

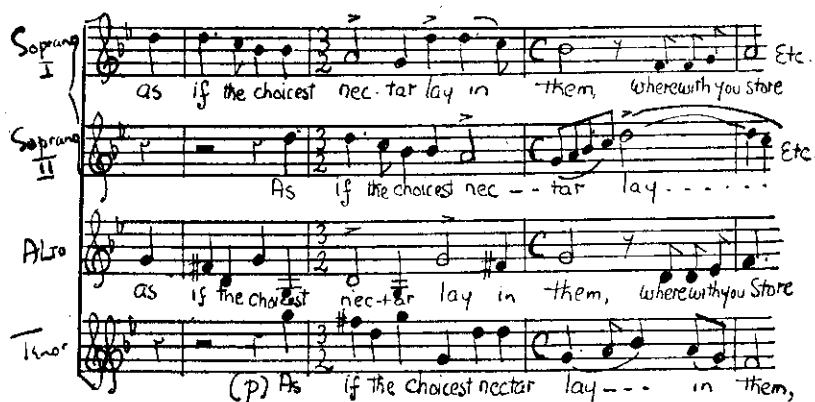
FORM IN MUSIC

THE fifteenth 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.

15. Concerted Vocal Music

IN this article we shall take a bird's eye view of the concerted vocal forms. Today, by a *Cantata*, we mean a composition for solo voices, chorus and orchestra, a setting of sacred or secular text, but its 17th Century prototype was really an *Opera* (rendered without scenery or action), in that

From the Madrigal - "Sweet Honey-Sucking Bees" Willbye 16th Century.



it was almost completely a sung declamation of the text by a solo voice. The instrumental *Sonata da Camera* and the *Sonata da Chiesa* was complemented by the sung *Cantata da Camera* and the *Cantata da Chiesa*. An *Oratorio* is a large-scale work for soloists, chorus and orchestra with a Biblical text, while the *Opera* is a music-drama—*Grand Opera* sets the whole work to music; the British *Light Opera*, the German *Singspiel*, the French *Opéra-Comique* (all of these not necessarily humorous) employ spoken dialogue mixed with the musical passages; the French *Opéra-Bouffe* is the equivalent of the British *Light Opera*, but the Italian *Opera Buffa* is a comic play with music. A *Ballad Opera* (such as *The Beggar's Opera*, by Gay and Pepusch) made up of a medley of airs, is known as a *Pasticcio*.

The *Mass* is the setting for choir (accompanied or unaccompanied) of the Roman Church's Eucharistic Service, its three great periods being (1) to A.D. 900; (2) The Netherlands School, des Prés, Dufay, Willeart, Okeghem (1400-1500); (3) 1500-1625 (Palestrina, Vittoria, William Byrd). A *Motet* is a sacred Choral work from the High Mass; an *Anthem* is a sacred work for any number of voices (usually sung by the choir, alone) in the Protestant Church Service—it is the Anglican Church's corresponding work to the Latin Motet, from which it is derived. The *Passion* is the musical setting of the text of the Passion of Jesus Christ. A *Chorale* is a German Lutheran Church hymn-tune, of which Bach composed some 30-odd original ones, and re-wrote about 400 already extant. The congregation sang the Chorale in unison—sometimes a *Chorale-Prelude*

was played before this singing began, and short passages of organ-solo were inserted after every second line.

The *Madrigal* began in Italy in the late 13th and early 14th Centuries as a secular two-three part vocal composition, using imitative treatment of phrases. The English *Madrigal*, which reached its peak in the Elizabethan era, is of three classes: (1) The *Madrigal proper*, which is contrapuntal and "through composed," i.e., not divided into verses; (2) the *Ayre*—less polyphonic

than the madrigal proper, strophic, and with the melody in the highest voice, usually, accompanied by other voices or instruments; (3) the *Ballett* (simpler in texture, like the *Ayre*, with a "fa-la-la" refrain), which was possibly also danced by the singers. The *Masque* (a pageant-like diversion of the nobility, including singing and dancing, spoken and sung verse, and instrumental interludes) was based mostly upon classical legends and parables. The outstanding *Masque* was Milton's *Comus* (1634) set to music by Henry Lawes.

A *Glee* is not a humorous composition—rather there is genuine literary merit in the verses set—but is an unaccompanied, characteristically English work for male voices, harmonic rather than contrapuntal in style, its peak period dating from 1750-1850. The *Part Song*, set for mixed voices (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) and usually strophic, was established in the 19th Century. There is a very fine English collection in this form.

CONCERTED VOCAL MUSIC—the 15th of the series, FORM in MUSIC—will be heard from Station 2YC at 9.30 p.m. on Friday, December 12.

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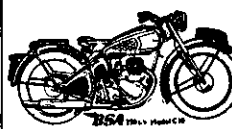
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