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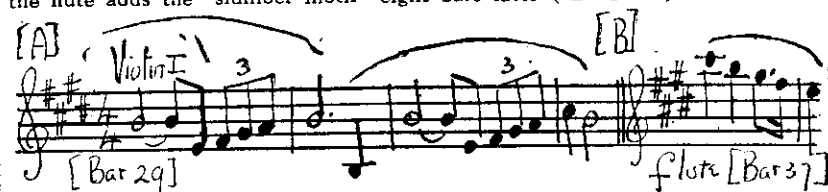
KNOW YOUR CLASSICS

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.

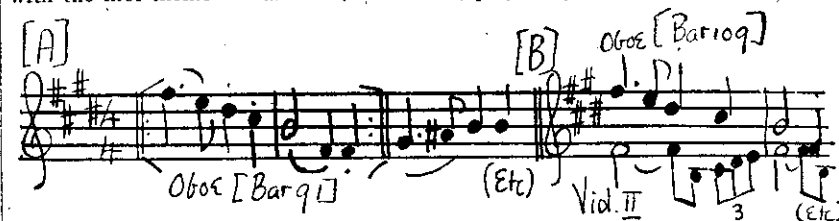
(24) "A Siegfried Idyll" (Wagner)

A SIEGFRIED IDYLL, composed to celebrate the birth of his son, Siegfried, and performed for the first time by Zurich musicians as a morning serenade for his wife at their Triebtschen country home on December 25, 1870, is one of the very few purely instrumental works which Wagner wrote. A composition of great beauty, remarkable freshness and atmosphere, the majority of its thematic material is taken from the last scene of *Siegfried*, the third evening of the colossal Ring Cycle. The form is a free rhapsody on these themes and I could quote no finer example of the flexibility and emotional significance of Wagner's music than the way in which they are treated, which is entirely different from anything in the opera from which they are taken. The *Idyll* is scored for flute, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns, trumpet, and strings.

The work begins with an introduction for strings. In bar 29 the first violins announce the main motif (the "motif of purity" from the Ring Cycle—"A" below); the flute adds the "slumber motif" eight bars later ("B" below)—



A new motif is introduced by oboe in bar 91 ("A" below). This is combined with the first theme in bar 109 ("B" below), played by second violins—



At bar 148 clarinets and bassoons introduce the "motif of love" in a slightly different form from its appearance in the Ring—



The climax of the work is reached in bars 243 to 258, ending with a cadenza-like passage which links to a horn theme from *Siegfried's Rhine Journey* in *Götterdämmerung* ("A" below). Small phrases from the Call of the Forest Bird are heard from the clarinet (bars 262-3), and in bar 275 the violas give out the "nature motif" ("B" below)—



In bar 305, the flute presents the Call of the Forest Bird motif in full—



Wagner's "Siegfried Idyll" will be heard from Station 2YC at 8.36 p.m. on Saturday, June 25.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, JUNE 17