

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.

(12) String Quartet in B Flat, Op. 67 (Brahms)

BRAHMS'S approach to his writing for string quartet could be an object lesson to composers of Chamber music. Only after he had written sonatas, trios, piano quartets, the great piano quintet, and sextets, did he feel that he had acquired the requisite poise and elegance of style necessary to write adequately for the four strings alone.

The third String Quartet, in B flat, Op. 67, was written in 1875, receiving its first performance in Berlin on October 30, 1876. It is more vigorous than the first two Quartets which make up Opus 51; its most outstanding moods are those of infectious good humour, and wholesome liveliness.

The first movement (Vivace) begins with a theme reminiscent of hunting calls—



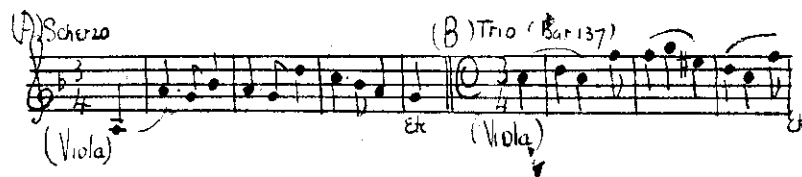
The second subject is a composite one, made up of three distinct motifs; "A" and "B" (below) are heard together, while "C" makes its appearance over twenty bars later—



Brahms's development of this subject material is masterly. The slow movement is lyric and abounds with rich and noble harmonic writing. The first section begins with a two-bar introduction, after which the main theme is given out by first violin ("A" below); the second section opens also with two introductory bars, followed by a contrasting melody ("B" below)—



The viola has a very prominent part in both the Scherzo and the Trio sections of the third movement, which is whimsical in manner throughout—



The Finale is cast as a set of variations on a rather merry little theme, beginning—



BRAHMS'S "STRING QUARTET IN B FLAT, OP. 67," will be heard from Station 3YC on Tuesday, September 28, at 8.0 p.m.

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