

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.

(10) Concerto Grosso in D Minor, Op. 6, No. 10 (Handel)

PERHAPS the oldest Concerto Grosso was a work so entitled issued by Alessandro Stradella in 1681. Compositions of the same type by Lorenzo Gregori (1698) and Giuseppe Torelli (1709) prepared the way for the remarkable set of twelve produced by the famous Arcangelo Corelli in Rome in 1712. Handel composed the twelve Concerti Grossi which comprise his Opus 6 in September and October, 1739, and they were published in the following year. The Concerto Grosso of Handel's day may be compared with the "Symphony" of the succeeding era—each Concerto has a series of basic quick and slow movements interspersed with such dance movements as the hornpipe, minuet, musette, polonaise and siciliano and so on. Most of Handel's twelve have the instrumentalists distributed into a group of soloists (*concertino*) and a full band of strings (*ripieno*), with a keyboard instrument (*basso continuo*) supplying a background for both tutti and solo passages. Usually Handel's orchestra included twelve first and twelve second violins and two harpsichords—one accompanying the solo group and both playing in the tutti passages.

The Concerto Grosso in D Minor—the tenth of Opus 6—begins with the usual majestic introduction—



The second movement is a three-part fugue, with its imitative writing throughout derived from the bold opening motif, and the undulating semiquavers of the subject—



The third movement is an Air of the Sarabande pattern ("A" below); the fourth is contrapuntal, introducing such devices as inversion and extensive imitative rhythmic figuration ("B" below)—



The fifth movement is based on three motifs—"A" is introduced by solo violins; "B" is heard in the bass, with a semiquaver figure ("C") above it—



The final movement is a theme and variations, beginning



Handel's Concerto Grosso in D Minor, Op. 10, No. 6, will be heard from Station 3YC at 9.47 p.m. on Saturday, September 18.

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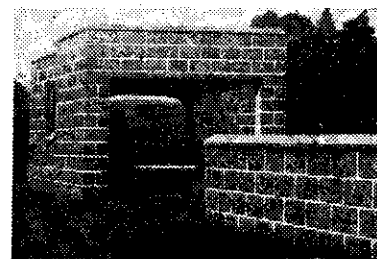
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