

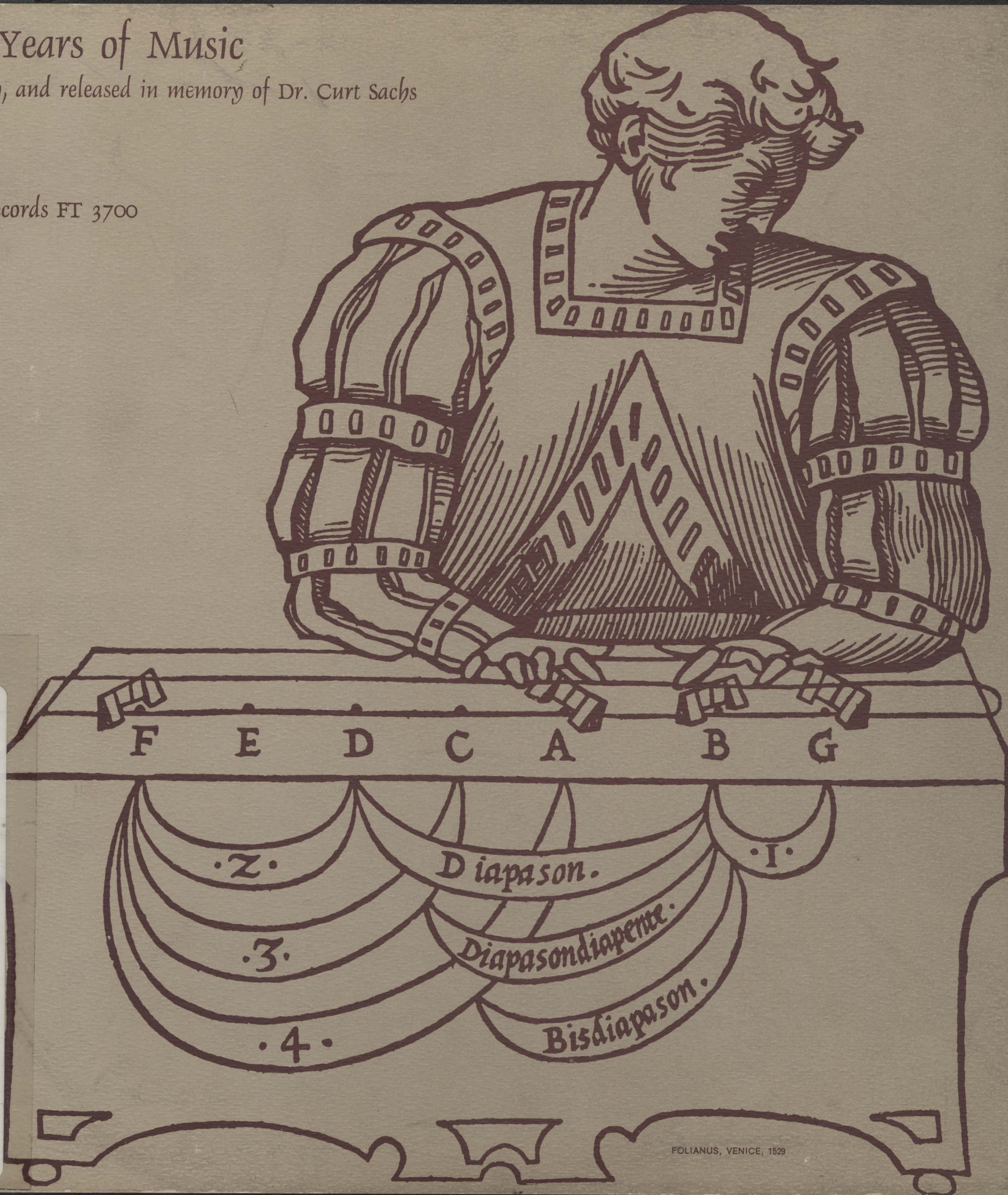
# 2,000 Years of Music

Compiled by, and released in memory of Dr. Curt Sachs

Folkways Records FT 3700

A concise history of the development of music from the earliest times through the 18th century

SI-FP-FW87-D c -02845  
Sachs, Dr. Curt  
2000 Years of Music





SIDE I  
 Band 1: GREEK MUSIC  
 Band 2: JEWISH MUSIC  
 Band 3: GREGORIAN CHANT  
 Band 4: EARLY POLYPHONIC MUSIC  
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 IN THE 16TH CENTURY — G. P. da Palestrina  
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 Band 21: CHAMBER MUSIC — About 1700 — J. S. Bach  
 Band 22: CHAMBER MUSIC — About 1700 — G. F. Händel  
 Band 23: ROCOCO  
 Band 24: SENTIMENT

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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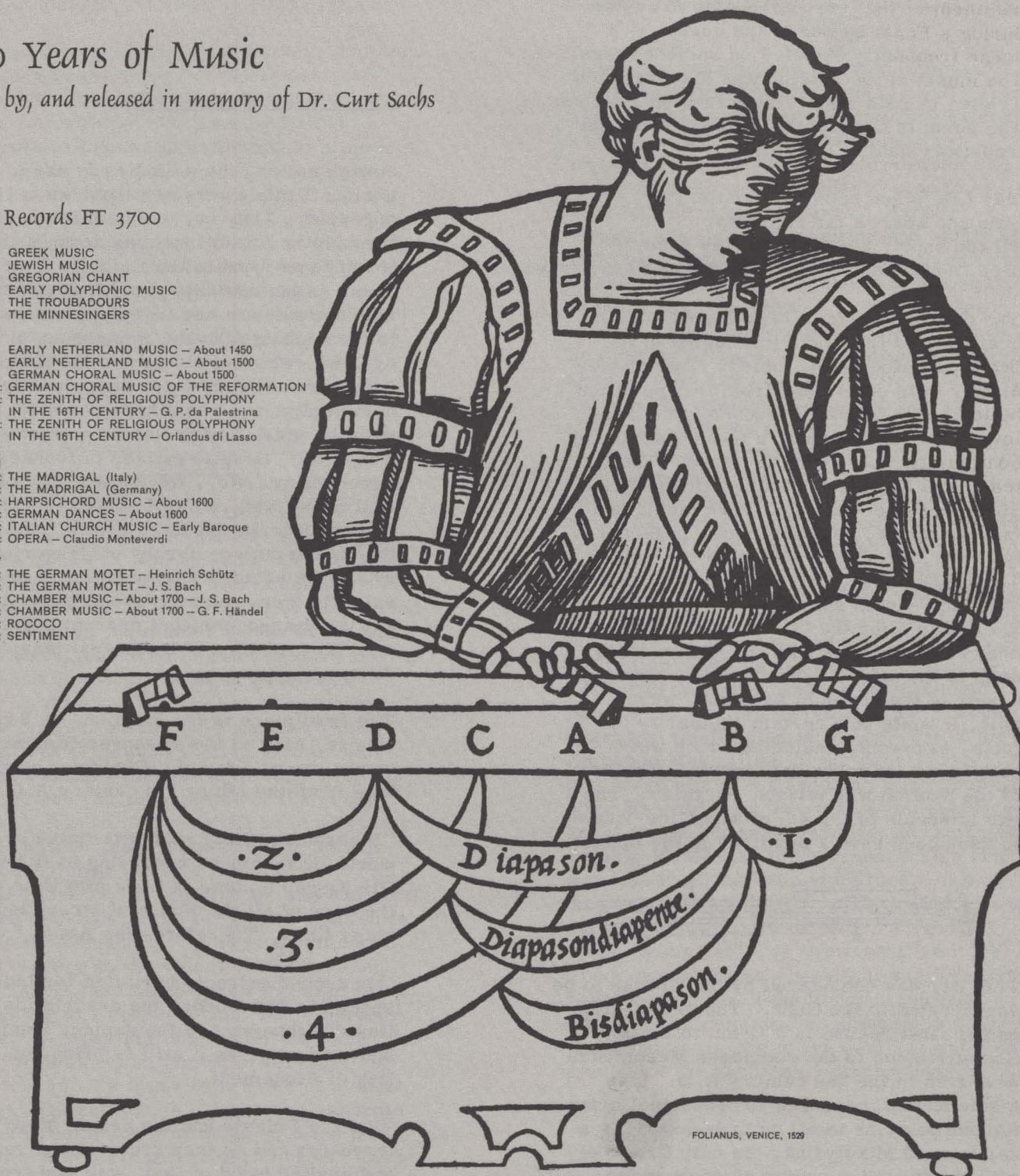
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FOLIANUS, VENICE, 1529

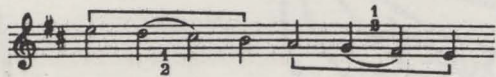


## 1. GREEK

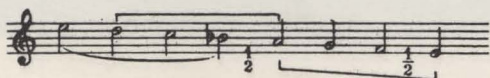
Of the little remaining Greek music the opening subject of our first record, The Skolion of Seikilos, is undoubtedly the most remarkable. The Skolion was a song, sung to the accompaniment of the lyre, according to custom during a Feast by one of the guests -- a scene frequently depicted on ancient vases. The music of the Skolion was discovered at Tralles in Asia Minor, engraved on a column. The poem is a melancholy comment on the transitory quality of life.

May Life's sun upon thee smile  
Pain and sorrow far removed,  
All too short, alas! our earthy span,  
Soon Death's arms will snatch thee to thy grave.

The opening music is very characteristic; beginning on the Tonic (the Mese) of the Scale (the Mode), the melody rises immediately to its octave and from this point the melodic line descends uniformly until the lowest note is reached, a fresh start being continually made from the Mese. The listener will be able to distinguish easily the differences between old Greek music and modern music. Feeling music in terms of harmony, we should designate the Key of the Skolion A Major and the note D on the syllable "-nu" a suspension to C sharp. We should alter the "G" on "zen" to G sharp and dispense with the final melodic drop to the note E. The Greeks, knowing naught of the bonds of harmony, were able, in spite of a certain regularity in form, to produce melodies which were both freer and more expressive. The Key of the Skolion was termed Phrygian. The two intervals of the 4th of which the octave is composed have a semitone in the middle.



This key was considered by the Greeks to be consecrated to the Gods. The second item on our first record is a Hymn to the Sun God attributed to the composer Mesomedes who lived in the 2nd century A.D. It is a solemn and measured Processional hymn for one part, as is all antique music, in a key termed Mixolydian, the only Greek key with the following series of whole tones.



The Mixolydian key was considered to belong to the Sun; in the same manner the

Phrygian key was dedicated to Jupiter, the Doric to Mars. The dedication of the Keys (Modes) was not a matter of their musical character, they were simply allotted to particular Planets.

## 2. JEWISH MUSIC

In spite of the breaking up and scattering of the Jewish nation, the melodies in use in the ancient Temple services have not entirely disappeared. They survive both in the East, through the faithful handing down of traditional tunes, and in the Catholic Church. There is indisputable proof that certain Gregorian melodies in use today correspond exactly to those chanted in the Synagogues of Babylon by Jews, who had already in the times of the Kings broken away from the principle Jewish community, and had since no contact either with the main Jewish line or with any Christian cults. Despite outside influences, development, etc., the ancient style has been well preserved, so well indeed that it is no easy task to distinguish the new from the old in the contemporary library of Gregorian music. The three examples on our record are extracts from music in present-day use in Jewish Synagogues, but present nevertheless a striking picture of mediaeval musical conditions.

The first piece is the Kaddish, or Song of Praise, sung at the Passover (Easter). The words are of Aramaic (Chaldaic) origin, and date from the 8th or 9th century A.D.:

"Blessed and Holy shall His Name be in the world He fashioned according to His will. His Kingdom come in thine own time and in the days of all the House of Israel and in short time. Therefore sing Amen."

Our second extract, curtailed for lack of space, is The Aboda, the description of the Day of Atonement in the ancient Temple, and was sung, as it still is today, on the Day of Atonement.

"But the Priests and the people stood in the forecourt and as they received the venerable and exalted word of God, well and truly spoken through the mouth of the High Priest in reverence and purity, they knelt them down."

The third example on our record is an extract from the Book of Esther: "And it was in the days of Ahasuerus." It illustrates the man-



ner--part recitative, part Psalmody, in which the Holy Script was read aloud, whereas the Kaddish and Aboda were more in the nature of Hymns and were "melismatic," that is to say more than one note is frequently allotted to a single syllable.

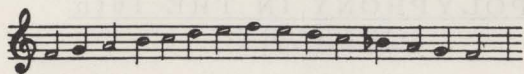
### 3 GREGORIAN CHANT

The music of the Catholic Church is derived from both Western and ancient Eastern sources but more especially from the treasury of song belonging to the Jewish religion. The Psalms of David supply its foundation. These are chanted in the ancient Jewish manner, a Declaration by the Priest alternating with choral responses. The human instinct to associate great occurrences in history with individual names, has caused that of Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) to be especially exalted in connection with ancient Church music. From his Pontificate dates the uniform ordering of the complete Musical Ritual and its adoption by the Christians of all countries, and in his honour the Ritual was named "Gregorian" Song or Chant. The central event of the Ritual is the Mass--the service which enshrines the Priestly communion. Between the principal parts of the Mass--Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus--interpolations are made. To this latter class belongs the Gradual; originally an entire Psalm, it consists today of but two verses declaimed by the Cantor alternating with the Choir.

The Gradual sung on our record is from the Mass for the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany and its words are:

Misit Dominus verbum suum, et sanavit  
eos: et eripuit eos de interitu eorum.  
Confiteamur Domino misericordiae ejus:  
et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.

The Chant is in the Lydian Mode.



The augmented 4th (F to B natural) ascending and the fall to B flat descending should be especially noted.

### 4. EARLY POLYPHONIC MUSIC

The beginning of the 2nd century A.D. marks the beginning of the break away of Western music from the Oriental with the introduction into the former of Counterpoint. This early

counterpoint presents dissonant-sounding chords in logical sequence as in the case of modern harmony; furthermore individual parts strive after ever increasing independence and for their coordination content themselves with consonance on (as we should say in present-day language) a strong accent.

All early Counterpoint was of the simplest variety, note against note, every note of the "accompanying" voice corresponding to the note of the "melody" voice. This style was known as "organum." From the beginning of the 11th century more freedom crept in. This freedom caused the "accompanying" voice to stand out in greater relief, leading to its development and eventual establishments as a melodic entity, i. e., Counterpoint. The 12th century Pilgrim's song of our next record combines these two styles. It is three-part and is from Santiago de Compostela. The lower voices, arranged note against note, moving in opposite directions, form an "organum." Above them however is a descant for the upper voice, lightening with its graceful and flowing line the rugged seriousness of their heavy measure. The Liturgical Text is filled out where necessary by the extension of a syllable to fit the duration of the music.

Congaudeant Catholici  
Letentur cives celici  
Die ista.

Clenus pulchris carminibus,  
Studeat atque contibus  
Die ista.

Haec est dies laudabilis,  
Divina luce nobilis  
Die ista.

Ergo caventi terminus,  
Benedicamus Domino  
Die ista.

### 5. THE TROUBADOURS

In Moorish Spain arose a great cultivation of and attention to Art. The origin of this influence is to be found in late Classic Antiquity and Persian roots, and it spread over all Christian Spain and the neighbouring territory of Southern France (Provence). This part of Europe which up till this time had manifested but the roughest forms of aristocratic culture became the seat of enthusiastic devotion to the Madonna and general courtesy to womankind; high social culture and of accomplished poetry and music which combined the strength of pop-



ular (Folk) art with the polish of cultured society. It is one of the few periods in history in which peasant and prince pursue a common artistic path. Once--it may well have been in the year 1195--there came from France two strolling players to the court of Montserrat, fiddling their popular dance airs. All enjoyed a new Estampida they played and only Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, a knight who loved the Margrave's sister, Beatrice, remained in gloomy spirits. In response to the Margrave's bidding the lady Beatrice urged the knight to be of good cheer and to sing them a song. He rose and to the melody of the Estampida they had just heard, he extemporised. The song survives and is the first example on our next record. It illustrates the strong and decisive influence of the popular dance music on the melodies of the Troubadours.

Neither the Mayfeast  
 Nor the leaves of the beech  
 Nor the song of the birds,  
 Nor the flowers of iris  
 Are what please me,  
 Gracious, joyful lady,  
 Until a speedy messenger arrives

From you, fair lady, to give me  
 New pleasure, which love brings me  
 And joy,  
 That I approach you, true lady.  
 And may he fall wounded,  
 The jealous one, before he drives me away  
 from her.

The second song by Bernard von Ventadorn  
 (circa 1150)

Because you ask me, Sir,  
 To sing, I will sing;  
 And when I wish to sing, I cry  
 At the hour, I try.

Scarcely ever will you see a singer  
 Who sings well, if he feels badly.  
 Am I sick of Love?  
 Far better than never to have loved!  
 Now, why do I trouble myself?

is remarkable for the fact that it was rendered into mediaeval German by Count Friederich von-Husen, a Minnesinger, and is a proof of the direct influence of the Troubadours upon the Minnesingers. The mediaeval German version is also sung on the record

Because I left the good woman  
 And didn't speak to her  
 As I should have liked to speak  
 Therefore I suffer now great trouble.  
 I omitted it on account of the pagans

From whom never came  
 Anything pleasing to me.  
 May He who overcame the power of Hell  
 Punish them with trouble and pain.

## 6. THE MINNESINGERS

The Minnesingers are the German parallel to the Troubadours. The art is of French extraction as is all the principle culture of European courts at the zenith of the mediaeval period, but retains its own individual features. Poetical and more religious in character Minnesong displays less the influence of popular dance music, more that of the style of church music. This accounts for the impression it gives of greater antiquity. The solemn Dori chants of the Priests dominate, not the merry dance measures of the strolling musicians. The exterior conditions and occasions of the two arts were however the same: in their respective countries both Troubadours and Minnesingers took part in singing competitions, extemporising on a given theme, as portrayed in Richard Wagner's music-drama "Tannhauser." While both Troubadours and Minnesingers flourished contemporaneously, the latter overlapped the former by about 100 years, existing roughly from 1200-1450. The outstanding figure among the Minnesingers is that of Walther von der Vogelweide (circa 1170-1230). Unfortunately there remain to us but few authentic melodies of his compositions. Our next record contains a late work of his, "A Song of Palestine."

Now only I live a true man's life  
 Since my sinful eyes see  
 Here the earth and the land of Him  
 Whose honour is always confessed.

For me has come to pass, that which I  
 always prayed:  
 I have come to the place  
 Where God walked as Man.

This song is in the Doric Key (closing phrase: DCDEFED). It illustrates the type of song popular at the time of the Crusaders, as the following satirical song "Undaunted" mocking Rudolph von Habsburg (1280), illustrates the type of song sung at contemporary song competitions (Tenson).

King Rudolph loves God and is steady in troath  
 King Rudolph has well guarded his men from  
 disgrave.  
 King Rudolph judges well and hates false  
 counsellors.  
 King Rudolph is a hero, manly and intrepid,  
 King Rudolph honours God and all noble women.



King Rudolph displays himself in high and honest nobility.  
I shall be heartily pleased that his generosity shall be repaid as it merits,  
Singing, fiddling and speaking of the Masters, he likes to hear their art and doesn't give them anything for it!

This latter song is in the major key, and does not belong to the series of Ecclesiastical (Lydian) Modes. The third example on our record is a simple love song by Prince Witzlaw von Rugen (Circa 1280).

Ah! I have thought the whole night long of this great wrong  
Which a woman has done to me, who doesn't let me make any defence.  
Ah! If she would now approach me  
A little kiss from her mouth is a punishment which I should gladly receive.

#### 7. NETHERLAND MUSIC - ABOUT 1450

At the opening of the 15th century the most important provinces, musically speaking, were the Southern Netherlands, and Burgundy, and so they remained for over a century. The familiar features of the painting of this period as witnessed in the master works of Jan and Hubert van Eyck, Memling and Gerard David, are identical with its musical features, Gothic fervour and mysticism allied to the noblest characteristics of Folk life, the shining joys of Heavenly Bliss side by side with the ordinary pleasures of daily life, all are depicted. As an example of the great models of this period we shall hear a remarkable movement from a Mass by the Master Guillaume Dufay: "Gloria in Excelsis." "Ad modum Tubae" - "In the manner of Trumpers" runs the sub-title. The melody is allotted to the voices exclusively. It is in strict canon, and so closely do the voices follow on each others' heels that one is given the impression of listening to a congregation, each member of which is repeating identically the same prayer with an equal degree of fervour. In broad tranquillity move twin tunes of a vocal melody. Beneath these pulsate two separate trumpets reminiscent of those so often portrayed by painters in their pictures of angels' music. In solemn symmetry the trumpets answer their respective calls, imperturbably furnishing the foundations of tonic and dominant harmonies to the C major melody. Gradually climax ahead is sensed and crochets are exchanged for quavers. The trumpets become more breathless and incisive, alternating even quicker with the voices. Amid rising intervals, with

a flourish from the trumpets to an ecstatic chain of quavers from the singers the splendid work closes on a high G.

#### 8. NETHERLAND MUSIC - ABOUT 1500

Under the Renaissance musical composition underwent considerable development. This took the shape of a general improvement in form, greater attention being paid to arranging, in the case of choral music, to obtain roundness and fullness, also to clearness in regard to the words. Parallel changes affected both painting and music at the close of the early Renaissance and lightly tripping subjects give place to a deeper seriousness. In music it is Josquin des Pres to whom the greatest achievement of this period belongs, an artist comparable to Leonardo da Vinci in his bold departure from the pleasant valleys of the 15th century to climb the unknown pinnacles of the later Renaissance. Josquin des Pres was certainly an older man than da Vinci, and cannot have been born later than 1450, on the borders of the Netherlands and France, that artistically fruitful territory which produced the flower of its century. He journeyed to Italy, and there we find him in the chief places where music was most cultivated, in the Papal chapel, at the court of Duke Ercoles at Ferrara. Like the Italian painters and sculptors such as Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto and Benevenuto Cellini, he visited the French court and finally died in the service of the Emperor Maximilian in the year 1521 - two years after Leonardo and a few months after Raphael. He was a real Renaissance artist in his happy combination of the highest artistic ideals and achievement with a fine humanistic education and culture. The Incarnatus (sung on our record) "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine et Homo factus est" - is an extract from the Credo and contains a mystical quality which has always made it an object of special attraction to composers. Josquin des Pres "Incarnatus" is one of the earliest and most moving of the harmonic compositions.

#### 9. GERMAN CHORAL MUSIC - ABOUT 1500

Up to 1500 A.D. Germany produced no really outstanding composer. Heinrich Finck, the first of the great Germans, was born in 1445. Technically speaking his music shows a strong Netherlandic influence especially in



its order of movements but is essentially German in spirit. Finck's "Christ is Risen" is the subject of our next record. A piece so massive and severe as to suggest hewn granite. It is a five part chorale and the ancient Gregorian Easter Chant forms the basic melody or "cantus firmus," and is given to the tenor voice.

Christ ist erstanden  
von der Marter allen,  
des sollen wir alle froh sein,  
Christ soll unser Trost sein,  
Kyrie elesion. Alleluja!

Christ is Risen  
Who suffered for all men  
Wherefor should we all rejoice,  
Christ shall be our consolation  
Kyrie Eleison, Allelujah!

Martin Luther spoke classic words of comment upon this school of composition: "Is it not remarkable and admirable how one singeth a plain melody or tenor voice (as the musicians have it) against which these four or five voices take part, gambling and playing round the simple tune as though in exaltation decking it with wondrous art and sound; seeming to take lead in heavenly dance, meeting, greeting and embracing one another in most lovely manner, so that all they who have an understanding for such art and feel themselves stirred by it, agree that there is naught in the world more remarkable than such a song decked round with many voices."

## 10. GERMAN CHORAL MUSIC OF THE REFORMATION

Thanks to the musical leanings of its Reformers, the Lutheran Church preserved its services from that Puritanical quality associated with those of Calvin and Zwingli. Luther for instance, in addition to issuing the ordinary hymn book with a one line melody for the use of the congregation, had Polyphonic arrangements of the Choral arranged in the manner of the Motets of the Netherlands. The Melody in unchanged form was given to the tenor voice and round it the other voices built contrapuntally in thematic imitation. The summit of achievement in this branch of evangelical music is contained in "Neue deudsche Geistliche Gesenge" - (New German Sacred Songs) which appeared in Wittenberg 1544 from the printing press of Georg Rhaw. It contains works of all the early masters of the German Reformation, among them those of Ludwig Senfl, Thomas Stoltzer and Arnoldus de Bruck.

In greatest need I cry to thee  
Lord God, hear my voice  
Thy gracious ear incline to me  
And hearken to my supplication  
If Thou Lord art extreme  
To mark what is done amiss  
O Lord who may abide it?

are the words of Arnoldus de Bruck's somewhat severe composition - the subject of our record. Naturally the technical difficulty of the music precluded the possibility of the congregation taking part in the singing of such Chorales. Trained choir-singers were needed and so came about the formation of voluntary choirs and school choirs under the direction of a Precentor. In towns where there were schools of Latin it was to the Grammar School choir that the major duties fell. In these schools music took an important place in the curriculum - in some it was a daily study and next in order of importance to the headmaster came the Precentor (Kantor). To be musical was also a compulsory requirement in the other masters: "A schoolmaster must be able to sing, otherwise I have no use for him," said Luther. Music was not merely taught in terms of song, its theory was also studied and the mathematical lesson touched upon the relations of mathematics to music. The time devoted to singing was employed in practising the music for next Sunday's services and the school was in constant association with the Parish Church. Every Sunday the Choir would sing two or three new compositions of contemporary composers; the curriculum especially recommended the compositions of Josquin des Pres, later those of Lasso and other masters. So the schools were in the forefront of musical life and the composers and their most difficult works were familiar to the young and to the general public.

## 11. THE ZENITH OF RELIGIOUS POLYPHONY IN THE 16th CENTURY

### PALESTRINA

The zenith of achievement in the 16th century was attained by Giovanni Pieluigi da Palestrina. Born circa 1526 at Palestrina (southeast of Rome) he became in 1540 choir-boy at the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, remaining there until his voice broke. He then became a teacher of music at the Choir school of S. Peter's, Rome, and found himself after a short while Choir-master there. After a few years he became a singer in the Sistine Chapel. But as a layman and a married layman at that, he was not allowed to retain his



position by Pope Paul IV., and found employment as Chapel Master in the churches of the Lateran, Santa Maria Maggiore and finally once more in S. Peter's. He died in 1594 - the same year as did Orlando di Lasso. Palestrina's compositions include 93 Masses, 600 Motets, 42 Psalms, 200 Madrigals. Palestrina's fame is largely connected with the events of the great Ecclesiastical Council Trent which was held in the years 1545-1563 with the intention of strengthening the Roman Catholic religion to hold its own against the Lutheran Reformation and to deal with various reforms in the Church. Church music was also to be reformed. The most radical members of the Council proposed to banish the existing church-music entirely, its place to be filled by the simplest Gregorian Chants, while the more moderate members were only concerned with freeing the existing music of much that was unsuitable and frivolous which had crept in - senseless coloratura, contrapuntal tricks, and so on, which chiefly succeeded in obscuring the words. Palestrina was selected to compose a Mass to show that Church music could remain Polyphonic and yet religious in character.

Our next record offers us the Sanctus - from the Missa Papae Marcelli "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt terra et coeli gloria Tua. Hosanna in Excelsis." "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and Earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest."

Palestrina was no innovator. In his work he collected, perfected and purified the various styles of his predecessors in the spirit of the Italian and especially the Roman style. He was the fulfillment of the past and not the forerunner of the future.

## 12. THE ZENITH OF RELIGIOUS POLYPHONY IN THE 16th CENTURY

### ORLANDO DI LASSO

The throne of success in 16th century music is shared by Palestrina and Orlando di Lasso. Lasso was born in 1520, a year before the death of Josquin des Pres, at Mons. He is said as a boy to have been stolen as many as three times from his home on account of the unusual beauty of his voice. At the early age of twelve he started his travels in the train of noble personages, visiting Milan, Sicily and Naples. At the age of 21 he was appointed Precentor of the Lateran Church

in Rome, the middle of the century saw him in Antwerp for two years stay, then he visited England and then France. Finally reaching the Munich court in 1557 he remained there under Duke Albrecht V. until death freed him from the deep melancholy of his latter years in 1594, the year of Palestrina's demise. Few composers have been as greatly honoured; the Emperor Maximilian II. raised him to the status of nobility and the Pope created him "Knight of the Golden Spur." From his numerous and varied compositions we shall now hear one of his versions of the Seven Penitential Psalms: "Miserere Mai Deus secundum Miserecordiam magnam Tuam. Dele, Domine, iniquitationem meam" ("Have Mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great mercy: do away, O Lord, mine offence"). There is none of the aloof severity of the Roman master in Orlando di Lasso and his religious music has also greater warmth than that of Palestrina. But he remains with feet planted firmly upon earth and to that Heaven into which Palestrina was admitted, he was denied entrance.

## 13. THE MADRIGAL: ITALY

The Concert Hall with its accompanying paraphernalia of box-office, concert-agency, stage, virtuoso with conventional bow, rows of seats and attendants handing up bouquets, is a phenomenon which scarcely dates back beyond the beginning of the 19th century. Before its appearance, the musician played and sang to the glory of God and for the pleasure of some wealthy and aristocratic patron. By far the largest amount of music was written and performed by amateurs for their own enjoyment and edification. This was especially the case in Italy in cultured society and among the aristocrats. Their favourite form of musical expression was the Madrigal. Four, five or six men and women sat round a table each with a book of manuscript before them, and with or without an instrumental accompaniment sang a setting of some polished poem, each voice a separate part of a well-sounding whole. The appearance of the Madrigal in musical history is very significant since it marks the breaking away from ancient bonds. The Madrigal by its closer following of the sense of the text, marks the introduction of the methods of expression of this later time. The world of the old Ecclesiastical Modes gives way; the upper voice takes more and more to itself the leading part and the interrelation of the voices assumes the spirit of modern harmony. The various harmonies are used to interpret the poetical sense of



the text and dissonance, even unintentional dissonance, becomes a most important means of expression. The finest and most representative madrigals of this school are the so-called "Chromatic Madrigals" by Prince Gesualdo da Venosa (circa 1560-1614).

Gesualdo's Madrigals amazed his contemporaries and were greeted by them as unique and marvellous. Their descendants, severe classicists, pooh-poohed them as the follies of a discredited amateur. We, who have experienced the harmonic development of the post-Wagnerian era, are aware that Gesualdo was one of those chosen few to whom it is given to express himself, using a language which only now the world has learnt to use and understand. The following are the words of our next record:

Cease to torment me,

Cruel delusion,

That I shall never more be again

The one whom you love.

For me Joy is dead,

I dare not hope

Ever to be happy again.

#### 14. THE MADRIGAL: GERMANY

Among those who inherited the art of Madrigal composition from the Italians, the name of the versatile Augsburg composer Hans Leo Hasler (1564-1612) stands high. As a holder of the Fugger scholarship in Venice, he received tuition at the hands of the great master Andrea Gabrieli. The Madrigal of our record is for double four part choirs.

My sweetheart would war with me  
Is armed for battle;  
Waving her banners and boasting of  
her might,  
Telling me to flee before her,  
Being experienced in a war of Love.

I will march against her  
And put her to flight,  
To Arms! Fire thy poisoned dart!  
Soon thou wilt repent of  
Thy overweening pride.

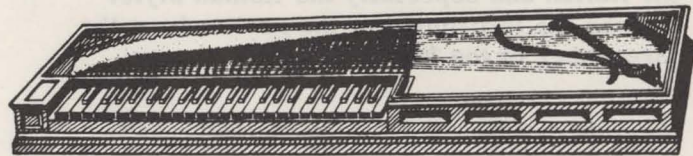
Diridiri don! Diridiri don!  
Shoot away! and onward speed!  
Ah! misery, I am stuck down  
By the glance of her eyes and  
I have spilt much blood.

To the Death am I wounded.  
Oh! my Love I cast  
Myself on thy mercy.  
I pray thee, grant me  
My life, thy prisoner will I be.

The inclination towards grandeur and heaviness which characterizes the period of the late Renaissance, led in the world of Venetian music to the multiplication of choirs, singing now together now separately. Effects were thereby attained which for strength and body of sound surpassed all previous achievement and Hasler was an adept at the use of this material.

#### 15. HARPSICHORD AND CLAVICHORD

The pianist of the 16th century had the voice of two entirely different instruments on which to play: the Clavichord and Harpsichord. The Clavichord (see illustration) is a small shallow box with strings cross-strung. The strings were struck, or more correctly, touched by upright hammers placed at the far end of the keys. The tone of this instrument is slight but of great sweetness. The Harpsichord mechanism consisted of quills which set in motion by the key-board plucked strings pizzicato. The tone of the Harpsichord is metallic and ringing, but hard; owing to the action of the instrument there is no possibility of varying it. The Harpsichord was built in two forms (a) with strings, strung at right angles to the key-board as in the case of the modern grand piano; (b) with strings strung parallel to the key-board. The Spinet and Virginal belong to this latter class.



The compass of these instruments in the 16th century was usually three octaves, extending to a fourth higher in some cases.

The piano music of the 16th century was largely bound up with that of the organ; both instruments were served by the same builders, players, composers, literature and style. The first composers to assimilate the spirit of the piano and create music for it were the English masters who flourished at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries - William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, John Bull and



others. The most important and complete collection of the music of this early 17th century school is to be found in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, one of the most outstanding documents in the library of English art. The forms and ideas were of Continental origin; variations of Folk Songs and Folk Dances, fugal, chromatic and pastoral Fantasies. It is to England that the honour of creating a style of piano music, as such, belongs, that is to say, music entirely pianistic, wholly free from organ and vocal influences. The piece to be heard on our next record is a very characteristic arrangement of a folk-song. It is played upon a Harpsichord of the period, built by Andreas Ruckers in 1618. The instrument is one of the primitive Harpsichords of the period with none of the improvements to be found in Harpsichords of a latter date.

## 16. GERMAN DANCES - ABOUT 1600

The forms of the dance are the basis of all instrumental music. Up to early in the 17th century these consisted of variations of those antique forms of contrast; the stately measure and the more lively "jumping-Dance"; danse basse and danse haute. Of the dances performed at the court-balls, the Pavane was the principal and most popular. The title of this dance is a corruption of the Italian Padovana and owes its origin to the North Italian town of Padua. Thoinan Arbeau in a work entitled "Orchesiographic" and printed in 1588, informs us that the Pavane served to exhibit the costly mantles and gala robes of kings, princes and aristocrats at official functions. The queens, princesses and noble ladies accompanied their lords in the dance, their trains either hanging loose or carried by their ladies-in-waiting.

## 17. ITALIAN CHURCH MUSIC - EARLY BAROQUE

In the development of Church music in Italy two distinct schools are discernible. The music of the Romans - Palestrina and his circle, is far removed from all that is secular and mundane, not so that of their opponents, the Venetians. As in the highly coloured work of the Venetian painters of this period, Bellini, Giorgione and Titian, so in the music, the earthly element is more in evidence than the mystic. The example of our next record is a seven part Benedixisti: -

"Benedixisti, Domine, terram Tuam, avertisti captivitatem Jacob, remisisti iniquitatem plebis tuae, operuisti omnia peccata eorum."

The composer is one of the foremost masters in the history of Venice, Giovanni Gabrieli. Born in Venice in the year 1557, he became a pupil of his famous uncle Andrea Gabrieli and later organist at the Munich court. His next appointment was as organist of St. Mark's in his native city and he died in 1612, the same year as his fellow pupil Hans Leo Hasler. The strong influence of Venice upon the artists of Germany in painting (Durer) is even greater in the case of music. The great Venetian masters, especially the two Gabrieli and the subject of our next record Monteverdi play an exceedingly significant role, providing a direct inspiration to German composers of the 17th century.

## 18. OPERA

### CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

"Seekest thou in such a fashion to raise me to the throne of thy mighty ancestors? Are the wreaths of Gladness with which thou hast braided my hair? Where is the golden sceptre, where the precious stones? Am I to remain here alone, exposed to the grief which consumes me? Alas! why O beloved Theseus, doest thou abandon me to die in such cruel fashion? In vain I weep, in vain I cry for aid, O, poor Ariadne, who so confidently entrusted to thee not only life but honour. Where shall I find hope and comfort in such a cruel state and such great pain? O let me die!"

At the first performance in 1608 at the court of Mantua of the famous Claudio Monteverdi's opera "Ariadne," the audience were moved to tears by the above lament of the abandoned heroine. The opera was lost and only the lamento survived and became for the whole century a source of beautiful emotion to listeners and an example to composers; the "Lamento" became in Baroque music a special kind of composition. Thus it may be regarded as the chief monument of the new style, which revolutionised the destiny of music about 1600; the "stile recitativo e rappresentativo," combining declamation and acting. The realistic spirit of the period required the art of singing to borrow from the art of speaking. For the first time in its history, music was called upon to express human emotions where before it had been content to remain absolute. Such music required naturally a new form and that form was Opera which came into being with the creation of Peri's "Daphne" in 1594. From



1600 appeared in swift succession a series of Operas written by Italian composers for court functions until 1637 which year marks the opening of the first public opera house in Venice and the establishment of Opera in Italian urban life. The most important composer of the new art of Opera, whose personality overshadows all his contemporaries is Claudio Monteverdi. Born in 1567 at Cremona he was singer, violinist, composer and musical director at the court of the Duke of Mantua. In the latter part of his life he became Chapel Master of St. Mark's, Venice, and a series of Madrigals paved the way to his ultimate great achievement, the opera "Orpheo." Dozens of his operas followed, produced either in Venice or in Mantua, and Monteverdi remained until his death in 1643, undisputed master of his art.

## 19. THE GERMAN MOTET

### HEINRICH SCHUTZ

The greatest pupil of the Italians is the celebrated 17th century master Heinrich Schutz of Thuringia. Born in 1585, exactly a hundred years before Bach and Handel, he distinguished himself vocally, so greatly that the Landgrave of Hess who happened while passing through Thuringia to hear the 13-year-old boy, took him off to Cassel. Here Heinrich Schutz was brought up as an aristocrat, educated at Marburg University and dispatched to Venice to study music under Giovanni Gabrieli. From 1617-1660 he was musical director to the court of Dresden but falling a victim to gout, blindness and deafness, he passed the last 12 years of his life in retirement, actively creating music however to the end. His output is monumental, and almost exclusively religious. On our next record is a Psalm written by Schutz, published in 1657. Written in his early years, it displays the scholar of Venice in the rich toned pomp and splendour of simple chords, in the handling of Polyphonic episodes. On the other hand such a feature as the striking, often abrupt, drama with which the text of the Psalm is packed is singularly un-Italian, peculiarly and characteristically German. (Psalm CXI. - with Gloria at end.)

## 20. THE GERMAN MOTET

### J. S. BACH

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) passed his life within the narrow limits of the little towns of Thuringia and the neighbouring city

of Leipzig. At one time he was court musical director to a prince, but in the main followed the calling of Precentor and organist, combining narrow and provincial association with the creation of art boundlessly deep and spacious. The subject of our next record is the fugue from the middle portion of the great Burial-Motet of the year 1729 - "The Spirit helpeth our weakness." In Bach's hands the Fugue ceases to be merely a game of hide and seek played by the voices. He banishes all that is superficial, extraneous and merely "accompaniment." Each voice is an independent member introducing into and infusing the whole with life and strength. Bach is master of the secret of the conscious construction of an unshakable edifice, and of the use of a flexible form without allowing it to become laboured. He perfected simultaneously the Polyphony of the late Gothic period and the majestic multi-choral school of Venetian early Baroque, moulding both to a mighty uniformity.

Bach is the compiler and perfecter of the strivings of a thousand years.

## 21. CHAMBER MUSIC - ABOUT 1700

### J. S. BACH

The movement of this Sonata shows us Bach from a totally different aspect. It is a "Sonata for violin and piano," and not a "Sonata for violin with pianoforte accompaniment." Three voices, one supplied by the violin, two by the piano take an equally important share in a Fugal movement. Only by the use of the slender toned Harpsichord is equal balance possible. In a series of records such as the present, where strict adherence to style is of paramount importance, the introduction of the pianoforte (Hammerklavier) would of course be inadmissible.

## 22. CHAMBER MUSIC - ABOUT 1700

### HANDEL

How different is this composition of Handel. Avoiding studiously any stressing of emotions, he preserves the atmosphere of restive play and dancing. Here also the oboe and violin proceed together fugally, tossing the rhythmic theme to and fro. It was not the fate of Georg Friederich Handel to share the narrow existence which was the lot of Bach. Both were born in 1685 in Saxony but whereas Bach passed his life in a narrow area, Handel set off at



17 years into the wide world. First of all he went to Hamburg and obtained employment in the Opera, three years he spent in Italy, then journeyed to Hanover, and in 1712 he came to London which remained his home until his death in 1759. A German by blood and birth, completely Italian in his operatic style, and English in his mastery of oratorio, a musical cosmopolitan, Handel stands in the same relation to Bach as did that other globe trotter, Orlando di Lasso to Palestrina. It is advisable in this record also to retard the gramophone's speed indicator for similar reasons.

### 23. ROCOCO

Tired of the overpowering heaviness of everything connected with Baroque, the mighty palaces with their huge square courtyards, the weighty Alexandrine Tragedies, the dresses whose length made swift perambulation an impossibility, the younger generation were insistent in their demands for lightness, fun, laughter and gallantry. This new generation required a new music, light in character, but deft and graceful. "La Poule" ("The Hen") which we are now to hear contains all these qualities. While it introduces with much humour and observation the cackling of the hen, the piece is in strict form, as required by romantic sensibilities. The fact that this merry little piece of music was written by Jean Phillippe Rameau, one of France's most serious composers, indicates the strength of the contemporary mood. Rameau was born at Dijon in 1683 and died in Paris in 1764. As leader of French opera he flourished between Lully and Gluck. He was not only France's leading composer of the 18th century but the scholarly and brilliant founder of our present school of harmony.

### 24. SENTIMENT

In Germany the Rococo style gave place to music containing much greater sentiment. In this case also the music was well formed, light and graceful, but of greater spirituality, and tenderness. These features naturally exposed the music to the dangers of sentimentality, one not always avoided by the composers of the period. This new leaning towards tenderness and delicacy also guided the hands of the instrument makers and caused the decline in favour of the hard toned harpsichord, its place being filled by the simple and previously neglected clavichord. Though incapable of producing a forte and hardly even a mezzo-forte, a sensitive

and accomplished performer can extract from the clavichord a wealth of tone colour, tenderness and sentiment. The keys should not be struck; the majority of clavichord players usually, as J. S. Bach's eldest son, Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach, in his "Klavierschule" has it, "stroke the keys very delicately." The French Suites of J.S. Bach, composed circa 1720, are examples of real clavichord music. Our record offers us the Sarabande and Gavotte from the 5th of these Suites (the G major). Why these Suites are entitled "French" is not apparent. The melancholy stately character of the Spanish Sarabande is brightened and assumes a new tenderness, and the accompanying Gavotte illustrates the playful lightness and smiling countenance of the period at its best.

### ... about CURT SACHS

Dr. Sachs, one of the most eminent musicologists of our time, was born in Berlin on June 29, 1881. Following several years of activity as an art critic, he turned to the study of music and its history. His teachers were the famous German scholar Krestzschmar and Johann Wolf. Until 1934, Dr. Sachs was Professor of Music at the University of Berlin; he also held the post of curator of instruments at the State Museum of Music. Toward the end of his tenure in Berlin, Dr. Sachs undertook the project of presenting a living history of music that would cover the "2000 Years of Music," which to most students and listeners represent heavily dusty volumes, tomes rather than tones.

Among his many authoritative works on music are "The Rise of Music in the Ancient World, East and West," "The Evolution of Piano Music - 1350-1700," "The History of Musical Instruments," "World History of the Dance," and "The Commonwealth of Art." Besides giving yearly series of lectures and writing numerous articles for scholarly publications, Dr. Sachs was consultant to the New York Public Library and the first President of the Society for Ethnomusicology. Dr. Sachs died in 1959.



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