

Canterbury Concerts

THIS is the first of two articles written for "The Listener" by BESSIE POLLARD. Each will discuss in outline an important symphonic work to be heard at the Canterbury concerts of the National Orchestra, on September 8, 10 and 12.

Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 68 (Brahms)

Brahms was an established musician, mature and famous, when his first Symphony appeared in 1876. As a whole, the work is grand in proportions, epic in style, of complex structure, and essentially dramatic—perhaps the greatest "first" Symphony ever written.

The work begins with a 37-bar introduction—*Un poco sostenuto*—powerful and majestic, before the theme of the first movement proper emerges—



There are a number of important subsidiary themes of which I quote three ("A," "B," and "C" below)—



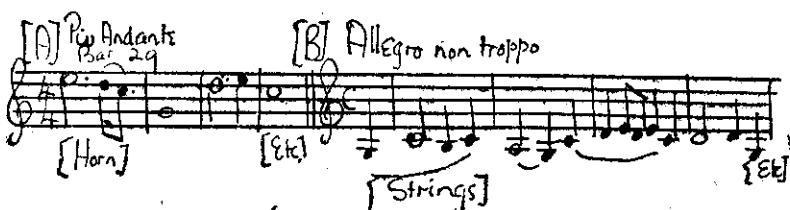
The predominant mood of the slow movement—*Andante sostenuto*—is that of a gentle melancholy. The main theme ("A" below) is heard at the beginning; the subsidiary subject, equally beautiful and thoughtful, appears in the 17th bar, given out by oboe ("B" below)—



In place of the customary Minuet or Scherzo, Brahms places a lively and graceful *Allegretto*. The theme, announced by clarinets at the outset, has an almost childlike, folksong flavour ("A" below); in bar 71 comes the second important theme from the woodwind ("B" below)—a typically Brahmsian passage—



"A" below quotes a most interesting phrase from the long introduction of the finale. This particular passage aroused much comment when this symphony was first performed by the Cambridge University Musical Society in England, as many listeners traced a resemblance between the theme and the chimes of the Cambridge clock, believing it to be a delicate compliment by Brahms to his Cambridge audience. The finale proper—*Allegro non troppo ma con brio*—begins in bar 60, with a warm and vibrant subject from the strings ("B" below)—



Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 68, by Brahms, will be heard at the first Christchurch concert of the National Orchestra, conducted by Anderson Tyrer, on Thursday, September 8, at 8.0 p.m. The concert will be broadcast by 3YA.

N.Z. LISTENER, SEPTEMBER 2, 1949



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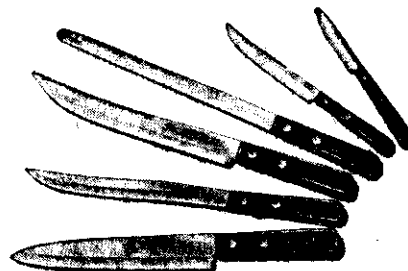
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