

ingenuous wandering minstrels, whose melodies, whether composed to the regular metre of poetry, or for the rhythmical figures of the dance, of necessity possessed that symmetry of construction which has already been given as a definition of rhythm.

It will therefore be seen that the first principles of form may be traced to the influence of the mediæval bard; and this point is worthy of note, when it is remembered to what an extent modern music is indebted to the fostering care of the Church throughout the dark ages.

With the close of the seventeenth century the wandering minstrel gradually passes away:—

“The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.”*

and in his place there arose a class of musicians who devoted their lives to the development of the art. Of these, Purcell (1658–1695) in England, Lulli (1633–1687) and Couperin (1668–1733) in France, with Corelli (1653–1713) and the elder Scarlatti (1659–1725) in Italy, should be specially remembered for advancing the cause of form in composition, and, together with others of lesser importance, for paving the way for the two great German masters, J. S. Bach (1685–1750) and G. F. Handel (1685–1759), in whom the old contrapuntal school of composition was finally consummated.

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), the founder of the modern orchestra, appreciating the want of a form, (other than the fugue), in which continuity of movement should be the characteristic feature, and following a suggestion from the great Bach family, evolved that which, from its frequent employment in the sonata, is now generally known as the sonata form.

* “Lay of the Last Minstrel.”—*Scott*.

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