

Contemplative Composer

FOR the next concert by the Burnside Symphony Orchestra under Dr. John Black, early in May, Bruckner's Seventh Symphony is the adventurous choice.

This symphony, which with the "Hansel and Gretel" Overture occupies the whole programme, was the work which first brought recognition to the aging composer.

It was played in Leipzig in 1884 by Nikisch, who on first seeing the score was on fire with enthusiasm.

"Since Beethoven there has been nothing that could even approach it," was his verdict; and from that moment he regarded it as his duty to make Bruckner known.

Of all composers Bruckner is the most contemplative. He is, in fact, the only true contemplative among the great composers.

In his music he lived literally "out of this world;" and his symphonies, with their almost limitless extension of time and space and logic, and the frequent "sittings down" where Bruckner pauses, as it were, to take breath and review the position, can be best approached in the same spirit of unhurried abstraction.

His nine symphonies all follow much the same pattern. In content there is little change of material, though as the series progresses we become aware of a deepening of thought from one symphony to another and a greater subtlety of expression.

He has nothing like Beethoven's range of imagination, nor has he Beethoven's sense of drama or his tremendous dynamic force.

MUSIC

by DR. ENID
ROBERTSON

He writes sturdily, either praising God from a grateful heart, or genially enjoying nature—not the urbane nature of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, but a more rustic, clod-hopping variety.

In Bruckner's orchestra is implicit the full texture of organ and choir, transmuted into instrumental tone.

First movements usually begin with a piling up of imitated figures or insistent broken chords in sequence working up to a gigantic fanfare. Yet variety is obtained through subtle changes of register or position.

The Seventh Symphony begins true to type with tremolo strings; and almost at once horn and cellos play the first long theme, a tune of 24 bars and the longest of all Bruckner's themes.

This majestic theme supplies a wealth of motifs for individual treatment.

The slow movement, a "most solemn" adagio, opens with beautiful music for tubas, leading unhurriedly from deep lamentation to serene consolation, and then to pathos.

Coming Events In Music

Tonight — Lili Kraus, pianist, Town Hall, 8.15.

May 4 and 6 — Musica Viva Subscription concerts, Town Hall, 8.15 p.m.

May 7—Burnside Symphony Orch., 8 p.m.