

TONIC

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EDITORIAL

After ten volumes (in their official numbering), the first of which had been edited as early as in 1980, by Martin Anderson, who was to remain editor for some seven years, it is for me as a non-Englishman a special honour having been appointed editor of *Tonic*. I am sure that the readers may even better than myself appreciate the editorship of my predecessor, Simon Phillippo, who had to resign his position in consequence of finishing his academic studies at Cambridge. I hope to retain the standards of quality and diversity you are used to find in this journal.

I am very happy to be able to start editing *Tonic* with a text from which I quoted several times in my Ph.D. thesis as early as in 1995, on the British symphony 1914-1945 (which meant that I had to exclude the works of Robert Simpson, which are now dealt with in the ambitious project by Paul W. J. Conway). Lionel Pike gave me in 1993 the opportunity to consult the typescript, which was then intended to be included in *Simpson on Music*, at the Robert Simpson Archive, and it was he who now supplied me with it for inclusion in *Tonic*. It is a transcript of part of a discussion between Deryck Cooke, Denis Matthews, Bernard Keffe and Robert Simpson. It was recorded by the BBC in 1964, without a chairman, and was an experiment with a view to starting a broadcast series called 'Musicians Talking'. The idea was to get a group of distinguished musicians to sit around a microphone and simply talk 'shop' quite freely. In this case the group comprised a musicologist in the person of Deryck Cooke; a conductor, Bernard Keffe (the only one of the four being still alive); a pianist and scholar, Denis Matthews; and a composer, Robert Simpson – that is, four different kinds of musician, whose conversation roamed over a wide range of subjects, which I have tried to imply in the title (the original typescript was simply titled *The Symphony*. Remember that this is an entirely spontaneous conversation, and that the coherence of a carefully edited script is not to be expected. The broadcast was transcribed apparently around 1983 and slightly edited by Martin Anderson and Robert Simpson; I have edited the script somewhat further. Some aspects touched were obviously based on some of the chapters written for the two volumes on *The Symphony* which Bob Simpson edited for Pelican (publication of vol. 1 1966, vol. 2 1967); Bob himself took many aspects of the conversation into the introduction of these two volumes, e. g. the thoughts on terseness and the nature of symphonic writing and the symphony itself. I have, where appropriate, made extensive reference to underline Bob's argumentation.

The second half of the broadcast talk was in part based upon ideas which Bob Simpson had already shaped fully in the 1950's – we now know that the 'avant-garde' has developed even further, sometimes (to say the very least) still

without regard to the listener. Dick Edwards supplied me Bob's introduction to a small book entitled *Guide to Modern Music on Records*, edited by Bob himself and Oliver Prenn and published by Anthony Blond Ltd. in 1958 and hitherto forgotten; even the Robert Simpson Archive did not have a copy of this introduction which, though short in length, stresses clearly some main aspects of Bob's view on 20th century music - the problems caused by the music itself to the 'ordinary listener', the inappropriate neglect of some (and, implicitly, the inappropriate promotion of other) works and composers.

Jürgen Schaarwächter

ROBERT SIMPSON
20TH CENTURY MUSIC ON RECORD (1958)

An age and a society combining vast increases of population with a cult of individual libertarianism is bound to have severe attacks of the shivers. There are so many opinions, such a seeming chaos of activity, that the way is wide open for the impostor, the charlatan, the crackpot theorist, the *avant-gardiste*.^{*} The reasonable intelligent man is driven into a suspicious chariness of much he is told – particularly by artists, in their work and what they say about it. Indeed, the arts, in a way never before, offer the unscrupulous or the dotty the chance to cash in – for there are so many people of all sorts that the number of mugs who are scared to say “this is rubbish” is sufficient to support what might almost be called a branch of light industry. Small wonder when the more solidly balanced fellow is inclined to keep clear of modern composers, painters and poets. Modern architecture he *has* to use, whether he likes it or not; and he can get used to it in time by the simple process of ceasing to be astonished. It is less easy to get used to an aggressive piece of modern music, for it makes a noise – and that is hard to put up with; in your house and garden you can probably make smells or carry on all sorts of questionable activities and get away with them for much longer than with noise, the one thing your neighbours will object to with the force of a spasm. You can paint your house in the loudest and most dissonant colours you like and it will certainly arouse comment. Make a noise of equal aggressiveness, however, and you will be visited by the police. Many intelligent people are merely amused by the wilder extravagances of modern painters and writers; much new music positively angers these same people.

To begin such a book as this with such a paragraph would seem to be unwise, to say the least; after all, our contributors are anxious to convince their readers that present-day music offers them much satisfaction and, into the bargain, pleasure. Yet it is necessary to clear the decks by pointing out that, despite the apparent confusion that faces the average listener who finds it difficult to see where or when he is being imposed upon, the cranks and opportunists are a minority among artists, and that people sometimes find composers of ‘modern music’ more immediately offensive than other artists simply because they employ sound that, seemingly, is not content with merely baffling but must also attack the ear. Now it is true that some composers have forgotten this simple attribute of sound, that it is in itself an active discharge of energy, that it must therefore be handled with care

^{*} Cf. p. 16.

if it is not to bludgeon the listener, first into annoyance and then into apathy. They have become so obsessed with abstractions that they imagine that aural dissonances can be insisted upon as can colours or shapes which are there to be observed so long as the viewer's eye can take them in. But once a symphony begins, the listener must either stay its course or leave it – he cannot have a brief rest and return to it to find it exactly as it was before. Ultimately, of course, the problem is the same for both visual and aural arts – for all arts, for that matter (only the difficulties of approach vary) – the balance and harmony of the whole can be achieved only by perceptive strengthenings and relaxations of the inner tensions of the work. Only the richest *feeling for the medium* in the artist, visual, aural, verbal, or culinary, will enable him to imagine such a work in depth; the 'contemporary' composer is easily tempted to treat real sound as an abstraction, something which he thinks he imagines, but fails to *hear* mentally. No wonder the results are sometimes unbearable; it is as if a cook with no sense of taste were to say, "I believe pineapple is sweet. We must have something to contrast with it – better mix it with garlic." But the cook who worked along those lines would soon get the sack, whereas the present-day composer may rely, if he wishes, on those who are afraid to commit themselves to dismissing his work. Ultimately, however, he must stand the test of time; if his method is no better than the miserable cook's, he will get the sack no less conclusively, even though it may be posthumously.

The gramophone, especially since the advent of long-playing records, has so far been one of the greatest and most effective means of separating the wheat from the chaff, and it is the purpose of this book to encourage the inquiring music lover to make use of this incomparable way of discovering the truth for himself. Music that is truly imagined and felt will reward repetition, and the gramophone affords immense opportunities for this. In a sense, the owner of a recording of some fascinating but still only partly understood work is close to the position of the viewer of a painting. He can return to it as and when his mind is likely to be receptive to it, and he can even concentrate on those bits that seem especially problematical, until he is able to appreciate the unity and validity of the whole. In spite of what I have said earlier, there are very many works of our own time that will give rich returns; the majority of composers are serious, sincere, and (at the elementary level) professionally competent; they are the fruitful soil from which the real twentieth-century geniuses draw sustenance. The world we live in (and that must include the intelligent, adventurous lover of music) provides the air these geniuses breathe; consequently, what they have to say is vital to everyone. I am not going to list them here; part of the excitement of journeying into modern music is the personal thrill of discovering something special, and in any case the contributors to this book have their own votes in the matter. I shall content myself with mentioning at the end of this preamble one particular genius, not because he is more important than anyone else, but because he has hitherto been outrageously neglected.

This is perhaps the moment at which to make a few specific points about this book. First, the classification of present-day music is a difficult problem; any method is bound to be unsatisfactory. We have chosen to fit as many composers as possible into regional or national groups, with separate chapters to cover those who refuse to be so pigeon-holed. Serial music, for instance, is essentially non-national, and must have separate treatment. Also Hindemith and Stravinsky, though certain racial characteristics may be discernible in their music, have had so international an influence that we thought it best to treat them as the sources of two very different streams of thought, in a chapter that would, by methods sometimes excusably Procrustean, bring in more composers difficult to include elsewhere. Other composers can be felt to express unmistakable 'national' traits; these are also dealt with separately. Inevitably there is overlapping, and the contributors' views do not always coincide; the editors, while they do not necessarily agree with all these views, have welcomed their diversity. The index should be a means of tracing all references to a particular composer throughout the book. Do not expect the text to contain detailed analyses of the works; the object here is to arouse interest enough to cause the reader to buy the record – he will usually find sufficient in the way of analysis or guide-lines in the record's sleeve-note itself. The lists of recommended records are selected by Oliver Prenn and reflect his own investigations; they do not pretend to be complete (this is not a record catalogue), but may be taken as representative of the most reliable versions of the music available at the time of going to press. It is hoped to publish this book annually, to keep the record lists up to date, and to invite a different set of articles each year from various distinguished composers and writers. Finally, it is also our object to urge the gramophone companies, to whom we already owe so much, to continue and widen their work in this field. There are still many fine contemporary works that are not recorded, many of which are mentioned in the text of this book.

This brings me to the mention of a composer whose work has so far been neglected, not only by the gramophone companies, but by the whole musical world. Havergal Brian is now in his eighty-second year; his case is an extraordinary one, almost without parallel. He reached his late seventies before he was allowed to hear *any* of his symphonies (he has now composed twelve*) and has thus far heard only three. For many years it has been customary, if his name has been mentioned at all, to dismiss him as one of those composers who became bogged down in heavily derivative, extravagant post-romanticism in the early part of the century (it will be noticed that Hugh Ottaway, through lack of opportunity to know Brian's late works, has not unnaturally fallen to this conclusion). Recent performances of his Eighth and Ninth Symphonies in the Third Programme, however, have revealed an altogether different composer. Through decade after

* Eventually Brian composed, until his death at the age of 96 years, thirty-three symphonies, of which thirty-two have survived.

decade of complete neglect, this iron-willed musician has composed steadily one massive work after another, apparently without hope of ever hearing any of them and without making more than token attempts to interest concert-giving organizations in them. He has achieved pure detachment from personal ambition, so far as his reputation is concerned, but his music has developed with astonishing power and consistency in accordance with a deeper ambition to find and conquer all that lies in the depths of his mind. There is, perhaps, something almost awesome in the thought of a man composing steadfastly in obscurity, certain of his own goal and heedless of outward success, and one's sympathies might easily lead one to an over-valuation of his music. But such music as Brian's does not encourage shallow sympathy; its strangeness and granite-like strength reflect with complete faithfulness and profound imagination a mind of immense character that needs no pity. The Ninth Symphony is one of the greatest and most concentrated of English works; its brooding first movement grapples with the deep problems discovered by a spirit that has been driven inwards upon itself, compelled to penetrate into mine beneath dark, hidden mine in its own being, and the unshakable grandeur at the end of the symphony is a thing far more powerful than ordinary triumph – it is like some titanic rock that has resisted the slow erosion of millennia. The music of this and his other late symphonies is never predictable; nor is it in any sense 'old-fashioned'. Its course is always entirely unforeseeable and entirely inevitable. It does not cultivate harmonic harshness as a norm, yet it contains many strange and wonderful sounds, such as could have been created in no time but the present. Brian's powers of organic construction, too, are remarkable in a period when many composers, having witnessed the apparent destruction of a whole way of musical thought, can do no better than play like naïve children with jig-saw puzzles made from what they imagine to be the fragments of the wreck. The strength of Brian lies in the foundations of his art; nothing is calculated for 'effect' (he has nothing to do with what Sir Hugh Casson has so aptly called 'look-no-hands architecture') yet the real effect is utterly unlike that of any other music. This great old man is still exploring and finding *new* things; few composers may be said to have done this after the age of seventy. We younger composers who have benefited so greatly from the help of the British Council, the B.B.C., and other bodies, should be ashamed to accept it until this octogenarian, the master of us all, has received his due.

MUSICIANS TALKING. SYMPHONIC THINKING,
AVANT-GARDE AND ROMANTICISM (1964)

[. . .]

RS Well now, Deryck, you were saying that there doesn't seem to be any accepted definition of what is and what isn't symphonic. Have you got one?

DC No, I haven't I'm afraid. I think this is the trouble. One is supposed to be a critic to criticize works as to whether they are truly symphonic, and one finds the most extraordinary complicated opinions between critics and musicians. Schubert, for example, has very often been rebuked for his formal purposes. Many people have said that the Ninth Symphony has too much repetition in it. One learned professor was annoyed by the method in one of the quartets of having a long passage and repeating it a tone higher, and then another tone higher. This implies that it's not symphonic. Now, apart from student works written by people who cannot yet compose properly, or who never will, it is very difficult to put your finger on a great work and say, 'this is wrong' - you may *feel* it is wrong; indeed, you may think it awful. But for other people who like the composer, it is probably one of the best bits in the piece.

RS Yes, but, surely, what's good and what's bad is a different question from what's symphonic and what is not. *Petrushka* is a good piece but not a symphonic one. How does this differ from a piece which is genuinely symphonic, or which everyone agrees is genuinely symphonic - say, the first movement of a Brahms symphony?

DC What is symphonic is, I think, an unanswerable question, though one can sense what is symphonic. I would have thought it was a certain way of developing material according to a rhythmic, harmonic and tonal scheme which moves forward in some way towards certain goals, reaches them, diverges from them, and so on. It is very difficult to define a technical criterion, so that you can say that this is a wonderful piece of symphonic writing, or this is poor.

RS All the same, musicians do, in fact, talk about a piece of music as being genuinely symphonic, don't they?

DC Yes, they do.

RS And nobody ever tries to say what they mean by this. They obviously do mean something - Denis?

DM I think I know what people mean – that it’s like the *Eroica* Symphony. I think Beethoven is the standard by which we tend to judge.* For example, if you ask me to cross my heart and say whether Schubert was as great a symphonist as Beethoven, I would say not. It doesn’t mean that I don’t love the great C major Symphony of Schubert as much, or that I don’t think it was a success, but I think there’s a different sort of balance between the song element and the spiritual element. I don’t mind Schubert’s recapitulations being repetitive, because I want to hear the song through again. It’s a naïve way of putting it, but I don’t think he was as great a symphonist as Beethoven, in whose music there’s a kind of inevitable logic about almost every bar – the way it is related to another bar.

BK I think it’s continuity of thought. A composer can write, shall we say, musical prose, which doesn’t depend on the repetition of a refrain, or something of the sort. Are the symphonies which are in music prose, that is, continuous thought, not dependent upon architectural features such as eight-bar phrases or regular phrases – regularity in that sense?†

RS Yes, Bernard, but I have heard people talk in terms of continuity of thought, and also, I’ve heard the symphony defined as an essay in the ‘large-scale integration of contrasts’.‡ All these descriptions seem to me to be a little superficial, simply because you can apply them to a piece like *Petrushka*, which I referred to before. This has contrasts in it, and they are integrated into a large-scale pattern; it has continuity of thought, because one thing leads perfectly naturally to another. We accept it as a piece of music, but at the same time, we find that that it isn’t symphonic. No one on earth would suggest that *Petrushka* was a genuinely symphonic piece of music in the sense that a piece of Beethoven – whether it’s a quartet, a sonata or a symphony – in fact is. I’m inclined to think that there may be something in this idea, that a symphonic piece is a piece in which *all* the elements, all the *prime* elements of music – rhythm, melody, harmony, tonality – are active, that is to say that not one of them is static. Now, in *Petrushka* it is the rhythmic element which makes the music static – both tonally and, in the end, rhythmically, because although it is very vigorous rhythmically, the rhythms are so engineered that they tend to cancel each other out, so that in the end the whole piece stands still, stays in one place; whereas in a Beethoven symphony the rhythms, the harmonies, the melody, the counterpoint, and the tonality (which is perhaps the most important basic ingredient) are all *active*, and they’re active from beginning to end of the piece. This is what makes a piece genuinely symphonic.*

* Cognition theory calls this kind of ‘tendency to judge’ referring to an archetype.

† This conception of ‘musical prose’ is not identical to that presented by Carl Dahlhaus and his pupil Hermann Danuser in several writings dealing with ‘musikalische Prosa’ from 1964 onwards.

‡ Cf. the Pelican Introduction, vol. 2, p. 9; this definition comes from Hans Keller, from his chapter on Mozart, where the aim is somewhat different from the one stressed here by Simpson (cf. vol. 1, p. 52).

* In the Pelican Introduction, vol. 2, pp. 9-10 Simpson refers similarly to *Le sacre du printemps*, though

DC I agree with you about this question of activity. It does seem to me what one means by symphonic is that, usually, what's going on is the development, spinning out some theme which moves forward actively because the harmonies change, the rhythmic element doesn't keep repeating a few chords and staying in the same place harmonically. The rhythm may continue to be the same rhythm, but it has an active quality because the harmony changes and you move into a new key. This is surely a symphonic feature, whereas for example, a lot of ballet music (such as *Petrushka*) and some of Bartók is static dancing: you're dancing around two or three chords which don't change key. There's a terribly exciting rhythm, while the harmony remains still. Surely, Denis, you as a Wagnerian, wouldn't suggest that Wagner wasn't symphonic, but his operas aren't in sonata form; they're in a sort of ritornello form – A–B–A on a very large scale. The music is, very often anyway, symphonic.

DM Yes, curiously enough, I *would* say Wagner is symphonic but I wouldn't say he'd written a symphony.

DC I'm saying that there is such a thing as symphonic thought, outside the confines of the symphony proper.

DM Yes, I think Wagner did use the kind of techniques that Beethoven used in the development of idea within a sonata-form movement. I know it's very difficult to generalize, even dangerous. Sonata is not a kind of blueprint. In sonata form the dramatic power of development, the new attitude towards tonality, modulation, dramatic contrast not only of key but of material, the kind of unifying of the material at the same time is behind all the great symphonies, certainly up to the beginning of this century, wouldn't you think?

BK Well, you're talking chiefly about first movements.

DM Not entirely about first movements. The shadow of sonata form hangs over almost all movements except the very early kind of minuet-and-trio movement. I

he also refers to the Symphony in Three Movements, which is, according to him, neither a symphony: 'its episodic nature is disarmingly positive' (ibid., p. 12); nor the *Symphonies pour instruments à vent* (ibid., p. 13). Another composer Simpson mentions in this connection is Hindemith (pp. 12-3): 'The basis of his art is nearer to that of Bach than to Beethoven's; his attitude to tonality is fundamentally like Bach's or Handel's, and he rarely treats it dramatically or dynamically. His splendid Symphony in E_b has the same kind of calm solidity as an early suite; the tonalities move round like the spokes of a wheel, rotating about a fixed centre that is never seriously in doubt. The so-called symphony based on the opera *Mathis der Maler* is another such work, not radically different from the magnificent ballet suite *Nobilissima Visione*. Although Hindemith can be sweeping and powerful, his action is more like that of a weight-lifter than that of a sprinter. He raises a massive object into the air, then puts it down again exactly as it was. This is impressive, but the music does not "travel" like symphonic invention. His use of the term "symphony" revives its ancient sense [. . .], and these works have much in common with the *Türmmusik* of the seventeenth century; they are dramatic as wholes, dramatic as would be a great tower with trumpeters upon its turrets, not dramatic in their internal processes.'

mean the scherzo of the Ninth Symphony – what is this? – a complete sonata-form movement, without the trio, I mean.

BK Yes, but I don't think that sonata form as such is an inevitable part of it, because we now accept for example, in Sibelius, symphonic structures which do not adhere to 'regular' sonata form.

DC Also, you have non-symphonic works which *do* follow sonata form. A good example is the Ravel String Quartet where I would say that the writing was not what one calls symphonic.

RS It's just the pattern of sonata form, without it's nature.

DM I'm not talking about the pattern but about the way Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and others saw the dramatic possibilities in this kind of development. That I always relate in my mind to the growth of sonata form.

BK But therefore do you deny the effectiveness, say, of a symphony by Tchaikovsky, where this sort of treatment is very thinly used?

RS But the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Fourth is a very finely organized sonata movement of the most genuine kind,* and you get, of course, things which are further removed from sonata form, in a sense, in Sibelius where you can't really trace at first any particular clear-cut resemblance to sonata form. My point is that the kind of thought which takes place in Sibelius' symphonies would not have been possible without the entire background of sonata thinking, sonata feeling, which is there just the same, even if, in fact, it grows into quite different forms. It's the way in which it grows, rather than the *shapes* into which it grows, which is important.

DM May I take you up on Sibelius up to the Third Symphony? Certainly as far as the first movements are concerned, I should have thought that the sonata form was pretty clear . . .

DC But then we have the Seventh, for example, which is surely one of Sibelius' finest symphonies and, I find, is extremely difficult to analyse – it can't be *crammed* into sonata form.

RS The kind of thought which takes place in that piece would never have been possible if Sibelius hadn't had the entire history of sonata form behind him.

DM The amazing recapitulation of ideas! For instance, there's a theme, whatever you like to call it, early on, low down in the wind, and it turns in the end into

* Cf. the Pelican Introduction, vol. 1, p. 12, where the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony is compared to *Francesca da Rimini*.

a great apotheosis high up in the strings and then into a kind of recapitulation of the opening, this woodwind thought – it’s difficult to explain it away from the piano. These seem to me the sort of elements that made Beethoven’s work symphonic in the way I saw it – the thematic development and returning to ideas. ‘Dramatic’ is the key word for me, as far as symphonic music is concerned.

DC But *Petrushka* is terribly dramatic in a different way, isn’t it?

DM Yes, but it’s also very episodic, which is in its nature, and so it should be.

DC This is an interesting point: episodic.

BK Of course, one would say a lot of Tchaikovsky is episodic.

DM Yes, I think Tchaikovsky *was* episodic. You say he was a great symphonist; I wouldn’t say that – I say that he wrote great symphonies, they happen to be called symphonies. They are marvellous music, and they do hang together, in spite of what I would say is an almost elementary adoption of the sonata-form technique.

BK Don’t you think that in some cases, and particularly in Tchaikovsky you can start off with the point that his general manner of melodic invention was against the nature of development in the sense we mean. Again, Schubert was, primarily, an inventor of an extended type of melody which was derived, as you said, from the old song form; but it wasn’t Beethoven’s type of melody: he invented themes capable of being broken up into significant sections. You can’t break up Tchaikovsky’s themes – except in the First Symphony (which one doesn’t hear): the opening theme of that *can* be broken up; in fact, he breaks it up rather well, and the first movement has got one or two passages of very effective traditional development.

DC You’re here assuming some axioms – as that lyrical themes are not suitable for symphonic development. What you must have is themes which must be broken up into small pieces, but if they *are* broken up into small pieces they should not just be repeated in sequence.

RS The trouble surely arises when a composer picks up repetitions of a single phrase: if he is not a very, very great or a very experienced composer, such as Beethoven, then the effect is to make the music stand still, as I think it does, for example, in the last movement of Sibelius’ Second where, especially in the recapitulation, you get that second theme (Ex. 1) piling up for pages. In fact, the music is

Ex. 1



standing still while this is happening.

DC The harmony stays still, never moves.

RS To my mind, what he's doing there is suddenly falling into a time-scale which isn't integrated with the true scale of the rest of the piece.

DM I feel that Beethoven's treatment is fantastic – his grasp of this sort of organic large-scale composition, his ability to create crystallized phrases like the opening of the *Pastoral* Symphony. You may say that this is a melodic idea, but it also breaks up into little fragments which grow, apparently quite naturally and in their



own nature, into other ideas (Ex. 2). You can say the same about the second bar and the third bar. This *kind* of idea was so overwhelming in its effect of logical writing that often composers, who hadn't this kind of gift but whose gift lay in the realm of song, as we see in Schubert or, in a different way, in Tchaikovsky – long, extended, sizable melodies: there is a lot of compromise, not always satisfactory, between the ideas and the treatment that's meted out to them.

DC I think that in his Ninth Symphony, a work I find comparable to Beethoven, Schubert was a master of large-scale form, a master of large-scale deployment of tonality, a wonderful inventor of dynamic rhythm.

DM Absolutely, and in the *Unfinished*, of course; one mustn't use the yardstick of one style to measure another.

DC This is very true. I think that in this country there is what I would call an academic tendency to assume that any symphonic composer must use the kind of methods Beethoven used – that Brahms was a very good symphonist because he got as near to Beethoven as anybody could, and that for various reasons, Bruckner, Mahler, Schubert, writing these rather more roomy symphonies with lyrical themes, are not really symphonic. Well, this begs the whole question of the meaning of the word 'symphonic': it simply means to say that it's not Beethovenianly symphonic, that Beethoven is the ultimate exemplar of symphonic writing. I don't believe this.

RS There is a case to be made for saying that a symphony which is concentrated in the sense that, say, Sibelius' Fourth Symphony is, in which the material is reduced to the very minimum and, therefore, made utterly powerful, is, in a sense, superior to a symphony which attempts to be – what shall we say – compendious. I'm not getting at Mahler particularly (Mahler naturally springs to mind, as does

Shostakovich) but the thought in Sibelius' Fourth Symphony is to my mind of a higher order of concentration and organisation – and to that extent, to me, more genuinely symphonic.

DC This also begs the question, which is begged all the time in this century, whether it's better to be terse than to go on for a long time, irrespective of what you have to say. As though in literature one said the best things are Bacon's Essays because they're so terse and aphoristic: there's meaning in every sentence, whereas everybody who writes a long novel with many many characters and themes is not so good. Why should symphonic writing have to be terse?

RS Everything has to be terse, in one sense. If it doesn't say what it's got to say in the shortest possible time, then it has something superfluous in it; I think this is pretty logical. We must not confuse terseness with shortness: they're not the same thing. Concentration is what we want. To me, the finest movements of Bruckner have it. The finale of the Fifth Symphony for example, is a completely terse piece of music, although it happens to be a vast one. Tovey (or was it Macaulay?) once said: 'What can be more vile than a pyramid thirty feet high?'

DM Yes, Tovey quotes this.*

RS It's entirely a matter of proportion. But I do think that a composer who tends to spread also tends, perhaps, to use too many parentheses and, generally, to run into diffuseness. He faces a much greater danger than the composer who tends to concentrate in a shorter sort of way.

DC Perhaps we can say, then, that there are two possible defects in writing a symphonic movement. One is to indulge in unnecessary repetition of what's gone before, and also, there's a possibility of wandering away from the point and producing extraneous material which isn't necessary to the general logic of the movement.

RS Yes, I think that's true. The gift of being able to digress and to come back in such a way that the continuity is maintained is a very great gift. Dvorák, for instance, has it in his slow movements. The slow movement of the D minor Symphony seems like one great spinning-out with its ramifications of melody - until at the end of it, it feels a complete piece of music, which hasn't even gone on for very long. For me, momentum is, perhaps, the basic thing. Returning to what I said before about all the elements of the music being active, there's no point at which one can say that the composer has abandoned any of these ingredients, except only very momentarily: he's forgotten about them. In an unsymphonic piece of music

* Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Vol. 2, *Symphonies 2*, Oxford University Press, London, 1936, p. 74.

we may feel it's standing still, because the composer's forgotten to think about harmony, or about tonality, because he's been taken up by some short-term rhythmic policy, as it were, or melodic idea. In a symphony he must not forget any ingredient at any time, and if he lets one stand still for a bit (such as tonality), he's always got at the back of his mind what is going to happen to it. I think the whole basis of recapitulation is in the matter of momentum. If by the time the music has got to the point where the recapitulation starts, there is enough momentum built up to carry it, its effect is very exciting and exhilarating, simply because it's carried along by this enormous wave of momentum which has been created by everything that has gone before. Now, if that momentum has never been created, the recapitulation becomes merely superfluous and falls flat.

DC This actually leads to another question. Do we want to discuss that one? Is the symphony dead? I think you were saying something about that, Bernard. Is the symphony now dead, then?

BK I think one of the reasons why the symphony is not dead, but temporarily dead, or likely to be treated as dead, is because the resource of tonality has been denied.

RS Well, tonality is, after all, one of the great natural resources of music.* It's

* In the Pelican *Symphony* introduction, Simpson writes (vol. 1, pp. 9-11): 'As Harold Truscott has admirably shown [in the chapter on Haydn], the origins of the symphony as we know it were in a new attitude to tonality, or key. In the third decade of the eighteenth century, tonality began to be felt in a new way, a change of key being an event that thrust the original key away over the horizon, so that it, for the time being at any rate, disappeared. Tonality is a difficult thing to describe in words, impossible in fact. Yet few people fail to understand it instinctively or, partly, by unconsciously acquired habit. Only a tone-deaf person could remain undisturbed if a simple hymn tune were to end in the wrong key. The right tonic chord is expected, demanded by us all. We also feel the rightness or wrongness of the harmonies in the middle of the tune, as the different notes of the melody are supported by various related chords. Now imagine such a process greatly extended, so that instead of a simple tune we have a much larger composition whose intermediate harmonies are stretched out into periods, each containing all sorts of activity. We can hear that, like the hymn tune, the piece possesses a sense of tonal direction, and when we reach the end, we feel the same completeness and finality. Any characteristic Bach prelude will illustrate this. The extension is such that what was originally felt as a close succession of harmonies is now so much spread out, and so enlivened by figuration or contrapuntal invention, that it seems like a drift through a series of keys. But the whole has still as static a feeling about it as the hymn tune. When we get to the end we have the idea that we have not really moved at all, but simply stood looking in various directions.

Each key has its retinue of related chords that can be used placidly without disturbing the original one. Imagine now a Bach prelude in a particular key, say A major. Get a musician to transpose it for you to E \flat , and you are in a different world altogether (nothing to do with so-called "key-colour"). The internal relations are the same, but the sound of E \flat is dramatic and strange after the sound of A. These two keys are as remote from each other as possible, and there is no need to be a trained musician to receive the full impact of the sensation. E \flat virtually blots out the original sensation of A, once the first wrench is over. Now it would be possible to thrust the original key over the horizon without a wrench, by means of a modulation – a raising of tension by means of various harmonies (some of them dissonances) that eventually relaxes into the new key. A modulation from A to E \flat would be an

something which the human mind responds to instinctively, and I think any composer who deliberately cuts it out does so at his peril. I'm not saying that to cut out tonality is necessarily a thing which is impossible. My views on Schoenberg, for instance, are quite well known. I don't like Schoenberg, but I would be the last person to say that Schoenberg is a bad composer because he is atonal. This to me is not making sense at all. Tonality, though, is something which is a great natural resource. If you do ignore it, you tend to become exclusive rather than inclusive, and that is a very dangerous artistic policy.[‡]

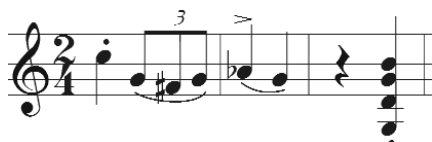
BK I think it also denies, structurally, the possibility of large-scale thought, which seems to rely on the implications of the plateau as it were, and the suggestion of a time-scale which is derived from this sense of a tonality; any music that moves freely in every bar seems to deny this sense of space.

DC I would have thought that the symphony would die if music were to become entirely atonal. In an atonal world the symphony would be dead.

HK Is the *need* for the symphony dead? One can so easily argue about what is produced in an artistic climate, and say that this isn't produced and that isn't produced, but does the climate require it?

extreme one, and one can more easily modulate to much nearer regions. We have seen that a Bach prelude more often than not sticks to related harmonies; its first point of rest is very likely to be on *dominant* harmony, that is to say the chord a fifth higher than the original tonic. The dominant demands a return to the tonic:

Ex. 3



In this case, one tonic chord of C major is enough to satisfy the simple demand left by the unfinished quotation. The G major chord is merely a harmony in the course of a melody. If Bach arrives on it half-way through the course of an elaborate piece, the rest of the piece will find its way back, normally through an exquisite series of steps.'

[‡] In the Pelican Introduction, vol. 2, pp. 10-1, Simpson writes: 'If the term "symphony" is to be the supreme challenge (and there does not seem to be any other accepted generic term of this sort), we must in composing symphonies ignore no basic response of the human mind, so far as elemental musical phenomena are concerned. The human sense of tonality has many times been modified, but cannot be abolished. To attempt to abolish it is to cease to be comprehensive, to be narrowly exclusive. If I appreciate the kind of expression Schoenberg achieved (I happen to dislike it, but that is irrelevant to my appreciation of its accomplishment) my sense of tonality, though it may be deliberately anaesthetized for the time being, is by no means abolished. Since all my musical faculties are not being engaged, I cannot feel that such music is comprehensive. It is certainly concentrated, but that alone will not make it "symphonic"; if you lose a leg, you have to concentrate in order to move about without it, but however hard you concentrate, you cannot escape the conclusion that it is better to have two legs. With these, you can forget problems of locomotion and concentrate on objects. With one leg you can hop about, but will find it difficult to invent new dance steps that have more than the temporary appeal of oddity.'

RS Don't you think we should be careful about talking about 'the climate'? If I may return to one of my old crackjaw dogmaticisms, I might say that there's no such thing as a dead form, there are only dead (or exhausted) composers.*

DC I'm very interested in this question of whether there's a 'need' for a symphony today, whether there's a 'need' for opera and so on. What was the original 'need' for the symphony, then? Why did the Mannheimers, and Mozart and Haydn and so on, 'need' to set the symphony going and write so many examples of it? Why shouldn't the symphony continue to adapt itself? It seems to be one of the most wonderful forms of musical expression. It could be adapted to express the feelings of any age, surely? Rather like the novel – they keep telling us the novel's dead.

RS When one speaks of symphony, one speaks of the highest possible degree of organisation in orchestral music. One uses that word as a challenge. When a composer says, 'I am going to write a symphony', he means he is going to throw everything that he's got into it, his whole intellectual and emotional capacity is going into that work. And so the term 'symphony' has become a very generalized one; it doesn't necessarily have to adhere to any particular form, but it can.[†] In fact, so long as it has this quality of thought, and the degree of concentration and internal movement, it is a symphony. Now I don't see why, at any time in history, whatever the so-called climate happens to be, this shouldn't be possible for a composer who really wants to do it. He can call it a symphony if it really fulfils these requirements, and if anybody hears it and understands what he's doing, then it will fill a need.

DM It's very curious, isn't it, that the symphony grew as a parallel form to the sonata and the quartet; in fact, often early symphonies and quartets are almost identical. Add a couple of wind instruments to a string quartet of Haydn's and you could almost make a Haydn symphony out of it,[‡] although this is putting it very naïvely. Yet the quartet has somehow held ground amongst serious composers more than the symphony. I am thinking of Bartók: he put his most concentrated thought into those half-dozen quartets.

RS I think that's also partly because a quartet is less demandingly named, if you like. A quartet is purely a statistical term: four string instruments. One can write any sort of work for it and call it a string quartet.*

BK But in all these things we're discussing, whether we admire them or not, we are not really talking about what is known as the avant-garde composer.

* Cf. the Pelican Introduction, vol. 1, p. 9.

† Cf. the Pelican Introduction, vol. 1, p. 12.

‡ Cf. the Pelican Introduction, vol. 1, p. 11.

* Cf. the Pelican Introduction, vol. 1, p. 12.

RS A great deal of contemporary music is essentially static, and I don't mean that as a criticism, but a statement of fact. One can regard it as a kind of kaleidoscopic treatment of sound, organized according to the wishes of the individual composer, and usually organized according to some preconceived system. I don't see anything against that, so long as exaggerated claims are not made for it.

BK No, I'm not claiming anything, either for one form or the other; what I'm trying to get from our four minds, if possible, is some further definition of these elements. Whether thematic invention is an inevitable resource of symphonic composition, for example. Is metrical organisation and its implication an essential part; or is what I call 'musical prose', which is note after note without the implication of 'echo refrain' or repetition? Are these elements necessary for recognition?

RS Are they not necessary because if you have anything on any kind of scale, there must come a time when the listener demands some sort of recognisability in something that's going to happen, otherwise he's just following a river that getting wider and wider until it eventually ends up in a swamp?

BK I think this is interesting because it leads us back towards our different definitions of what is symphonic and when, in all the things we have said about the use of sonata form, about its use of themes as opposed to the use of melodic invention. These things lead us to the conclusion that symphonic writing implies a mode of thought which is probably dialectic in that it leads to a conclusion, either formally or materially. Take the last movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* – you can't say that he is here making use of a formal resource in any sense; he is writing a wholly original type of movement in which the conviction of his invention has brought that symphony to a conclusion. The conclusion is not optimistic, but is nevertheless a perceptible, comprehensive conclusion to the type of thought that has gone on, so that, in talking about symphonic writing, we imply the conclusion as the result of some sort of process of thought. This, then, I think follows from Deryck's requirement that we should not take Beethoven as the only ideal. Any type of symphonic thought, of musical process, that leads to a conclusion seems to me to be the definition.

DC This opens up a much wider field, because it's always seemed to me that conclusions are based on the fact of tonality, and also that tonality came into being in a world which was settled. Whether the philosophers at any given time were religious, secular, pessimistic, or optimistic, people had a definite kind of set philosophy of life, and this seems to me the basis of why works end on a major or minor chord, and why, in fact, in our time, when there are no settled beliefs, when everybody believes something different about everything, there is this fragmentation of tonality, so that now, you – or at least the people who feel this way – can no longer come to a conclusion.

BK Exactly! This is it. It seems to me that the technique of composition of the so-called 'avant-garde' composer implies the abandonment of the decision-making element of creation. There's this element of choice, but, finally, what the composer does represents something decisive, faith of some sort, conviction. It seems that the technique of composition which wants disintegration, that wants denial of the elements of stability (such as tonality), deems resource in a compositional technique unnecessary because it's only that way that you can assure chaos. Isn't it, really? Because the accidental nearly always produces some sort of agreement. If you hit the piano you're as likely as not to produce a concord as a discord, and the only way to ensure that you get dissonance is to organize your continual dissonance.

RS But on the other hand, surely, if I might interrupt there, the avant-garde composer could very well say with some justification that his conclusion, and his beginning are the same thing - in fact, the piece of music is an organized entity which is not meant to go anywhere, in the sense that a symphony is meant to go. It is in fact a thing which exists and is internally organized, although it happens to be totally static - rather like the contents of a cauldron which, although all the ingredients of the soup are swimming about in all directions inside, the thing is confined by the shape of the cauldron.

DM The great difficulty is, and I'm speaking now as an ordinary listener (apart from the fact that music is my profession and I spend a lot of my time practising the piano) that I find it so extremely hard to be communicated to by the avant-garde composer. Suppose he does have an extremely organized explanation of his ideas, I think this is the great difficulty nowadays - the fact that this can't easily be communicated to anybody except a few of his initiates.

BK But don't you think that the reason for this is the presentation of his musical material? He is not presenting it in the way I'm talking about. He is not arguing to reach a conclusion; if you like, he presents his conclusion at the beginning.

DC This is not only a feature of avant-garde music. It might be considered a feature of many works by Debussy, for instance. It also might be said to be a feature of pre-classical music. Polyphony, the old polyphony, is not really trying to argue its way to a conclusion. The symphony is a dynamic thing that grew up with the dynamic movement of humanity, the humanistic movement.

RS A public thing . . .

DC A public thing. It's significant that it started just before the 19th century - in the second half of the 18th, which was working towards the whole business of the 19th century with its sudden explosion of the *Eroica*, and then it all went on from there. Not that I wish to make all symphonies heroic! Beethoven's own Fourth and Eighth are different.

RS And Sibelius' Sixth.

DC Sibelius' Sixth – as many other and different types of symphony. But the idea of conflict and dialectic and resolution was somehow linked up with this general movement of humanity in the 19th century; and as this movement has rather disintegrated and lost direction it may explain why tonality has disintegrated for many people. Suppose somebody still does feel strongly, and has definite, fixed, dynamic convictions, about something: he wants to change the world. There's no reason why he shouldn't have to write a symphony, but think it would have to be a tonal symphony: he'd have to use tonality in some way, however advanced. It would be difficult to imagine presenting an argument, a dialectic, and a conclusion towards some point, in purely atonal terms, especially as atonality is now being used together with the fragmentation of notes and rhythms.

BK But don't you think we ought to try and find a counterpart in attitudes to philosophy, in the philosophy that takes words for their meaning and not abstract ideas?

RS I wonder if it's something to do, not so much with philosophy as with science. In the 19th century, science was looking outwards; it was exploring the universe outside as far as it could, confident that it didn't have very much more to discover. And then all of a sudden, along came Einstein with his Theory of Relativity; and at the same time came the investigation of the atom, the sub-microscopic world, as opposed to the macroscopic, and this revolution in the more literal sense may perhaps be reflected in some of the arts – the current fragmentation, the exploration of microscopic possibilities: the discovery of the single note, as they say. I think it may be a combination of the influence of science in producing fragmentation and sub-microscopic examination of music, and the decadence – and I mean the word literally – of late-Romanticism at the turn of the century. Romanticism meant that music, the *pace* of music, was slowing down. The pace of Schubert is slower than Beethoven's. The pace of Wagner is slower than Schubert's, and so it goes on. In the end, the logical conclusion is that music should actually stand still, and all these things become completely fragmented. This is basically a pessimistic and undynamic course of events, and without tonality all you can do is reduce music, further and further, to its constituent elements of just *sounds*. Try and organize them, try and make pretty patterns with them – with the little bits of the smashed body of music that are lying on the floor: it's a form of decadence as well.

DC Whether that's true or not, I agree with both that Romanticism has not yet finished, because I regard the avant-garde as the end of Romanticism. There has been a revolution through the destruction of tonality, but on the other hand, the *intenseness* and the intense *personalness* of music, as well as the fact that the composer writes what he likes, whether or not the public wants it, are a development

out of Romanticism. The Romantics began to write what *they* wanted, not in order to satisfy patrons but, as they still had tonality, and as they were very largely concerned with communicating to people, in order to lead or guide the *mass* of people. They still communicated, but they wrote what they liked, and people had to follow them. Now we have the same thing – the composers still writing what they like. It's an *intensified* form of Romanticism, whether people want to listen to them or not; the reaction hasn't come. From Haydn up to Wagner the growing complexity has gone on and on and on, until we have reached the very end of complexity as I see it, and there still hasn't come a reaction: one has to come. Things just do not go on getting more and more complicated; in fact, I've got a feeling we're nearly at the end now, because I can't see that further complexity can be introduced.

DM Yes, but this wasn't a general process. You see, the break after Wagner . . .

DC But there was only a break because tonality was destroyed.

DM Wasn't that a break?

DC On another plane, I would say so.

DM Yes, but it's curious that it happened at the same time as the atom was split!

DC Yes, I agree but complexity continued. If you take parts of *Tristan* and *Par-sifal* as the most complex music of the time, we've become more and more complex through Strauss and Mahler to Schoenberg, and you can practically trace a line notwithstanding the break from Strauss, *Elektra* into *Erwartung*. Whether or not tonality disappeared, this has been a growing process of complexity.

BK It didn't continue with Strauss, did it? Because his later operas were very, very simple really, weren't they?

DC You can trace a line of growing complexity for late Romantic music into atonality.

DM How would you fit the later works of Stravinsky into this line?

DC The later works? Well, he's just gone with the avant-garde, hasn't he? He's part of the present day.

DM Well, not the *latest* works, but the *later* works I am thinking of . . .

DC You mean the neo-classical works?

DM The neo-classical works.

RS That's an attempt to escape from Romanticism, which is itself a form of Romanticism.

DM What do you mean by Romanticism?

DC Oh heavens! What a subject!

RS I'm not talking about early Romanticism, which is a very idealistic protest against the dead hand of academics, and against a moribund classicism. But later on, as Romanticism developed, it became more and more a question of the individual personality being inflated, the composer thinking of himself as the centre of the world, the whole being a gigantic stage for him. And this eventually produced both an enormous expansion, an exhilaration one finds, say, in the works of Strauss and, at the same time, an immense depression which one often finds in Mahler, and which reaches its final level – nadir, if you like – in the present-day avant-garde: if one wished to put it unkindly, one might describe it as being the rotting remnants of the corpse of Romanticism. The fragments, lying all over the place – stinking.

[They laugh.]

DC I wouldn't put it quite as strongly as that. I challenge you on the question of inflation. There was some inflation, I agree, but I think there was also some very good late Romantic music.

RS Certainly. I'm not denying this, but it is a natural order of events that if a man inflates his own personality too much, depression and impotence result in the long run. If he has insufficient power of looking at the world calmly and taking it in objectively, and trying to reflect what he finds, as well as what he imagines to be his *own* problems – then we're bound to be landed with the situation we've got at the moment.

DM You know, a lot of trouble nowadays is that composers, musicians altogether, hear far too much music. Great creativeness thrives within limitations. Bach didn't know a great deal of music: he walked miles to hear Buxtehude; he copied out scores – he didn't have access to almost the entire world of music (all nationalities, all kinds, all periods), access which we have nowadays; it seems to me that this is a disadvantage. Think of how Beethoven worked at his late quartets and what he achieved. I don't mean just because of his deafness, but because there wasn't the inundation of sound that everybody has all the time nowadays. It stifles creativeness.

BK Surely, it's not so much hearing all the other music but the fact that composers grew out of the conclusions of their predecessors. They worked from the philosophic position, if you like, if one can return to that. They worked from a certain point of acceptance of ideas in music, of ideas in philosophy. But now we have presented to us the ideas of *all* philosophers, of *all* periods, and we have, through

science, knowledge of everything, except the answer to the final 'why'? As a result, there's no conclusion from which the living composer can work, unless exceptionally, he works from a rare religious conviction, or something of the sort. Because, even as Bob was saying, the Romantic composer believed in himself as the centre of the stage, and whether he expressed it like this or not he looked on himself as 'the interpreter of God'. He, given by God the right to speak to man directly, had a voice. This has gone, even this element . . .

DC Well, I would have thought the Romantics tended to think that they were speaking for humanity. They certainly were concerned with their own personality, but I do believe that people like Wagner, Mahler and Tchaikovsky did see themselves as summing up the general feelings that through their own personality . . .

RS Yes, but they rather tended to make the assumption that their feelings were, in fact, the general feelings of humanity. That's what I meant by putting themselves in the centre of a great stage. They, in fact, are humanity. Mahler is humanity, in his own eyes. This is a late Romantic point of view which, whatever magnificent music it may have produced for Mahler, was to produce an atmosphere which had to collapse, and has collapsed.

DC I don't think it's quite collapsed, because composers still regard themselves as high priests. Stravinsky speaks as a high priest of music, doesn't he? He speaks just as dogmatically as Wagner did.

BK Yes, but I think Bob means, not of *music*, but *you* mean of something else, don't you?

RS I mean that which Mahler was expressing, consciously trying to express in his music, and there's no doubt that he was consciously trying to express certain concepts. They were related to his own subjective feelings, and these he interpreted as being the condition of mankind, the predicament of mankind, if you like. But it's also possible to regard this, not as a predicament, but as a situation of choice between action and reaction, as Sibelius did, or Nielsen did. They didn't regard the human situation as a predicament. They regarded it as a serious situation in which you could choose between two possible courses of action. Either you could be a late Romantic and go on where Wagner left off, or you could try something much more positive: you could try to recapture the sense of classical organisation, of growth, of approach, positive feeling, – of the dynamism of the great classical age of symphonic composition.

DC Yes, I think that a very true remark – very much obscured today because, due to the present atonal climate, where all tonal music belongs to the past – Sibelius and Nielsen, and likewise Vaughan Williams and even perhaps Shostakovich are linked in the minds of atonal composers, with the ends of Romanticism, aren't

they? There's a very strong divergence between post-Wagnerians going one way, which did lead (probably through no fault of Wagner) into the present impasse of fragmented atonality, and this other direction, which was reacting against Romanticism, to try and restore classical poise, or the symphonic classical posse. This seems to me one thing that's never realized.

RS It is an objective as opposed to a subjective way of thinking about music. There's a desire to think about emotions, feelings, humanity, in a much more generalized and less personal sort of way. My feeling is that when this sort of music is successfully achieved, as it is by Sibelius and Nielsen, it ends up by being far more intensely personal, because, by looking outwards on the world, and by considering other people, by being in fact *considerate* rather than self-centred, one achieves a much bigger, broader, personality.

[. . .]

In addition to this discussion, Simpson's definition of the symphony may be specified from the Pelican Introduction (vol. 1, pp. 13-4).

[. . .]

We cannot now put off any longer an attempt to list (however haltingly) those elements of music a composer must master if he is to write a true symphony. They must be put in the most general terms possible, for this is not, being an artistic phenomenon, a matter for the straight-jacket.

(1) The fusion of diverse elements into an organic whole. The composer must be able to create a wide range of movement and character, shape and colour, even mood and atmosphere, within severe and powerfully concentrated limits. A great symphony embraces all kinds of musical movement, from one extreme to the other. From this arises:

(2) The continuous control of pace. Even within a single movement the control of pace must be absolute; an abrupt change of motion that might be acceptable for itself in a ballet will require subsequent justification in a symphony. In a great master it will have the thrilling effect of imperiously commanding justification, as it does in the first E major outburst in the first movement of Nielsen's Fourth symphony [. . .]. A movement in a single pervasive tempo must show a continuous mastery of *composed* flexible pace; the listener must have the sense that it is the composer and not the conductor who is controlling this. In first movement of the *Eroica*, though it is an unbroken *Allegro con brio*, there is far more variety of motion than in, say, Liszt's *Les Préludes*, which requires the conductor to make crashing changes of gear from time to time.

(3) The reserves of strength necessary to achieve (1) and (2) are such as to express

size. A true symphony is always big in its power of suggestion, even if its physical dimensions are small. Consider any of Haydn's middle-period symphonies, Beethoven's Eighth, or Sibelius's Seventh. (I regard this work as more genuinely symphonic than does Harold Truscott.) A symphony may possess great dimensions but these alone are not enough; Beethoven's Seventh is gigantic in its implications, which dwarf many a monster of sheer bulk. The mere fact of this special kind of mastery is enough to invest with a distinctive sense of power and stature even light and gay symphonies such as Mendelssohn's *Italian*, and there is more of such quality in Prokofiev's *Classical* Symphony than in his much more aggressive and expansive *Scythian Suite*.

(4) In the first place it was the dynamic treatment of tonality that made all this possible; it was a reaction against the tonal passivity of earlier music. The important thing to remember about it is that the revolt was vital and constructive, positive - it threw away nothing, not even counterpoint. [. . .]

(5) Perhaps the basic observation one can make about true symphony is that it is active in all possible ways. That is to say that in creating it the composer must never allow any prime element of the music (rhythm, melody, harmony, tonality) to seem to die, so that artificial respiration becomes necessary. In a piece of ballet or purely picturesque music temporary failure of one of these elements need not matter seriously - the effect may even be compelling or beguiling. But in a symphony such a failure amounts to a lapse; even when movement is temporarily denied to such an ingredient as, say, tonality (as is often imperative) there must always be an awareness that the movement can be restored at will, without disrupting the continuity. In such a case the composer, if for example he leaves the bass holding a long pedal note, must *know* what he is going to do with it, and that what he will do will be positive. No evasions are tolerable in the attempt to achieve the highest state of organization of which music is capable. In the orchestral field we have long applied the term 'symphony' to such an endeavour.

[. . .]

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