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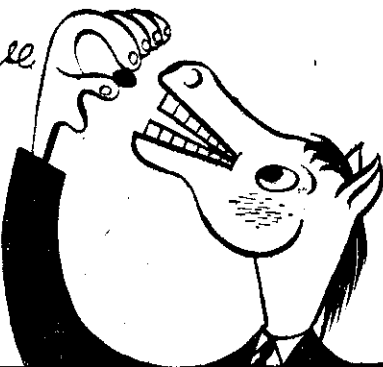
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KNOW YOUR CLASSICS

THIS is one of a further series of articles written for "The Listener"
by BESSIE POLLARD. As with the preceding series, published
some time ago, the aim is to help the student and the interested
listener towards a more complete appreciation of good music.

(19) Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G (J. S. Bach)

IN 1717 Bach relinquished his position as Court Organist at Weimar and became
Capellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. His new office turned his
creative abilities towards instrumental music. Through his patron he met Christian
Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg, who commissioned Bach to write for his own
orchestra; two years later Bach forwarded the set of six concertos which now bear
the Margrave's name. Each Concerto of the series is scored for a different
ensemble; as a whole one feels that the Concertos were experiments in the Con-
certo Grosso style which were discussed fully in *The Listener* of 13.9.48. Readers
will remember that a feature of this form is the group of solo instruments (the
Concertino) supported by the orchestral forces called the Ripieno.

In the *Fourth Brandenburg Concerto in G*, the soloists' group is scored for
violin and two flutes, while the orchestral ensemble is made up of violins I
and II, viola, cello, bass, and harpsichord-continuo. In the MSS., Bach terms
the flutes, "due Flauti d'Echo," no doubt because in the *Andante* movement, the
flutes and solo violin echo the tutti passages.

The first movement—*Allegro*—is long, extending for some 427 bars. The
flutes announce the main theme, made up of a broken chord motif which is the
"germ" of the whole movement—



In bar 13, the solo violin gives out an important counter-theme ("A" below);
at bar 35 the flutes present a new counter-subject ("B" below)—



The exposition, or setting out of material section, ends with a cadence divided
between violins and flutes—for convenience the upward stems stand for the flutes,
and the downward for the strings—



The second movement—*Andante*—features a favourite device of the period—
the "echo" effect. Soloists and orchestra begin with a loud phrase, which is echoed
softly by the soloists only—



The Finale—*Presto*—is a lively Fugue; the viola announces the subject
accompanied by a cello and continuo theme which foreshadows the pattern of the
counter-subject—here is the viola subject—



Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G" will be heard from Station 4YA
at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, May 19.