydn was the first of the classical composers to employ the designation for an actual Sonata movement. Later, Beethoven made this type

Beethoven:
Scherzo - Sonata in C, op. 2 No. 3.



(continued from previous page)

to startle him into realising that the most urgent problems of modern times are precisely the problems with which these men of old were wrestling. Sometimes the parallel between the events of those days and events of to-day is so obvious that it may almost seem that the authors made it all up to give their drama a modern twist.

Maurice Jacobson was called in at an early stage to provide the musical setting of the plays. His work is planned on an almost symphonic scale which supports and illuminates the themes with which the plays deal.

Seton Pollock has been interested in the Hebrew prophets since he was a child and, some years before the war, started to write a book about them. He resumed his work on the subject in his leisure time during the war, in which he served in the R.A.F. Believing that the oracles were meant to be heard rather than read, he experimented with some radio scripts. These interested the BBC and he was put in touch with Grantham.

Wilfrid Grantham is a producer in the drama department of the BBC and spends much of his time writing scripts, mainly about religious subjects. He has also written stage plays. He was an officer in the Regular Army during the 1914-1918 war, at the end of which he resigned his commission to study music and singing, and then went on the stage.

The present series of plays, recorded under the title *Men of God*, will start at 2YA on Sunday, October 5, at 9.32 p.m. and will be heard on the first Sunday of each month. The series will be broadcast on the second Sunday of each month from 3YA, beginning on November 9; on the third Sunday from 1YA (beginning on October 19), and on the fourth Sunday from 4YA (beginning on October 26). The plays, in the order in which they will be presented, are *Elijah*, *Amos*, *Isaiah*, *Hosea*, *Jeremiah*, and *John the Baptist*.

of movement one of the most distinctive facets of his skill. In nearly all his large-scale works—symphonic creations, piano sonatas, chamber works—Beethoven inserted Scherzos that appear to be the ingenuous declaration of his seemingly inexhaustible fund of droll humour. But his mirth is not always that of mere man, for one has only to think of the gargantuan laughter in the immense Scherzo of his ninth Symphony.

From its immediate ancestor, the Minuet, the Scherzo took over the balancing middle section called the "trio," the standard progression being: Scherzo-trio-then Scherzo repeated. Sometimes composers extended this basic formula by introducing a second trio: Scherzo—trio (1)—Scherzo again—trio (2)—Scherzo again repeated. Mendelssohn's were truly light and airy, often omitting the trio altogether, but by comparison his seem to miss out somewhere on that genuine ingredient of fun that we find, for instance, in those of Schubert.

Chopin's first three Scherzos are imposing and funereal, sad and tumultuous by turn, yet tinged with romantic fire—only the fourth has that dash of volatile gaiety which we always associate with the form. Brahms, too, thought of the Scherzo as a heavier medium, but he revealed considerably larger scope in content and formal design. Two outstanding examples of his spring readily to mind—the suggestion of combined Minuet and Scherzo in his 2nd Symphony; and from the 4th Symphony the "Allegro giocoso" which suggests Scherzo combined with "first-movement" form.

Dukas's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is an interesting quasi-modern work in Scherzo form, showing the application of its great capabilities and adaptability.

THE SCHERZO—the fifth of the series, **FORM IN MUSIC**—will be heard from Station 2YC at 9.30 p.m. on Friday, October 3.



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