

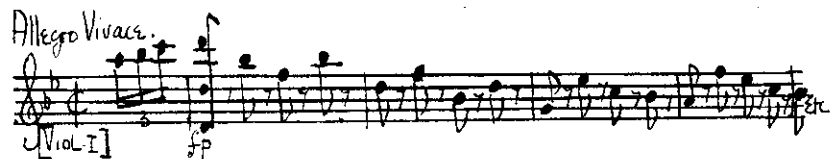
KNOW YOUR CLASSICS

THIS series of articles, written for "The Listener" by BESSIE POLLARD, is designed to help the student and the interested listener towards a more complete appreciation of good music. Each article deals in outline with one accepted masterpiece and illustrates its main themes.

(7) Symphony No. 4 in B Flat, Op. 60 (Beethoven)

BEETHOVEN'S Fourth Symphony was written in the autumn of 1806, and performed for the first time in Vienna in March, 1807. It is dedicated to Count Franz von Oppersdorff, who commissioned a new Symphony from Beethoven and was the victim of one of those slightly unethical transactions in which the composer indulged occasionally. In 1807-1808 Oppersdorff paid Beethoven an advance sum of 350 florins in all, but no Symphony was forthcoming, the composer dedicating the Fifth and Sixth to Prince Lobkowitz and Count Rasumovsky; however, at long last he inscribed the Fourth (which not only had been started before the commission was accepted, but had been performed already) with Oppersdorff's name. The Count was mortally offended.

The work is bright and unclouded—though in a sense it has been almost completely overshadowed by the Third and Fifth Symphonies. Indeed, Schumann described the Fourth as a "slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants." The introduction—adagio—supplies the only really subdued mood in the whole work. After approximately forty-one bars the main theme emerges—

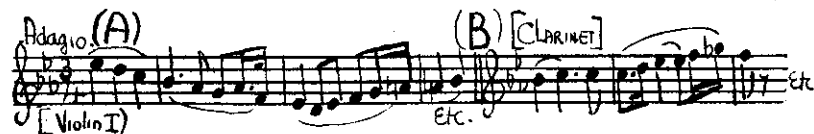


The bassoon, oboe and flute parley animatedly in the second subject—



An air of happiness and good humour dominates the entire movement.

The violins give out the principal theme of the slow movement ("A" below)—accompanied by a firm, constant rhythmic figure. The subsidiary theme is announced by the clarinet ("B" below). There are some beautiful passages for wood-wind and horns.



The third movement is a Scherzo in all but name, one of the most extended of its type that Beethoven has given us. It opens with the violin theme ("A" below); the first section is offset by a delightful Trio, which begins with an oboe melody ("B" below)—



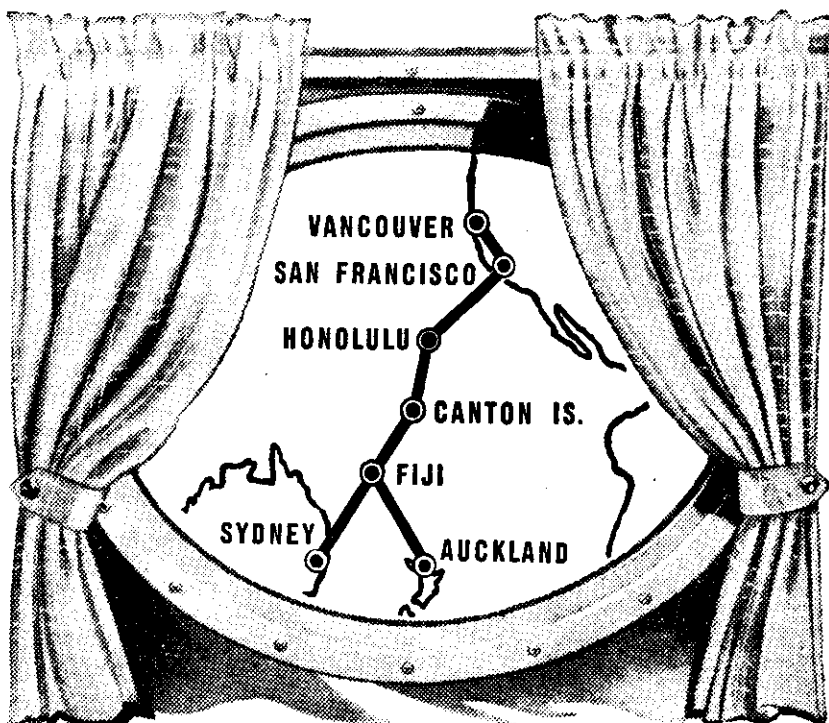
The three bars for horns at the end of the movement give an effect of closing with a query.

The Finale is positively luminous with its humour and whimsy. The violins introduce the main subject at the outset ("A" below), while the second theme is given out by the oboe ("B" below)—



Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 in B Flat, Op. 60, will be heard from Station 2YN Nelson at 8.0 p.m. on Monday, August 23.

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