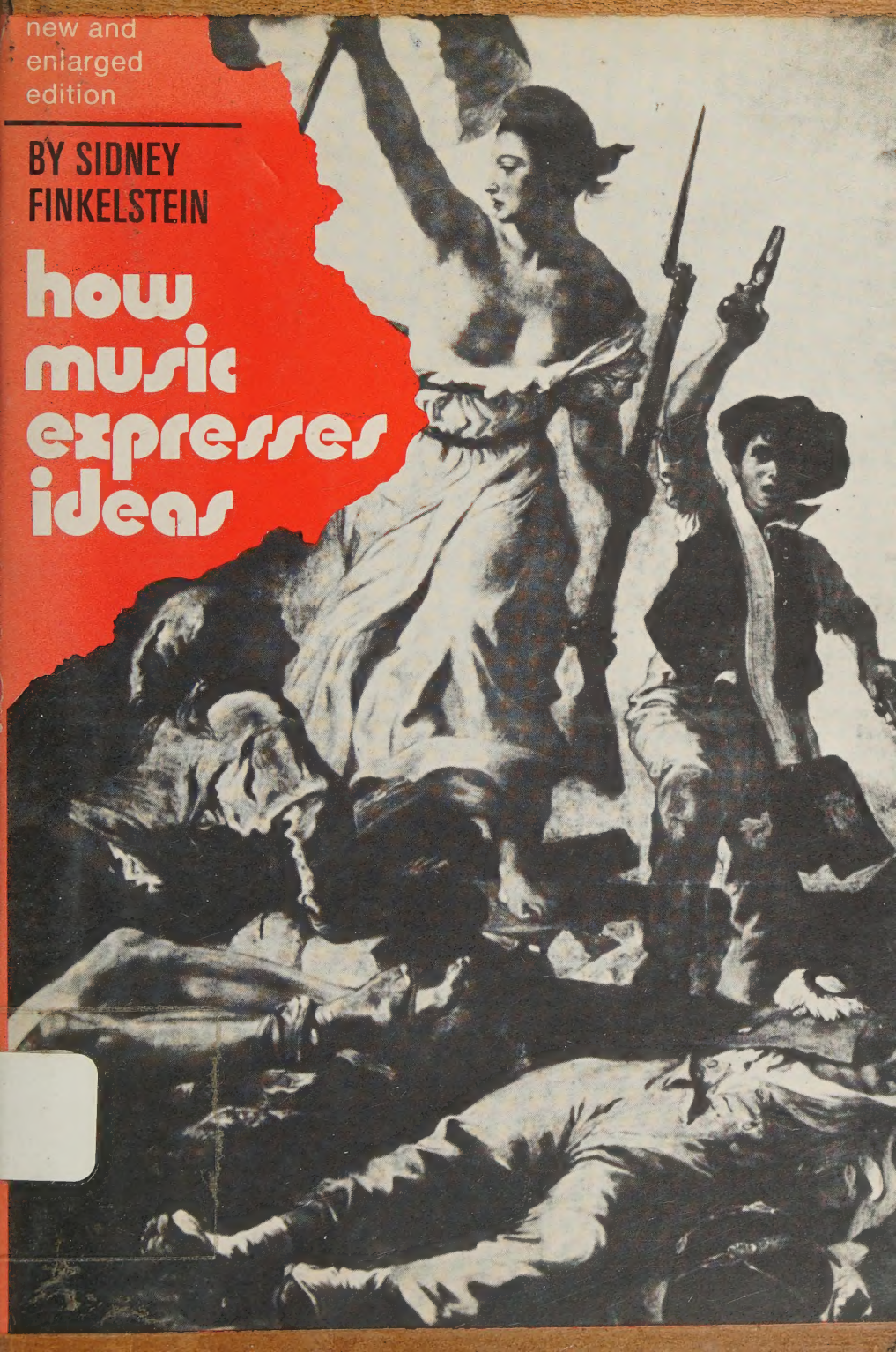
new and enlarged edition

BY SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

how music expresses ideas



HOW MUSIC EXPRESSES IDEAS

by Sidney Finkelstein

This newly revised and enlarged edition again makes available an important study on the meaning of music. What does music evoke in the listener and how is this accomplished? This is the question the author raises as he reviews the development of music — primarily in Europe, but also in the United States and the Soviet Union.

The author contends that music must relate to society to evoke real feelings which augment and reflect artistic and social development. Among composers discussed within this context are Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Wagner, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Bartok. Particularly interesting is the eloquent section on Beethoven which shows how this great composer's work not only expressed the strife and conflict of the revolution against feudalism, but also affirmed a new humanism.

Provocative chapters on medieval religious and secular music, the evolution of opera and symphony as well as the ever present conflict between "court" and "folk" are integral elements of this study. With a thorough comprehension of musical technique, the author probes the cumulative

(continued on back flap)

HOW MUSIC EXPRESSES IDEAS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Sense and Nonsense of McLuhan
Existentialism and Alienation in American Literature
Composer and Nation
Realism and Art
Jazz: A People's Music
Art and Society

HOW *Music* EXPRESSES *Ideas*

Sidney Finkelstein

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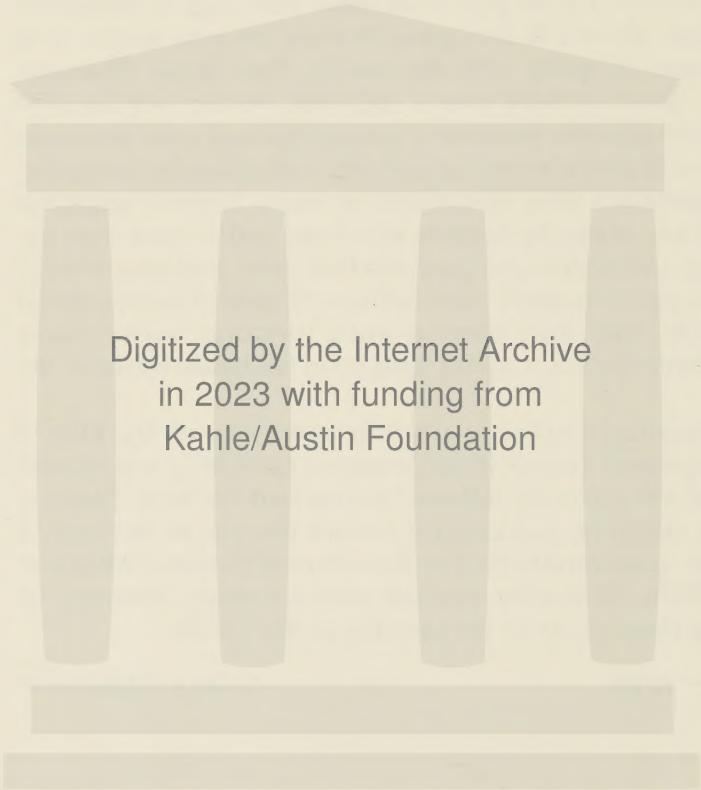
AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO NEW EDITION

For an author to have the opportunity to revise and even rewrite parts of a book published some years ago is somewhat like being allowed to live parts of one's life over again. As it turned out, in going over the earlier *How Music Expresses Ideas,* I found nothing that I regretted having written. But there were phrases, sentences, paragraphs and even omissions which could give a wrong impression, and called for rewriting. The expansions were stimulated by many friendly questions which were raised by readers when the earlier book was circulating, and which convinced me that some problems which I had thought were dealt with sufficiently needed further detail and study. And then there is some updating, where recent events have thrown a useful light upon the issues raised in the book.

The opening chapter is a wholly new essay on the kind of ideas expressed in music, and explains more fully and clearly, I believe, the approach followed throughout the book. Sections of other chapters, particularly toward the end of the book, I found too much conditioned by the events of the late 1940's and early 1950's. No drastic changes were necessary, however, in bringing them closer to the opening of the 1970's.

February 1970. —Sidney Finkelstein



Contents

1. Music and Human Images

Music is widely considered to be the "purest" of the arts, an abstract art not significantly influenced by the outer world of nature, society and history. Yet music's own history contradicts this. It has gone through changes of style and form, like renaissance, baroque, rococo, classic, and romantic, of the deepest importance to composers, and which parallel similar changes in the other arts. And these changes have corresponded to changes in European society from the 15th through the 19th centuries.

Music does not present "eye" images of outer reality as do painting and literature. It does have "sound" images of the outer world like imitations of bird calls, footsteps, wind and rain, but these are only superficial to the art. Music differs from other arts in its mode of expression, not in its fundamental nature as an art embodying the human being's response to the world outside of him, or his "interior" life.

Neither painting nor literature operates as art simply by presenting documentary or photographic accounts of the outer world. Rather, they operate as art by creating images of outer reality so as to evoke in the onlooker certain states of interior or psychological life. The work appears to speak not only "to" the onlooker but also "of" him. Rembrandt's landscape drawings are obviously sketches of actual scenes, but they also can be called "human images" or "human portraits." In reproducing these scenes with pen strokes on paper, he created something that also reveals his mind and embodies a particular human response to nature. When Shakespeare writes: *"and then my state, Like to the lark at break of day arising, From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate,"* he is not teaching the life-cycle of the lark but creating in the reader, through the memories and feelings the words evoke, a particular state

of interior life. We can describe this state clumsily, calling it "a sudden change from despondency to estatic joy." But Shakespeare's words do not describe this state; they evoke it in the reader's mind. Shakespeare's dramas weave such states of mind into psychological complexes, or "human portraits."

These "human portraits" are not only specific human responses to the outer world, but, for all their individuality, are also illuminations of a society. The individual psychology is a social creation. Whatever unique potential talents, sensitivities and bents are born in an individual, they develop and grow under social conditions. These include prevalent forms of labor or of acquiring the necessities of life, various existing social classes and resulting human relations, knowledge of what the world is and what a human being is, prevailing ideas and new conflicting ideas, and existing institutions. As society changes its modes of production, its class relations also change, and with this, its institutions, knowledge and ideas. Along with this there are developments of the psychological or internal life of its people. At the core of such changes is the state of human freedom, and the growth of freedom rests on the possibilities offered by society.

Long-term development of human freedom depends on the discovery of laws of the real world and the ability to use these laws for human ends. Each step opens up new possibilities for human growth, with new awareness of what life can be, and so involves changes in psychology or internal life.

Thus the changes in the external conditions of life bring about changes in the internal life of human beings. What people find that they can do in the outer world, in collaboration with their fellows, alters their knowledge of themselves. A society does not stamp personalities from a die, but no one can go beyond its possibilities for freedom and growth. It has been the special province of the arts to reveal these changes in human internal life, to show what it has meant to live in a particular society.

Music evokes this interior life through what may be called its "human images" or "human portraits." Music is not simply made by following one tone with another, but by a succession of tones which the ear grasps as a unit, like a melodic phrase

or a melody. These units are "human images," for they evoke states of life. Larger forms are created involving complex melodic chains, alternation and variation of melodies, simultaneous interplay of two or more melodic lines or "polyphony," formations of "chords" or groups of different notes that, struck simultaneously, merge to sound like a single note with an enriched "feeling tone." Such complex forms evoke psychological states that are "human portraits."

Through such "human images" and "portraits" music can be said to embody ideas. These are not the ideas that may be found in a scientific tract but commentaries on a society showing what it means to live in it. They embrace developments in sensitivity, in the human's awareness of his own powers, and in the situation of internal freedom, as conditions change in the external world. In this way music joins the other arts in creating social consciousness, or the individual's awareness of the internal life he shares with society, and in revealing the internal history of society. Music also brings to bear upon the education of the present, past growth in sensitivity and freedom.

Some claim that music is purely "emotional" communication, implying that it contrasts to "thought" or "idea" communication. But emotions are aroused in people by everything they perceive, and also by the most rational thoughts and actions. Indeed, profoundly rational and scientific discoveries of reality sometimes inspire high emotional response, as in the story of Archimedes shouting "Eureka!" after discovering specific gravity. Emotions and reason are not mutually exclusive. The emotional life of one who acts rationally—i.e., guiding his actions aware of the known laws and conditions of the outer reality he faces—is different from the emotional life of one who acts irrationally, like one repeatedly beating his head against a stone wall. In music, as in the other arts, the very structure of a large-scale work provides a clue to the relative rationality or irrationality of the artist's thinking about the problems of life he raises in the work. Both "rational" and "irrational" works can be equally emotional.

If the function of music were simply to arouse private emotions that are recognizably like those of real life, it would have no reason for being, since real life does this better. No "love'

music, for example, compares in intensity to the actual experience of love, and no lament or funeral march is as sad as the loss of a dear one. Music, like all art, is not a substitute for life. The arts are artifices, conscious creations of the human body and mind, through channels created by society for addressing a public. They evoke states of internal life that also involve states of human relationships, through objective means, or socially created languages and forms. The work of art exists therefore as an undying object and as a social possession. The unique quality of art, as a product of the human mind, is that it embodies thought about life while it appears to evoke life itself.

Internal states evoked by works of art are not simply flickering moods and the feelings that accompany various moments of life. In creating a work the artist draws more or less upon his entire personal and social experience. What results is therefore not merely a random mood but a set of concentrated psychological states that represent an attitude toward life. Since art moves through socially organized channels, it is an attitude generally toward not a particular moment of life, but rather toward the more basic conditions that persist through day-to-day changes, and affect more or less consciously all the members of a society, including the artist.

Music, even though it proceeds through time and produces structures that cannot be seen or touched, characteristically creates an objective thing, existing outside the artist and the listener. It also works with concrete materials which are invisible and weightless sound waves. A particular characteristic of music is that, even when written down, the real work of art is the live performance. What is written is really an explicit set of directions for creating a performance, and its success rests on the ability of the performer to share the world view of the artist, or his feeling for life. This does not deny the character of music as an art creating objective works, shaped by the body and mind, able to be repeated and to stand forever as an embodiment of a stage of human sensitivity.

Aesthetic emotion, or recognition of beauty, aroused by its concrete state, is central to the arts, including music, and

marks the difference between art and life. This aesthetic emotion is a special kind of joy. It is a reaction to a leap in knowledge of the kind that transforms the human being by opening up new possibilities of life. It is the joy of discovering a new common tie among people, and the recognition that the mind has grown an inch in stature by becoming aware of new powers.

This aesthetic excitement can equally well be aroused by music of sad or tragic feeling, high gaiety or fierce dramatic tension. It does not rest on the particular moods or emotional complexes that can be described as belonging to a musical work. It rests on the dual nature of music, of every art; its relation to interior life, and its artifice, or objective existence embodying thought about life; the individual's discovery of how society has shaped him, the relevance of this discovery to all members of a society.

When the internal can thus become externalized, a new power has been created. A stage has taken place in the humanization of relations among people. Life can be discussed in terms of the innermost yearnings for happiness and mutual growth, through channels that are socially created—inspired by magic rituals, religious liturgies, theaters, festivities, musical gatherings, concerts, music publications—and potentially address all society.

The "language" of music is a social creation. Every society has a music basically composed of songs, dances, melodies and melodic phrases, in which various groupings of notes have coalesced into units evoking various states of life. In primitive societies or situations, gifted individuals improvise with these social and living materials or plastic "units"; in more developed societies and situations, composers can create imposing structures with these materials. In this sense all new music is made largely out of already existing music. This does not detract from the originality of a musical work. It only states why an original work of music is also understandable. New music takes familiar material and molds it in new forms, ranging from new melodic shapes to large structures built with them. If there were not this socially-created language, there would be no individual creation.

Because of its lack of word or pictorial imagery, music seems to be the most inward of the arts. But it is also the most immediately social, in the awareness of kinship it evokes among a body of listeners, without impediments of any kind. As literature and painting, for all their outer-world references, have an inward or subjective quality, so music, seemingly inward, has an outer-world character. Its internal states are a commentary on life as it is actually being lived in society. With a painting or novel, the subject matter or the story is important, but so too is what the artist is really saying through the kind of human presence he evokes, about life with all its psychological subtleties and conflicts. For real understanding, it is necessary to ask with music, seemingly exclusively inward, just what are the outer conditions of life, the problems, conflicts and challenges, that affect the humanity of those who made it. And, further, what do the internal states disclosed tell us about these historically created conditions of life? Only this examination can answer the questions of why music has meant so much to people in every age, why it has gone through radical changes and transformations, and why each age has given it new problems to attack.

The ideas which permeate music will not be found by those not looking for them. A person may listen to the greatest work of music as simply a procession of sweet sounds, as if he were taking an emotional bath. But real understanding, as well as greater joy, comes with recognition of a human presence in the musical work, a stage in the development of the mind itself as it becomes aware of the new potentialities and problems of life afforded by the changes and conflicts outside it.

2. Origins of Music

This book is a study of the development of the meaning of music. It is not a history, but it must necessarily approach the subject historically, giving some idea of the way in which music has assimilated new experiences, problems and ideas.

It deals, but for some discussion of origins, with the European music of the past 500 years and with the problems of music in the United States today. This is far from the whole story of music. There have been rich musical cultures among the peoples of Asia and Africa, and the Indian peoples of the Americas. Capitalism, which arose in Europe and the Americas during the past five centuries, took its riches from the robbery and colonial exploitation of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. This exploitation was accomplished by enslavement of the peoples and contempt for their cultures.

Yet the contribution of European music these last 500 years was historical and crucial in the development of the art. This contribution is not to be regarded as the product of any particular culture. It drew heavily upon Asian and African music. The liturgical music of the Middle Ages was based on Catholic chant, which drew upon Greek, Syrian and Hebrew music. The folk music of eastern, central and southwestern Europe, which infused the classic musical creations of the last five centuries, was itself built on a heritage of Asian and African music. A basic contribution to the music that has developed in the Americas was made by the black people and the culture they brought from Africa. Drawing upon these riches, the great works made possible by the battles of capitalism against feudalism in Europe represent a gigantic and unique advance, which raised the social content of music to a new level, increased the breadth of its forms, and gave it a powerful role in the battle of ideas. There can be no doubt that this classic heritage will be a source

of lessons for music in the future, just as the people and musical resources of Asia, Africa and the Americas will play a powerful and independent role.

The organization of sounds into human images was a creation of primitive tribal life.

In primitive social organization the means of livelihood, hunting and fishing grounds and land on which crops were raised, were communally possessed. The wresting of man's needs from nature, the sowing, harvesting and hunting, were carried on socially by the entire tribe. Nature, still unexplored and unmastered, was seen as peopled by powerful, mysterious, living forces. Along with the first real mastery of nature through the use of fire, the creation of the ax, the spear, the wheel, the boat and pottery, primitive tribes also attempted to control nature through collective magic rituals. These rituals combined poetry, music and dance in one set of actions, along with painting of the body and the carving of masks.

What was "magic" was the belief that through imitating or symbolizing the mysterious forces of nature by word, gesture or paint, the tribesmen could assert domination over those forces. With the development of more powerful tools and of real scientific knowledge of the world, magic became utterly fantastic and degenerated into superstition. Yet in primitive life it had a core of realism. It was a means of organizing the tribe's collective labor in real activities such as hunting and sowing, and the beginning of an attempt to understand nature. There were rituals of hunting, war, sowing, harvest, festive initiation of the young into adulthood, and ceremonies over the burial of the dead. Each had its own dance or song.

In tribal rituals appear the two characteristics of organized musical sound, contrasting and yet combining, that are basic to the entire art of music: pitch and rhythm. Pitch refers to the relatively high or low quality of tones; the faster the rate of vibration of the sound waves in the air, the higher the tone will sound to the ear. Rhythm refers to the regular recurrence of groups of accents or beats. Although it is possible experimentally to have music on a single repeated tone, all known music uses at least two different tones. Even in speech today a mono-

tone sounds lifeless; it is the presence of pitch, of different intonations, which adds an affecting human feeling to speech. Similarly, it is experimentally possible to have a rhythm consisting of a single recurring beat, but practically all known musical rhythm consists of the alternation of at least two different beats, as in the heartbeat, breathing, walking, rowing, the sowing of grain, the up-and-down swing of an ax, and all the movements of labor. It is this alternation, or up-and-back quality of rhythm, which gives it the character not merely of division of time into intervals, but of forward motion.

In primitive rituals, pitch and rhythm were distinct from one another, although never wholly separate. Words were chanted, thus producing a song, although the word "song" had a different meaning from what it has today. A song in primitive life was a melodic phrase seemingly endlessly repeated, with little variation, close to the intonations of speech. It was organized most simply about a single repeated tone as a center or resting place, about which the other tones clustered. Sometimes this tonal center could extend to an axis of two or more repeated tones.

A dance meant a rhythmic pattern also endlessly repeated. The rhythms of primitive music achieved great complexity, inspired by remarkable skills in manipulating hands, fingers and feet, and by complicated cross-motions of limbs, fingers, head and body in ritual dance.

There were different songs and dances in primitive life, each having a different use – for hunting, battle, sowing, harvesting, rowing, lovemaking or lullaby. From the use of such definite musical patterns for human social activities rose the human imagery of music, or the ability of musical patterns to evoke images of different actions and feelings associated with them. It is much debated whether the human imagery of music is only arbitrary, an outgrowth of social custom, or whether it is based on the natural physical characteristics of sound. It cannot be other than a product of both. Different peoples have different musical patterns for courtship, battle, or putting a child to sleep. These are socially evolved. Yet the fact that sounds are produced by different tensions of the body, of chest,

throat, lips and fingers, indicates that there must be a relation between these body tensions and the affecting quality of the tones they produce. Certainly the music that one people uses for a war cry cannot become a lullaby for others.

It was a great advance, which may have taken place in primitive life, for "songs" to be not merely sung, but played on instruments, such as pipes, and still have the connotations of the words and feelings to which the music was originally set. Music has since gone a long way from song-speech, or the simple reflection of intonations and accents of speech, and from the bare impact of rhythmic movement. Yet key to the expressiveness of all music, including the instrumental, is that permanently embedded are speech inflections, patterns of body movement, and human imagery manifest in almost every activity of life. Necessary to a thriving musical culture, along with the imposing forms it produces, is music's use by people for song, dance, march, the activities of labor and other aspects of their daily lives. Thus the human imagery of music, the key to its content, is confirmed by people through their very use of it.

Primitive tribal communalism usually was followed by slaveholding societies. Sometimes called the first "city civilizations" because of their great temples and palaces, with workshops and homes clustered about them, their main productive labor was still agricultural. Slaveowners were given titles such as king, emperor, pharaoh, and their military lieutenants and overseers became the landed nobility. There were constant wars for land and slaves, and also sharp class struggles between the landed nobility and small peasantry. Slave-holding societies include those of ancient Egypt, starting about 3000 B.C., those of Mesopotamia and India, the city-states of ancient Greece, the empire of Alexander, and finally the Roman Empire. These societies produced highly specialized craftsmen, many of whom were slaves, including trained musicians. Elaborate musical instruments were developed, made possible by increasing skills in working metal, wood and stone, and by increasing mathematical knowledge. The latter made it possible to calculate the pitch of instruments with exactness through the sizes of pipes and strings and the placement of holes. Out of

such instrumental development the voice and ear could be trained to hear and reproduce more exact pitch.

Music in these societies was still considered to have magical powers and was used for rituals. The rituals, however, were no longer a collective product of all the people, but were organized by the priesthood in the interests of king and nobility, to affirm the belief that the slaveholders were not ordinary mortals but gods and the descendants of gods.

If the music of slaveholding society was more formalized in its rituals, it also provided great advances in instrumental techniques, and an arena for rich development of the human imagery of music. The traditional musical patterns developed by various tribes could be enhanced by one another. Epic poems, such as those ascribed to Homer, describing the exploits of tribal kings and chieftains and intermixed with ritual and magic beliefs, were publicly chanted to music. Independent rituals arose among the slaves, peasantry and mine laborers, such as the Osiris cults of Egypt and the Dionysian and Orphic cults of Greece. The great dramas which flowered out of the Dionysian cults in Greek city-states, like Athens, were saturated with music.

The music of slaveholding society, judging from portrayals of groups of musicians, was frequently polyphonic, or many-voiced. Many singers and instrumentalists performed together, and although they might all start with the same traditional melody, each would improvise, depending upon the character of his voice or instrument. Music of complicated, interweaving strands could arise, although it was still improvisational, and very different from the highly organized polyphonic music of the Middle Ages. In these societies appeared the first attempts at writing music. No musical notation in any of these early cultures sets down pitch and time duration with the exactness demanded by musical composition. Sometimes this early notation was a picturization of the hand and finger motions of the leader of a chorus. Among the Greeks, an elaborate notation was built up based on the position of the fingers in performing on an instrument. Music in these societies was also elaborately rhythmic, reflecting the intricate movements of

ritual dances, using not only a wide variety of drums and taborets but also bells and strings, which produced a music both melodic and percussive. In Africa a rhythmic music developed as a kind of speech communication that could be heard over long distances. In these early societies music took the dual form which has continued throughout all its later development; as pointed out by the Hungarian composer, Bela Bartok. It can be "speech inflected," tending to evoke inward, reflective states, or "rhythm dominated," evoking outer-world movement.

3. *Village, Court and Church*

In the European Middle Ages, as in slaveholding society, the major production of wealth took place on the land. The ruling class of emperor, kings and landowning lords regarded both the land and their titles of nobility as given by divine right, a theory affirmed and enforced by the medieval church. The free peasantry and serfs were almost as tightly bound to the service of their lords, and as restricted in their movements, as the slaves had been, and were subject to poverty, plague and starvation. Yet there were ways of escape for some of the bold and hardy, who could become outlaws and brigands, or journeymen, artisans, and merchants in the growing towns and cities. The peasants were also able to carry out rebellions on a scale unknown to slave society. These revolts of the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries played a powerful role in the dissolution of feudalism.

The Holy Roman Empire and the papacy were, to lift a phrase from Thomas Hobbes, "the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof." Theoretically, through the hierarchy extending from emperor to serfs, from pope to local priest, the empire and the papacy ruled all Europe. In actual fact, Christendom in the 13th and 14th centuries was rocked by struggles between emperor and pope over the power each claimed to wield above the other. Pope, cardinals and bishops were rich and powerful landowners, nobles and secular rulers in their own right.

Throughout Europe merchant and manufacturing cities arose which theoretically owed loyalty to church, empire and the nobility. The populations of these cities, the "middle class" of feudalism, were organized along the lines of a feudal hierarchy, in guilds of various trades and crafts, with guild master workmen over journeymen, and journeymen over apprentices.

Yet these cities, from behind their stout walls, fought against emperor, pope and the nobility, both secular and church. They were little republican centers, electing their own mayors, aldermen, burgomasters and signoria. This relative democracy did not extend, of course, to the poor of the cities, let alone to the peasantry on the land outside. Still these middle-class struggles in the cities were a powerful factor in the breakup of feudalism, leading to the formation of city-states, such as the Republic of Venice and the Commune of Florence. They supported the rise of national states, as in France and England, independent of emperor and pope, and unified against the claims of the internal nobility.

Music in the Middle Ages still existed in a shell of the "magical." During the fourth century St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, engaged in converting people to the Church, composed many hymns based on folk strains. He was accused by purists of "having charmed the people with magic chants."[1] Throughout the Middle Ages the sound of bells was thought to have magic properties, useful for frightening demons. The alchemists used musical symbols as part of their cabalistic mixture of magic and what was later to become chemistry. Music in the Middle Ages was also divided on class lines, reflecting the classes of feudal society. There were a folk music of the peasantry, a music of the courts, an official music of the church, and a growing music of the city middle class, the bourgeois. Each made an individual and important contribution to musical development although they also drew from one another.

Among the peasantry existed a heritage of memories passed down by word of mouth, of epic songs and sagas which had been sung by minstrels for the tribal courts at a time when the kings still led their people into battle and did not live very differently from the common. Other ceremonies and rituals were carried over from tribal life, such as the carnivals, the spring and harvest dances, maypole dances, courtship and wedding ceremonies. Some of these rituals were absorbed into Christianity, as in the Christmas and Easter celebrations.

This folk art, however, which combined music and poetry, as well as dance and miming, was no mere half-remembered

relic of tribal life. It was shaped by the peasantry as an independent culture of their own and a means of struggle against the oppressive forces of feudal life, just as, much later, the black slaves in the United States preserved memories of African culture as forms of communication and of struggle against slavery, with meanings known only to the slaves. So primitive and tribal art was transformed; it took on as a new content the ways of life, character and struggles of the medieval peasantry. Ancient sagas became "outlaw" ballads, e.g. those of Robin Hood, expressing the popular hatred of courts and nobility. Religious music-plays and songs of folk and town artisans, such as the Christmas carols, emphasized not Christ the King, but the common people's symbol of mother and child in the poor manger, to whom kings did homage. Ballads and songs with cryptic primitive symbols became revolutionary songs of the peasantry, like the English ballads of the "Cutty Wren," which the people hunted, and the mystically indestructible "John Barleycorn." There developed a variety of songs of love, courtship, lullaby, labor in the fields and in village shops.

The earthy simplicity and strong human imagery of this music made it of inestimable service to the later development of a powerfully realistic composed music. One of the great contributions of this folk music to the development of the art was that it laid the basis for a national music, a composed music that would sound characteristic and typical of England, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, Bohemia. This growth of folk music and its entrance into "art" music was a continuous process from the 15th century to the present day, as struggles for national unification and independence developed in one nation after another.

The culture of the medieval courts was also filled with rituals carried over from more primitive times, although in a manner very different from that of the folk. Customarily, histories of culture describe court primitivisms and archaisms as things of ineffable beauty, while those of the folk are characterized as examples of ignorance and superstition, as in the following passage:

It is here that the path of fancy proved its civilizing value. All aristocratic life in the later Middle Ages is a wholesale attempt to act the vision of a dream. In cloaking itself in the fanciful brilliance of the heroism and probity of a past age, the life of the nobles elevated itself towards the sublime. . . . The need of high culture found its most direct expression in all that constitutes ceremonial and etiquette. The actions of princes, even daily and common actions, all assume a quasi-symbolic form and tend to raise themselves to the ranks of mysteries. Births, marriages, deaths are framed in an apparatus of solemn and sublime formalities.[2]

If the rituals of the court, like its costumes, embodied more elaborate craftsmanship, those of the folk had a more earthy sense of reality. As primitive rituals among the common people gave rise to the folk play, among the nobility they gave rise to the court tournament, a kind of ritual drama of "make-believe of heroism and love." Ancient sagas gave birth to the outlaw ballads of the folk and produced court tales of chivalry in which gallant knights slew enemies by the thousands with magic swords, killed dragons and rescued virgins from the castles of magicians. Music and poetry were part of every courtier's education, like the hunt, dance and swordplay, and love-making was an elaborate game carried out with a highly formalized poetry and music.

The court music of the Middle Ages combined a vocal, instrumental and composing skill, otherwise heard only in church music, with themes that dealt, even if in partly formalized fashion, with such secular subjects as love, beauties of nature, and exploits of battle. The art of the troubadours and trouvères of the south of France during the 11th and 12th centuries, poet-musicians and singers connected with the courts, has been particularly renowned. This Provençal culture leaned toward a heretical and humanist version of Christian theology. It was wiped out when the land was devastated in the crusades of 1209 and 1244, "holy wars" carried on against the prevalent humanist heresies much feared by the church—the Waldensian and Albigensian. The art was one in which, as in sagas and battle songs heard in tribal courts of more ancient days, or the Homeric epics of Greece, poetry and music, improvisation and composition, had not yet separated

from each other. Music tended to be "endless melody," guided in its form by the stanzas of the poem and by the inflections of speech, adorned with elaborate vocal decorative figures and using folk melody. As Henri Punières writes:

> The highly skilled art of these wonderful musician-poets was carefully secluded from the uninitiated. They took pride in developing an obscure manner called the *trobar clus* (literally to compose 'closed' or obscurely), yet their sophisticated forms appeal by a spirit of freshness deriving from the simple, rough-hewn examples invented by the people.[3]

In the later Middle Ages, although poetry and music remained an avocation of courtiers, court music came increasingly to be composed by skilled artisans hired for the purpose.

The cities, being merchant centers, were focal points in which widely different strains of music could be brought together, to augment one another. The peasantry brought their instruments, songs and dances. The elaborate music composed by church masters for the cathedrals could be heard. An independent musical art of the city artisans and middle class grew up, but was frowned upon by church theorists and scholars of music. "A writer on music about 1300, the Frenchman Johannes de Grocheo, first dared to discuss the *musica vulgaris* of Paris, with its songs and dances, along with the dignified music of the Church."[4]

Typical of the musical mixtures that could take place were religious chants into the midst of which folk songs found their way, and "motets" in which a traditional religious hymn was sung simultaneously with what were frequently ribald secular songs. In the German cities the mastersingers arose, guild members who prided themselves on their avocation of poetry and music. "The syllabification and tonal character of these pieces, their frank rhythms and simple layout imply a popular and primitive appeal. They anticipate the Lutheran choral which was to appear a century before the reformation."[5] The peasant religious plays with music, both devout and satirically anti-clerical, were taken over and expanded by the city guilds. With the arrival of ships and merchant caravans, music of widely separate lands, of France, England, Germany, Italy and

the East, could intermingle. As the cities, particularly those of Italy, grew in wealth and power, great open-air pageants were presented with music, in which lay some of the beginnings of what was later to become opera.

A rich source of song came from wandering students, who produced a music and poetry full of joy in life, love and the open road. Even more important in the development of a secular music was the art of the jesters, jongleurs or jugglers, minstrels, actors and mountebanks who wandered from town to town, welcomed by village, city and court alike for their entertainment. The word "jester" comes from the old word, *gest-our*, the singer of *gestes* or sagas of the tribal courts. These minstrels were attacked by both church and state authorities; the general charge was that they were immoral, "lascivious," and agents of Satan, but the real motive, as in all such cases of "moral" censorship of a people's art, was political. Paul Henry Lang writes:

> By the 13th century the minstrel became a powerful factor, loved and feared. In a single person he played the role of a newspaper, theatre and music hall. [By the 14th century] while the minstrels now enjoyed more freedom than they had in the early Middle Ages, the authorities frowned upon them because they were able, under the guise of singing, to encourage social and political revolt.[6]

In 1402 the English House of Commons ordered that "no westours and rimers, minstrels or vagabonds, be maintained in Wales, to make kymorthas or quyllages on the common people, who by their divinations, lies, and exhortations are partly cause of the insurrection and rebellion now in Wales."[7]

In the cities, among the guilds of printers, the practice of printing music arose, enabling musical composition and performance to be circulated and studied in a way previously impossible. The first printed music appeared in 1500 in Venice. It was not, however, until the end of the 18th century that composers were able to actually make an important part of their living from the printing and sale of their music. A contribution of the cities, which proved to be of the utmost importance in the future transformation of music, was the development of music based on what are our present-day major-minor scales. This

system was a simplification of musical writing and thinking, freeing the art of music from the complications and theological rules of church modes, and making possible a new wealth of emotion and drama in music. The major-minor tonalities arose in folk and popular music, and in the cross-pollination of many strains brought by the minstrels and city entertainers. Lang writes:

> The oldest documents of popular instrumental music testify to the vogue of a major-minor conception of tonality among these simple musicians, a fact which is an exception with the art music of the period. Medieval musical science was contemptuously opposed to these tonalities, against which it cited the doctrines of the ancients.[8]

To the church throughout the Middle Ages music was not an art devoted to the many-sided portrayal of life but part of religious ritual, bound to its words and ceremonies. The Catholic chants themselves, the basis of liturgical music, had arisen between the fourth and ninth centuries out of popular song and ancient Greek, Syrian and Hebrew chants, but they were standardized by the church theoreticians into various generalized note patterns, or modes, each with its own ritual use, which were presumed to be the modes of ancient Greek music and were given Greek names, such as Dorian, Lydian and Phrygian.

Within church music, however, two great advances took place which were crucial to the development of the art. One was the rise of musical notation, worked out by the monks in the monasteries of the 11th and 12th centuries. By the 13th century notes were written in exact time values as well as pitch. The basis was laid for the freedom of music from the limitations of improvisation. A musical composition could be studied, worked over, developed in length and breadth, form and content.

The church of the Middle Ages was itself the greatest of landowners and the staunch support of feudalism. It fostered the composer of music for its own glory and for the grip that music could have on people's minds. It trained gifted children of the poor to become singers and composers in its ranks. Musical craft and theory in the Middle Ages were a branch of theology,

like painting, education, philosophy, law and what passed for science. The liturgical mass and motet became the major musical forms of the age, constantly growing in architectural breadth.

Yet in fostering musical composition, the church brought a force into being that would eventually break the ecclesiastical grip upon music itself. As one creative musical mind after another appeared, each building on his predecessor's work, each seeking to make music meaningful in its human imagery and emotional content, the demands of ritual increasingly appeared as manacles to be broken.

The composers came from different social classes. Guillaume de Machault (1300-1370?) was a French courtier and diplomat. Guillaume Dufay (1400-1474), another great French composer, was born of more lowly parents, and his music has a folkish loveliness and simplicity of melody that makes it the most lovable of the Middle Ages. To the church, all music was theoretically supposed to sound similar, built on the same modes and rituals, no matter in what land it appeared. Yet a national character forced its way into composed music, mainly into that for secular use but not ignoring the liturgical. Almost all of the great church composers wrote secular music. Machault wrote songs and ballads, and Dufay also wrote many enchanting songs and dances. The great composer of the Netherlands, Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594), wrote hundreds of chansons, madrigals, and comic and satiric villanelles, or dancing songs. The Flemish composer Isaak (1450?-1517) wrote carnival songs to be sung in the streets of Florence. Yet the secular music, if it was able to catch the varied human imagery, and sunny and serious moods of daily life, was still bound to short and restricted forms of dance music and settings for lyric poetry.

The official Catholic church music reached sublime heights. The late medieval church or cathedral was conceived to shut off all thought of the real world and its clamor, its poverty and strife; to represent the "other world" of heaven and eternity. So too the music of Catholic liturgies embodied the inner states of yearning and hope which made men find solace in the vision

of a life after death, as peaceful as actual life was troubled. Extroverted feeling, through strongly propulsive or dancing rhythm, boisterousness and dramatic clashes, was banished. Thus the great Masses of the 15th and 16th centuries are the epitome of a subjective and conflictless music. The socially created "raw material" consisted of the body of traditional church chants, hymns and even folk and popular songs. But it was softened of its original outer-world feeling and woven into flowing polyphonic lines with sensitive harmonic movement. This intensified the subtlety and depth of poignantly yearning psychological states.

This is not to say that the church music of feudalism was devoid of other imagery. The church may have fostered composition and musical theory in order to eliminate improvisation, with its dreaded intrusion of national, "pagan" and secular images. Throughout the Middle Ages folk music was called an arm of Satan, who in turn was pictured as enticing people to perdition with a fiddle in his hands. Something of this was recognized by Samuel Wesley, the English hymn composer, centuries later, when he said he didn't see "why the devil should have the best tunes." But the "devil" entered church music itself. Monks in the monastaries put love songs between the drawn-out syllables of liturgical chants. The folk improvised "motets" combining church chants with ribald songs. Dufay put lovely French popular songs into his church masses. Between the 13th and 16th centuries a perpetual battle was waged between church authorities and musicians over the injection of folk songs and dances and folk-style music into liturgical composition.

Pressure for folk and secular elements in church music was not merely a humanization of ritual. It had connotations of politics and class struggle. The "battle for the Bible," to translate the Bible into vernacular languages and to interpret religion in terms of the needs of the common people, was one of the forms taken by the struggle of the peasantry, weavers and masons, the city middle classes, against the courts, nobility, wealthy merchants and the church itself. Engels writes:

The Middle Ages had attached to theology all the other forms of ideology – philosophy, politics, jurisprudence – and made them subdivisions of theology. It therefore constrained every social and political movement to take on a theological form. To the masses whose minds were fed with religion to the exclusion of all else, it was necessary to put forward their own interests in a religious guise in order to produce a great agitation.[9]

There was no question in the Middle Ages as to whether music had real and specific meanings. In 1325, a bull of Pope John XXII denounced the "new school" of music which

invented new melodies in a new notation rather than singing old ones, forced rapid tempos on sacred music, dissolved the melody by ornaments, rests and polyphony, and grafted sacred words on secular tunes; in short, it disturbed devotion, intoxicated the ear, and perverted the listener.[10]

These were exactly the ways in which folk melody had entered sacred music, by becoming vocal "ornaments" to traditional chants and becoming polyphonic vocal lines sung simultaneously with them. In the 16th century a secret musical language grew up in the church music of the Netherlands composers, with hints to singers that certain passages were to be performed in altered fashion from the way in which they were written, and with other musical devices used to emphasize certain words in the text, "hiding views that the church was not supposed to discover."[11] With the ordinances of the Council of Trent (1545-63), called to combat the rising tide of Protestantism, Catholic liturgical music was "purified." The effect of this purification, however, was only to drive the best composers into writing more and more for secular purposes.

Protestant music was a development of these folk, national and heretical elements in the music of the Catholic church. Martin Luther created a body of hymns in part adapted from folk songs, in part composed in popular style by himself and other German composers. These hymns or "chorales" took on the character of a national music of the German middle class. They were also battle songs of the peasantry in the historic revolt of 1525. A large part of the middle class joined the nobles and turned viciously against the peasantry. During the two centuries of war and economic stagnation that followed, which

served to strengthen the power of the German princes, these chorales remained in German popular and sacred music as a relic and reminder of the time when the German people had almost broken the bonds of feudalism.

During the 16th and early 17th centuries leading composers appeared, such as Orazio Vecchi (1550?-1605) in Italy, John Dowland (1562-1626), Thomas Morley (1557-1603) and John Wilbye (1574-1638) in England, who devoted much of their talents to secular music. The music they wrote – madrigals, instrumental dances, and "chamber music" to be performed in the homes – was still guided in its movement by the inflections of poetry, but with a fine interweaving of many vocal and instrumental strands. At the same time, within this art a new form of the song developed; a song that was no longer a phrase endlessly repeated or an improvisation on a set pattern, but a tonally organized work with a beginning, middle and end apparent to the ear. Composers paid increasing attention to the merged sounds produced by many voices, and to the movement from one tonal center to another. Major-minor scales began to suffuse all music, even that of leading Catholic liturgical composers such as Palestrina (1526-1594) in Italy, although theorists tried to show by ingenious manipulations of the old official church modes that the music was still being written within these modes.

The close of the Middle Ages and the battles of capitalism against feudalism were delineated in culture by breaking the grip of theology over all forms of thought, including the arts. Art could deal with religious themes, but its main task now had to be the study of life in terms of life itself, and its central subject had to be the human being, studied from real life.

The Renaissance secularization of art, as shown in the madrigal, produced an historic formal development, the appearance of music drama, or opera, at the end of the 16th century. This was the first form in the history of music which could investigate secular life and human character, with a breadth of form and architecture equal to and surpassing that of church music.

4. *The Composer as Artist and Artisan*

To extract the meaning of the music of the 17th and 18th centuries means penetrating the outer form in which it superficially clothes itself. From the viewpoint of a later age, everything seems confused.

Musical works of depth and searching emotion are offered simply as "exercises" for the instruction of the young, as technical treatises, or as "chamber music" for the diversion of amateurs at home. Classical or "serious" opera, pretending to be lofty tragedy cut to fit the tastes of the proudest nobility, is actually most infantile in story and characterization. Comic opera, offering itself as light entertainment, contains the most serious social thinking and the most realistic human images. Great musicians, profound thinkers in musical form and content, are treated by the aristocracy, for whom they work, as artisans and servants in livery, hardly above the status of a cook. Religious music, which in a previous age had fought against the intrusion of folk and secular elements, now embraces every kind of song and dance music, borrowing heavily from opera, in order to hold its audiences. Great dramatic and intricate musical structures, embodying encyclopedic studies in harmony and musical form, are offered superficially as collections of dances. The myth is retained that music is court entertainment, and the germinating form of court entertainment is the chain of dances which originated in ballet.

In this apparent contradiction between content and form, the music reflects the conditions of real life of the age. The economic life of England, France, Italy and Germany is mercantile and capitalist. Yet everywhere but in England, the state forms are hangovers of feudalism, dominated by monarchies with elabor-

ate and wasteful courts, and by an equally wasteful and parasitical landed aristocracy living on the backs of the peasantry. In England, where the revolution of 1648 accelerated the development of capitalism, the state is run by a combination of great landowners and wealthy merchants.

Typical of the contradictions affecting the music of the age are those seen in opera. Opera, or drama set to music, appeared in Florence and Venice at the turn of the 16th century, seemingly wrapped in the authority of antiquity, as a "revival" of classic Greek drama, the poetry of which was known to have been chanted. It proved to be a most popular commerical musical entertainment, and within a few years there were 17 opera houses in Venice alone. Opera became the favored entertainment at all the courts of Europe, existing at the mercy of court politics, a form through which kings and nobility could patronize music, dictate its form and content, and yet have it partially supported by the public.

The Italian cities, declining as merchant empires, became training grounds for singers, instrumental performers, composers, and libretto writers, who were exported almost like luxuries such as laces and wines. Opera became a cosmopolitan art of the dream world of feudalism, almost the same in story, and often in music and language, in whatever land it was presented. The world it presented was one of a fancied past, in which time stood still, merchants, capitalists, workers and rebellious peasantry were nonexistent, and only noble characters, garbed as ancient heroes or demigods, such as Achilles, Orpheus, Hector, and Roland, told of their exploits, passions, and heartbreaks. Characterizations in poetry and music had necessarily to become one-sided abstractions of love, sorrow or anger. The high point of an operatic presentation frequently became the elaborate stage spectacle itself, with trapdoors opening in the stage floor, live waterfalls playing, angels or goddesses strapped to wires flying through the air and exotic ballets.

Yet opera was a revolutionary step which became formalized, as seen in the fact that one of the earliest composers of opera and a groundbreaker in the medium, Claudio Monteverdi

(1567-1643), who began his career as a viola player to the Duke of Mantua, remained unsurpassed in musical portrayal of emotion and character in "serious" opera for the next two centuries. The librettos he set had a serious philosophic tone and even at times, implied criticism of court life. He drew upon a rich variety of musical resources to make his human beings live on the stage. These included a free-flowing song-speech or "recitative" reminiscent of old court ballads and church music, the art of the madrigals, songs for solo voice, dances and songs in folk style, and developed the harmonic and instrumental colors of the orchestra accompanying the voices. In most operas after Monteverdi, the music becomes a declamation of poetry alternating with a kind of concert in costume of dances and songs, or "airs," with elaborate improvisational passages, or "cadenzas," in which the singers could display their technical agility. The "arias" or airs for solo voice were frequently in the rhythm of such dances as gavottes, minuets or sicilianas. Engaging enough to the ear, it somewhat limited their power to portray emotional conflict and plumb the depths of feeling.

In the latter 18th century the composer Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714-1787) issued a manifesto declaring that in opera "the true mission of music was to second the poetry, by strengthening the expression of the sentiments and increasing the interest of the situations." The real trouble, however, lay not in the fitness of the music to the words but in the words themselves, protected from realism and sense by censorship of the aristocracy which controlled the theater. The operas of men of genius such as Jean Phillippe Rameau (1683-1764) in France. George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) in England, and Gluck, who wrote in Milan, Venice, Vienna and Paris, for all the inspired music in them, are barely playable today because of the feudal ritual to which they were bound in music, word and action. What the aristocracy of the time felt to be the last word in drama now seems silly and infantile.

In spite of shallow conceptions of human beings and human relations that prevailed in classical or "serious" opera because of its stately ritual and simulation of poetic tragedy, the form made an important contribution to the growth of music. It en-

couraged the development of skilled singers and instrumentalists. It inspired the formation of large bodies of fine instrumentalists, which finally broke away from the opera house to become the magnificent collective instrument, the symphony orchestra, of later times. Even the comparatively shallow reflection of human passions in instrumental form, which rose in opera, inspired the development of the orchestral symphony, a dramatic work for orchestra without words. The word "symphony" comes from "sinfonia," which was an orchestral overture or introduction to a dramatic vocal work. The rise of skilled instrumentalists, and the interplay of solo singers with the accompanying orchestra, inspired development of the instrumental concerto, in which the proclamation of musical themes by the full orchestra alternated with improvisations and developments of these themes by one or a group of solo instrumentalists, displaying their skill in technique and musical invention.

One of the greatest of early concerto composers, Antonio Vivaldi (1675?-1743) who wrote in Venice, dramatically entitled one of his series of twelve concertos "The Contest between Harmony and Invention," describing the form as a test of skill, alternating "harmonies" announced by full orchestra with "inventions" upon these harmonies by solo passages. The concertos also sparkled with passages of nature imagery, inspired by opera, music simulating winds, the play of water, storms, dances of spring and hunting horns. This movement of dramatic ideas into instrumental music was one way composers began to create music reflecting the bourgeois world view and human portrait. They began to see the world as a place of conflict, instead of seeking a fancied peace and "simplicity," as the aristocracy was doing.

If the invention of opera may be called a revolt against the domination of music by the church, so the phenomenal development of instrumental music of the late 17th and early 18th centuries may be called a revolt against the aristocratic censorship of opera. The forms of this instrumental music often rise directly out of opera or other vocal music, and simultaneously become more truly dramatic than most opera.

Typical is the instrumental concerto, to which Italian composers made so great a contribution. The overture to Italian opera became an early model for the orchestral symphony. The ballets, or sets of dances, of French opera inspired the instrumental suite, consisting of an overture and a set of dance movements, which in turn helped preside over the birth of the symphony. Divertimentos, or "open air serenade" music, arose as an instrumental setting of popular song and dance music. The sonata, which originally meant music to be sounded on an instrument rather than sung, became a major form of musical experiment, generally designed for intimate musical gatherings. As opera had stimulated phenomenal development of the human voice as a performer of music, these instrumental forms stimulated equal development of instrumental technique and of instruments themselves. The great musicians, middle class composer-servants of the aristocracy, generally showed two faces to their era. They were entertaining "performers," "improvisers," craftsmen to their patrons; to their fellow composers they were artists, profound inventors, admired thinkers in music.

Comic opera mushroomed in the 17th and the 18th centuries as a kind of opposite and complement to "serious" or tragic opera. It drew upon the popular folk play and improvised vaudeville, such as the Italian *commedia dell'arte,* the English ballad opera and the German *singspiel,* with spoken dialogue instead of poetic declamation. Comic opera grew to be a double-edged artistic weapon. It enabled the aristocracy to laugh at the buffoonery of the "simple folk." Yet much of the actual shape, color, manners of life and national consciousness of the times entered into these works, and through ad-libbing and veiled satire, the "simple folk" were able to send pointed shafts back at their patrons. In England John Gay's (1685-1732) ballad opera, *The Beggar's Opera,* practically swept "serious" opera off the stage, although the latter was supplied by so great a musical genius as Handel.

Oratorio was created by an Italian Jesuit, St. Philip Neri, as an attempt to combine popular operatic style with Biblical subjects for Catholic propaganda. The greatest series of ora-

torios were the Protestant works written by Handel in England to Old Testament subjects, such as *Israel in Egypt, Samson, Saul* and *Judas Maccabaeus,* celebrating the military victories of the middle-class Whigs over their conservative aristocratic enemies at home and on the European continent. The "cantata," originally simply a piece of music to be sung, developed in Germany as grand, spacious, dramatic music, without costumes or scenery, based on a Biblical text, embodying the great national music of the Lutheran chorales, with elements taken from opera and the earthly vitality of folk song.

Typical of the contradictions of the age, these works, such as the cantatas of Bach and the oratorios of Handel, although not designed for the theater, have a more genuinely dramatic music, with deeper tragic feelings and captivating joy in life, than most of the operas of their time. The human imagery of this music is found in its melody and great dramatic portrayals of emotion, reflecting the personality and feelings of the bourgeois minds who created it. Bach's great *Mass in B minor,* so different in breadth and emotional range from the Renaissance Masses, was an expansion of his cantata style. For Handel in England to turn from opera in Italian to oratorio in English, taking his themes from the Protestant Bible which had been an ideological weapon of the middle-class revolution, was a giant advance in both content and form. The English accepted these works as a cultural expression of the rise and strength of their own nation. This reflection of bourgeois-democratic thought gives depth to the music of Bach, Handel and Mozart. Superficial outer imagery is still imposed by feudal myth and ritual — in opera the aristocratic myth of a "chivalry" that had never existed, in oratorio and cantata a religious symbolism and ritual, in comedy the mask of the jester and buffoon behind which shafts of political and social satire were sharpened.

In musical form and technique, the revolutionary achievement of this era was the development and standardization of the system of major and minor scales, "key" and "key change." This was one of the turning points in the history of music, one of the few true advances, which did not merely sharpen a tool, but transformed the art as a medium for the reflection of life.

The important change was the concept of key and shifting tonality. Under the new system, any chosen tone could serve as the basis of a major or minor scale, as the tonal center on which a work of music began and ended. This tonic note, or tonal center, became the "key" of the music. The music, in its course, could constantly "modulate" or shift its tonal center, and build powerful emotional and dramatic effects in the contrast between one tonality and another. With the development of "equal temperament," or the tuning of instruments so that there were 12 exactly even half-steps between a note and its octave, it was possible in one composition to move through a cycle of different and connected keys. Thus musical tones could be organized into a kind of solar system, with every possible combination related to every other by innumerable harmonic pulls and tensions. It was possible to organize music harmonically in a way previously impossible, the term "harmony" referring not only to the merged sounds or "chords" at each particular moment, but the entire pattern of shifting tonalities, the movement away from the first tonal center and the return "home." If the movement from tone to tone in primitive song-speech represented a kind of affective sharpening of each word like a speech intonation, now the movement from key to key, moving and shifting entire blocks of sound, could represent a far richer interplay of mood and emotion, a portrayal of the human mind itself in its awareness of deep conflicts in the world outside and the search for their solution.

This system may be compared to the development of light and shade, perspective, atmosphere, depth and the portrayal of human psychology in painting. It made possible a new level of "realism" in music, which in the rising bourgeois world meant an art centered on the study of the human being and human mind, taken from life, and guided in its form by thought about the movement, conflicts, storms and even unanswered questions in the struggles of capitalism against feudalism.

Once established, such a system, like the realistic developments in painting, could be petrified by innumerable useless academic rules. It could be used not only to explore reality but to simulate emotions and dramas which the composer did not

really feel. Every advance in realism, in all art, has given birth to countless misuse of new powers and techniques given the artist. Then, as today, reactionary trends arise which demand that realism itself be thrown out and art "go back" to the feudal or primitive. An academy of petrified realistic tools, is replaced by an academy of even more petrified archaic tools, which seem to be novel only because they have become strange.

The major-minor system was necessary for the further maturity of music as an art. It developed in the search of the most pioneering minds for musical tools that could be used for the reflection of real life. It was not a musical "cosmopolitanism," imposing the same practices, forms and content upon musicians of all countries, but rather to combat the cosmopolitan feudal musical ritual imposed by the medieval theologians. It helped develop national qualities in music, accompanying the rise of nations themselves, as in the work of Monteverdi, Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1644), and Antonio Vivaldi (1675?-1743) in Italy, Henry Purcell (1658-1695) and Handel in England, Diedrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) in Germany, Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) and Rameau in France. These composers learned from one another, and even adopted new countries, as Lully moved from Italy to France, Handel from Germany to England, Buxtehude from Sweden to Germany. Many drew upon the riches of folk music in the country in which they lived and created new works that were absorbed by the people as a folk and popular national music.

Many songs for solo voice and operatic airs that appeared in the 17th century have a major-minor sound to the ear. At the end of the 17th century and beginning of the 18th the major-minor system was fully explored in theory and practice by a group of composer-theoreticians who offered their work, actually an exploration of new realms of emotional portrayal in music, as a "science" of music. These men, such as Francois Couperin (1668-1733), Vivaldi, Buxtehude, Rameau, and Johann Sebastian Bach, were middle class musical artisans who worked necessarily for the church and aristocracy, but pushed the boundaries of music far beyond the desires of their

patrons. Complete masters of their craft, they were virtuosos on the organ and almost every other musical instrument of their time. They frequently trained and led choirs, taught music, improvised and composed, and sought out each other's works for study. One medium used for their harmonic explorations was the "figured bass" or "continuo," a bass melodic line dominating the entire composition, above which an intricate structure of melody and rhythm could be erected, guided in its movement by the harmonic tensions created as it moved away from and back to the tonality of the bass.

These leading composers, treated by their patrons as hired servants, were among the great intellects of their time. Almost all created theoretical works either in written texts or in sets of musical works designed to take up various forms and explore their resources. They laid the foundation for the immense growth of instrumental music by combining dance forms with polyphony and variations, rising high above the functions of dance, as notably with the *chaconne* and *passacaglia.* They developed in the concerto and fugue ways of structuring music through harmonic movement away from and back to the starting tonality. With rhythm-dominated music, began broad speech-inflected instrumental forms like the *fantasia,* exploring chains of internal moods. In meetings of musicians in public coffee-houses, organ recitals in public churches, or oratorio performances and concerts in public theatres, there developed the middle-class concert hall.

The greatest composer-theoretician was Johann Sebastian Bach, whose life and work contain the two rival concepts of the musician; bourgeois artist addressing multitudes and feudal craftsman-servant are in conflict, one struggling to break through the shell of the other. He worked for part of his life in the service of the German courts, like those of the Duke of Weimar and the Prince of Anhalt-Köthen, and part as a teacher of music, organist and composer of Lutheran church services for the city of Leipzig. Living under vestiges of medieval serfdom, he had to get permission every time he changed his job, or traveled from one town to another. He was even jailed by the Duke of Weimar for "too stubbornly forcing the

issue of his dismissal." The burghers of the town council of Leipzig, while seeking pious sentiments rather than light entertainment in music, were hardly less conservative and stuffy than the courts. Typical of the conditions under which Bach worked are the terms of the certificate of his appointment as town organist under the Duke of Weimar:

> Now therefore you are, above all, to be true, faithful, and obedient to him, His above-mentioned Nable Grace, the Count, and especially to show yourself industrious and reliable in the office, vocation, and practice of art and science that are assigned to you, not to mix in other affairs and functions.[1]

It is not true to say that he was unrecognized by his time and wrote only for "posterity." This myth, that great artists are never appreciated in their lifetime and work only for the "future," is one of the romantic inventions of the 19th century, designed to obscure the fact that composers, although their work is perfectly comprehensible, starve because music is not a profitable business commodity. Very few of Bach's works were printed in his lifetime. Printing of music was still haphazard, and works of music were not yet accepted as "art" with lasting interest. Those that were published in his lifetime caused a stir and hardly anyone associated with music in Germany did not know Bach as one of the great musicians of the time.

If Bach was an artisan-servant to some, he was a philosopher, reflecting life in music, to others. A criticism and rebuttal which were written in his lifetime reveal these two conflicting worlds of music most clearly. A critic, Scheibe, attacked Bach in 1737 as a *musikant* and *künstler,* or artisan of music, whose works were too complicated and difficult to perform, who even went so far as to write down all the notes to be played, instead of leaving room for others to improvise. Scheibe was hotly answered by another musician, Birnbaum, who objected that a word like *musikant* or *künstler*

> sounds too much like a handicraftsman, and that to speak thus is just as contrary to the usage of language once introduced as it would be to call philosophers, orators and poets *künstler* in thinking, speaking and verse making. . . . For this composer does not lavish his splendid ornaments on drinking songs, lullabies, or other insipid *galanteries.*

. . . The essential aims of true art are to imitate Nature, and, where necessary, to aid it.[2]

He went on to explain that music had other purposes than light entertainment or amateur use, and the expression of profound thoughts in music required exact notation and accomplished performance.

The argument is not really between two differing critiques of a great man, but between two worlds of music, one dying, already an anachronism, the other struggling to be born. It is true that today, when vistas of a new kind of cultural life are opening up, there need be no opposition between composing for amateur use and composition on the highest levels of profound content and form. It is ironic however that today, in the name of "Back to Bach," musicians and theoreticians are arguing for a return exactly to the feudalism of musical "handicraft" against which Bach and the most progressive musicians of his time rebelled.

These contradictions may be found in Bach's music itself. Complicated textures, the knotty problems of construction which Bach solved and for which he is famous, are less signs of a "new form" arising out of a "new content," than of an attempt to express new content by stretching archaic forms imposed upon him by the conditions under which he had to work. Thus many of Bach's techniques proved unusable to the generation of composers who followed, and all attempts to revive these forms today, in the name of "Back to Bach" or "neoclassicism," only result in the most stuffy, dry or superficial music. Therein lies the difficulty of extracting the "meaning" of his music; the very forms imposed by feudal culture in its decline are a sort of censorship. Real problems of content and human imagery, the portrayal in music of a new human imagery and new emotional stirrings, show themselves superficially as adaptations of set methods of work which feudal practice regarded as fixed and not to be questioned. The new pretends that it is really carrying out the old ways with slight differences.

Most of Bach's instrumental works were offered as works for training performers, musical diversion, "keyboard practice," and instruction, such as the *Little Organ Book*, the Partitas, the Inventions, the *Well-Tempered Clavier* and the *Art of*

Fugue. The last named was printed without any instrumentation, as if it were a treatise on composition meant only for fellow composers to read or perform on whatever instruments lay at hand. The *Well-Tempered Clavier* consisted of two sets of 24 preludes and fugues, proceeding in regular order "through all the tones and semitones," both in major and minor. It was designed to prove the advantages of the equal-tempered keyboard. It really explored the structural and expressive possibilities opened up by the major-minor system; the movement from key to key in each single work, the harmonic interplay of a freely moving melodic line against a solid bass, the expressive use of half-step or "chromatic" deviations from the major-minor scales. Almost every variety of musical writing and imagery of the time is contained within them; showy and glittering finger-display pieces, court and peasant dances, somber works in the manner of the Lutheran chorales, deeply introspective and poignant pieces that may almost be called musical self-portraits. And all this was offered simply "For the use and profit of the musical youth desirous of learning."

Bach may be called the greatest of musical teachers, who, kin to the Encyclopedists of the 18th century, arranged and put into systematic and usable order all the isolated and progressive musical advances of the previous century. Needless to say, he saw these advances not merely as techniques but as means for bringing a richer reflection of human life and drama into music. Only under those conditions could greatness of musical composition take the apparent form of works of instruction.

A great number of his compositions were in dance forms, although the structural complications and emotional depth go far beyond the boundaries of dance. This practice, found also in many of the opera and oratorio arias of Handel and Purcell, was a bow to feudal practice, as if all music had to pretend to be court entertainment, or to proceed in jigging rhythms. The portrayal of human drama and emotional conflict in music required contrasts and oppositions of patterns of movement. Many of Bach's fugues were masterpieces in the interplay of inner rhythms, while the fixed rhythm which dominates the whole becomes almost a ghostly shell.

The fugue form itself, which Bach used so prolifically, was in part archaic. The fugue may be described briefly as a form laid out for a number of separate, interweaving "voices," each entering in turn with the same theme or "subject," and each preserving its identity throughout the work, as if it were still medieval polyphony with each singer having an independent part. Although the separate lines are still called "voices," the fugue may be written for instruments or a single instrument. The "counterpoint," or interweaving of lines, was highly organized on harmonic principles, or the movement away from and back to the starting tonality. Thus the fugue was needed by Bach as a form in which the investigation of new emotional expressions and structural ideas could proceed seemingly in an ancient, accepted garb.

The forms of Protestant church service, such as the cantatas and passions, were archaic even in Bach's time, hardly a flicker remained in his Germany of the social upheaval of the Reformation which had given them birth. The passions even had hangovers of the medieval anti-Semitism which the church and nobility had injected into the story of Christ, to divert bitter resentments of the peasantry away from themselves and into pogroms against the Jews. Yet they have some of Bach's greatest music, the rather uninspired, flat poetry contrasting strikingly to the musical imagery, bursting with life and full of dramatic expressions of earthly love, joy, anguish, alarm, tragic despair, pastoral serenity and folkish high spirits. The reason that Bach's great genius was so little appreciated by the Germany of his time, compared to the esteem given it later, can be gathered from Frederick Engels' description of the desolate state of Germany during Bach's century:

> Peasantry, tradesmen, and manufacturers felt the double pressure of a blood-sucking government and bad trade; the nobility and the princes found that their incomes, in spite of the squeezing of their inferiors, could not be made to keep pace with their increasing expenditure. . . . No education, no means of operating upon the minds of the masses, no free press, no public spirit, not even an extended commerce with other countries—nothing but meanness and selfishness —a mean, sneaking, miserable shop-keeping spirit pervading the whole people. Everything worn out, crumbling down, going fast to

ruin, and not even the slightest hope of a beneficial change, not even so much strength in the nation as might have sufficed for carrying away the putrid corpses of dead institutions.[3]

It was common in Bach's time that a German musician, to make his way, had to go to another country. His son, Karl Philip Emanuel, said of him, "But in general he did not have the most brilliant good fortune, because he did not do what it requires, namely roam the world over."[4]

Bach's church music had a deep national consciousness which gives a clue to his remaining in Germany. At its heart were the great Lutheran chorales that had been the battle cries of the German Reformation. These Bach expands with all that is most dramatic, expressive, human in imagery and forward-looking in his musical art – impassioned love music, poignant outcries, sunny folk songs and dances. Thus in these works, as in all of his great music, Bach reflects the desolate Germany of his time by speaking over its head, at once looking back to the heroic days when great German struggles were taking place against feudalism, and looking forward, within this archaic shell exploring the realistic portrayal of human beings and emotional conflicts in music that would be used by composers for the next 200 years. The harmonic elements in his music are those to be exploited by the bourgeois revolutionist Beethoven, as well as carried to an extreme of subjectivism by Brahms and Wagner. Bach was a great bourgeois mind, in a time and age when no bourgeois struggles were taking place, when a moribund feudalism still dominated musical culture, and he had to appear to be its "honest servant." In the varied emotional life of his music, the "whole man" emerges.

Many of the leading musical intellects of the 18th century were born among the petty-bourgeoisie or peasantry. Thomas Britton, an English coal peddler, was one of the founders of public concerts, fixing up his loft as a music room where the public could hear such great musicians as Handel, at a price of one penny. The son of a shoemaker, Johann Nikolaus Forkel, wrote one of the first great critical studies of music, a biography, critique and appreciation of Bach. Emanuel Schikaneder, a self-educated strolling actor, became one of the most enter-

prising theatrical producers in Austria, offering Schiller and Shakespeare to the common public, sponsoring and producing one of Mozart's greatest operas, *The Magic Flute,* and stimulating Beethoven to write opera. The giant of the later 18th century who did most to cast off the shell of archaic and obsolete musical practices was the son of a peasant wheelright and largely self-educated, Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809). Writing mainly for orchestra, for piano, and for string quartet of two violins, viola and cello, he was foremost in developing musical form based on harmonic movement, dynamic and rhythmic contrasts. This form made possible enormous freedom and flexibility in the evocation of human portraiture with complex changes of mood, dramatic conflicts and their resolution.

This—the development of the orchestral symphony, the string quartet and the general principle of formal organization known as "sonata form"—was the next stage in development of the major-minor harmonic system as a means for reflecting the real world of human struggle. The figured bass or bass continuo of the earlier generation of composers was discarded as no longer necessary, along with a mass of intricate counterpoint, pseudo-scientific theorizing and the enslavement of so much musical form to dance rhythm. Folk song and folk dance remained, of course, and were even more richly used as human imagery. Melody became dominant in musical form, supported by shifting harmonies which could add a variety of emotional "colors," and the structure of an entire work was built on powerful dramatic contrasts of melody, massed instrumental sound, rhythms and harmonic movement. These new concepts of musical form were not the product of one man alone. Important figures in the rise of this music were Bach's sons, Johann Christian (1735-1782) and Karl Philip Emanuel (1714-1788), and the Bohemian-born composer, Johann Stamitz (1707-1757). Haydn, however, along with the younger genius who learned from him, Mozart, saw the rich possibilities of this development which seemed to others to be only a "simplification" of music.

A unique quality of Haydn's art was his tie to the peasantry, bringing to his composed music a wealth of middle European,

Austrian and Slovak folk music. He saw this folk material not as comedy or as a pastoral excursion among the "simple folk," but as material for the most exalted and dramatic composition.

Haydn also had to work as a servant of the nobility. For a time he almost starved. He was fortunate in finding as a patron one of the wealthiest of European noblemen, Prince Nicholas Esterhazy, who had a private theater and orchestra of skilled musicians, and was willing to allow Haydn to experiment. In spite of Esterhazy's genuine admiration for Haydn's music, the composer had to suffer the many petty tyrannies of a prince who regarded even the greatest of living musicians as a private servant.

But the prince had better taste than the critics in Vienna. These critics, who served as censors and cultural toadies for the ruling class, seized upon what was precisely one of Haydn's greatest achievements for the condemnation—his use of folk themes in composition in the grand manner. They accused him of "mixing the comic with the serious." Folk art to them was synonymous with "comic." During Haydn's lifetime music began to be published with fair regularity, and it was his growing fame in England and France which finally forced the arbiters of Austrian cultural life to accept him as a great man.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was the opposite and complement to Haydn. Whereas Haydn was born among the peasantry, Mozart was born in aristocratic and court circles, not himself a prince, of course, but the son of a proficient court musician who took him throughout Europe as an infant musical prodigy and planned a career for his son in his own footsteps. Before he was ten, Mozart had as much craft as had taken Haydn 30 hard years to learn. He had less of Haydn's warm folk sympathies, being even in childhood a sophisticate and a master of the courtly "galant" style. He became one of the fine critical intellects of the 18th century, like Beaumarchais, whose play became the libretto for Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro.* Mozart and Haydn loved, respected, and learned from each other's work. Both of them joined the Masons, a secret and persecuted anti-feudal order, although some liberal aristocrats could be found among its adherents.

Mozart's resignation from the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg, at the age of 25, was a historic declaration of artistic independence. Although this dignitary described Mozart as a "conceited scoundrel" and Mozart referred to the archbishop in turn as a "presumptuous ecclesiastic,"[5] the clash was not so much of personalities as of two worlds of culture. To the archbishop, who was one of the powerful princes of the Holy Roman Empire, a musician belonged on the level of a footman or table waiter. Mozart saw himself as something more, an artist, thinker and human being with human rights. As a free agent, however, his privations were great and probably helped to cause his early death. It was not that he failed to be appreciated or "understood" in his time. The fact was that, like practically every great artist, his work was very much loved and appreciated. Practically every musician in Austria and Germany knew him as one of the great men, and tunes from his operas became the rage, sung in the streets and arranged as beer-garden dances. "Figaro's songs resounded in the streets and gardens, and even the harpist at the Bierbank had to strike up *Non piu andrai* if he wanted people to listen."[6]

A revolution was necessary before an artist could be supported by a public. Mozart, for all the popularity of his music, still had to seek the favor of penny-pinching kings and nobles, or of court lackeys who ran the backdoor politics of the opera houses. Typical lines from his letters are: "The Queen wants to hear me play on Tuesday, but I shan't make much money."[7] "My concert [in honor of the coronation of Emperor Leopold II] . . . was a splendid success from the point of view of honor and glory, but a failure as far as money was concerned."[8] Critics as usual took the tone of their writings from aristocrats and snobs. They complained that Mozart offered "too many beauties," that his music was more than light background for salon chatter. "He gives his hearers no time to breathe: as soon as one beautiful idea is grasped, it is succeeded by another, which drives the first from the mind: and so it goes on, until at the end, not one of these beauties remain in the memory." It never occurred to them that they might take a piece of music as a serious work of art.

Compared to Haydn's later work, Mozart's music has on the surface more mannerisms of the court world. Within this "galant" shell, however, it discloses even more poignant and anguished feelings. There was no way in which he could address multitudes, and his more probing portrayals of emotional strife took the form of private expression, over the heads of his customary audiences. No other composer could use so few notes to say so much, but only for those with ears to hear. Like Bach he had the entire "solar system" of the major-minor harmonic scheme at his fingertips, and there are passages where, for comic purposes or for especially deep expressions of pain, he foreshadows the practices of the contemporary "atonalists." Unlike the moderns, of course, he never makes a system or world view out of these extremes of dissonance and tension. It is out of obedience to court methods of music production that the form of the concerto for solo piano and orchestra holds so large a place in his output. This is not to imply that the concerto form has become outmoded since the 18th century. It played a powerful role in 19th century music and is an important form today. Its preponderance in Mozart's output, however, indicates that in the musical circles for which he worked, the separation of composer and performer was not yet acknowledged. The composer still had to show off his talents as a public entertainer and "music-maker," like the improvising "poet-singers" of ancient societies. And so these concertos, most of them written for his own performance, were the form in which Mozart appeared as a musician before the nobility form whom he had to seek favors. They are, of course, works of the greatest beauty, in which he solved triumphantly the difficult problem of appearing to offer light entertainment, yet providing far deeper emotional undercurrents for those with open ears and mind.

In the operas written during the last ten years of his life Mozart expressed the full depth of his anti-aristocratic thinking, within a formal framework supplied by court culture. He abandoned poetic and "serious" opera, given over to the dream life of noble personages in a static and timeless world, and turned to comedy where, like the folk, he could express political

thoughts under the mask of a buffoon. A remarkable characteristic of these comedies is that each is a masterpiece of a wholly different comic style. *The Abduction from the Seraglio* was a popular romantic comedy telling of a maiden's rescue by her lover from a Turkish harem. There is much pointed dialogue in it about the independence of women, who are given the most profound musical characterization in dramatic and stormy arias. The opera was, moreover, a German-language work, written as such at a time when to be a patriot, and to advocate a national art understandable to the people, was to be pointedly political and anti-feudal.

With *The Marriage of Figaro* Mozart moved to realistic comedy. There are a lecherous nobleman and a comic servant, but they are not stock myth characters, from no particular time or place. A light of contemporary reality is thrown about the situations, with the Count exposed as a hypocrite and fool. The servant, Figaro, is the hero of the piece, fully realized in music as a human being, fighting for his right to love and winning. Figaro's air, *"Non piu andrai,"* which swept all Vienna, satirized the army at a time when young men were being dragged to fight Austrian imperial wars. The women in this opera are likewise profound characterizations, the Countess depicted as a victim of feudal double standards, and the servant, Susanna, emerging as the wisest person of all. *Don Giovanni* adapted an ancient pattern of folk legend, the lionizing of the outlaw and sinner who is dragged down to Hell, but remains unrepentant and defiant to the very end. "The devil" gets splended music, and in fact the heroic music that Mozart gives to the Don, emphasizing his defiance of social convention, leads directly to Beethoven.

The Magic Flute was Mozart's second German-language work and in fact may be called the first "people's opera," not sponsored by the courts at all but put on as a popular commercial entertainment. On the surface, its story is a fairy-tale fantasy full of comic vaudeville, but it is actually open praise of the Masonic order, emphasizing its ideals of humanitarianism and contempt for rank and title with Mozart s grandest and most sublime music. Obvious symbolism in the work was

the use by Mozart, a Catholic, of the old German Lutheran chorales, with their national-patriotic connotations. The part of the clown, Papageno, played by the producer himself, Schikaneder, contained many barbs pointed at "princes," some in the libretto and even more ad-libbed. This work, contrary to the myth that Mozart was not understood by his times, was an immense success, and precisely among the common people of the city. Finally *Cosi Fan Tutti* opening with the tone of an airy comedy of manners, described with the most subtle and entrancing music the transition in two women from the youthful game of puppy love to the deeper passions of maturity.

In all of these comedies except *The Marriage of Figaro*, which was threatened with censorship, Mozart had to use court symbolism for anti-feudal ideas, which has allowed these works to be misinterpreted in later times. It is characteristic of the myth patterns derived from feudalism, both the upper class tales of chivalry and the peasant folklore, that in an age of bourgeois realism they are taken as material for children. To see them this way is to misunderstand them. That such symbolism had to be used by even the most progressive minds was a real limitation, not only upon the form but upon the ideas that could be expressed within that form. Mozart was the last great composer to suffer from the disparity between depth of thought and feeling, on the one hand, and the outer forms forced by the relics of feudalism upon the greatest minds that rose within it. These grotesqueries were swept away by the French Revolution of 1789, which transformed the cultural world along with the social and political, not only in France but throughout Europe. In this new world Mozart's music – thoroughly misinterpreted – was used by backward-minded critics as the standard of "correctness" to chastise such ground-breaking realists as Beethoven and Schubert.

5. *"Pure Music" and Social Conflict*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was 19 years old when the French Revolution broke out. It may seem contradictory that the greatest musical expression of the ideas born of the French Revolution should have come from a man who was born in Germany and spent most of his life in Vienna.

The revolution, however, was a world event. For a few years there ruled a government based on the declaration of the "Rights of Man," universal male suffrage, the separation of Church and State. The peasants and working people of France, whose uprising had touched off the revolution, beat back the armies of feudal reaction led by German and Austrian princes. True, the middle class, having gained the power it sought, turned savagely against the left, wiping out most of the democratic gains and laying the basis for the dictatorship of Napoleon. This dictatorship was a façade for the rule not of landed nobility, but of great bankers and industrialists. Distinctions of "birth" were swept away. The new ruling class were owners of factories, stocks, bonds and money capital. Market-place competition became the form of the "new freedom," and the masses of people, uprooted from the land, were likewise "free" to offer their labor and talents in the market place.

This cataclysm shook all Europe. The best feudal armies were being trounced by the French working people singing the "Marseillaise" and by the "upstart" corporal, Napoleon. In order to save themselves, the princes had to draw, however guardedly, upon the national liberation sentiments of the common people. An example of the impact of these developments upon tsarist Russia, for example, is given by the great Russian critic, Vissarion Belinsky (1811-1848):

On the one hand the year 1812, which shook the whole of Russia from end to end, roused her dormant forces and revealed to her hitherto unsuspected wells of strength; it welded, by a sense of common danger, all the diffused interests of private wills, blunted through national desuetude, into a single huge mass, stirred up the national consciousness and national pride, and in this way fostered the birth of publicity as the precursor of public opinion; furthermore the year 1812 inflicted a telling blow on petrified usage; it witnessed the disappearance of the non-serving nobles, who peacefully came into the world and peacefully went out of it in their country places, beyond whose sacred precincts they never ventured; the backwoods swiftly disappeared together with the staggering survivals of ancient usage.[1]

The partisan movement of the peasantry against the invaders grew into demands for land and for the abolition of serfdom. In central Europe the revolution inspired national patriotic movements and demands for constitutional government.

Beethoven was born in the city of Bonn, on the Rhine. His father was a badly paid court musician, his mother the widow of a cook. The Rhineland, adjacent to France, was deeply stirred by the events across the border, and as a young musician in the court orchestra of the Elector of Cologne, Beethoven learned much of the exciting popular revolutionary music of France. The Vienna which he entered in 1792 to make his permanent home, was alive with middle class democratic sentiment, with anything that spoke for "freedom" in the arts and hinted at the overthrow of old institutions. Napoleon's declaration of himself as emperor, and his control over the German principalities, smashed the hollow shell of the Holy Roman Empire, a relic of the Middle Ages. In answer, Austria declared itself an independent empire. Each emperor in turn promised "reforms," none of which was actually forthcoming.

In this atmosphere it was possible for Beethoven to win support for his revolutionary music, even among some liberal and music-loving nobles. Nevertheless, it took great courage for him to proclaim his pro-French and republican sentiments, while in the name of these sentiments Austrian imperial armies were being beaten. He dedicated his great Third Symphony, the "Heroic" or "Eroica," to Napoleon, and made his re-

publican feelings even more obvious when he tore the dedication up after Napoleon became emperor in 1804.

Beethoven's music falls into three periods, as scholars have traditionally described it. In the first he was still a young man making his way as a musician, giving lessons to the wealthy and performing at their private concerts. He wrote a number of piano sonatas and chamber music works which still preserve in their outer form the galant character of music for salons and well-off amateurs, although these works have a boisterousness and rugged dramatic power which takes them far outside the bounds of light entertainment.

In his second period, from about 1802 to 1814, Beethoven was able to realize both in his way of life and in the form and content of his music what was essentially a new world view. He lived differently from all earlier composers except Handel, who had been his own manager in England. He walked among the nobles as their equal and superior. He accepted commissions for works but wrote them as he pleased. He made his major income from the publication and sale of his music, and concerts open to the mass public. Contrary to the myth that he was "ahead" of his times, his works, eagerly bid for by publishers, made him famous throughout Germany, France, England, Russia and even the young United States. He was granted a pension by three Viennese noblemen when it was feared that he would leave Vienna, but he wore nobody's livery and was nobody's servant. Some biographers show a squeamishness about his dealings in money matters, as if it were not fitting for an artist to drive a bargain. But in moving from aristocratic patronage to the market place, Beethoven had to handle the market place on its own hard terms.

Musically, this is the period of his major symphonies from the Second through the Eighth, of the opera *Fidelio,* the violin concerto, the last three piano concertos, dramatic overtures written for the theater such as "Egmont" and "Coriolanus," and a number of string quartets and piano sonatas which gave a new dramatic and emotional richness to these traditional "salon" and "amateur" forms. The symphonies projected the central place of the public concert hall in musical life. The pub-

lic concert, which had been growing in the 18th century as an occasional and secondary avenue of musical performance, now started to be the major arena where reputations were made, a forum where the middle class came to hear new and challenging works. The movement of instrumental music from wealthy salons to theaters, where the middle class could become its sponsors, was a revolutionary step, and the concert hall contained this electric atmosphere.

The public production of the symphonies themselves was a social act. It was made possible not only by the ticket-buying public but by the musicians themselves who, making their living in labor for the aristocracy and church, offered their services in a symphony because they were genuinely interested in hearing and fostering this music. An anecdote tells of Beethoven's brusqueness with a faltering clarinet player, which so offended the other members of the orchestra that they vowed never to play for Beethoven again. "But this lasted only until he came forward with a new composition, when the curiosity of the musicians got the better of their anger."[2]

The symphonies of this period are public orations in the greatest sense of the term, and a similar tone of heroic public address characterizes all the other works of the period. What is not so commonly recognized in the present day of formalistic criticism, when the simplest song is "analyzed" so that it emerges as an inexplicable puzzle, is how truly popular these symphonies were, in intent and effect. Both Beethoven and his audiences looked upon the symphony as a popularization of music.

The idiom he started with was that of folk and popular dance, march and song. In fact, in "variation" sets throughout his career, including the late *"Diabelli" Variations*, Beethoven would probe the transmutation of popular-style tunes into expressions of the most subtle and exalted moods. The Third Symphony has a funeral march, and a march in its last movement. The Fourth and Sixth Symphonies are suffused with folk music. The Fifth Symphony is full of marches and processionals, as in the great coda of the first movement and the opening of the last movement. The Seventh Symphony has

been rightly called the "apotheosis of the dance." The Eighth is a masterpiece of humor, teasing the listeners with seemingly bizarre harmonic and rhythmic twists. There is no contradiction with the fact that these works rank with the most profound in the history of music. One may compare them to the work of a novelist who starts with characters recognized by readers as typical, realistic and familiar. From this point he can take them through the most profound and illuminating patterns of life and conflict. The demands of both popularity and realism have been met, however, by the common ground of real life and people between artist and audience. So Beethovan was both popular and understood; at the same time he gave harmonic and structural ideas to composers for the next century.

It may seem strange to commentators today, feeling that they have "discovered" Beethoven through their technical analyses, that Beethoven was understood in his own times better than today. But he was, and he wanted to be understood. He had no compunction about giving titles to his works, letting it be known for instance that his "Eroica" Symphony dealt with a heroic leader of the people, and using in the last movement a theme he had once associated with Prometheus. His one opera, *Fidelio,* was a typical "rescue" melodrama, popular in Paris during the revolution, and was written in "comic" style, not flippant but popular, with the vernacular language, spoken dialogue and melodious airs.

Much is made in later commentaries of the attacks upon Beethoven by the music critics. These did not represent the public, but were the "educated" writers, subservient to the witch-hunting press for which they worked, serving the most reactionary forces in Viennese life. As is always the way with reactionary critics, who recognize the cultural threat to their patrons, they try to destroy the new realism by accusing the work of poor craft, bad taste, ignorance of the correct rules, vulgarity. Yet even they had to recognize Beethoven as a "genius" who seemed to be "going wild."

The people – i.e. the city middle class, for the great exploited working population on the land could not be reached by even

the greatest of bourgeois realists—flocked to his concerts. He was the idol of all forward-looking and progressive minds. His friend and first biographer, Schindler, writes of his "never ceasing opposition to every existing political institution"[3] and says that "in his political sentiments Beethoven was a republican."[4] The pianist Moscheles writes of how, in 1804, his teacher warned him against the "eccentricities" of Beethoven, whereupon Moscheles sought out a Beethoven sonata and from that time on "seized upon the piano-forte works of Beethoven as they successively appeared and in them found a solace and delight such as no other composer afforded me."[5]

The third period, from about 1814 to Beethoven's death, has been something of a mystery. After the outpouring of symphonic works, there is a lapse of 11 years, from 1812 to 1823, in which no symphony appears, and after that only one—the tremendous Ninth. It is the period of the great last piano sonatas and string quartets. The fundamental reason for this change lies in the events following the defeat of Napoleon. The "tyrant" had been defeated, but on the heels of this came the worst tide of political reaction, the restoration of feudal despots on every throne, and the attempt of the Council of Vienna and the Holy Alliance to stamp out democratic movements wherever they showed themselves, even as far off as the Americas. The atmosphere of Vienna was thick with police spying and clerical-political censorship of every spoken and written word. Peoples who had fought Napoleon and been given promises of reform were savagely repressed. Under such conditions a further stream of public democratic orations in music was inconceivable, and Beethoven turned to the more intimate forms of the piano sonata and string quartet. He gave these works, however, the scope and gradeur of his greatest symphonies. They are deeply introspective and subjective, among the most poignant works ever written. Even here is no surrender to despair, but always the sense of struggle which may be the keynote of Beethoven's character, and always a final serenity and affirmation of faith in life.

When Beethoven worked out his Ninth Symphony, it was as if he felt that in this new Vienna, the electric democratic at-

mosphere no longer existed in the concert hall. Without this base, the social meaning of the "pure" symphony, as he had once conceived it, would no longer be understood. So he set its last movement to the words of Schiller's "Ode to Joy" and praise of human brotherhood. He wrote much of this movement in the popular style of the choruses from *Fidelio,* and created as its main melody a broad swinging tune of the kind that could catch the mind and be sung by people almost on its first hearing.

Another work of this period, the great *Missa Solemnis,* although set to the words of the Mass, was anything but church music. The dramatic, proclamatory music sung by the chorus to the words *"Dona nobis pacem,"* a cry for peace in the midst of military sounds, could leave no doubt in the listener's minds as to the message of the work. It was during this late period that the poet Grillparzer wrote in the deaf Beethoven's conversation book, "Musicians after all cannot be affected by the censorship; if they only knew what you think when you write your music!"[6]

Later commentators have not been so clear. In typical romantic style, they accept Beethoven's heroism but abstract it from real struggles, making it a kind of individual "defiance of society" exhibited by his deliberately throwing "dissonances" and "new chords" in the face of an audience that presumably wanted only sweet sounds. The central character of Beethoven's forms is realism, rising to the demands of the times. Musical realism does not consist, of course, of the imitation of wind, water, bird calls and the other sounds of nature. Beethoven's realism shows itself in many ways. One is the understandable human imagery of his melodies and themes, a social product of the musical life of his times. Another is his mastery of the new stage of development of music, the possibilities of the magnificent collective instrument of the symphony orchestra and the possibilities of the public concert hall.

In the great Beethoven symphonic works, everything is boldly and openly addressed to the listener's ear. Counterpoint is always clear to the ear and dramatically justified. The bold harmonic flights and dissonances are not made into a "sys-

tem," a "value" in themselves, as they became to some pettier later minds, but they are always psychologically justified. The pain, anguish, tension or fantastic humor they convey is always resolved on a new level of acceptance of reality. The most important aspect of Beethoven's realism is the over-all organization of his music, guided by nothing other than the movement, dramatic action, conflict and resolution of real life; seen by a great social mind who understood the social conflicts of his day and had taken a part in fighting them through, grasping the great forward surge of freedom at the core of these struggles.

The general name given to Beethoven's type of musical organization, as seen in his symphonies, sonatas and chamber music, is "sonata form," an instrumental music which embodies its own dramatic life. Themes or subjects are introduced in what is established as the basic key or tonality. They are developed rhythmically and harmonically, with a sense of movement away from the opening, piling up of tension and conflict, resolution and returning to the opening tonality, but with the themes now seen in a transformed light. Beethoven's music moves continually through a series of dramatic oppositions. One theme or musical phrase is answered by another contrasting one. A passage in one rhythm is answered by a passage in another. A dissonance, impelling to further movement, is answered by a consonance, or halting place. Passages in the high notes are answered by passages in the bass, solo instrumental voices are answered by massed sound, one tonality is answered by another. It is music written to fit the instruments, exploring their full possibilities, and yet made possible only by the long development of song, operatic and dramatic music preceding it. Passages which are in obvious song or dance style, sometimes even a kind of "aria," alternate with what are obviously "recitative" passages, full of speech inflections. The movement of a theme or subject through a series of harmonic transformations has the aspect of a gigantic recitative, or inner monologue, resolved again in passages of a powerful rhythmic and song character. The end of a work is a summation and resolution of conflicts; it is not conflict which is the goal but the

ability to work through it, to arrive at an ending with clarity, assurance and renewed strength. This music does not merely reflect the feelings of the listeners but transforms them through the composer's thought, giving an aroused consciousness of the historic social movement of which they are a part.

Such realistic music makes new demands upon the composer's art. A major work sums up a long process of struggle and thought, and by the same token, it cannot be repeated in content and form. The composer must then advance to new problems, wrestle with and solve them.

We can discover the ideas contained in Beethoven's works by relating the interior dramas of the works to the social realities of the time which engendered them. In other words, we must ask ourselves what outer conflicts engendered these interior ones. The fundamental reality was the cracking of absolute monarchy, the victories of bourgeois democracy, the freeing of the individual. Had a composer consistently written music that was light, refined and gay, in the aristocratic dance and salon forms, the ideas would have been those of flight from the storms of life, the attempt to recover a tight, static little feudal world untouched by time or reality, to make believe that nothing was happening. Had a composer consistently written music that was a long, unbroken lamentation, the ideas would have been those of despair at the passing of the old world. But Beethoven filled his symphonic works with stormy emotional conflicts, displaying his recognition of a world in process of violent conflict and rapid change. He expressed deeply sorrowful and tragic feelings, recognizing the casualties of the struggle for progress. He resolved all of these feelings in an expression of overwhelming joy and triumph, indicating his feeling that change was good, and through it humanity was discovering new powers of life and development.

The effect was to give exultation and strength to those listeners who welcomed and found progress in the conflicts of the time. His music helped crystallize and clarify their own states of mind, along with the new awareness that this was not purely personal but social consciousness which was now addressing the world. It proclaimed that only a social mind can speak as a "whole man."

Beethoven did not regard his work as an overthrow of the art of Haydn and Mozart; he had learned too much from them. But he exulted in his new-found freedom. Taking up the tools of "sonata form" they had developed, he used them to bring into music the broadened and deepened psychological life belonging to the new mentality of his time.

Clearly Beethoven after 1815, in his "late period," could not write the same sort of music of struggle and victory that he had written during the Napoleonic era. Then it seemed a host of stifling and reactionary institutions would be swept away, not only through Napoleon's overthrow of the autocratic feudal dynasties of Europe but in the struggles against him, for the liberation of the nations he overran. With Napoleon's defeat the Holy Alliance broke whatever promises had been made to the masses, tried to restore autocracy over Europe and trample whatever democratic sparks were still alive from the French revolution. The psychological pattern, or interior drama, of Beethoven's music became different. It contains a deeper, more poignant and pervading tragic sense. Struggles to exorcise this are more difficult and harrowing, and if he again achieves serenity, joy and assurance of the liberation of humanity – as in the last piano sonatas, the late quartets, and most explicitly in the Ninth Symphony – it is as an expression of unbroken confidence in the future, not as celebration of an existing victory. One thinks of the lines Walt Whitman wrote later, after the defeats of the revolutions of 1848:

Liberty, let others despair of you – I never despair of you.
Is the house shut? is the master away?
Nevertheless, be ready, be not weary of watching.
He will soon return, his messengers come anon.

Why has all this been obscured? As capitalism was assured of its victory over feudalism, and as the working class grew, organized, and educated itself, understanding of the anti-feudal revolutions was frowned upon by the ruling class. The great artists who reflected and helped fight out this movement in the realm of ideas were transformed into mythical personages. Their achievements were seen as vague flickerings of a misty "genius" or simply as the invention of technical improve-

ments in the art. Beethoven's sonatas were widely performed and enjoyed in his lifetime; his symphonies were acclaimed; his Ninth Symphony and last quartets, considered "abstruse" to this day, were performed without trouble and with evident public appreciation in his time. When he died, all Vienna turned out for his funeral. But it is true that a generation or two later, the great mass of his works had to be "rediscovered" and defended. It came to be fondly assumed that Beethoven's own public was blind and in some mysterious way he had addressed only "posterity" with "new forms."

Certainly Beethoven's music is not devoid of personal feelings. But there is no barrier in art between the personal and the social. A change in social and political institutions brings a new kind of personality to the forefront of history, which it is the task of art to disclose. If we take Beethoven's music simply as a portrayal of a human mind – and it is far more than that – it is the portrayal of a mind wholly conscious of life, reacting to every event with the utmost sensitivity and depth of feeling, boldly rejecting whatever it saw to be useless and outmoded, the kind of mind that in political life was then in the forefront of history and was declaring the "Rights of Man." The expressions of love which may be found in the "Moonlight" and "Appassionata" piano sonatas, or in *Fidelio*, have a mixture of tenderness and joy, of unrest resolving in a full acceptance of life, far different from the feudal game of love-making, with its sentimentality and mock self-pity. They are far different as well from the erotic blind obsessions and self-destruction that Wagner was to portray in music two generations later. The beautiful slow movement of Beethoven's First String Quartet, which he himself described as the tomb scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, demonstrates not the acceptance of death but the struggle for life, and the great "Eroica" funeral march is not merely lamenting but grand and heroic, with a powerful struggle at its center. The "personal" in Beethoven is the personality of a social and revolutionary mind.

Also assisting at the mystification of Beethoven's art, and in fact of all art, is the theory, popular among the self-styled "scientific" critics of today, that "thought" must be separated

from "feeling." Things are presumed to be seen clearly only when divested of emotions, or removed from human relationships. Emotions are properly felt only if divested of the things that engendered them, or as the mysterious forces of the "unconscious." The result is not scientific clarity, but only a dehumanization of art, so that music is created as if it consisted of little puzzles of sound patterns, and emotions are treated as if they were inexplicable apparitions of the "unconscious."

The contemporary concert hall has also fostered the separation of music from life, feeling from thought, emotions from objects. It is no longer an arena for the battling out of contemporary ideas and concepts of life in music. The great works of the past are accordingly presented as a kind of escape from the present. The grander and more heroic the past conflicts, the more successful the escape, like a historical novel in which wars and sword-play appear so glamorously different from wars today.

Another set of misconceptions rises out of the fact that Beethoven's revolutionary achievement took the form of apparently "pure" music, without word, story or stage action: the orchestral symphony, piano sonata and string quartet. This has fostered the belief that thenceforth the "true course" of music had to be in "purity." But this seeming "purity" of Beethoven's music, which does not hold true even in his case, considering his overtures and vocal works, is a product of the fact that in past class society progress often had to take place in a one-sided way. Beethoven's choice of forms was conditioned by the censorship and clerical atmosphere that hung heavy over Vienna. The question of realism could not be fought out in church music or the music of feudal-controlled opera, the only other large architectural forms of the time. Thus the symphony as he developed it became a form capable of broad content, rich experience and stirring drama, free from the manacles of church ritual and the feudalisms that still infested the opera house. This communication was possible in wordless forms because the audiences understood what this move to the concert hall represented. The effect of Beethoven's great realisms was not to make music "pure" but to sweep the archaic out of all

forms of music. Their liberating effect is seen not only in the tradition of concert symphony and sonata that follows him, but in every kind of music that arises after him, which must follow or seem to follow in its organization and content the movement and flow of life and the portrayal of a rounded human mind.

Beethoven's art is the classic creation of bourgeois realism in music, and it exhibits both the great qualities and limitations of bourgeois realism. In its middle class audiences, which are so much larger than the audiences of feudal music and yet so small compared to the real population of the country, it reflects the fact that the great cultural achievements of capitalism, like its economic progress, in the form of major industry, take place in the cities at the expense of the countryside. It is a social music, possible only to a profoundly socially conscious and forward-looking mind. Yet in its tendency to portray social movements predominantly in terms of a heroic individual psychology, which seems to stand apart from society, in its overemphasis on wordlessness and its occasional use of mystical imagery, it indicates that the most progressive bourgeois minds raised questions of freedom and progress which they could not solve in a realistic and practical way. Its exaltation of the public concert hall as the primary center of great musical experience, and its exaltation of a professional music at the expense of music for amateur participation, were necessary progressive steps. Yet they were also narrowing steps, which could lead to a destructive one-sidedness of music unless further revolutionary achievements were to make music truly popular, addressed to all the people and participated in by them, in a way that was impossible in Beethoven's time.

6. *Art for Art's Sake and the Philistines*

All 19th century economic, political and social life was stirred into movement by the destruction of monarchic absolutism in the French revolution. New contradictions appeared. To the working class there was no freedom, not even suffrage, as parliamentary democracy demanded property qualifications for the vote. To live, the worker had to sell his labor power in competition with growing numbers of unemployed. To whatever job he moved, he found himself faced with the same conditions, a bare subsistence pay at best, and the constant menace of starvation. And so, against the most brutal suppression, independent organizations began to grow among the working class. These took such forms as trade unions in England and France, the Chartist movement in England, socialist groups in France, a revolt of the Silesian weavers in Germany. The middle class of small businessmen, traders and shopkeepers, the class which felt most completely "liberated" by the break-up of feudalism, found itself afflicted by contradictions as mysterious to it as they were oppressive. In 1825 appeared the first of what was to be a periodic series of economic crises, from which the large bankers and industrialists emerged richer and stronger. In 1830 revolution broke out in France, supported by almost the entire population, but resulting only in replacing one king with another, backed by a somewhat broader oligarchy of bankers and factory owners. Then in 1848, following another crisis, a revolutionary movement swept France, Germany, Austria and Italy.

In the production of music, "freedom" of the market place—the printing of music for public sale and the offering of public concerts—showed similar contradictions. To Beethoven and his audiences, the break from aristocratic patronage into the

"free market" had been a great step of liberation. But by the 1820s, the same publishers who begged Beethoven for new works had become a power on the market. To them music was nothing more than a commodity, manufactured for sale. Far preferable to the idiosyncracies of a "genius" was the standardized work produced by a musical hack, who could turn out streams of imitation folk music, or superficial borrowings from the great revolutionary realistic music, reduced to some easily digested form. This is the basic pattern of the mass-produced "popular music" of bourgeois society, which is anything but "of the people." It represents both the huckster's fear and hatred of anything really new and a frantic search for "novelty," a parasitical feeding upon the great music produced during the heroic period of the rise of the nation.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) grew to maturity in a Vienna where Beethoven was still alive and idolized, but publishers were not interested in any new "genius." The son of a poverty-stricken school teacher, Schubert attempted to make a living out of music. He lived in poverty, but not because he was, as the romantic myth puts it, "ahead of his times," an "enigma" to the "common herd." During his lifetime his songs became the rage in Viennese homes. But he was given the most meager pay by publishers.

The critics, as usual, fulfilled their function as cultural toadies of the upper class by putting a finger of disapproval on what was precisely his ground-breaking achievement – the rich use of Austrian folk song and dance as materials for the most deeply emotional, dramatic and exalted composition. Thus a review of one of his stage works complains:

> The music for *The Twin Brothers* has much originality and many interesting passages, and the declamation is correct; but it is a blot upon the work that the sentiments of simple country folk are interpreted much too seriously, not to say heavy-handedly, for a comic subject. . . . Comic music, it seems to us, does not take at all kindly to a very close adherence to the words, or to the composer's taking refuge in a modulation whenever pain, for instance, is mentioned.[1]

To this feudal mind, any entrance of the village folk or peasantry, on stage or through their characteristic music, must

necessarily be "comic." A reviewer of a different work writes: "The introduction to the third act, by the way, is so like dance music that one is scarcely able to conceal one's astonishment, although the piece is otherwise quite pretty."[2] The images created by Schubert's songs and instrumental works declare that the "simple country folk" are no longer to be seen as clowns, but as human beings with their right to love and sorrow.

In Vienna after 1815, Metternich and the reactionary Holy Alliance tried to set up a world-wide witch-hunt against democratic beliefs. Student friends of Schubert were arrested by the police. Schubert, so great a master of vocal music, never wrote a successful stage work, one reason being that he could not get a worthwhile libretto, for the stage was heavily censored. All plays had to be submitted to the police, and the writer was lucky if he got a reply in five years. Schubert had the intellect to set poems of Goethe, Schiller and Heine to music with deepest insight. The stifling reactionary, clerical and imperial atmosphere continued unbroken until 1848, indeed without much break until the 20th century. Effective in its direct censorship, it forced upon all minds raised under it the sheer ignorance of everything social, political and historical.

"Romanticism" is a general name often given to the whole of the arts of the revolutionary period, including in its sweep the great realistic achievements. It is a visionary approach to art which also becomes subjective, reflecting not only revolution but also censorship and counter-revolution. "Romantic" tendencies showed themselves before 1789 as a kind of vague dissatisfaction with the tight aristocratic and church patterns forced upon the arts. It took such forms as idealization of the "simple folk"; interest in the early art of the Middle Ages and the "Gothic," where folk craftsmanship took seemingly mysterious, yet harrowing religious and primitive forms; "nature" as a backdrop for the "man alone"; interest in everything strange, exotic and magical, even a Catholic revival. Many of the great revolutionary realists, such as Beethoven, had something of the visionary romantic about them, as if they could not quite see the real and practical paths to freedom and progress which they so genuinely proclaimed.

The sweep of romanticism after 1830 was increasingly affected by the tide of reaction, in which the great bankers and industrialists were consolidating their power and were everywhere fearful of the forces unleashed among the common people, the peasantry and working class. Romanticism then took such forms as deep yearnings for "freedom," which seek the path to freedom everywhere but in the real world, and so express these yearnings in the strange and the exotic or attach them to subjects that cannot adequately contain such feelings. And so the subjects become "symbolic," like a grasped straw or a transitory means to express the "inexplicable."

Romanticism in Schubert may be seen in the tragic feelings of such song cycles as "The Maid of the Mill" and "The Winter Journey," which are not adequately explained by the sentimental story of the heartbroken, jilted and wandering lover. What they reveal is a deep unrest in Schubert, and in the Austrian people for whom he felt such attachment and sympathy. Also romantic are the sudden outbreaks of passion in his instrumental works; they flare up in the midst of the most charming passages and as suddenly subside. Yet at the core of Schubert's strength is his realistic quality, seen in the earthy human imagery of his melody, full of the presence of people and genuine joy in life.

Beethoven near the end of his life noticed that his music, at first so well understood, was no longer being performed correctly. "A certain class of piano-forte performers seemed to lose intelligence and feeling in proportion as they gained dexterity of fingering." Not only was the playing too fast, but it was also too loud. Orchestral performances were coming to be places in which "noise was paramount."[3] The concert hall was losing its character as an anti-feudal arena of new ideas, and was becoming a place in which the newly risen wealthy could show that they were as "cultured" as the feudal nobility, and as little interested in the real world. The difference was that now unreality had to be expressed in terms which had accompanied the rise of this class to power, seeming bigness of proclamation and air of heroic conflict. The concert hall also began to take on the limitations of a business enterprise. Managers found

it easier to advertise, sell and profit from a glamorous soloist-personality performing sure-fire music than to enter the world of disturbing ideas and arguments. To Beethoven bigness of sound had been a quality to handle respectfully, and only when the bigness of his thought demanded this kind of public oration. But now bigness was demanded of all music, however thin its real content. Everything must appear to be heroic in attitude, unreal and misty in subject.

The value of separating the composer from the public performer quickly became distorted. The composer was "freed" of the necessity to entertain an audience through his technique and improvisations, but this "freedom" took on the aspect of prison. The "virtuoso" of the piano and violin, the purveyor of big sounds and bravura effects, became the reigning monarch of the musical world, far outstripping the composer in monetary return, offering the audiences a seemingly heroic ritual in which musical sounds—their content hardly mattered—were recreated before their eyes by the sweat and strain of the human body. The Italian violinist, Niccolo Paganini (1784-1840), would cut three strings of his violin before the audience to show the feats he could perform on the fourth alone. A typical program of Franz Liszt (1811-1886), the first of the great concert pianists, was burdened with "fantasias" on airs from popular operas of the day, as if the performer were recreating on the piano all the dazzling virtuoso sounds of an orchestra and singers combined.

Paganini and Liszt were composers of very great talent. Liszt particularly was prolific in what seemed to be startlingly new ideas of musical sound and texture—the "symphonic poem," which proclaimed its break with the "pure music" of the past; the impressionist piano piece, devoted to the sights and sounds of nature; the one-movement concerto; works such as the Hungarian Rhapsodies, which openly proclaimed their national spirit. All of these "innovations" could have been found, with less fanfare about them, in some of the work of older masters, like Beethoven and Schubert. Liszt may be called the first of the "modernists," who one-sidedly expand an element from the rounded body of realistic music and consider

it a new invention. Beethoven's "innovation," that everything in a concert piece must be understandable to the listener, was vulgarized by making everything transparent and sensational. Every musical theme, whether folk song or melodious sigh, had to be dressed up in heroic sound. The concerto for solo pianist or violinist and orchestra became a kind of imitation symphony or symphonic poem in which the great emotional conflicts of a Beethoven work were replaced by a mighty battle of sounds between the soloist and the orchestra.

The strength of the piano music of Frederick Chopin (1810-1849) arose from the melodic idiom he had learned from songs and dances of his native Poland. This idiom suffuses not only his pieces with dance titles, like the Mazurkas and Polonaises, but all his other works, Nocturnes, Ballades, Concertos. His music had the romantic character of a "song without words," and the fervent national patriotic feeling, which he expressed with such fire and tenderness, seemed to come not from the outside world but "from within the heart." Through his work the idiom of Polish national music became part of world art, and at the same time his compositions became a beloved national heritage of the people of his native land. He transformed the technique of writing for and performing on the piano by making the instrument "sing" as it had never done before. In its very popularity as a kind of "cosmopolitan" concert piano music, the national qualities of his music were vitiated. A new kind of performance developed which offered improvisation in disguise, an improvisation consisting of "interpretations" of his and other composers' music, which stretched and contracted like a rubber band to suit the performer's feelings of the moment. Critics began to blame the sensationalism of such performances upon the "mob," although the "mob" to which this music appealed consisted of the wealthy and titled people of Europe.

Many musicians of great talent genuinely worshiped the giants of the past, notably Beethoven, and tried to carry on the great tradition. But the bourgeois composers saw this achievement only as a musical one, not one fought out in social life as well. Two great functions of the composer were the writing of

songs and dances for people to use, and the public presentation of ideas in musical experiences on a high epic, dramatic and heroic level: Both functions were taken over and distorted by the market place, one becoming a factory industry and the other a kind of acrobatic circus. The bourgeois composer, however, tended to accept this state of affairs as if it were mysteriously ordained for all time, just as the bankrupt shopkeeper took the competition and crises that had destroyed him. The composer saw the publisher and concert manager as the "philistine." The whole world was full of "philistines." He looked upon even the common people as "philistines," although they were no more responsible for the adulteration of music than for the adulteration of bread. The artist was always destined to be a "misunderstood genius," always "ahead" of the public. Issuing fiery manifestoes and brandishing his weapons, he departed from the real battlefield. The experiences he put into his music were his own subjective anguish and yearning; he had lost touch with the popular, the heroic and dramatic, the real world. The art of music was divided in two. On one hand were manufactured "popular" songs and dances and concert display pieces, with their appearance of joy in life and extrovert display of the human powers. These appeared understandable and heroic, but were only a flimsy imitation of the great revolutionary song and symphonic art, like calendar imitation of Renaissance painting. Serious music on the other hand, drawing its strength from the great past achievements of harmony and seeking "true feelings," took the direction of withdrawal from reality.

These early romantic composers include some of great creative power, expressing sincere human feelings and even frightening pain. The mind portrayed in their music is less social, more introverted. Even their structure weakens, for the underlying bone-work of dramatic oppositions disappears in favor of a one-line movement with a rich sensuous texture embodying subjective feelings. There is no longer a fund of varied human images taken from the real world, but constant probing of self and an always fruitless attempt to resolve inner conflicts; for their source is sought everywhere but in the realities

that engendered them. They fight the philistinism of the market place in a way this is itself bourgeois, individualistic, competitive. A story related by the great French romantic, Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), indicates how deeply the market place commodity spirit ate into the composers:

> It was during my rides in the neighborhood of Rome with Felix Mendelssohn [1809-1847] that I told him how surprised I was that no one had written a scherzo on Shakespeare's glittering little poem 'Queen Mab.' He was equally surprised, and I instantly regretted having put the idea into his head. For several years afterwards I dreaded hearing that he had carried it out."[4]

Berlioz regarded himself as a revolutionary in music. A friend, Hiller, writes of him, "He respected no one but Shakespeare, Goethe and Beethoven. He was at war with all conventions."[5] He lived as if surrounded by wolves. He tried to go "beyond" Beethoven in making his symphonic works even more monumental and splendid in sound, and adding to all of them stories, symbols, words, literary programs. In his work we see the weakness of the romantic "tone poem," or instrumental work to a literary title or story. The trouble is not with the idea of tone poems or "program music," as many purist critics find, but with the kind of "program" that is used, which often makes a work of this type more incomprehensible than a work of "pure music." The listener can relate every episode of the music to some story, but the question then arises: What does the story mean? Berlioz' literary themes are the typical, unreal romantic symbols for a real unrest: the brigand, corsair, lonely wanderer, opium dream, suicidal lover, Faust and the Devil, the "Last Judgment." His genius, with its subjectivist direction, is best seen in his extraordinarily long, arching melodic lines, like a concentration of romantic yearning. This kind of melody influences his handling of symphonic form. Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven had built genuine drama in "classic" style, through the creation of clearly defined sections in strong contrasts; a forward movement through the "interplay of opposites." But Berlioz' "romantic" and "open" style rests on a continuous, wave-like flow of rising and diminishing tension but no real dramatic clash. An illusion of drama is provided by brilliance

of color and changing literary associations. Berlioz' truly inspired music has the achievement of a new aspect of interior sensitivity, at the expense of overall breadth. The same basic interior life, and idea, appears in work after work, although described at different time as belonging to a young lover suffering an opium dream, to Byron's Harold in Italy, or to Shakespeare's Romeo.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856), like Johannes Brahms after him, was aware of the problem of gains in inwardness being accompanied by serious losses in breadth and scope. But he was unable to cope with it and wrote much of his finest music in small forms strung together. They have the air of a private diary which the audience was inadvertently reading. He thought about his music, as well as his critical writings, as if they were a product of two personalities warring within him. He gave these personalities the names of Florestan and Eusebius, one impetuous, the other dreamy. Thus conflict to him seemed to proceed not out of real life but "out of the heart." As with many romantics, maturity brought a slow wearing down of courage. His piano works and songs, written in his twenties and early thirties, are perhaps his most beautiful music, reflecting as many do the impetuous feelings stirred up by his courtship and love for Clara Schumann. They also sum up the poignance of inexplicable fears, and all his heroic proclamations of individuality against a society that seemed wholly antagonistic to him.

Both Berlioz and Schumann challenged the music criticism of their time, in which entrenched political reaction took the form of dogmas about "correct style" and "taste." Both became brilliant music critics themselves. Schumann attacked the "philistines" and welcomed every fresh talent in the most self-effacing way. Among his "discoveries" were Chopin and Brahms. Berlioz wrote for the press to make a living, and also to defend himself. He said, "For the Press is, in a certain way, more precious than the spear of Achilles; not only does it occasionally heal the wounds which it has inflicted, but it also serves as a weapon of defense to the person who makes use of it."[6] Yet there is unreality within the very feverish intensity

of these critical tournaments, as if they did not carry on battles taking place in society itself, but rather transferred these feelings of oppression and protest to an ideal world of art. "Progress" came to be seen solely as a matter of destroying an old musical convention or welcoming a "daring" harmonic progression.

Berlioz, the self-declared enemy of all conventions, in his youth partisan of the 1830 Revolution, looked upon the 1848 Revolution with horror, crying, "Republicanism is at this moment passing like a vast roller over the face of the Continent. Musical art, which has been long dying, is now dead."[7] The new French Republic recognized Berlioz' talents, but he did not blink at its subsequent overthrow, and willingly served the despotic Emperor Louis Napoleon. Schumann, who reflected the revolutionary feelings of the 1830's with the stirring marches of the "Davidsbündler against the Philistines," as in his *Carnaval,* wrote some "barricade marches" reflecting the events of 1849. But he was already suffering from the mental ailment that was to cause his death. Less flamboyant than Berlioz, his music expressed more deeply the yearning for love and peaceful human relationships that make romanticism appeal so deeply to the human heart.

7. *Reaction in Life, "Progress" in Art*

"Revolutionary music" can only mean music which tackles new problems offered by society, thinks them through and thus raises the art to a new level of realism. The composer who does this discovers at the same time that the heritage of musical form and technique he has taken over is inadequate. He must reshape it and carry it further. His new developments may be few compared to the heritage he uses, yet each is profound and electrifying, an advance in the power of music to reflect life.

This kind of progress is not what has passed for "new" and "modern" in the mainstream of bourgeois music from about 1830 on. This does not mean that the music thus produced is lacking in beautiful and moving innovations. The works of Schumann, Berlioz and Liszt, for example, are full of deep feeling and beauty. But the art as a whole, in form and techniques, is brought down to a lower level of realism. Its power to reflect life in its fullness and to convey ideas is vitiated. The mentality behind it is thinner, for it is less social; it is the product of artistry which increasingly avoids the problems of life and struggle in the real world.

The art does not speak for the "whole man." At the same time this is accompanied by proclamations of the "revolutionary overthrow" of all previous musical forms and conventions. Such proclamations are themselves a sign of decadence, for there can be no real progress except by full mastery of the best, most realistic achievements of the past. To wipe out the past, or pretend to, itself weakens the art. And it is true that the truly progressive masters of the past, such as Dufay, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, never

seemed in their times to be "moderns" as later did Liszt and Wagner and others who followed them. They appeared, on the contrary, to be popularizers of music, even "vulgarizers" to some critics. While they had trouble with those who pretended to be arbiters of music, they had comparatively little trouble being understood by their audiences. Now, however, the "modern" artist must appear to be "ahead" of his times, when the truth is that he fails to stand up to them.

In the revolutionary movements of 1848, the working class emerged as an independent force, the most self-sacrificing in the struggle for republic and democracy, challenging the entire basis of the exploitation of labor by capital. Battles against monarchy and oligarchy, for constitutional government, seemed at first to be won in France, Germany and Austria. But, as Engels writes, "the very victory of their class so shook the bourgeoisie of all countries that they fled back into the arms of the monarchist-feudal reaction which had just been overthrown."[1] In France, the workers who had led the victorious fighting for the republic were promised suffrage, given jobs on public works and disarmed. Then, when a pampered and anti-labor national guard could be organized, the workers were thrown out of their jobs, forced into revolt and shot down. As a result the republic itself fell easy prey to the adventurer, Louis Napoleon, who declared himself emperor in 1852. During 1848 and 1849 democratic uprisings gained control of Berlin and Vienna. But here too the weakness of the middle class, afraid to consolidate its own victories, caused the uprisings to be drowned in blood; and promises of constitutions made by terrified princes and their ministers were quickly withdrawn. Walt Whitman wrote of this period in his poem, "Europe – The 72nd and 73rd Years of These States":

The People scorned the ferocity of kings.
But the sweetness of mercy brew'd bitter destruction, and the frighten'd monarchs come back,
Each comes in state with his train, hangman, priest, tax-gatherer,
Soldier, lord, jailer, and sycophant. . . .

Meanwhile corpses lie in new-made graves, bloody corpses of young men,
The rope of the gibbet hangs heavily, the bullets of princes are flying, the creatures of power laugh aloud. . . .

Despite this destruction, Whitman saw hope for the future:

Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom but grows seed for freedom, in its turn to bear seed,
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains and the snow nourish. . . .

Characteristic of the main stream of bourgeois music, however, was that it abandoned its vague democratic yearnings of the 1830s and 1840s, and seeing "freedom" solely in internal terms, served reaction in the outer world. As composers abandoned the real world of life and struggle, questions of musical style and form were furiously raised and debated. Should music be "pure," or should it have word, story, and "program"? Is the symphony a greater form than opera, or is it "old-fashioned"? Should folk song be used in musical composition or is it a "vulgarism"? Should music be tuneful, or should it abandon melody for harmonic progressions? Such questions are unanswerable, for they are false to begin with. The achievements of such great masters as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, working in every form, the simplest and the most complex, with words and without, each task assisting the other, made this process of setting one part of music against another obviously ridiculous. But the furious arguments, in which the public had nothing to say, indicate what happens when art is removed from real problems of social life, and when the crucial question of how art, in any form, can best reflect life and move people is ignored. An escape from reality does not lead to peaceful life and art, but to more violence. Just as esthetics becomes torn by insoluble conflicts, so content becomes one of pessimism and violence, all the more harrowing because these storms now seem to come "from within."

Richard Wagner (1813-1883) took part in the fighting in Dresden in 1849 and had to flee Germany. He quickly recon-

ciled himself to living with the "powers that be," curried favor in France with the Emperor Louis Napoleon, became a protégé of the young and half-insane king of Bavaria, and was pardoned by the German authorities. After 1870, when unification of Germany was achieved under the most reactionary forces in German life—the Prussian Hohenzollerns and behind them the Krupp works—Wagner became the unofficial musical laureate of the new empire. His own life was typical of cutthroat bourgeois competitiveness at its most open and glaring. His hand was raised against every other man as a potential enemy. He curried favor from the French, then gloried in their defeat by the Germans. He took favors from leading Jewish musicians, then assailed them in the vilest racist and anti-Semitic terms.

His art, which borrowed heavily from Schubert songs, Schumann fantasies, Berlioz symphonies and Liszt tone poems, thrust the music of his teachers into the background by offering itself as even more overwhelmingly "revolutionary," supplanting all previous musical forms. The new idea was to combine everything previously done in music into the single form of opera. The music, he thundered, had to be a "means to an end," the end being "drama." But to what was drama a means? What was its relation to life? In opera he moved away from the depiction of human beings and social relationships in terms of the human imagery of song. Everything was more gigantic, more overwhelming in sense appeal, than anything seen and heard before. The operas were longer, the orchestras twice the size, the singing louder, the stage spectacles more glamorous. But these new techniques only served to overwhelm the senses of the audience. Instead of "speaking" to the listener about life, it moved to supplant real life, to become a new environment, to shut life away as in the music of medieval cathedrals.

Wagner was one of the great masters of musical art, who used his genius to move the art away from realism to naturalism, and away from structure based on rational thought to a structural dissolution guided by irrationality. This dissolution of the strong and clear architectural forms that created an organic balance between inwardness and outwardness had been

begun by Berlioz in his romanticist revision of the symphony, and by Schumann in his rich-textured chains of short structures. Wagner carried this further with an illusion that the dissolution of structural organization and move to irrationality was an advance "to the future." His vocal and melodic line became predominantly song-speech, losing firm contours and sharp human imagery, covering this retrogression with a great advance in richness, subtlety and flow of harmonic movement, intensifying in inward emphasis.

This song-speech, itself a movement from realism toward naturalism, was dressed up with the richest naturalistic depictions of wind, water, fire, thunderstorm, galloping horses. It required a phenomenal mastery of instrumental timbre and harmony. But naturalism drags thinking down to the level of immediate sensation, abandoning all generalization, all real and clarifying thought; as the song-speech itself, accenting each word with great finesse, moves away from recreating in musical shape the personality speaking.

The great step in musical sensitivity created by Wagner was in reflecting the irrational aspects of the mind. This was intensified by his use of "leitmotifs," or musical themes associated with people and events on the stage, constantly recurring in varied and shifting patterns, evoking memories in the mind of the listeners. They were like an extraordinary "stream of consciousness," a masterful evocation of the *processes* of thought as a substitute for presenting the *content* of real thinking and the summation and results of thought.

Similarly the dramas, except for the comedy, *The Mastersingers,* in which a recognizable society and credible human relationships appear, represent a modern primitivism. It is not a return to the realities of primitive life, but a disguised use of primitive symbolism as the only tool in the artist's hands, and a most inadequate one, with which to deal with modern life. Primitive "magic" symbols and totems were socially created forces attempting to control still unmastered and mysterious forces of nature. Faced by mysterious forces of bourgeois life, the artist dredges up these primitive symbolisms, no longer social but appearing to be psychological, representing "in-

scrutable" forces at war in the mind. It is an abandonment of any attempt to discover the real forces creating these apparently mental disturbances. It is a product of the dissolution of conscious social relationships between the bourgeois individual and his fellow human being. Every human desire meets unconquerable obstacles, human beings can never know one another, love is an uncontrollable obsession and all events are the product of accident, mysterious curses, mystery and "fate." Male heroes are dashing, stupid, infantile, as in the bourgeois dream of "freedom" and power, riding roughshod over all obstacles, surrounded by malicious enemies and triumphing over them, until defeated by an inexorable "destiny." Women are hailed as goddesses but with no other function in life than to serve the male; when the "hero" dies, they have no other recourse but to die also.

Mythological sources reflect precisely the ideology demanded by the German emperors and Krupps, disguising their real military operations in mystic terms of a German "racial" destiny and hypocritical religious clothing. It is composed of German tribal sagas and rituals, of medieval German tales of chivalry mixing feudal arrogance with infantile magic. It is no accident that the psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, who worked in Germany under the Nazis, drew heavily upon Wagner for his theories of inherited myths and "racial unconscious" as the dominating forces in the human mind. Even *The Mastersingers,* which has a semblance of realism in its portrayal of 16th century German society, ignores the great peasant revolts and proclaims a mystic German unity of knight and burgher, while lesser common people look on in adoration.

Wagner himself became a figure of bourgeois myth. For the bourgeois world to have analyzed him realistically would have demanded that bourgeois life itself be analyzed critically. More books have been written about him than about any other composer, generally accepting him on his own evaluation as a maligned genius, the summation of all previous music, and the master of "meanings" which cannot be clearly defined because they are too "deep." The very mountain of interpretive literature that has been piled up is a sign of reversion to the archaic

concept of art not as a reflection of the real world but as a ritual, a collection of oracles, or "sacred book," requiring the mystic and constantly differing interpretations of a priesthood. In fact, at the "shrine" Wagner built at Bayreuth, his works are presented not as ordinary operas but almost as religious ritual.

That so much subsequent music seemed to follow the paths he laid down is offered as proof of his "revolutionary" and prophetic character. Yet this "influence" means only that as the crises, contradictions, havoc and war of monopoly capital multiply, the middle class, spinelessly leaving control of the real world to the most reactionary forces, finds an increasingly attractive refuge in Wagner's heroic gestures in the land of dreams.

Wagner did foreshadow many of the cultural currents that have become the mainstream of unrealism today. The second act of *Tristan and Isolde,* for example, is a "night piece," in which "day," when real life and actions are carried on, is proclaimed to be full of "falsehoods" and "phantoms." Only night and its dreams are real. His last opera, *Parsifal,* foreshadows the religious revival among modern "intellectuals," like T. S. Eliot, Stravinsky, Schönberg and Dali. In *Parsifal,* no flicker of the deep human feelings is found of past religious art, when real social struggles in the real world were sometimes carried on in religious terms. Nor is there any real conviction. In *Parsifal* as today, primitive myth and magic, Catholicism, Protestantism, belief in witchcraft, cabalism, Buddhism, philosophic pessimism, "sex temptations," are all rolled together.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), 20 years younger, was born in Hamburg, lived most of his life in or near Vienna and came to maturity in the reactionary atmosphere that followed 1848. He had nothing like Wagner's youthful revolutionary experiences and, unlike Wagner, felt no need to offer propaganda for reaction in the name of "revolutionary art." Where Wagner offered his works as flamboyant sense appeal and elaborate pageant, Brahms shuddered from contact with public life. Although he wrote four symphonies and four concertos, all at the cost of great travail, the form he favored was chamber music, a medium for his most personal, introspective, yearning and

pessimistic reflections. Where Wagner proclaimed he was overthrowing all previous musical conventions, Brahms proclaimed a feeling of relative impotence, and wrote as if he could only follow humbly in the footsteps of such great men as Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. The truth is that the harmonic complications of the "modern" school can be traced back as much to Brahms as to Wagner.

Brahms did not offer his music as a world view of triumphant reaction, but took the attitude of a medieval craftsman who left politics and all such matters to the lords of the manor. He childishly gloried in the victories of the German armies over Austria, Denmark and France. Ironically, his will, which left the bulk of his fortune to a society for the aid of struggling young musicians, was broken after his death with the connivance of the Prussian government he so admired. Such a bequest was apparently "too socialistic." He created works of music with the careful, sound workmanship of an honest Middle Age master guildsman, enriched as Wagner with techniques and methods learned from Beethoven and the great achievements of realism.

His meanings are cloudy in a different way from Wagner's. The music is offered not as mystical symbol but as "pure feeling," and of course the feelings, so wordlessly offered, relate to the real world of this time. Although as a citizen Brahms followed the path of the junkers and empire builders, as a musician he says that this is a world of melancholy disappointment.

Brahms' great insight is that he realizes the need to preserve at least in form the most heroic qualities of past music. He not only extracts the lessons he needs from the great music of the past, but partly rewrites and reworks that music, though not in an imitative or plagiaristic spirit. Rather, as Brahms feels that the world is somehow running down, his emotions are bound up with the great works of the heroic past, more real to him than life about him. He draws from these works as more realistic composers draw experience from life. All human relationships appear difficult and complicated. In his music expression of the simplest feeling becomes complicated and full of reservations. Everything is said through indirection; joy melts into

sadness, and powerful outbursts of protest dissolve into resignation. A deep reaching out to the "folk" is seen in his songs and the many folk-dance finales of his chamber works. But the "folk" are also seen in medieval terms, as "simple" people whose joys come because they are so carefree.

The verbose battle between followers of Wagner and Brahms did not represent partisanship which examines art to find what is outmoded, and what must be done to suit the needs of real people in a changing world. Rather, it represented the one-sidedness that bourgeois culture increasingly takes, each offshoot demanding that it be accepted as the one "true art." Wagner's "advances" were offered as a critique and answer to Brahms' looking toward the past, his worship of the old masters, his acceptance of a relatively impotent role in social life. Brahms' music is a critique and exposure of the essential windiness, silliness and unreality of Wagner's "revolution," its battles in the clouds. Each was right about the other. Wagner leads directly to such contemporary composers as Schoenberg, whose works are full of harrowing cries, dream symbols and proclamations of the mysterious power of the "unconscious." Brahms leads directly to such contemporary composers as Hindemith, a musician to his fingertips, who turns out finely contrived contrapuntal works in the spirit of the German craftsmen-composers of the 17th century, and whose more emotionally expressive works are elegies and requiems.

Brahms reminds one of the late Beethoven, who also lived in a period of reaction. But where Beethoven's anguish and protest end in a feeling of victorious faith in humanity, Brahms' protest ends in a feeling of tragic resignation. Certainly nobody has expressed this resignation better than Brahms does in his late chamber and piano works.

Wagner and Brahms, for all their genius, seem lesser composers than Beethoven and Mozart because they embody so well the mentality of a German bourgeoisie which has relinquished its social responsibility and revolutionary spirit. They no longer stand mentally at the center of society, but leave it to the politicians. With magnificent artistry they explore the new sensibility of withdrawal. Brahms laments this impotence,

even raises a thundering cry against it, but tends to end either in tragedy or a mindless excursion among the "simple folk." Wagner pretends to be master and lawgiver of a "great society," his own dream-invention, in which he can perform heroic gestures that are only revolutions in the air.

To have wrestled with the political developments of their day, to have awakened to the great popular movements and sought to express them in music, would have meant awakening to new musical problems not so easily and "tastefully" handled. It might have meant the entrance of elements in their music that scholars would refer to as "crude" and "vulgar." Such "crudities" and "vulgarities" were found in abundance in Verdi's operas, which were a partisan weapon of the Italian struggle for national liberation, and in the works of the great Russian national composers. It was these latter works that really brought new human imagery, meaning and content to the music of the later 19th century, and carried on the triumphs of musical realism which had opened the century.

8. *Music and National Freedom*

National music does not consist of a language, as system of putting tones together, unique to one nation and incomprehensible to others. It consists basically of musical works, folk songs, dances and large-scale compositions, created by people in their struggles for progress, and by composers with close ties to the people. Part of the living cultural history and artistic treasure house of each nation, these national works can be deeply moving to people of other nations.

National cultures rose with the development of nations under capitalism, accompanied by the suppression of other national cultures, as one nation asserted its economic, political and cultural domination over others. Within the culture of bourgeois nations, many cultures of minority peoples were suppressed or kept from growing. As national struggles have been a continuous part of history from the 16th century to the present, so the rise of national cultures has been a continuous process in music history.

A national music, like a nation, goes through constant change and development. Its materials may in part be a tribal heritage of ritual music and songs of ancient bards. Its folk music stems from tribal music but also takes whatever it finds useful from other musical cultures. Its composed works of music, reflecting struggles for nationhood, use and in turn influence folk music. Lutheran chorales composed in Germany, Elizabethan songs and madrigals and the melodies of Handel in England, songs of Haydn and Schubert in Austria, songs written by Chopin for the Polish people – all have become more than the personal expressions of their composers. They belong to the nation. The composer may be called an intermediary, who returns in enriched form the material he has gotten from the people, reflecting in the process the conditions of life of the

nation in his own time. By so doing, he is only repeating on a far higher level of formal development the process of creation of folk art itself.

Folk art was the product of innumerable anonymous individuals of talent, each contributing something new to the common cultural possessions. In the period of anti-feudal struggle, whatever is progressive and lasting in the arts inevitably takes a national form, for its rise accompanies the rise of nations themselves. The tendency of an advanced capitalist country is to deny the national character of the arts, for the rise to nationhood of other peoples, and the national aspirations of peoples within its own borders, are a menace to its own ruling class. This bias, and misinterpretation of music, was shared in the 19th century by the feudal-minded monarchic courts and aristocracy. The great Czech composers, Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884) and Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904) who used so richly the folk music and national traditions of their people, had to struggle against being considered "provincial." Their symphonic works, operas, songs and chamber music were actually in the main line of music development. The freshness they brought, in their wealth of popular imagery building on folk song and dance, was a continuation of the freshness that Haydn brought to symphonic and chamber music, with his Hungarian and Slovak motifs, and Schubert with his wonderful use of what had originally been an Austrian "peasant" musical language.

Opera, after its glorious beginning at the close of the Italian Renaissance, tended to fall into court-bound, neo-classic stereotypes which could not even be broken by the beautiful music poured into it by composers like Handel, Rameau and Gluck. Mozart, in his serious-comic operas, brought opera near to life again, which inspired new life and national feeling in Italian opera, as in the work of such composers as Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868), Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) and Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835). This quality appeared partly in the guise of comedies of village life, partly in historical melodramas based on stories from Sir Walter Scott and Schiller which had anti-feudal implications. All of these works drew upon folk and popular song to create an appealing lyrical human imagery. The

giant who raised opera to a new level of realism, carrying it toward the faithful depiction of history and society, and toward the rounded-out musical portrayal of human beings, was the peasant-born Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). He was able to do this because he made opera a conscious weapon of the Italian democratic and national struggles.

Verdi had to combat the censorship, direct and indirect, of the Austrian police and the Roman Catholic Church. An edict of Pope Leo XII, governing behavior in the theaters of Rome during the 1840s, prohibited an actor from interpolating a word or gesture not found in the prompt-book, on pain of being sent to the galleys for five years. Applause and hisses could be rewarded by a prison term of two months to a half year. Verdi's political allusions had to be made in symbolic form, but with symbols, unlike Wagner's primitive myth and magic, provided by real history and with realistic social meaning. In his early opera, *Nabucco,* for example, dealing with the Biblical Jews enslaved by Nebuchadnezzar, the cries to revolt against oppression had obvious significance to Italian audiences. Verdi set the chorus of the Jews yearning for their homeland to a broad, swinging melody in popular style which immediately became the rage throughout Italy and became a "new folk song." There were similar parallels in his music dramas of the struggle of the Lombard League in the 12th century against the invading German emperor, and in the outcries against tyranny of his outlaw-heroes such as Manrico in *Il Trovatore* and Ernani.

Many of his operas, snobbishly regarded today as blood-and-thunder melodrama, were among the first to show the feudal nobility in their true oppressive nature, with bloody feuds and insensate concepts of family "honor" masking the most arrogant egotism. He gave the common people, such as the gypsy mother in *Il Trovatore* and the townspeople in *Falstaff,* the most warm and affecting musical characterizations. He broadened the entire human scope of opera with profound musical portrayals of characters like Violetta in *La Traviata* and Rigoletto, seeing deeper humanity in these victims of the nobility than in the nobility themselves.

Verdi sought to create melody of firm contour, expressive of active people who were "in the world," while getting away from superficial or merely ornamental tunefulness. He learned to put simple song outlines alongside complex melodic chains affording psychologically sensitive portrayals of mood and conflict. Song alone does not create realism, but the presence of song affirms the presence of living human beings as the material of the drama. The great song writer, in the words of the Russian Glinka, "arranges the music of the people." Verdi brought to opera a wealth of popular Italian melody, creating new melodies that became beloved by the people and sung in the streets. His art had two lives, one on the stage and the other on people's lips. This turn of music to the service of the people was in no way a "vulgarization" or "simplification" except in the worthwhile sense that everything in the operas was designed to be understood.

Verdi did not take the step of representing the history of his own time in music, and his portrayal of past history had limitations. Frequently the struggles for freedom were portrayed as if they had been carried on solely by noble personages. The cliché persisted, presenting social struggles in terms of love affairs cutting across the opposing camps, in *Romeo and Juliet* manner.

Verdi's deep but incomplete realism is typical of the great bourgeois realist, baffled by the manner in which corrupt politics denies what people had fought for and their needs. Verdi, elected to the Italian legislative assembly, wrote in 1870, "I cannot reconcile the idea of Parliament with the College of Cardinals, a free press with the Inquisition, civil law with the Syllabus. I am frightened at the way our government goes ahead any old way, hoping that time will take care of everything."[1] He wrote again in 1881:

> For you know, you inhabitants of the city, that the misery among the poor is great, very great, much too great—and if nothing is done about it, either from above or below, some time or other a catastrophe will result. . . . Look! If I were the government, I wouldn't bother so much about the parties, about the Whites, the Reds, or the Blacks. I'd bother about the daily bread that the people must have to eat. But don't let's talk about politics—I know nothing about politics, and I can't stand them, at least not the kind we have had up to now.[2]

His *Otello,* written in 1888 and based on Shakespeare's play, may be said to reflect the situation in Italy itself, with its opening cries of "Victory" and its inspired portrayal of the tragic soldier and hero destroyed by the machinations of Iago, the self-seeking politician.

Russian national music differed from the almost single-handed efforts of Verdi in Italy in that it was a collective creation of a number of men of genius, each stimulating the other. Starting with Michael Glinka (1804-1857) and Alexander Dargomijsky (1813-1869) who devoted themselves largely to opera, it flowered in the work of the "Five": Modest Mussorgsky (1835-1881), Mily Balakirev (1837-1910), Alexander Borodin (1834-1887), Cesar Cui (1835-1918) and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908). The "Five" taught each other, studied, criticized and fought for each other's work, with a self-effacing devotion to the creation of a truly national music, representing the nation's history and the greatness and character of its people. Opera remained the core of their work, but they also moved into song, tone poem, symphony and piano music. Another great figure who stood somewhat apart from them was Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893).

This musical creativity was an integral part of a sweeping national cultural movement which included literature and the graphic arts, and produced a body of novels, poetry, satire and criticism second to none in the century. The writing was outstanding for its partisanship on behalf of the oppressed people; its popular character even when it seemed it could not reach the greatest part of the masses in its own time; its devotion to the battle of ideas and search for truth; its opposition to every form of hypocrisy and fraud no matter how deeply entrenched in government. This democratic cultural movement in turn reflected a century of developing social struggle in the nation, starting with the guerrilla movements of the peasantry against Napoleon in 1812; the struggles against serfdom, continuing with the revolt of the "Decembrists" (a liberal group of the nobility) in 1825; reaching a new level with the freeing of the serfs in 1861; going on to peasant uprisings, the organization and militant struggles of the working class, culminating in the Revolution of 1905. These social struggles at first found their

most articulate voice in cultural works. Their early leadership came from a left-wing minority among the nobility. Then in the 1840s middle class figures rose to leadership, and, at the end of the century, great working-class figures.

A host of outstanding musical works were set to the dramas, poems, stories and folklore collections of Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837), the great poet of African ancestry who was a friend of the "Decembrists." A guiding spirit of the "Five" was Vladimir Stasov (1820-1890), folklorist, art and music critic, friend and admirer of the powerful anti-tsarist, democratic and socialist polemicists, Belinsky, Nikolai Dobroliubov (1836-1861) and Nikolai Chernishevsky (1828-1889). Tschaikovsky, regarding himself as a conservative in politics, was deeply influenced by Leo Tolstoy, who expressed such sentiments as

> Science and art have forwarded the progress of mankind. Yes; but this was not done by the fact that men of science and art, under the pretext of a division of labor, taught men by word, and chiefly by deed, to utilize by violence the misery and sufferings of the people, in order to free themselves from the very first and unquestionable human duty of laboring with their hands in the common struggle of mankind with nature.[3]

Tchaikovsky made it a goal of his own art "to reach out to the hearts of as many people as possible."

It was necessary for Russian composers to take this progressive path. If they nad a genuine interest in creating truly Russian music, they had to turn to the people for their material. In doing this, they discovered the true life, miseries and struggles of the people. In building an art on this base, even in rediscovering past history and fostering national consciousness, they found themselves in direct opposition to tsarism and the decadent aristocracy, who welcomed the exploitation of the land, its people and resources by British and French capital and fought with ruthless violence every move to better the lot of the peasantry and working class. Russian national music rose in constant battle against cosmopolitanism, which showed itself in the importation of the lightest Italian opera and admiration for everything "French" in the courts and salons. When Glinka's opera, *Ivan Susanin,* was first performed, with its peasant

hero and use of Russian folk idiom, titled listeners complained that it was "coachmen's music." Cosmopolitanism also took the form of a "German academicism" taught in the music schools, according to which musical composition was a matter of knowing the "correct rules of harmony" presumably ordained from on high. The rejection of cosmopolitanism did not mean insularity and provincialism. As the great Russian social critics and philosophers had been inspired by the French Encyclopedists such as Diderot, the national composers studied Beethoven's music and everything that they thought was innovative in the realm of human expression from the work of Schumann, Berlioz and Liszt.

Operas of the Russian national school are in general distinguished by high literary quality of text, naturalness in the presentation of human characters in music and action, and faithfulness to history of a kind previously unknown in opera. Human love is dealt with, but no longer does it decide the fate of nations and empires. Works like Borodin's *Prince Igor,* Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and *Khovantchina* present history realistically, and in *Boris* the people themselves are a powerful protagonist. Even in fairy tale, the emphasis is on the folk and social meanings of the old stories. Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel* was censored because its fantasy of a stupid king going off to war was considered a reflection on the tsar's war with Japan in 1904-05. There is an absence of vocal display for its own sake. In works like the above, and in Tchaikovsky's operas such as *Eugene Onegin* and *Queen of Spades,* the melodic line and construction of the vocal passages follow the intonations and rhythms of speech, and yet the music is not declamation. Character is always expressed through genuinely lyrical and songful invention.

Operas, along with the tone poems, songs, symphonic works and chamber music, exhibit the riches to be found in folk music, and their free, varied and expressive uses. In Mussorgsky the words "folk" or "folk style" embrace a multitude of different musical forms and human images, used for peasant characters and kings; sometimes a free semi-speech, and semi-song music, sometimes a square-cut strophic song; sometimes sounding

major or minor, sometimes modal, sometimes Asian in origin. And in Mussorgsky "folk style" sounds wholly different from the way it sounds in Glinka, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky. Nor does "folk" ever mean childish simplicity or primitivism. Characters such as Boris Godunov, or Tchaikovsky's Tatiana and Onegin in *Eugene Onegin,* are profound psychological portrayals in music as well as word. They are mature, fully conscious and grown-up people. There are not many operatic characters who share this quality. One thinks of Mozart's Figaro and Susanna, Verdi's Othello, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth, and Simon Boccanegra, Wagner's Hans Sachs. With Wagner's Tristan, Isolde, Siegfried and Brunnhilde, and with most of the characters of "modern" opera, such as Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra,* Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande,* Berg's *Wozzeck,* we are back with the child mind, the obsessed and the "unconscious."

Tchaikovsky found himself in opposition to the "Five." The differences were not deep, and rose out of the narrowness of music patronage of the time. Progress could not be debated solely in terms of real needs of people and changes demanded of music, but had to take the form of one camp against another, each backed by different patrons and journalists. What alienated Tchaikovsky from the "Five" was what he felt to be their one-sidedness and even amateurishness. In the necessary rejection of academicism, the "Five" found themselves with few tools. They worked with painful slowness, leaving many works unfinished. Yet the "Five" saw the main task of Russian music in their time to affirm the relation of music to life by associating it with real images of people, history and drama. Only on such a base could more generalized and "philosophical" music of symphony and chamber music be built, and remain meaningful to the people. Tchaikovsky took the next step, to build a musical culture that could satisfy a variety of people's needs and express every side of life. He set himself the task of building Russian music on a more scholarly basis, encouraging conservatory study and exploring symphony, tone poem, sonata and chamber music, along with opera and song.

Tchaikovsky's music is sometimes described as "morbid" or expressive of "Slavic soul," the stereotype used to hide the profoundly social character of progressive 19th century Russian art. Taken as a whole, including the symphonies, concertos, ballets, operas, songs and chamber music, his work is many-sided, showing much joy in life. He suffered from harrowing personal problems, and his works, such as *Queen of Spades* and the "Pathétique" Symphony, often express deep anguish. But he is never pessimistic or morbid, for he never rejects life. There is always the struggle for life. His symphonies reaffirm the nature of the form as developed by Beethoven, a public message on an epic level, intended to be clear and understood in every bar. There is never a question as to what any passage in the music means, or a passage inserted by the demands of symmetry or formal rules. The listener feels a close kinship with the human being thus speaking to him through melody and harmony.

For a generation after Tchaikovsky's death critics wrote snobbishly about his music, as if its popularity made it suspect. This only meant, however, that the masses with whom this music was popular were ahead of the critics. They recognized a composer who respected them as human beings, felt kin to them, and even, in the best sense of the word, obligated to those whose labor made his own work possible.

9. *How Modern Is Modern?*

The 20th century has witnessed both a revolutionary development in music, and a succession of pseudo-revolutions that moved to cut the social ties which make music meaningful. This irony reflects 20th century social history itself. There have been vast developments in science and technology, opening up new vistas in the mastery of nature and satisfaction of human needs. Yet in much of the world the use of this knowledge has brought widespread despair as to the future of humanity.

The advanced industrial capitalist countries developed economies dominated by giant trusts, monopolies, banking chains and industrial combines. They covered the world in search for raw materials, markets, exploitable labor and investments. The internal competitiveness of capitalism appeared on a new scale, in struggles for redivision of world markets, sources of raw materials, trade and spheres of investment. This created a succession of war tensions, and the outbreak of war itself on a colossal scale of destructiveness. A redivision of colonies, control and spheres of investment in Africa took place, as spoils for the victors; and there was renewed economic exploitation of Asia and Latin America.

Engendered also, however, were a socialist revolution in tsarist Russia, more powerful organizations of labor in capitalist countries and rising struggles for political and economic independence by colonies and semi-colonies. Against this opposition, imperialism began to circumscribe, negate and abandon parliamentary democracy and human and civil rights, instituted during the struggles of bourgeois society against feudalism, aristocracy and absolute monarchy.

Progressive new techniques for transmitting and recording music, like radio, phonograph and tape recording, permitted a vast popularization of music, and created an unprecedented

public for the art. Enrichment of the materials of music itself came from two directions: the extension of chromaticism, with an accompanying sensitivity to various shades of dissonance, enabling music to penetrate further in the portrayal of the inner or psychological world; and the absorption of newly explored areas of folk and popular music, and traditions of national music, with their modes, melodies, "irregular" scales and complex rhythms. The astronomical increase of the educated musical public and resources from which potential creators could arise, the development of harmonic sensitivity and possibilities of richer and more rounded human portrayals in music, and the proliferation of national and peoples' cultures with the consequent enrichment of world music, pointed to a revolution in music. Its consummation depended on a world at peace, with international cooperation among nations and the end of human exploitation.

What were trumpeted as "revolutions" in 20th century music were not these changes, but narrow developments marked by their "shock" power, achieved through a one-sided emphasis only on that which in isolation, attacked humanist traditions in music. There were two such main trends.

One, pioneered by Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), contained a one-sided development of Wagner's chromaticism, constant modulation and dissolution of melodic line in harmonic movement, an intensification of subjectivism. The other, led by Igor Stravinsky (*b.* 1882), rose out of the national and popular trends of the 19th century. What it derived from them was not their popular musical imagery, melodic strength and humanity, their richness of expression. It intensified the harmonic and melodic primitivism of music in folk modes. With this, it built a "super-objective" music that treated notes, dissonant or "shock" chords, timbres, dynamic thrusts and rhythmic accents like "concrete" things.

What both trends represented was not an expansion of the power of music to reflect on life, but a withdrawal from this task. What they embodied and hailed as "new" was the alienation of the composer from society and from his fellow human beings. One trend emphasized as reality the composer's loneli-

ness and anguish, the eternal tragedy of life. The other restricted reality to what the composer could physically touch, or feel in his viscera. As rebellions, they resisted the tradition of realistic humanism. It is not surprising that this "avant-garde" music has been unloved by the great mass of music lovers.

This lack of appeal is often explained by the "misunderstood genius" theory that geniuses are unappreciated in their own time; or that their music represents the "future," so must naturally be baffling today. Yet in the past, music of men of genius found appreciation. It was argued over, criticized, and sometimes shabbily rewarded, but the artist found a devoted public. Nor can it be said that the leaders of the musical "avant-garde" or "revolution" in our own time, like Stravinsky and Schoenberg have gone unknown, unrecognized, starving in garrets. They have been the most highly praised and publicized figures in 20th century music, and if their radical works at first aroused violent shock and controversy, they soon came to be idolized by a host of disciples. Their theories and musical practices became dominant in music schools. Their followers became music critics for leading publications and wrote prolifically for scholarly journals. Their work is performed, published and made available for study on phonograph records. Books have been written expounding their methods and theories. They are in fact the most "explained" composers in history. The illusion that this music represented some kind of revolutionary spirit has now vanished. Their music and theories are accepted today in the press and the academies, traditionally centers of staunch conservatism and reaction. But, more than a half-century after the radical works of these composers appeared, the public feels little kinship with the music.

The reason is not that these works were too revolutionary for their age, but that they were not revolutionary at all. Music went through periods of revolutionary development, but it reflected revolutionary change in the real conditions of life; the replacement of old social institutions with new, the rise of new social relationships which brought a new level of freedom and growth to a great mass of people. Music reflected this in the

democratization of its forms of public life, the richness of new sources of creativity, in its collective embodiment of new-found freedom of life and thought, in its capture in breadth of new sensibilities of the time. There were successive stages of such revolutionary development between about 1600 and 1830. Milestones in this development were operas of Monteverdi, oratorios of Handel, cantatas, passions and keyboard works of Johann Sebastian Bach, operas of Mozart, symphonies of Haydn and Beethoven, songs of Schubert. All were comprehensible to the public of their time. This does not mean every work was easy to enjoy, or not controversial. But they had a future precisely because they meant so much to the "present." Art that is in this sense most "true" to its age, or contributes a vital part of this truth, establishes itself both for its own time and posterity.

To say that Schoenberg and Stravinsky were not revolutionary in this sense does not deny that they were comsummate masters of the craft of music, men of genius in their grasp of the materials they handled. It is entirely possible that within their withdrawal from social engagement, their despair with the mass of their fellow human beings, their music touched some aspect of human psychology the depiction of which may become part of an all-encompassing realistic musical art of the future. But the "shock" quality of their works was not due to any revolutionary quality, but to the composers' expression of alienation; their loneliness in the midst of fellow human beings; and feeling that all people lived in pockets of loneliness in a hostile world.

There are major composers of the first half of the 20th century, like Jean Sibelius (1865-1957), Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) and Ernest Bloch (1880-1959) whose works differ markedly from anything written previously, but which do not display this "shock" quality. These composers retain their humanism, reconstructing the great forms of symphony and chamber music with fresh texture and meaning, and draw upon folk and national materials as a living addition to the language of music. Among their works are reflections of the deep anguish, internal conflicts and turbulence of the times, as

with Sibelius in his *Fourth Symphony,* Vaughan Williams in his *Fourth* and *Sixth Symphonies,* Bloch in his *Schelomo* and *First String Quartet.*

Around the pseudo-revolutionary "avant-garde" critics arose, in many cases composers within this "avant-garde," who projected myths: Only those who shared in the demolition of the humanist tradition were truly "of the 20th century." Composers who remained humanist, like Vaughan Williams and Sibelius, were really "19th century composers" in spirit, even "academic," although there is nothing academic about their work. Incomprehensibility was a sign of true greatness; the feeling of incomprehensibility which came from a lack of humanism was a revelation of the "future."

What this avant-garde "revolutionary" clamor represented was not an attack upon the ruling imperialist economic and political powers, but a yielding to them. The artist surrendered any attempt to comprehend this world. Step by step he resigned in mind from society and from broad identification with his fellow human beings. The real world, to him, was shrouded in mystery and declared incomprehensible, even "unreal," as was the mass of his fellow humans. He was left alone with his loneliness, fears and anguish. He could express this alienation in two ways. He could make his internal anguish, subjectively and repeatedly the leading ideas in his work, or he could create a super-objectivity, almost impersonality, handling the sheer materials of art as concrete things, the only realities of which he was certain. These two directions, represented by Schoenberg and Stravinsky, with their disciples and followers, became the false "opposition" in 20th century music. By the Second World War the distinction disappeared. Both led to the end of melody, for the social base of melodic language was abandoned, and to the end of meaningful musical form. Engagement was abandoned in conflicts of life out of which great dramatic structures could rise.

Both trends had predecessors, although the nature of a pseudo-revolution, as represented by the "avant-garde," is a succession of "revolutions"—each new stage a "revolution" against the preceding stage. Each step in the abandonment of humanism seems humanistic compared to the following step.

The outstanding first "modern" opera to appear in the 20th century was in 1902, Claude Debussy's (1862-1918) *Pelléas et Melisande.* Compared to what followed it is a miracle of a new kind of beauty, in its flow of what is frequently modal melody often derived from folk scales, its subtly sensitive harmonization, its creation of "speech-melody." Yet it is a medieval tale full of pathos and mystery, in which the characters, lacking depth, are oppressed as if in a nightmare or hallucination. They are not "whole" people, but lost symbols of incomprehensible reality. The music, as with much of Debussy's impressionism, is passive, boneless, and in its lack of structural contour as mindless as the characters. It is the mindlessness created by a keen intelligence baffled by the conflicts of life.

The opera *Elektra* of 1909, by Richard Strauss (1864-1949), presents equally mindless but even more obsessed characters, whose emphasis is on brutality. Compared to this treatment of the Elektra legend, those by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, are high achievements of rational thought and humanity. In the modern work the emphasis is on the flow of blood, its characters driven to hate and kill by uncontrollable forces. Typical is Elektra's homage to her slain father: "And may the blood from severed throats fall upon thy tomb! And like urns upturned, may it flow." The entire spectacle a "dance of death," the music, while it has moments of Strauss "Viennese" lyricism, assaults the ear with spasmodic violence and constant unrest.

Schoenberg's "revolution" represents the mentality of the petty-bourgeoisie which, once optimistic in building the capitalist framework, now finds its "freedom," that of the marketplace, turned into mysterious and oppressive chains. It becomes lurid dabbling with images of anarchistic violence and horror, or man "lost" in a world without reality, as if the fears engendered by the real world which it refuses to recognize come back with redoubled force and appear as outcries of the "unconscious."

This school of music was called "atonal" because it carries the subjective uses of harmony to the point where all sense of key or tonal resting place is lost. There are no longer "dissonances" but only degrees of dissonance, resulting in an al-

most constant state of tension, which ends defeating its own purpose, leaving the listener unmoved. The music has a line of development from Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. What it draws from them are their extreme moments, like Don Giovanni's last shuddering cry, a dissonant chord and introspective passage of indeterminate tonality in a Beethoven sonata, a wide leap of the voice in a declamatory Schubert song.

In this "progress" (really a decline) in the power of music to evoke human experience, melody becomes merely a conventional term applied to any two successive notes. It lacks significant groupings, and therefore "human imagery." Form collapses accordingly, becoming paper intricacies meaningless to the ear. A landmark in this "progress" was Schoenberg's song-cycle *Pierrot Lunaire* of 1912. Song was replaced by speech-sounds of definite pitch and time. In the instrumental accompaniment were "paper" baroque contrapuntal forms, fugue, canon, passacaglia, but the ear found no apparent structural continuity. In the 1920s, Schoenberg announced having done what in reality only a society can do; he invented a new "language" and structural system for music, the "12-tone" or "serial" system. What it did was to impose a perpetual chromaticism and dissonance on all music produced under it. A "pure" 12-tone work had to be based throughout on a "tone-row," a theme of 12 tones which was an arrangement of the 12 tones of the chromatic scale. The system employed every harmonic and contrapuntal variation possible of this "tone row," to construct a work. It merely formalized subjectivism, and gave it a pseudo-objectivity.

Stravinsky rose out of the Russian national school, but departed from his homeland before the First World War. His "big" works before the war used Russian, as well as other melodies, but he evinced no melodic plasticity or creativity, and no sense of large-scale structure. They were ballets, written as chains of dances and introspective passages, with a glittering surface of masterly instrumental color, "shock" dissonances and complexities of rhythm. The melodies were simply adopted and "scrubbed clean," or dehumanized, robbed of their humanistic evocations, treated as concrete objective things like bricks to be manipulated, the rhythms mechanistic. The *Rite of*

Spring ballet was a nodal point in this ornate mindlessness or sophisticated primitivism, appearing "revolutionary' because any spark of humanistic feeling was masterfully exorcised. Some spirit remained in the folk tunes despite their mechanistic setting, but the impact of the music was almost exclusively visceral or kinesthetic.

In the 1920s Stravinsky broke his Russian folk ties, and turned to a "neo-classicism," which became popular with a number of other composers. Form consisted of either dances, ostinato repetitions of phrases, or the simple outlines of baroque and sonata structures. They were treated as purely objective, not psychological patterns, with an ornate surface of instrumental color and dissonant harmony. Using modal scales in complex connections, the ear would hear what according to the major-minor system could be two keys at once. In this "scrubbed clean" or dehumanized effect, melodies adopted intact from the past history of music were inserted. He proclaimed that not only his but all music was powerless to express anything, that it had no connection whatsoever to psychological states. Creating music was the work of a fine artisan making shoes, retaining his integrity only in his craftmanship.

In the decade before the First World War, it is understandable that such trends should be berated by conservatives and should interest critical and rebellious minds. Even in their subjectivism and anti-humanism these trends evoked a conviction that all was not right with the world, that fearsome and brutal tensions were operating under the civilized surface. The war exhibited the horrors of which the "civilized" world of monopoly capital was capable, including a lively trade in materials of war among the warring countries. The war ended after a socialist revolution broke out in tsarist Russia, and revolutionary tremors were felt in Germany and France. The incipient revolution was put down in Germany and elsewhere, but efforts of the formerly warring powers to crush socialism in Russia were defeated.

In the newly established Soviet Republic, still war-torn, Lenin pointed out a basis for a revolutionary culture different from the "avant-garde" blanket renunciation of the humanist past:

Unless we clearly understand that only by acquiring exact knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind and that only by reworking this culture, can a proletarian culture be built, we shall not be able to solve this problem. . . . Proletarian culture must be the result of a natural development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society and bureaucratic society.[1]

The "avant-garde" movement however, while still talking "revolution" in musical tones, became increasingly conventional and escapist. The ultra-subjective, "atonal" movement became formally systematized, although, when combined with some social-mindedness, it could still produce a powerful, anguished and tragic document like Alban Berg's (1885-1935) opera, *Wozzeck*. The sophisticated primitivist movement turned neo-classical, with religious leanings, as if seeking refuge in a society long past.

If the "advanced" subjectivist and formalist trends were so foreign to real life and the needs of people working for human progress, why did they continue to produce excitement and rapture among groups of composers and critics who clustered about the "new"? These schools, for all their "rebellion," became safe academies of their own. With their elaborate, formal systems they provided a means through which a composer could turn out a flock of works, each seemingly well made, praised by other composers and critics attached to the school, without engaging in the social struggles of real life, learning the problems of his fellow human beings, and trying to reflect this in music, These schools also represented a world view, enabling the bourgeois who feels lost, afflicted by fears and torments, to make his alienation, into a philosophical generalization seemingly true for all humanity. For example, in a review of Anton Webern's *Six Pieces*, Op. 9, composed in 1909, an American "serial" composer, George Rochberg, wrote:

It is a profoundly tragic expression which builds inexorably from piece to piece forming ultimately a hexagonal unity of dark, daemonic power, terribly contained. I cannot refrain from commenting that it compresses into its brooding strength a feeling akin to that evoked by some of the best sections of Berg's later *Lulu* orchestral suite. It breathes the same poisoned air which we have learned to know as our very own in the twentieth century and it reminds us overpoweringly

that man is still a tragic creature whatever his source—whether divine or not—but above all tragic. In other words, Webern's Opus 6 speaks truth.[2]

There is a crucial difference between formalism and the creation of true or meaningful form. The first is the search for new stylistic devices, new ways of manipulating materials of art like concrete entities. The second is the realization of the artist's thought about life through the structuring of a work, so that units which themselves evoke states of life, or are "human images," are brought into relationships that bring new insights. As formalism increases, meaningful form dies. The avant-garde formalism reached a dead end, in that it produced, as does all academicism, lifeless art. This dead end could be forever exploited, so long as one formalistic or technical novelty could be found to replace another.

The defeat of fascism in the Second World War, in which the socialist Soviet Union played the leading part, brought the spread of socialism to China, Korea, Vietnam and a number of European countries. It also brought to the centers of imperialism an immense increase and concentration of technology, including the nuclear bomb, threatening to wipe out all humanity. Wherever the shadow of fear and despair falls most heavily the "avant-garde" trends become most triumphant among musicians and publicists, although the mass of the music public finds nothing there of interest. Inevitably, since the accent fell on formalistic techniques offered as "new sounds," "revolution" followed "revolution," engendering a frightful mortality among musical works which one year were hailed as masterpieces and a few years later scorned as outmoded.

After the Second World War, the "serial' system seemed to have triumphed, with Stravinsky embracing some aspects of it. Then the "avant-garde" deposed both Schoenberg and Stravinsky as its "masters," and found its models instead in figures like Anton Webern (1833-1945) and Edgard Varese (1883-1965). Webern, a follower of Schoenberg, carried out a concentration of serial music, whereby a work, full of complicated relationships between tones on paper, lasted but a few minutes, and what the ear heard was only a succession of unrelated

fragments, single notes and silences. Varese derived from Stravinsky's earlier primitivism, and moved toward a music dominated by dynamics, percussiveness and unpitched sounds, even noises. A new influential figure rose, Karlheinz Stockhausen (*b.* 1928), who abandoned the use of definite notes, in favor of general dynamic determinations and "note-groups." Stockhausen even dropped the paper concept of consecutive order and design in favor of a succession of "moment-forms," each existing for itself. Music, if it could now be called that, became, instead of an evocation of or an appeal to human life and thought, another form of artificial "environment." To composers in this school, the use of computers and electronic sound-producing machines both "freed" them from the need of interesting performers and gave the illusion of having embraced "science."

Thus the succession of formalistic "revolutions" within music itself, withdrawn from any social considerations or responsibilities, reached the logical point of destroying every connection to the humanist music of the past, along with any language connection to the people of its own time. To the latest "avant-garde" composer whether he thinks his music has a "future" is meaningless, for it is not part of his artistic thinking that the world has a future.

That Schoenberg and Stravinsky were such extraordinary masters of musical tools, and men of such independence and integrity, only emphasizes the destructiveness of a social order which no longer serves human progress. Perhaps the most subtle blow it deals them is its destruction of their humanity. It could be said that a composer has only one, two or three great basic ideas in the course of his life; that his maturity comes upon discovering them; that his subsequent work consists of revealing different aspects by giving them ever-fresh clothing in life. If this is so, Schoenberg and Stravinsky started their mature careers with too narrow an idea to permit such continuous reclothing from life. They had to substitute for genuine growth a series of purely stylistic "revolts," even against their own previous styles. The same could be said in a larger sense of the movements which followed.

There are composers whose style sometimes appears to resemble the style of alienation, but who used it as a protective shield for a humanity they never lost. An example is Bela Bartok (1881-1945), who said of peasant music, "It is the ideal starting point for a musical renaissance, and a composer cannot be led by a better master." He rejected, as not being truly "folk," the urbanized cafe and entertainment music that was often called "folk music," and collected and studied older forms of peasant music retained on the countryside in his native Hungary, throughout the Balkans and even in Turkey.

Bartok brought the study and knowledge of folk music to a qualitatively new level, in scientific breadth and objectivity combined with profound aesthetic insight. His collection and analysis of thousands of folk songs are a permanent contribution to musical knowledge, full of lessons about folk and peasant music in general, and about the roots of all music. To him this music represented miracles of structure, saying the most with the fewest notes, just as ancient tools and utensils created for "function" are miracles of formal perfection. He showed this not only in the folk songs he had written down but also in his creative developments of them, and in his own works of "instruction," beautiful collections of creative art works in small forms, like *Mikrokosmos, Forty-Four Violin Duets* and *85 Pieces for Children.* They show how harmonic and polyphonic patterns grow from the seeds of this folk music, and throw new light on all musical composition. His discoveries exploded racist and chauvinist theories of musical origins, revealing the interplay of many strains within any folk culture.

Bartok's string quartets, concertos and sonatas are efforts to reconstruct larger forms of the humanist heritage in terms of the melodic phrases, polyphony, rhythmic patterns and modalities derived from his study of peasant music. They are works of great originality and integrity, embodying his own sensitivity to the great social issues and catastrophes of his time. The focus of his feelings was his identification with the Hungarian peasantry. Although superficially his rhythmic complexities, percussiveness and dissonances make his music seem to resemble the Stravinsky school, it is fundamentally different.

Never coldly objective nor alienated, it always contains at its heart human warmth and elasticity. He attains only rarely and with great difficulty the high drama of great humanist forms, although he came close with his *Second String Quartet* of 1915-17. His thinking, especially in the music of the First World War period and the 1920s, largely reflects the tragic experiences of the Hungarian and Balkan peasantry, used as cannon fodder in the war and betrayed afterward. These works, with their moments of introspective sensitivity and poignant tragedy, also have a hard shield of mockery turned to the outer world, a defense of lacerated feelings. He could perhaps see no way out for the peasantry. Yet he never lost a sense of struggle and a feeling for the joy in life. Some of the works produced in the latter part of his life, like the *Music for Strings and Percussion, Sixth String Quartet* and *Concerto for Orchestra,* discard this shell or mask, revealing rich singing qualities and an open dramatic breadth.

No school of "avant-garde" music or of "music of the future" was formed about Bartok. He himself would have thought a group of "disciples" ridiculous. His work represented no new "system," but a fresh look at and enrichment of the musical heritage. Because his work is so profoundly educative it is assured a productive future. Its opening of avenues is already apparent in the composition and musicology of socialist Hungary.

Today the world is at the dawn of an unprecedented change, when the exploitation of one class by another will be abolished. The possibilities of man's collective mastery over nature, and ability to produce his needs from it, have developed to an extent that all people will be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor, not only things consumed but in being able to develop their artistic powers to the fullest. This does not mean a "leveling." It means that far richer resources of artistic creation will be tapped than could have been before. It means that mankind will have no other interest than knowing and mastering the world, without reservation or deviation from truth and reality due to class interests.

The breakdown of one-sidedness, that all people may have

the right and ability to develop their artistic talents; the fullest humanity, with no reservations; scientific knowledge of the natural, economic, social and historical forces operating in the contemporary world; partisanship on the side of progress—these may be called, in general, the content and goal of socialist realism.

In a considerable section of the world, working-class societies, either socialist or moving directly toward socialism, now exist. This is a central historical fact of our time, and must be understood by all people, whatever land they live in and whatever social class they belong to. The cause of peace as against the terrible destructiveness of another world war, the future of humanity itself, rests on the guarantee that socialism and capitalism will work out their future peacefully. Those who cannot see this, who speak of the "inevitability of war," or who say the same thing by declaring "war is human nature," or capitalism is synonymous with all "freedom" and "culture," and yet offer to lead or enlighten others, cannot be considered minds worthy of respect.

The working-class approach to music combines the humanity of folk music, the continual search for genuine human imagery born out of the people's life and struggles against oppression, with the techniques to be learned from the cumulative developments of musical realism. It seeks both an art of daily use and one presenting the richest and broadest dramatic and social experiences. In working-class countries, music like all art is removed from the competitiveness of the private market place and from the remnants of private patronage. Music is supported by and easily available to the mass of people. It is as much their right as the right to work, and as available as bread. Symphonic concerts, opera, chamber music organizations, have no trouble existing. They are part of the social services of the community, and expand in numbers as rapidly as they can be organized and the performers trained. Constant education is carried on by presenting the masterworks of the past, and there is no end to the demand for fresh works of the present. The people, for the first time, can really support the composer. At the same time, there is a great expansion of

amateur music-making, singing and instrumental performance groups, which in itself is a rich musical education for the people taking part.

In the Soviet Union, during the earliest years when the country was ravaged by invasion and civil war financed and sustained by the imperialist powers, the greatest attention was given to building and preserving culture. During the entire growth of the Soviet Union, constant attention was given the development of the arts, including music, not merely in "expressions of interest" but in the allotment of as great a part of each year's budget as was possible to the building of theaters, conservatories, opera companies, orchestras and the manufacture of musical instruments. In 1939, 29 new operas by Soviet composers were produced. During a typical music season, 1940-41, a new opera by Khrennikov received 154 performances in 26 theaters. Other new operas by Soviet composers received respectively 130, 39, 34 and 34 performances.

There had been a constant fostering of the cultures of the national republics and autonomous national groups, to preserve and encourage their traditional folk cultures and also to introduce symphonic and opera forms hitherto unknown to these peoples. There are periodic gala festivals of folk music in the major cities, with performers coming from every corner of the Soviet Union. New forms are developed, such as a kind of opera which combines folk with standard concert instruments, and composed music with improvisation. The people of Buryat Mongolia, who in 1929 did not know symphonic and opera music, were, in 1940, able to send a complete ballet and opera company to Moscow for a fortnight of Buryat Mongolian musical art.

Composers have organized themselves into a union, similar to writers' and painters' unions, which fixes rates of compensation and royalties, carries on musical education, fosters musical composition, and subsidizes young and rising composers. Musical education for children is especially rich, both as a normal part of schooling and in the form of Schools for Specially Talented Musical Children. No talented musical performer ever has a problem of making a living, and the demand far

exceeds the numbers available. When an important new composition is being prepared for performance, articles describing it fill a great deal of space in the daily newspapers. In 1946, while the people were repairing the ravages of the Nazi invasion, plans were announced for training 39 new symphony orchestras, as well as a large number of choruses and chamber music groups.

To what extent has socialism found its own characteristic musical expression? Music as music, of course, cannot expound socialism. There cannot be a "Marxist" music in the sense of elucidating the Marxist view of economics and history. Music expands human kinship by expressing, developing and bringing to social consciousness the interior life of people in society as it responds to their conditions of life. Soviet music can be said to reflect the interior life of a people who have had bitter hardships, threats of invasion and planned destruction throughout the life of the country, who have been wracked by devastating wars not of their own making, and yet who have a growing humanism for others, a capacity for laughter, and a firm faith in human progress. This is not the interior life that will be characteristic of people when, all over the world, wars and class exploitation will have been forgotten, except in the archives. Regarding the art of today, one can only lament the potential creativity lost among the millions slain in the anti-fascist war, so many of whom were young. In the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries the flowering of multi-national music, with its affect on musical language itself, is in a comparatively early stage. Already there is a rich creative fabric of musical work, the nature of which can hardly be glimpsed through the trickle of works that move through the narrow channels of the international concert hall. One example is the abundance of choral-symphonic works that in their homeland bring closer rapport, even collaboration, between composer and public, but are rather difficult musical "imports" for other countries.

The few works from the Soviet Union that have reached United States concert halls, mostly by Serge Prokofiev (1891-1953) and Dmitri Shostakovich (*b.* 1906), are distinguished by

the enormous popularity they have won. This popularity has come despite the widespread tendency of American critics to denigrate Soviet music, claiming its humanist turn was both a reversion to the 19th century and a product of demands by "politicians" that composers write only "easy," problemless music. Yet the music's inspired humanism was the reason for its popularity. An academic music, imitating the past, cannot hold a public for long. Nor can a music of alienation. The lasting power of works like the *Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies* of Shostakovich, or the *Alexander Nevsky Cantata* and the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music of Prokofiev, lies in the fact that listeners find their own feelings and hopes for fruitful human relationships reflected in the music. This correspondence between musical content and the psychological life of the public proves how much this music represents the 20th century, despite the "avant-garde" contention that only the alienated truly belong to the 20th century.

Highly publicized in the United States were the criticisms of Soviet music within the Soviet Union which appeared to have governmental authority, like the criticism by *Pravda* of Shostakovich's opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk (Katerina Ismailova)* in 1936, and the critiques of Soviet composers by Andrei A. Zhdanov in 1948. They came at periods when there was a sharp rise in the menace of war upon the Soviet Union. In the middle 1930s Hitler was consolidating the Nazi war machine, in collaboration with capitalist enterprises in the rest of the world, their governments assisting him diplomatically in the hope he would attack the Soviet Union. In 1948, the anti-fascist war alliance was replaced by the Cold War. The Soviet Union, still repairing war devastation and suffering from terrible losses of people, was again threatened with attack, this time with nuclear bombs. The criticisms, the importance of which was not how they appraised particular works but the general direction they tried to set for Soviet music, were an obvious attempt to close ideological ranks, to make music a more direct factor in the struggle to build and defend socialism.

The complicated question of the relation of music to ideology

was answered in simplistic fashion, considering neither the complexities of music as psychological expression nor the complexities faced by composers seeking to create with truth to their deepest feelings. There was a tendency to regard styles themselves as ideologies, so that a composer using stylistic elements classified as "bourgeois" or interested in the experimental directions in other lands could be regarded as a "class enemy." Specific charges made against certain works have since been tacitly dropped. The opera *Katerina Ismailova* for many years withdrawn from circulation, has in recent years been played in Soviet theaters, made available in score, put on records and even made into a motion picture. A massive *October Cantata* by Prokofiev, derided in 1936, is now considered a masterpiece.

What damage was done in limiting the free development of Soviet composers is difficult to appraise. The fundamental health of Soviet music was not destroyed, as can be seen by succeeding works and the world-wide popularity they enjoyed. Soviet music could conceivably have been richer and freer, had it been treated as an equal partner in political development rather than subservient to political tactics. Nevertheless, the criticisms had their productive aspect. The partial truth at their core was that the crisis in bourgeois culture, with its ultra-subjectivism, derision of the realistic and humanist heritage, and alienated seizure upon the formal elements of music was far from a true revolution. A true reflection of socialist revolutionary development in human society had to learn from what was most genuine of past musical achievements and find ways to bring the art closer to people, not make it meaningless to them. This truth, if expressed heavy-handedly, struck home to Prokofiev and Shostakovich because of their own fundamental attachment to their land and people, and to socialist society. Their work demonstrates a constant broadening and deepening, unlike most of the brilliant Western "avant-gardists," whose richest works are usually their earlier ones, and who moved toward sterility.

Prokofiev, whose early maturity took place just before the First World War and who took part in the derisive mockery of

past musical heritage, and Shostakovich, whose early maturity was touched by such currents in the 1920s, are quite different in personality and style. Prokofiev is a melodist of great refinement and clear contour, delicate wit, clarity, conciseness and economy of form, and rhythmic incisiveness. Shostakovich is more dramatic, boisterous in humor, speech-inflected in melodic line, more probing internally, and often needs great space to work out his ideas. Prokofiev leans formally more to the 18th century heritage, Shostakovich to the 19th century. Both expanded their styles and forms in humanist breadth. Both were able to reflect the bitterness of the anti-fascist war years in works that, in true aesthetic terms, strengthened their listeners through the evocation of common tragic experience, and buoyed up the conviction of ultimate victory; Prokofiev in his *Fifth Symphony, Sixth, Seventh* and *Eighth Piano Sonatas, First Violin Sonata* and the opera *War and Peace;* Shostakovich in the *Seventh "Leningrad" Symphony, Eighth Symphony, Second Piano Sonata* and *Piano Trio in E minor.* Such works are contemporary in their artistic commentary, and their relevance to their listeners. Without the lessons of the past they could not have achieved this reflection of today in as broad and deep a fashion. Great lessons of past works of genius lie not in any specific formal models to follow but in development of the power of music to follow and evoke the many sides of life and human feeling. The "avant-garde' revolutions against this tradition, for all they might have advanced here and there in a one-sided way, in the depiction of some new aspects of human sensitivity, by and large represented a narrowing of the power of music to reflect life.

The music of Prokofiev, in the eight years from the end of the war to his death in 1953, continued on the high level of the works produced during the war, with the *Ninth Piano Sonata,* the *Cello Sonata,* the *Sixth* and *Seventh Symphonies,* the opera *Story of a Real Man.* The instrumental works, with tenderness and beauty, have already established themselves in the concert halls. Whether his late operas have the all-over strength to establish themselves alongside the classics in the opera house repertory remains to be seen, but there is splendid music

in them. *Semyon Kotko*, *War and Peace* and *Story of a Real Man* are in the heroic-dramatic vein, which the early Prokofiev was not equipped to handle. That he determinedly developed his art to embrace such projects, and achieved the success he did, is itself a remarkable feat in the story of 20th century music.

For Shostakovich, the years from the end of the war through the 1960s have seen immense productivity combined with a constant exploration of new avenues of emotional expression. His range is enormous, from the use of popular idiom and sweet lyricism to highly subtle chromaticism and dissonance probing internal states. The choral-instrumental *Song of the Forest* and the cycle of songs for three voices to Jewish Folk Poems are freshly songful. His dramatic works contain deep inner conflict and tragic evocations as in the *Tenth Symphony* and *Second Cello Concerto*. The *Ninth Symphony, Ballet Suites* and *First Cello Concerto* are rollicking, witty works. Other compositions evince a variety of mood, overwhelmingly characterized by a probing and often sad meditativeness, like the two Violin Concertos, the 24 Preludes and Fugues for piano and the remarkable series of String Quartets, ten of which were written between 1945 and 1969. It is not easy to absorb some of these works at one hearing, but there is no "new language" for novelty's sake, and no hint of any "writing down" to a public.

Socialism cannot guarantee that artists who embrace it will produce works of genius. What it can do, and has done, is create conditions of musical life that eliminate the corruptions of commercialism and the loneliness of the artist who feels unwanted by society. And it has enormously increased the art public. In the Soviet Union there is a close rapport between composers and performers, with an avid interest in new works on the part of performers and public. The obligation is implicit that the composer write with a sense of social responsibility. The result is not work that speaks politics in musical tones, but work that carries out on a wider scale the affirmation of human kinship and brotherhood by recognizing not only the joys and triumphs but the woes, yearnings and conflicts that people share in common.

In the Soviet Union there have been mistakes in defining too narrowly the relationship of social responsibility to musical forms and idioms. These mistakes have been publicized and berated in the capitalist world, with dire predictions of the end of creative music under socialism. History has proved these predictions false, for the attacks in the "West" have all too often been not really against the mistakes but against the very concept of the social responsibility of the artist. New works of the 1960s, like the *Cello Concerto* by Boris Tishenko, the *Songs of Kursk* by Yuri Sviridov, the *Carmen* ballet and *Piano Concerto* by Rodim Schedrin and the *Sixth String Quartet* by the Georgian composer Sulkhan Tsintsadze, indicate a wide variety of methods being developed by Soviet composers.

No generation in the Soviet Union has grown up free from the menaces and ravages of war, forced on it by the imperialist sector of the world. Its full flowering of culture rests on the end of these menaces. Yet it has already benefited the entire world by showing that the realistic humanist tradition in music can be reconstructed with new sensibility and on a new level, in the 20th century.

10. Music in The United States

Judged by its music composed in large forms, like opera, symphony and chamber music, the United States might be considered an unmusical country. This "art" or "classical" music has limped along, considered by most an imitation of an imported luxury like the "old master" paintings in the art museums. Our composers have never produced a body of work that either the American people or the world public has considered important. But the country is highly musical. It has produced, through the genius of its most oppressed and deprived, the black people, an exciting "new folk music," like the spirituals and Blues. In the 20th century, again with inspiration from black people at its core, it has produced a "popular" music of extraordinary vitality, which has become a world influence.

"Folk" music can today be defined as a music that, whatever its origins, a community of people possesses and uses as part of its common life, the separate songs and dances of which are fluid in form, never completely rounded and "finished." A folk song differs from one performance to the next. It has many variants which give birth to other songs. "Popular" music is composed of finished and rounded forms, known to have definite creators and aimed at immediate use for social entertainment. "Art" music is produced by composers who have learned from and tried to refashion for their own times the heritage of great music, including its complex psychology or human portraiture.

The borderlines between these areas of music have always been fluid, and have changed with changes in society. In the Renaissance, fine secular musical composition, like the villanelle, madrigal and chanson, rose as popular music, and in the following Baroque and early classical eras, composers of great and profound works also wrote, sometimes even as part of these works, lighter music for immediate social entertainment.

There were no "specialists" in "popular" music. Even in the 19th century, when music publishers deliberately produced music as commodities for popular consumption, Schubert wrote waltzes and ländler for the Vienna carnivals, Brahms wrote his "Hungarian Dances" as popular music for the homes. Composers who fell into the "popular" category, like Johann Strauss, the "Waltz King" of Vienna, and Sir Arthur Sullivan of the English Gilbert-and-Sullivan operettas, were well-equipped craftsmen who knew the fundamentals of classical music.

In the United States the business of manufacturing "popular" music has become the major factor in the country's musical life. The profit-seeking business institutions aim to guide and control public tastes and the shape of music, employing hacks who follow viable formulas rather than composers interested in the full art of music and in the meaningful working out of every detail demanded by a work of art. Yet the history of this "popular" music, with its host of talents, and torrents of bad, dead formula music it has poured out, is also fascinating in its revelation of how the public has periodically refused to accept the desired passivity. Healthy innovation has forced its way in, surprised the publishers with its popularity, and engendered a new set of formulas.

"Popular" music cannot fill a country's musical needs, for all the remarkable gifts that sometimes appear, any more than detective, cowboy and science-fiction stories can supply a country's literary needs. In no other country has "art" music suffered so greatly from the abyss that exists between it and folk and popular music. The art of music has been broken in half, with neither half able to operate as a whole. Creators of "popular" music generally restricted their gifts by working with rudimentary tools and repeatable formulas; at the same time the best possessed and developed a meaningful musical language that stemmed from the people, including their folk music. Among other things, popular composers mastered the craft of setting music to American speech, which "art" composers were rarely able to do well. The "art" composers, whether writing vocal or instrumental music, were trained in

the use of the big, inherited musical tools but did not know how to recreate them in the people's musical language. They often did not seem to know that such a language existed.

At the heart of the problem of bridging the abyss between "art" and "popular" lay the problem of racism. Capitalist development of the country demanded that the indigenous Americans, the Indians, be robbed of the land. They were treated with vile hypocrisy, racist segregation and brutal cruelty, including wholesale murder, typical of the ruthless forms of accumulation of capitalism. At the same time, a vital section of the country's economy was based on the enslavement of Africans. After the Civil War forced the end of slavery, black people were robbed of their rights as citizens, confined to peonage on the land or segregated in city ghettos, denied proper education and limited to menial occupations and enforced poverty. The rapid growth of industry made it necessary to attract great numbers of working people from other countries; these people—the Irish, Italian, German, Slovak, Jewish, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Czech, Scandinavian—along with black people, and the Latin-Americans whose lands were seized in the wars against Mexico and Spain, actually built the country. The working people were taught to "keep their place." Racism poisoned social relations, proclaiming that blacks were less than human, to justify the savage and inhuman treatment. The reverse was true. The oppressed were true human beings; the oppressors had lost their humanity. Racism applied as well to other darker-skinned people. And the streams of immigrant workers were "educated" in schools and the press with the "melting-pot" theory, which taught them to be ashamed of their national cultural heritage, and admire as truly American a mythical middle-class Anglo-Saxon stereotype. Characteristic of American culture is its racist "humor," mocking every real or fancied national characteristic brought to these shores.

Despite the forced formulas and censorships bound to popular music production, the vitality of various musical heritages brought to America showed itself. A highly varied American musical language began to take shape. The best popular songs achieved artistic permanence, like those of Stephen Collins

Foster (1826-1864) in which can be found elements of Irish lyricism, Scottish reels and black plantation songs. Folk songs grew through social use. There were love songs, dancing songs, and songs of every kind of labor; in the cotton fields, mines and lumber camps, among the seamen, railroad workers and cow hands. They flourished to accompany struggles like the bitter and bloody strike battles to affirm the rights of labor. It is ironic that the growth of this affirms the human kinship of peoples the world over, while racism and chauvinism permeate American ideology and drive the people apart.

The greatest creative contribution to United States folk and popular music was made by black people, for whom music asserted their independence and desire for freedom. A musical heritage carried from Africa by slaves, absorbing and transforming the words and music of hymns found on American soil, produced the wonderful body of spirituals between 1830 and 1860, as the struggle against slavery gained with rising intensity. Spirituals were a religious music of a people to whom religion was meaningful only if it supported the abolition of slavery. For the slaves to assert their humanity through this music and poetry was a defiant step and affirmation of solidarity. Spirituals were also Underground Railroad signals, freedom messages and battle songs. The anti-slavery struggle was the core of the struggle for democracy, so spirituals embodied in their music and poetry the affirmation of an unbreakable demand for freedom. And the demand for freedom was itself a stage achieved in freedom. This made them the best loved "new folk music" among all the people. As with the music of Bach, on a different level, the manifold experiences of real life were, within a religious frame, expressed in music.

That the richest contribution to American musical-poetic culture produced during slavery, came from the slaves, is ironic. The irony continued after slavery. Not until the end of the 19th century were spirituals collected and their beauty made manifest to the nation and to the world. By then new forms of creative music were rising among black people, struggling against new forms of oppression. These new forms were the "gospel" songs of the Negro churches, and the secular music of the Blues.

The Blues were a folk music always recognizable in melodic-poetic shape and harmony, not rounded, defined songs; a basic language for improvisation and the constant proliferation of new songs. Their origin might have been in the field calls and work songs of slavery, but they were shaped as the ballad-music of the wandering singer, "speaking" his heart to others, in the days of post-slavery peonage. Characteristic of the Blues were the closeness to speech intonations, their antiphonal or "statement and answer" interplay between voice and accompanying instrument; their flexible opposition of speech-inflected phrases to a basic unchanging rhythmic beat; their combination of deep feeling with a shield of wit, making at times a semi-secret musical language intelligible only to those who knew its style and could fill in the things "unsaid" from what was "said."

Early in the 20th century the Blues joined with another remarkable music, ragtime, created by largely unlettered Negro musician-entertainers, to produce the phenomenon known as jazz. Ragtime was an instrumental music of dance and march, sometimes for solo piano or banjo, sometimes for instruments of military bands, such as clarinet, trumpet, trombone and drums. Whether march or dance, it was highly syncopated, the instrumentalists combining popular and even simple "classical" tunes with melodic-recitative qualities and rhythms of the Blues. It became, as jazz, polyphonic or many-voiced in texture, permitting Blues-like improvisation within its framework. By the early 1900s popular music publishing had grown to a major industry, with the spread of pianos and phonographs in homes creating an enormous demand for music. Centered in New York, the popular music industry became known as Tin Pan Alley. Children of Irish, Italian and Jewish immigrants developed their talents in it. The impact of jazz gave the popular music explosive vitality, making it of world influence.

As a commodity-producing industry, Tin Pan Alley worked with cliches and formulas, borrowing from every branch of music, including tunes from "classical" composers. It commercialized jazz, formalizing it, ignoring its black origins but making fortunes out of them. Some black composers, like William C. Handy and Clarence and Spencer Williams, were able

to achieve some prominence, and a number of gifted white composers of popular songs found that the jazz idiom could coalesce with their own creative impulses. These included George Gershwin, Hoagy Carmichael, Jerome Kern, Vincent Youmans, Cole Porter and Richard Rodgers. Tin Pan Alley also produced a mass of rubbish and forced its more original composers to work with generally inane tests and straightjacket form. Yet a number of popular songs from the First World War to the early 1930s have not been surpassed in richness of humanist melody.

The creativity of Blues-based jazz was not limited to its influence on song writing. More important was the flag of freedom it waved through improvisation, giving the performer opportunity to be creator as well, and speak from the heart. A remarkable collective improvisation grew up, by performers using the common language of the Blues. In the 1910s and 1920s, even rudimentary opportunities for making a living out of music caused great Negro talents to appear, like the ragtime and blues pianist Ferdinand "Jellyroll" Morton, the singer and creator of Blues songs Bessie Smith, the trumpeters and band leaders Joseph "King" Oliver and Louis Armstrong, the clarinet and saxophone player Sidney Bechet. Much of their work has been preserved on phonograph records, because the growth of Negro ghetto communities in the large cities provided a market for what were derisively called "race" records. They were extraordinary musicians who could have become leading American composers, granted rational and human conditions to develop. However, they were badly paid, forced to work in sleazy surroundings, treated with chauvinism, and compelled to undertake clownish roles.

After the middle 1930s, popular song and dance music were more tightly linked to monopoly, becoming subservient to the record companies, the cinema industry and radio. Mountains of rubbish were created. Yet there was also a thin stream of genuinely touching, witty, beautiful jazz music, produced by performers, largely black, who felt the principle of freedom at the heart of the music, and understood the language of Blues improvisation. Some white players shared the same spirit of

creative freedom. Many improvisations, polished in performance after performance, could be called fine, rich textured musical compositions in small form. Among outstanding bands were those of William "Count" Basie and Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington; sensitive pianists and leaders with fine musical ideas, able to encourage and integrate the improvisations from the gifted performers who worked with them, extraordinary solo improvisers like the saxophone player, Lester Young.

After the Second World War, jazz was openly recognized as an important American music art, and exploited by Voice of America because of European audience's interest. Largely controlled by commercial interests, no rational ways arose through which Negro jazz musicians could develop their creative talents. Many began to explore the scope and extremes of harmony that had heretofore been a province of "classical" composed music. But they were still hampered as part of the commercial musical entertainment industry and were often unemployed while hearing their names lauded in the press. In the 1960s the power of the Blues was heard again, along with "gospel" music; "Rock" and "soul" music, with all their commercialism, became the "protest" music of youth. This was remarkable not in musical heights achieved, but in stimulating the young public to become active music makers and poets.

The fruitfulness of American popular music has been due—despite its confinements, crudities and enforced simplicities—to its periodic invigoration by the country's folk music, and its use as a weapon of struggle for freedom. Struggle for freedom is here used in the broadest sense, to include not simply a direct attack upon oppressive political and social conditions, but an assertion of humanity in face of forces which rob people's lives of dignity and their labor of joy. Among black people, music and music-poetry have been angry, satiric, lamenting, full of gay humor and joy in life. A means through which they could fight, it also asserted their right to love, laugh and to grow. They could affirm their humanity in face of an oppressing class which denied them the common rights of human beings.

These have been the conditions through which rising nations have developed their composed "art" music, mastering and transforming great inherited tools, using them to create their own musical portraiture, making music important and meaningful. But musical "art" composition in the United States has rarely been seen as an arena of ideas and struggle.

Near the middle of the 19th century the New Orleans-born Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869), who studied music in France and became an outstanding virtuoso pianist, created a number of little piano pieces treating Negro, Creole and Latin-American motifs with affectionate freshness and life. He had grandiose ideas about composing operas and symphonies, but the country did not have the kind of organized musical life that could sustain such projects, and he died young. Interestingly, although his family owned slaves, he was militantly democratic and opposed to slavery.

Later in the century, when symphony orchestras and opera companies were more firmly established, Edward MacDowell (1861-1908) tried earnestly to create an American repertoire of piano concertos, piano sonatas and symphonic works. He had a genuine, if minor, lyrical gift and an understanding of how to put together a large-scale piece of music. But he had little comprehension of the American folk and popular idiom taking shape. Using as models the more academic European romanticists, he attempted to create drama through standard, formal means and devices, rather than express any self-revelation.

In the 1890s the great Czech composer, Antonin Dvorak, then teaching in New York, declared that American composers should study their folk music, that the most beautiful American folk music he knew for this purpose was the Negro spiritual. Some composers made efforts in this direction, like Henry F. Gilbert (1869-1928) with his *Comedy Overture on Negro Themes* and ballet, *The Dance in the Place Congo.* But to use such themes creatively, it was necessary to know and understand the life and feelings of the black people. Gilbert's work has the same condescension to blacks, seeing them more as colorful, exotic "primitives" than as human, that marred Gershwin's "folk opera," *Porgy and Bess,* in the 1920s.

The most original and inspired American composer prior to

the first world war was Charles Ives (1874-1954). His idiom was made of the music from his small-town New England childhood; popular songs, church hymns, barn dances, street marches and ragtime, developed contrapuntally with a strange harmony that disregarded any set rules or conventions. Sometimes this harmony resembles Debussey's "impressionism," sometimes the "atonal" or "polytonal" composers. Ives created with disdain for all systems, and had none of his own, following only his impulse of the moment. This "free" harmony was connected in his mind with the old New England transcendentalism. Indeed one of his works which comes near to total success is the *"Concord" Sonata* for piano, the movements of which are titled Emerson, Hawthorne, the Alcotts and Thoreau.

His contempt for conventions extended to institutions of the public musical world, including commercial music publication and the concert hall. He made no effort to have his works performed, and in fact exulted in the idea that some of them might be unperformable. His symphonies, songs, tone poems, piano sonatas and sonatas for violin with piano attempted to recreate the spirit and mood of what to him had been the truly democratic America, the America of the New England towns with their town meetings, holiday celebrations, Civil War debates, philosophical discussions, church services, picnics, political polls and baseball games.

Ives stopped composing, by and large, after the First World War, perhaps baffled by the imperialist United States that emerged. His works never became rooted in the concert repertory. Some simply baffle the ear, sounding not "philosophical," as he may have intended, but disorderly. His attempted structures lack direction and continuity. They meander, as if he were allowing the music to go its own way regardless of the listener's need for intelligibility. It is strange that a composer so imbued with the democratic spirit of an earlier United States, should have made so little effort to be heard, as if he doubted whether there was a body of people that might learn to welcome his music. Yet in all his works are moments, and sometimes full sections, of unique beauty, which speak for an American experience in the language he uses and the feeling with which he handles it.

By the second decade of the 20th century, with the spread of the symphony orchestra, concert hall, opera house and music conservatory, and the growth of a large musical public, United States musical composition was ripe for maturity; the production of big works which absorbed and put to new use the lessons of the European past, spoke a specific American-shaped idiom and reflected American life in breadth. This was the decade of the First World War. The United States that emerged was one in which the voice of working people went unheard while great banks and corporations took the country's helm. They had grown enormously wealthy through the war. Now they moved confidently over the world market, engaging in open imperialist machinations in Latin America, fostering bitter attacks against the working people's organizations, instigating legal murder of radicals like Sacco and Vanzetti, heating up all forms of chauvinism and racism.

This post-war United States saw come to maturity the largest galaxy of gifted, professionally equipped serious composers that had yet appeared. Wallingford Riegger (1885-1961), Walter Piston (*b.* 1894), Roger Sessions (*b.* 1896), Virgil Thomson (*b.* 1896), Henry Cowell (1897-1965), Roy Harris (*b.* 1898), and Aaron Copland (*b.* 1900), struggled through their compositions, and in most cases through critical writings and teachings, to establish large-scale composition in American cultural life. They sought, each in his own way, to make it American, without superficiality or chauvinism.

The methods they fashioned, which they thought represented a declaration of freedom from the academic imitation of European music, merely dropped one form of European influence for another. They adopted the pseudo-revolutionary attack upon the humanist heritage, with its deification of the formal materials of music. This fitted their post-war temperament, and seemed to them to be a liberation of music. It was actually restriction. Each of these composers created a style which he used with fine craftsmanship to make cleanly constructed and splendidly organized works. The pseudo-revolutionary styles prohibited rich emotional drama or the subtle interplay of evoked emotions that makes music seem "true" to the complex-

ities of human psychology. It was as if the composers felt that to probe freely into themselves, to find what linked them to their fellow human beings, was "old-fashioned." This creation of a pseudo-objective music restricts through its very principles of design the entrance of the full turbulence of life, which gives this school of composition a "neo-classic" character. Their fine craftsmanship and novelty of style were described by a number of critics of the new generation as beautiful, great and historic. But most of the music public was little affected.

Outstanding among the group was Copland, with an almost Stravinskian mastery of the physical materials of music, rhythms, dynamics, timbres, chords and intervals used as independent blocks of sound. Yet he too tended to gravitate among a narrow range of feelings, a brooding nostalgia, a violently propulsive motor energy. It was largely his influence, meant as a defense of the "new" American music, that helped first Stravinsky, in his neo-classic phase, and then Shoenberg, in his "serial system" phase, to be regarded as deities by American composers.

From the middle 1930s through the early 1940s, some fresh winds blew in American musical life, as working people on the land, in mines and factories began to make their mark on history through titanic organizational struggles against the great corporations and banks. The face and mind of the people broke into American cultural life. There was an extensive research into and recovery of American folk music. A critical appreciation rose of jazz as an important American music, which at the same time tried to discriminate between the stream of genuine jazz creation and the torrents of commercialized and formalized jazz. Serious efforts were made to bridge the destructive gap between the "classical" or "art" music and the "popular."

George Gershwin had a decade before made such an effort with his *Rhapsody in Blue, Concerto in F* and *Porgy and Bess.* The latter, a commercial failure in the 1920s, was a success in the 1930s, and helped give seriousness to the New York musical comedy. Earl Robinson wrote his strong *Ballad for Americans* and *The Lonesome Train.* From the "classical" side, Copland

embraced folk song in what proved to be his most popular works, *Rodeo, Appalachian Spring* and *A Lincoln Portrait.* Virgil Thomson did the same in scores for documentary films, like *The River* and *The Plough that Broke the Plains,* and Roy Harris wrote his *Folksong Symphony.* Most striking in the social satire of his text and the artistic, sensitive use of popular music language was Marc Blitzstein's (1905-1964) opera with spoken dialogue, *The Cradle Will Rock.* This movement was only the beginning of the difficult collective task of going beyond mere "folksiness" or local color to develop a plastic musical language "popular" in basic elements, yet refined enough to capture every nuance of human psychology; and to find themes that honestly revealed the real America. This beginning froze with the "Cold War."

From the defeat of the fascist axis, by an alliance in which the Soviet Union played the most powerful and self-sacrificing role, the United States emerged the wealthy possessor of the most technologically advanced production machinery in the world. It took over the economic, political and military leadership of the capitalist sector of the world, restoring to power the West German trusts that once supported Hitler; carrying on an economic and political offensive against socialism; threatening nuclear war; stifling attempts of economically backward countries to establish their economic as well as political independence. The effect of this swing to reaction was not so much to enlist the American composer in its behalf, as to drive him into an ivory tower, the walls of which gave an illusion of "freedom," made of ever-changing techniques he could call "revolutionary." He tended to accept the social-economic world of American imperialism as an unpleasant but unchallengeable side of life, which left him with little hope for the world.

In the United States "avant-garde" musical world of the 1960s, with its replacement of formerly "revolutionary" techniques by others even more novel and more confining, the generation of American composers which rose after the First World War has been scornfully deposed as "old-fashioned." Likewise deposed as deities are Stravinsky and Schoenberg, replaced by Varese and Webern. The "radical" composer, as far as tech-

niques, gets by much better than his spiritual fathers who fought in their own way for an American music. The new "revolutionary" composers have far less audience, but some live as music critics and others are supported by foundations and university grants, made possible by enormous amounts of corporation money evading taxes by pretending to assist the country's "culture."

Three composers can be cited as most eminent, in terms of critical adulation or publicity, of those who have carried music to where it is nothing but a decorated corpse. One is Elliot Carter (*b.* 1908), who works generally in a direction laid out by Copland, but whose scores are far more intricate in their organization of rhythms and timbres, and far more arid melodically and psychologically.

Another is Milton Babbitt (*b.* 1916) who has given complications to Schoenberg's "serial system" by adding the duration, timbre and loudness of each note to the elements of "serial" organization, working out this organization with the help of mathematics, computer machines and electronic sound-producing machines.

The result is, as his admirers boast, that a single note in one of his scores carries as much "information," in its relationships to the surrounding notes, as an entire passage in a symphony by Mozart. This is like saying a crossword puzzle, in which most letters play two roles, horizontal and vertical, carries more "information" than an entire act of a Shakespeare play. Mozart, like Shakespeare, wrote with a socially created language that was also alive and part of the psychology of his listeners. He sought no complexities for their own sake in the realm of language. As for the unintelligibility of Babbit's music to all but his trained followers, Babbit makes this a virtue by claiming his music means nothing other than what it "is," that its "language" is "revolutionary" in the same way Einstein and Planck represent a "revolution" in mathematics and physics. People, he says, should not expect to understand him, without special scientific knowledge, any more than they should expect to understand Einstein's formulas without advanced mathematics. But of course the scientist works with

real problems of life and finds solutions that prove their validity by enabling changes in the world, like exploding nuclear energy or sending a rocket to the moon. Various non-Euclidean geometries justified themselves by being applicable to aspects of reality, like movements within an atom or interstellar space, to which Euclid's geometry no longer applied. But Babbitt's pseudo-science of music is no more science than would be a piece of written gibberish organized according to precise mathematical formulae or geometrical principles. It rises out of no real problems of life and its solutions bring no results other than their own existence. The debasement of American musical life is indicated not so much by the fact that a Babbitt exists, as by the fact that he is so highly respected and praised, and is honored by a teaching post at a major university.

The third figure is John Cage (*b.* 1912), who discards musical organization in favor of sheer chance and discards even musical sounds of definite pitch in favor of random noises that may be heard in actual life. His claim is that he is destroying the illusory operations of music as an artistic commentary on our way of thinking and life and replacing this with an actual "environment" of sound like that of life itself. It is as if a person driving an automobile to a concert would be happier if at the concert he heard no music, but only a repetition of the honking horns and brake squeals; or if soldiers on leave from a battle front should be entertained not with songs or deep music but with a repetition of cannon roars and machine gun clatter. What is significant about Cage's deliberate "anti-music" offered as a replacement of music is the entire bankruptcy it represents of the view of music as a form of human relations. Jocularly, Cage remarks, "I have nothing to say, and I am saying it," but what he really says is, "There is nothing to say."

In the 1960s efforts have been made to bridge the gap between "classical" and "popular," but which distort the problem by not seeing it as social as well as musical. Some black musicians used "advanced" harmonies of 20th century atonal music knowledgably for improvisations and arrangements, but they achieved at best an expression of personal protest and anger, and were confined by not being permitted to develop as com-

posers. Always in jazz, each innovation that found a public was immediately vulgarized, commercialized and imitated by white musicians who made far more money than the genuine black originators.

The life of a black jazz musician is still largely uncertain in terms of regular employment and miserable in terms of adequate income. There have been some "token" breakdowns of segregation, so that black musicians may sometimes be found playing alongside white musicians in jazz bands and occasional symphony orchestras. But the black population of the country is still the most poverty-stricken, unemployed, lowest paid when employed and is deprived of education, musical or otherwise, through which it can develop its talents. As for "third stream" music or combination of jazz styles with classical forms, like that produced by the highly honored Gunther Schuller, it is at best music of piquant novelty; it uses jazz as an abstract mannerism without the heartfelt tragic expression, sense of freedom or playful wit that characterized the work of genuine jazz creators like Sidney Bechet and Lester Young. Much of the commercial "rock" music of the 1960s has embraced unresolved dissonances, driving rhythms and dynamic patterns for purely visceral or kinesthetic effect, and electronic sounds, as in contemporary "art" music; but this has been at the expense of losing the human and social language qualities that made the best of popular music a living art.

Certainly United States music from the 1920s through the 1960s is not the product of a natural "coming of age" of a nation which has grown in cultural life along with the development of its material resources. Rather it is the product of a special turn in which the country has denied its own democratic and humane traditions. Now at the end of the 1960s, a vast arsenal has been built up of terrible death-dealing weapons capable of massacring entire populations, and United States military bases dot the world. Questions of war and peace are removed from the American people, who are alternately ignored, treated as "enemies" if they insist on their rights to shape the policies of the country, and fed torrents of misinformation. A central theme in this misinformation is "anti-communism," which con-

sists chiefly of ascribing to socialist countries and groups the horrors and inhumanity which the United States has developed to attack the spread of socialism. Resources of applied science and laboratories of great corporations are employed in continuously inventing and producing new instruments of death, including enforced starvation through chemical destruction of crops, to break the spirit of a peasant people in Vietnam.

It could be said that the bleakness, lack of human substance and denial of human kinship in the leading trends in both "art" and "popular" music, fulfill the function of art in revealing the dominant interior life of the country; both the spreading unhappiness and the denial of humanity in social relations. But this is scant consolation, for an art of total alienation, or nonhumanism, is a dead art.

The growth of American music demands that the policies intensifying war and the threat of war be changed to policies that establish peaceful relations and mutual help among nations. Along with this, the manacles of racism must be broken. It must especially be recognized with institutions as well as words that black people have the right to live, grow and fully develop themselves, and to organize and control the channels of their cultural life. The basis for the musical life of the country is recognition that blacks have made the most vital and creative contribution to American music through their use of music in struggles that were really for the democracy and freedom of the American people as a whole. With this beginning, popular music can be cleansed of control by the commercial mind and commercial procedures. And art music can dissolve its isolation from the public through social institutions that bring artist and public freely together and make available to both the entire heritage of great music. Each step in these directions can only help liberate the musical talents of the American people, that "popular music" has shown to be, even in its chains, so alive and vital. Instead of expressing ourselves in the diffuse and broken ways that have caused so much waste of talent, we can realize our great, potential contribution to ourselves and to world music.

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Glossary of Musical Terms

ARIA: Beginning first as a song set within a larger vocal work such as a cantata or opera, the aria developed in the 18th century as an elaborate melodic and dramatic form for solo voice and orchestra, brilliantly written to show off the powers of the voice, and often repeating words of the text many times over for musical effect. An aria was generally preceded by a recitative, a word-by-word setting of text to music, which in its speech-like inflections and rhythms was part speech, part song.

ARIOSO: A vocal form with melodic phrases like those of an aria set in a free, declamatory continuity resembling the recitative.

ATONAL MUSIC, ATONALITY: *See Harmony.*

CADENZA: A florid section inserted just before the closing passages of a movement in an aria or an instrumental work (most often found in the concerto), in which the soloist exhibits his ingenuity and skill in manipulating the themes of the music. Early cadenzas were improvised at the performance.

CANTATA: A setting of text to music, employing solo voices, chorus, or both, with orchestra, ranging in scope from an extended aria to a large body of arias and choruses.

CHACONNE: *See Counterpoint.*

CHAMBER MUSIC: Music for a small group of performers, few enough so that each can play an individual role. Composed at first for home, private or amateur performance, chamber music in the 19th century came to be written for concert performance, and built according to the general principles of sonata form. It generally embodied more reflective and intimate emotional experiences than the big orchestral forms. The basic instrumental combinations of chamber music are the sonata for solo instrument with piano, and the string quartet of two violins, viola and cello. Works of chamber music are generally described by the number of instruments they are written for, a trio being for three instruments, a quartet for four, a quintet for five, etc.

CHANSON: *See Song.*

CHORALE: The German Lutheran hymn, or a melody in hymn style.

CHORD: Two or more notes sounded at the same time. *See Harmony.*

CHROMATIC: *See Mode, Scale and Key.*

CODA: *See Sonata Form.*

CONCERTO: Originally a style of composition based on the concept of alternating heavy and light masses of sound, the concerto became in the late 17th and 18th centuries a major form for the development of purely instrumental music. A concerto was generally in three or more movements contrasting in tempo; and a typical concerto movement was one in which statements of the basic melodies or themes were made by the massed body of the orchestra, alternating with ingenious, touching, and brilliant exercises on these themes, as well as on their harmony and rhythms, by a solo instrument or a group of them. The writing for the solo instruments was in improvisational style and, as the concerto developed, was strongly influenced by the opera aria. The concerto became a major form for the public appearance of the masterful solo performer, and in the late 18th century the concerto for solo piano or violin with orchestra became the leading concerto form. Nineteenth century concertos, in which the style of the orchestral writing approached the symphony, also reached a high point of display of the brilliant dynamic and technical powers of the soloists.

CONSONANCE: *See Harmony.*

COUNTERPOINT, CONTRAPUNTAL: Counterpoint is polyphonic, or "many-voiced" music, organized on harmonic principles. "Baroque" counterpoint of the 17th and 18th centuries was the art of composing for two or more interweaving melodic lines, their relationship guided by a controlling concept of tonality. An important tool in the counterpoint of this period was the "baroque bass," "thorough bass," or "continuo," sometimes also called a "figured bass" when it was not wholly written out. This was a bass melodic line controlling the harmonic movement of the entire composition, against which the upper melodic lines moved in various harmonic and rhythmic pulls and tensions. Major contrapuntal forms of this period were the trio-sonata; dance forms such as the chaconne and passacaglia, constructed on a bass theme or "ground" repeated over and over; the chorale-prelude, in which a counterpoint was woven about a chorale, and above all the fugue.

DANCE, DANCE FORMS: Closely connected with song as a major source of human imagery throughout the entire history of music, most dances are songs in which one can follow the bodily movements of the dance itself in the accents and rhythmic pattern of the music. The 17th and 18th centuries saw a vast amount of composition in simple or elaborate dance form, inspired by the ballets, or dance sections, of opera, which in turn gave birth to the dance suite, or collection of dances written for instruments. Many operatic arias, and choral and vocal movements in the works of Purcell, Bach, Handel, and Gluck, are in dance rhythm. The dances used were developments of both the court and the folk dances of the Middle Ages. Some of the most popular were the gavotte, allemande, sarabande, gigue, minuet, siciliana, passepied. Characteristic of many dance forms is a contrasting middle section called a trio. The march is a development of dance. The 19th century saw a great infusion of popular and national dance images in large-scale compositions, some being the Austrian *ländler,* the Polish mazurka and polonaise, the Czech polka and *furiant,* the Hungarian *czardas,* the Russian *hopak,* the Spanish *jota.*

DISSONANCE: *See Harmony.*

FANTASY, FANTASIA: One of the freer and more experimental forms of the 17th and 18th centuries, proceeding apparently like an improvisation, in which the composers depicted highly introspective moods and in the process investigated some of the more unusual chromatic colors and key changes of major-minor harmony. The fantasy-piece was much used in the 19th century to express deep yearning and unresolved emotional conflicts; it was kin in free-flowing style to the rhapsody.

FUGUE: A compact and intricate contrapuntal form, often written for instruments, but retaining the polyphonic vocal principle of separate melodic lines, called "voices," each keeping its comparative integrity throughout the composition. There may be three or more such "voices" in a fugue. A fugue begins with a theme, or "subject," on which each voice enters in turn, as if "imitating" the preceding one. Each voice follows the subject with a "countersubject." This opening, called the "exposition," introduces the main material and all the voices. Then comes a "development" in which there are many "episodes," introducing new material, playing the voices against each other in various combinations, transforming the themes rhythmically and harmonically, taking the music far from the opening key or tonality. Finally there is a "recapitulation" in which the opening theme is reaffirmed in its original form by all the voices, uniting in an assertion of the opening tonality. The fugue had its origin in popular vocal

music in which one voice "imitated" another by following it with the same melody, some examples being the Italian *ricercare* and *canzone,* the French *chanson,* the English round.

HARMONY: In the most general sense, the organization of the notes used in a musical performance in definite relationships to one another, the most important being the affirmation of one note as the "tonic," or "home note," another as the "dominant" or alternate resting place. The two form a kind of axis about which the other notes used in the performance cluster with various effects of intonation and degrees of tension. With the development of polyphony or many-voiced music, harmony began to refer to the simultaneous merged tones, or chords, produced by the interweaving melodies. With the development of the major-minor system, and the use of key and key change, harmony became the study of such problems as the chords which affirmed the presence of the various keys; the relation of chords to each other; the way in which chords were used in the movement from key to key; the way in which chords added depth, mood and color to melodies. However, harmony also retained its broader meaning of the organization of an entire musical composition about the principles of tonality, and the movement away from and back to the "home" key. Basic to tonal music is the concept of dissonance, or a set of notes aurally clashing and demanding further movement and consonance, which the ear accepts as being at rest.

Twentieth century atonal music, such as Schoenberg's, is a development of major-minor music in which the key shifts so constantly, and there is so constant a use of chromatic notes, that key itself is abandoned. The relations between consonance and dissonance disappear, and there are only various degrees of dissonance or "tension." Since there are no binding relationships between notes, chords and keys, and since musical form is based on such relationships, all form, even that of a simple song, must disappear, and in spite of the intricate combinations of tone patterns worked out by the composer on paper, the ear hears only an unorganized continuity of sounds. Twentieth century polytonal music, such as Stravinsky's, employs melodic lines and chords in two or more different keys at the same time, and also uses the various instrument timbres as controlling factors in the chords. Here, too, the effect of key and key change is abandoned. The melodic phrases begin to resemble those of primitive music, with a mechanization not found in the primitive, and the incessant repetition of rhythmic figures begins to play an overwhelming part in musical form.

HOMOPHONY, HOMOPHONIC: *See Polyphony.*

LIBRETTO: *See Opera.*

MADRIGAL: A popular form of musical composition in 16th century Italy and England, consisting of a lyric poem set for a small group of voices, generally no more than five, each of which sang the same words but preserved its individuality of accent and phrasing.

MAJOR AND MINOR: *See Mode, Scale and Key.*

MASS: The major musical form of Catholic Church ritual, and a development of primitive ritual drama, depicting through a series of traditional Latin prayers, the *Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei,* the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. A special form of the mass is the Requiem Mass, a service for the dead.

MELODY: A series of notes following each other in time which, through differences in pitch, accent, time duration, are bound together into a unit, which has the ability to convey emotion and human imagery.

MODE, SCALE AND KEY: Modal music is found in all periods when music was wholly or largely improvised. Modes in the most general sense were traditional melodies or melodic phrases, used as a basis for improvisation. They acquired great intricacy and standardization when connected with magic and religious rituals, each mode having a special magic significance. Scales are more generalized bases for creating and analyzing music than modes, and rose along with the greater place of the instrument in music. A scale may be called the notes used by a work of music arranged in orderly succession. Modern European music (since 1600) is based on what are known as the diatonic scales, called this because of their special arrangement of whole and half notes. The important difference between music based on mode and the modern music based on scale is in the ability of the latter to "modulate," or change key. A performance in modal style, with few exceptions, revolves about the same tonal center throughout. However, in the modern music based on scale and on the major-minor system, a scale may be built on any given note. The name of this note becomes the key of the music. Thus a scale built on C is in the key of C, which is the "tonic" note or tonal center. The scale may be major (proceeding through two whole steps and then a half step) or minor (proceeding through a whole step and then a half step). During the course of a compostion, it is possible to shift all the melodies, chords and musical material, from major to minor and from a scale based on one key to a scale based on another. This shift of key, called modulation, makes possible a far greater organization of musical tones into one usable body, and also a far greater psychological and emotional content than was possible in the old modal music. The chromatic scale consists of all the half steps arranged in order. Since all the

steps, or intervals, are the same, the chromatic scale has no tonal center, no axis, and is not really a scale. Chromatic effects – adding notes not found in the scales being used, but not calling for an actual change of key – are used to add color, piquancy and special moods to major-minor music. Music is also called chromatic when it shifts key so constantly that key itself is evanescent.

MOTET: A contrapuntal form used by both Catholic and Protestant Church composers, setting for voices a prayer other than the traditional liturgy of the mass. Also a popular form in the Middle Ages in which a traditional liturgical melody was combined contrapuntally with secular, folk and even ribald songs.

MOVEMENT: A composition, self-contained in form, which is a section of a larger composition, such as a symphony, concerto or suite.

OPERA: Drama set to music. The words of the drama and the arias are called the "book," or "libretto." A tradition of drama with music has existed from the earliest times, including the Greek dramas and the folk plays of the Middle Ages. Composed opera, known as such, began about 1600 in Italy. It is one of the errors of music theorists to deny importance and meaning to the librettos of opera. The best composers of opera have always been deeply concerned with the librettos they set, and sought the most advanced dramatic style of their time. The main styles of opera are the Italian *opera seria* of the 17th and 18th centuries, based on a poetic mythological text, with many elaborate arias; French opera of the 17th and early 18th centuries, also based on revivals of poetic classic drama and using stately declamation and many ballet, or dance, sections; the various forms of comic opera, of the same centuries, such as the Italian *opera buffa,* the German *singspiel,* and English ballad opera, which contained spoken dialogue, much folk and popular song, a great deal of ad-libbing, buffoonery and political satire. In 19th century France "grand" opera, a kind of flamboyant historical and costume pageantry, was developed. The real division that developed, however, was between the subjectivism of the Wagner operas, on the one hand, with their symbols taken from ancient myths and magic, and a symphonic or tone poem approach to musical form, in which the vocal line tended to dwindle in importance; and, on the other hand, the nationally conscious and historically realist opera of such men as Verdi, Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky, in which voice and song remained dominant.

ORATORIO: A large-scale form for solo singers, chorus and orchestra, drawing heavily on operatic methods and applying them to a Biblical or religious subject or story, without, however, using costume, scenery and stage action.

OVERTURE: An instrumental composition acting as an introductory movement or "curtain raiser" to a musical work, most often an opera or an oratorio. The 18th century French and Italian overtures were elaborate musical forms that had a powerful influence on the rise of the orchestral symphony. The 19th century overture tended to be a kind of descriptive or dramatic fantasy, often using melodies from the body of the opera, and summarizing its dramatic conflict. It had a powerful influence on the tone poem and the symphonic poem.

PASSACAGLIA: *See Dance Forms.*

PITCH: The quality that a musical note has of sounding relatively "higher" or "lower," depending on the rate of vibration of its sound wave. A faster rate of vibration will sound higher.

POLYPHONY: "Many-voiced" music or music of two or more interweaving melodic lines. Polyphonic music is contrasted to homophonic music, which is music of a single melodic line, either alone or supported by chords. In actual practice, all homophonic music has some polyphonic character, and all polyphonic music has some "vertical" or chord character, which would make it partly homophonic.

POLYTONALITY, POLYTONAL MUSIC: *See Harmony.*

PROGRAM MUSIC: Music guided in its form by a story, scene painting, dramatic action or philosophical idea, this material being known as its "program." While program music has existed as long as music itself, its esthetic qualities were widely questioned during the 19th century, on the ground that it was not "pure" music and depended on non-musical supports. The controversy was touched off by Liszt's symphonic poems and piano "tone poems." The truth is that no music is really "pure," and all musical form must depend for its meaning on its relation to real life and human actions. Program music has been as artistically successful as any other form (examples being Beethoven's dramatic overtures, Berlioz' "Harold in Italy," Schumann's "Carnival," Smetana's "My Homeland" cycle and quartet "From My Life," Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet") The weakness that appears in bad program music is often the vagueness of the program, more unreal and incomprehensible than the music, and the tendency to disguise the emptiness with musical naturalism, or the depiction of the actual sounds of nature such as wind, waves, battle noises, bleating sheep, etc. Such naturalism, for all its occasional usefulness, is a low level of depiction of life in music.

RHYTHM: The reflection in music of body movement, ranging from the heartbeat and the movements of labor to the intracacies and cross-

movements of dance. A musical rhythm has a fundamental beat regularly repeated, like a pulse beat, sometimes called the "meter," or measure. Within this, there are clusters of notes of various accents and time duration, which create secondary impulses and beats, uniting with and at the same time opposed to the fundamental beat and thus giving the music a feeling of life and forward movement.

RONDO: A dance form derived from the ancient ring or round dance, and, in the Middle Ages, also a dance poem. Its main characteristic is the regular reappearance of its opening theme, or melody, as a kind of refrain, while between these reappearances comes contrasting and varied material. The rondo became a favorite last-movement form for symphony, sonata and concerto because its repetition of the opening melody and tonality, along with its dance-like character, gave the music a strong sense of affirmation of life.

SCALE: *See Mode, Scale and Key.*

SCHERZO: Meaning literally a musical "joke," the scherzo became a favorite third-movement form to Beethoven and subsequent composers, replacing the more sedate 18th century minuet with trio. The scherzo, which also had a contrasting middle section or trio, had a lusty folk-dance quality, and could be as well a music of witty and sardonic rhythmic fantasy.

SONATA, SONATA FORM: Sonata originally meant music to be sounded on instruments, in contrast to cantata, or music to be sung. Sonata early became a catch-all term for instrumental music, much of which was a direct transfer of vocal style to instruments. By the late 17th and early 18th centuries the "trio sonata" became established, along with the concerto, as a major form for the development of instrumental music. "Trio" in this connection referred not to the number of instruments, but to the number of "parts" or "voices." A trio sonata was written in terms of a middle melodic voice, a bass line or "thorough bass," and an upper-voice contrapuntal decoration, or "obbligato." Such sonatas had a number of movements, most often four, and the particular style of each movement could be taken from fugue, aria, choral-prelude, a concerto movement or the many dance forms of the time.

The kind of music now known as sonata form (the music itself appeared long before the description) flowered in the latter half of the 18th century. It is homophonic, the controlling element being the melody in the upper voice, supported by harmonies, although it may have many passages in counterpoint. It is built with melodies or themes of contrasting key, rhythm and emotional character, intro-

duced at or near the beginning. It proceeds through differing and contrasting rhythmic patterns. Thus it is a qualitative leap over the instrumental forms dominated by vocal style or by the unbroken rhythms of dance forms. It may be described as instrumental music which embodies a dramatic life in its very form and texture. Like the fugue, its structure is based on harmonic movement away from and back to an opening tonality. It has an exposition section, in which its main tonality is affirmed and material introduced; a development section, in which there is a free rhythmic and harmonic transformation of the material; a recapitulation section, or return of the original material and tonality; a coda, or second development, rounding out the movement, sometimes very short and sometimes becoming a major section of the movement. While works in sonata form have more than one movement, generally three or four, it is the first movement which is tightest and most dramatic, and so sonata form is sometimes called first-movement form. All the movements, however, are based in one way or another on the harmonic and rhythmic development of themes. While "sonata form" can refer to the symphony or music of any instrumental combination, the term "sonata" now refers to a work in this form written for a single instrument, such as a piano, or a combination of two, such as violin and piano.

SONG: Song in primitive life took its name, content and form from the rituals and dances to which it was set. It was frequently "antiphonal"—that is, built on the interplay of a leader's voice against a response by the people. Song in the Middle Ages took its form from the intricacies of lyric poetry and from dance. The growing secularization of composed music produced many forms of song for groups of singers, examples being the French *chanson,* Italian *canzone* and *villanella,* and finally the rich Italian and English madrigal. The late 16th and the 17th centuries produced the composed solo song with instrumental accompaniment, and at this time song took on a marked harmonic construction, with the beginning and end strongly affirming the tonality and the middle contrasting in key. Throughout its history, composed song delved into folk song for its material. Song became, in addition to a form in itself, a unit of human imagery which could enter into and lend its character to larger musical works, such as opera, cantata, sonata, symphony, concerto, etc. Song exhibits perfectly the basic character of music, so incomprehensible to many theorists. It has a form of its own and is at the same time a reflection of life. Thus the innumerable successful songs, folk and "art," follow the inflections of speech, bring out the character and emphasis of words, and at the same time intensify the emotions of the entire poem in the repetitions, variations and rounded-out pattern of the melody.

SYMPHONY: Rising out of the "sinfonia," which was an instrumental overture to a vocal work, the symphony developed in the late 18th century and flowered in the early 19th century as a work in sonata form for full orchestra, the orchestra being treated as a great collective instrument capable of many colors and effects of loudness and softness. The symphony is generally in four movements. The first is most dramatic and representative of conflict. The second is generally slow and reflective, with the character of an extended and developed song. The third is generally a dance with trio, or a scherzo. It is the last movement which has assumed the greatest variety of forms. This arises from the fact that the symphony itself, through the circumstances under which it developed, became essentially a means for the public expression of profound social and philosophical views. Thus the last movement had to embody a summation and resolution. This problem also arose in the solo sonata, chamber music and the concerto. Some of the forms taken by closing movements are a rondo (often with a development section resembling sonata form), a choral cantata (as in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*), a fugue, a passacaglia, a theme and variations. Sometimes, carrying out more obviously this character of a summation, there is a quotation of material from the earlier movements.

SYMPHONIC POEM, TONE POEM: *See Program Music.*

TEMPO: Tempo refers to the rate of movement of a musical work, generally signified by traditional Italian words such as (proceeding from the slowest to the fastest) largo, adagio, andante, allegro, presto.

TONALITY: *See Harmony; also Mode, Scale and Key.*

THEME: A theme is a musical phrase used as a unit in a larger musical construction. A theme may be a melody; a fully rounded song or dance with a beginning, middle and end; or a short phrase of a few notes. In the last case, its virtue is its ability to be used for a continuous series of extended and complicated harmonic manipulations.

TIMBRE: The "tone color" of a human voice or a musical instrument. This "color" comes from the presence in a musical tone not only of a main wave vibration setting its pitch, but also of accompanying lesser and partial vibrations, which are called "overtones." Each instrumental timbre has its own characteristic pattern of overtones.

TONALITY: *See Harmony; also Mode, Scale and Key.*

(continued from front flap)

effect of musical knowledge. He exposes developments in music hailed as "revolutionary" but which are in effect regressive steps in the development of the artistic consciousness and the inability of the composer to reflect what is central to all men: freedom or the desire for freedom.

In dealing with creative talent under socialism in the Soviet Union, the author discusses how the much discussed criticisms often served to direct this talent into fruitful channels which communicate the need for human images in music, providing impetus for further progress.

The Blues and jazz of the Afro-American is understood as truly indicative of a hope for freedom within an oppressive society from which evolved Tin Pan Alley and the exploitation of indigenous creativity. Important to the author's discussion of music in the United States is his analysis of the reasons why this country has not engendered a greater growth in classical music.

The student or lover of music will find this view of the meaning of music full of valuable insights, his pleasures greatly enhanced.

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