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## 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

## (14) String Quartet in D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2 (Haydn)

THE String Quartet is said by some authorities to have emerged first as a form with compositions by Gregori Allegri (1582-1652). Corelli (1653-1713) also showed composers how to write adequately for small string ensembles, Boccherini and Dittersdorf made further advances in the art of writing for groups of strings, but it was Haydn who raised it to that ultimate high artistic level which it has enjoyed from his period until to-day. Haydn wrote approximately 83 standard quartets, the first of which are really small suites for strings. After he had composed about 40 he began to cast them as four-movement works, expanding both the construction and the thematic material. Eventually Haydn produced a perfect symmetry of form further embellished by a crystalline clarity and grace. Each of the four instruments (particularly in the later quartets) has an individual part well within its capacity, yet all four are unified into a true ensemble.

The six quartets which comprise Opus 76 were written about the period which produced *The Creation*. The No. 2 of Opus 76 (subtitled the "Fifths") is remarkable in that all the four movements are in the same key—D.

The outlines of the first movement suggest Sonata form; one basic motif (the fifths from which the Quartet takes its name) dominates the subject material of the whole movement. Here is the first subject, given out by first violin—



The second subject is a duet between second violin and viola with a countermelody provided by the first violin—



The slow movement has been described as "one of the most spiritual pages written by Haydn." It is cast in ternary form—a principal section ("A" below); a middle section ("B" below) and then a varied re-statement of the principal section.



The Minuet section of the third movement is an infinite canon ("A" below); the Trio ("B" below) is reminiscent of a Beethoven Scherzo.



The Finale is a typical Haydn movement—gay and charming and full of a pungent wit. It is built on two main themes, a principal subject ("A" below) and a subsidiary theme ("B" below)—



Haydn's String Quartet in D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2 ("Fifths") will be heard from Station 2YZ Napier at 3.15 p.m. on Wednesday, October 13.