MUSIC IN SHAKESPEARE.

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It happened that in 1623, the year of the publication of the First Folio, three leading English composers died—Philip Rosseter the lutenist and song-writer, Thomas Weelkes the madrigalist, and William Byrd, whose sacred choral music is among the chief glories of the age of Elizabeth. We may therefore be excused, in the tercentenary year of the Folio, if we attempt to trace the significance of music in the works of Shakespeare. He lived through the palmy time of English musical greatness. This aspect of the life of his age is duly reflected in his plays and poems. We know, of course, that any specialised line of approach to him has its own dangers. We shall do our best to avoid them.

Within limits that look narrow to-day, Elizabethan music was wonderfully alive. It was still in some degree the appanage of the Church and of public and private ceremony. But it had quickly found a home in the theatre; the drama, with its incidental music for instruments, and its interspersed songs, had in fact many elements of the modern miscellaneous concert. The masque, more strictly a Stuart development, foreshadowed the opera; in The Tempest (1611) it overflowed into the drama. Thus while neither orchestra, concert, nor opera had independent existence, their elements were in being. Music did not of itself court publicity; the prima donna, the primo uomo, with their train of vanities, had not arrived. The best music, all polyphonic and vocal, was heard either in church or in the domestic circle. The sacred compositions of Byrd and Gibbons, which need fear no comparison with those of Palestrina himself, were rivalled in quality by many of our secular works. These ranged from the serious type of madrigal often written by Wilbye to the sportive ballets in which Thomas Morley excelled. The secular trend of the art was typically Elizabethan. The flood of madrigals and kindred
works, inspired by Italian example, was a counterpart of the great poetic outpouring. Madrigals were sung in private, by friends sitting round a table, their part-books in front of them. There were rarely more than six parts, with one voice to each; lutes, viols or virginals filled in missing parts when necessary. The madrigal was the thing, rather than its ideal performance. The solo art-song, with instrumental accompaniment, was a comparatively recent growth, cultivated by Rosseter, Campion, Jones, and Dowland. Purely instrumental art was yet in its infancy, though already, in the hands of Dr. John Bull, virginal music had made remarkable technical progress.

Not only from countless allusions in contemporary literature, but from specific statements like those in Morley’s *Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (1597), it is clear that part-singing at sight, and the mastery of at least one instrument, were accomplishments expected of a gentleman. From the swarming references, in Shakespeare and elsewhere, to contemporary folk-song and folk-dance, from the numerous ballad-tags, catches and refrains scattered through the drama, we may also assume a remarkable love of music, and a degree of accomplishment in it, among the homelier classes of Elizabethan society.

Shakespeare viewed the art from no erudite standpoint. Milton seems to have been able to hear music polyphonically; he can show us in three lines that he understands the essence of fugue form. It is unlikely that Shakespeare could have done either. Still, he rarely trips in technical detail, even when he courts disaster by making his characters bandy musical terms like tennis-balls. As his references crop up we get the impression of a keen-witted but easy-going amateur, broadly familiar with the talk of music-makers in the theatre and in courtly and popular society. Music in Shakespeare is mainly a social phenomenon. He reflects the secular tendency of the art which for so long had been the handmaid of the Church. His references to sacred music are few and conventional. Further, he rarely alludes to the more serious forms of secular vocal art. We can hardly see him at a table with madrigal-singers, or even listening to them. Actors, as such, did not come within range of this music; even as he rose in the social scale Shakespeare would have little leisure for it. As actor-manager, he would come into contact with solo singers and with instrumentalists. Where music in his plays touches art, it generally has
to do with these two categories. Where, as often, it touches conviviality and riot, it has to do with popular vocalism.

This latter branch has a prescriptive right to be treated first. Shakespeare mentions many folk-songs, mainly in scenes of a humorous order. They were well known to his audience; it is reasonable to suppose that some at least were his own favourites, especially when he shows that he has a definite notion of their character. "Greensleeves," first printed in 1580, is twice referred to in The Merry Wives of Windsor. Mrs. Ford (II. 1) comments thus on her first love-letter from Falstaff: "I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words, but they do no more adhere and keep place together than the Hundredth Psalm to the tune of 'Greensleeves.'" Later (V. 5) Falstaff is waiting for Mrs. Ford beneath Herne's oak. He sees her coming, and breaks into a strain of grotesque heroics: "Let the sky rain potatoes, let it thunder to the tune of 'Greensleeves.'" This tune has a vigorous lilt of the country-dance; two fine unconventional leaps give boldness to its melodic line. Thunder crashing to it would be Falstaffian, a jolly jest of Titans, that would "make the welkin dance indeed." The poet knew that "Light o' love" and "Heartsease" were cheerful tunes; he prescribes both as a remedy for the dumps, and he notes that the former "goes without a burden," or refrain. One song mentioned in The Winter's Tale (IV. 3) is of peculiar interest to Manchester librarians. This is the "Ballad of Jinny and Johnny," of the nymph who through many verses sits perched on a hill, putting off her swain with "Whoop, do me no harm, good man." The earliest manuscript of this tune is in the Henry Watson Music Library. Its interest is more than antiquarian, for the melody has lovely curves; its tinge of unusual wistfulness is deepened here and there by the flattened seventh of the Mixolydian mode. The scene of revelry in which this song is mentioned gives us Shakespeare's closest study of the popular music-making of his day. We are in Stratford meadows, for all the talk of Bohemia. The poet, home from theatrical toil in London, looks on at the festivities of a sheep-shearing. The rogue Autolycus, pedlar for the nonce, comes with his ballads to the old shepherd's door, and chaffers with the country girls:

**Autolycus:** This is a merry ballad, but a very pretty one.

**Mopsa:** Let's have some merry ones.
MUSIC IN SHAKESPEARE 483

Autolycus: Why, this is a passing merry one, and goes to the tune of 'Two maids wooing a man': there's scarce a maid westward but she sings it: 'tis in request, I can tell you.

Mopsa: We can both sing it: if thou'lt bear a part thou shalt hear; 'tis in three parts.

Dorcas: We had the tune on't a month ago.

Autolycus: I can bear my part; you must know 'tis my occupation: have at it with you.

And then they sing "Get you hence, for I must go," a dialogue song for three voices. All this chimes in with the customs of the age. There is no need to imagine that such songs were always good music. Often, doubtless, they were no better than "Hold thy peace, thou knave," the extant catch in Twelfth Night, "a trivial two-bar production" writes Dr. Walker, "which must have been very well within the powers of Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, even in their most convivial moods." Still, part-singing, whether trivial or serious, was then an essential feature of musical life. Two country girls might strike into a trio with a pedlar, at a moment's notice and as a matter of course. The folk-songs were often of rare spirit and beauty. Popular music, as we find it in Shakespeare, was in a thoroughly healthy condition. Best of all, people made it themselves. The world of modern music, doubtless, is infinitely wider. But pestilent growths have choked the Elizabethan plant—widespread ignorance, sloppy amateurishness, showmanship, commercialism, and the shop-ballad.

Shakespeare drew most of his musical terms from the instrumentalists' vocabulary. The lute gave him some favourite figures. We should remember in passing that the sonnet in The Passionate Pilgrim referring to Dowland, the lutenist, is by Barnfield, and that the Bianca scenes, full of lute technicalities, in The Taming of the Shrew are probably unauthentic. Even so, many allusions remain to show that the poet understood the main peculiarities of this instrument. Its tender, evanescent tone had no strength, it was not of much use for part-playing; though it could provide a beautiful if sketchy accompaniment to a song. With their twelve strings—six unison pairs—and the extra bass strings of the archlute, instruments of this family were very difficult to keep in tune. If Shakespeare's ears were only normally acute he must have heard "jars" on lute-strings most
days of his life. No wonder that figures drawn from strings out of tune are common in Elizabethan drama. "Frets," another technical term, denoted the ridges across the finger board, which guided the fingers in "stopping" the strings. This word is tortured into an elaborate figure in *Lucrece*, 1140. *Hamlet* uses it punningly of Guildenstern, who can "fret him" but not "play upon him." Of bowed instruments—the viols—the favourite was the one now inseparably linked with Sir Andrew Aguecheek. "He plays o' the viol-de-gamboys, and speaks three or four languages word for word without book, and hath all the good gifts of nature." Sir Toby means the viola da gamba, which had six strings and was played against the knees like the modern 'cello. Compared with the tone of that instrument, its sound was dull and nasal; and bowing, naturally, was a delicate matter. Still, it looked well against the knees of a gentleman of quality dressed in the gay costume of the period. Many prints and allusions assure us of its vogue.

In the "jack" Sonnet (CXXVIII.) Shakespeare makes for once a bad slip in musical terminology. The work is a curious piece of familiar realism, one of the tenderest of its kind. He envies the "saucy jacks," that kiss the Dark Lady's hands when she plays on the virginals. This small instrument, one of the tinkling precursors of the modern pianoforte, was played as it rested on a table; it could not be heard across a fair-sized room. The jacks were little wooden objects, with quills attached, which plucked the strings as the keys set them in motion. They could not possibly touch the lady's hands as she played. Shakespeare means the keys. It was over them, not over the jacks, that her fingers "walked with gentle gait." The scene in *Hamlet* (III. 2) where the Prince banters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern about the recorders, shows that the poet knew the elementary technique of these instruments, the flutes of their day. We are tempted, as elsewhere in *Hamlet*, to give this incident an application personal to Shakespeare. "O! the recorders; let me see one," says the Prince, fingering the instrument as it is handed to him, and blowing into it, as he gives the courtiers his little apologue on curiosity; "govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music." Shakespeare the manager may well have tried fingers and breath in an idle moment on a recorder handed to him by an instrumentalist in the
theatre. However that may be, the scene naturally leads us to the consideration of incidental music.

It is unknown to what extent the modern stage directions represent Shakespeare's own wishes. It is likely, however, that the indications for music represent them fairly well. Sometimes the text confirms this; and such things, in his day, were largely stereotyped. Specific "consorts"—families of instruments, of differing pitch but similar tone-quality—were used for specific purposes. Music vied with spoken word and action, with story and costume, in its appeal to the audience. The appeal sometimes grew into an assault. Though theatres were partly unroofed, and audiences noisy, the harsh trumpets of those days must often have been an infliction. They were used, with drums, in scenes of war and pageantry, especially in the historical plays. Well might the writer of the epilogue to Henry VIII. admit a fear that they had disturbed would-be sleepers. The noise of Henry V. and Coriolanus must have been as bad. The trumpet was a "fearful wildfowl" in the instrumental menagerie of those times; one word conveys the fastidious Hamlet's scorn of its din:—

"The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge."

Cornets—not to be confused with the modern instruments of that name—and sackbuts, their bass complement, formed a "consort" of pleasanter tone-quality, foreshadowing crudely the modern trombones. They were used in scenes of tragedy and solemn ceremonial. For indoor scenes, cornets sometimes replaced the noisy trumpets. Where there is hunting, we must listen for the horns. These also, in the poet's day, could only be called musical when heard in the open air and at a distance. Boyish impressions of the chase in fields near Stratford may account for the verbal sound-pictures of hunting in several early works. There is a stilted attempt at one in Titus Andronicus (ii. 2):—

"And whilst the babbling echo mocks the hounds,
Replying shrilly to the well-tun'd horns,
As if a double hunt were heard at once,
Let us sit down and mark their yelping noise;"

there is the hare-hunt, carefully and vividly recorded, in Venus and Adonis (678-708), and the still finer description in A Midsummer
Night's Dream (iv. 1) in which the same sound-impressions, of hounds and horns and echo in "musical confusion," delight the ear.

Hautboys are sometimes mere noise-producers, but in two scenes they are definitely used for an effect of the sinister supernatural. Their reedy, penetrating tones give the right instrumental colour to the incantation scene in Macbeth (iv. 1). They are aptly used also in the scene in Antony and Cleopatra (iv. 3) where, to music under the stage, the god Hercules moves away with his unseen train from the doomed Antony. Here Shakespeare translates into musical sound, and a few whispered comments of the guards, a description elaborated in Plutarch. Other scenes of the supernatural demand the recorders, which had a sweet, woody tone-quality. Such are fairy scenes, and many of those in which "soft" or "still" music is indicated. Stringed instruments were mainly used to accompany songs; yet it is clear that strings might also prepare the audience for the supernatural—an important function of music in Elizabethan drama. There is a beautiful instance of this in Julius Caesar (iv. 3). The tense emotions of the "quarrel scene" have relaxed; Brutus has discussed plans of campaign and is now alone at night in his tent. He calls for his servant-boy Lucius, who plays a stringed instrument—a lute probably—and sings. The tired boy falls asleep over his music. Brutus turns the leaves of a book; the hush is at its deepest. The ghost of Caesar stands before him. Music, which has played its part in the long diminuendo of emotion, is seen also to have prepared us for a visitant from the other world.

Shakespeare's use of incidental music is at its subtlest germane to his use of songs. Much has been written on their functions. They heighten the dominant mood of a scene; they dally with it, or relax it; they give atmosphere; they help to supply the lack of scenery (notably in As You Like It); they further the action, or tide over pauses in it; they lend variety to a popular show. But the simple fact that the songs were sung, and their accompaniments played, has seldom been rightly appreciated. Songs should not be thought of as recited, where it is clear from the context that they are sung. Mr. Richmond Noble, in a recent study, has pointed out how the very sequences of vowels and consonants in the Shakespearean lyric are pleasant to sing; how the sentence movement of the songs lends itself to musical phrases, which are sometimes indicated by the very punctua-
tion of Quarto or Folio. In a purely technical sense these lyrics ask to be sung; apart altogether from their spontaneity and directness, their indefinable surge and spring, and their magical play of fancy. Since the poet did so much in advance for his composers, it is important that we too should conjure up in the mind, when reading, something like the aural background or atmosphere originally intended. We possess a few contemporary settings, two of which are in their way perfect—"It was a lover and his lass" and the "Willow" song. The melody of the first is perhaps by Morley; that of the second is traditional, and both may be. By these we may imagine the character of the lost settings, banishing for the time all later ones—even Purcell's—from the inward ear. We must conjure up simple, diatonic melody, often modal in flavour; melody of no great emotional depth, commanding a few simple moods between plaintiveness and gaiety. It must never distort the words; its main accents must correspond with theirs, its phrases with theirs; and words must only be repeated if they are in the nature of a refrain. For accompaniment, we may imagine a faint, detached background of lute tone, or a rather fuller one with viols or recorders. Such, or something like it, was the effect of most of the lyrics, those falling outside the category being ballad-tags, catches and choruses which would most likely be trolled unaccompanied. Whatever the moods of the songs—and their emotional range is immense—they reflect in varying degrees the dominant moods of the works in which they occur. Remembering the chronological order which has, in essentials, long been settled by scholars, we may now attempt to trace a few special meanings which music acquired for Shakespeare in the course of the years.

His early Euphuistic word-play turns not infrequently on the technical terms of music. Such writing, often mere barren ingenuity or verbal high spirits, takes on real humour in Moth's study of the moonstruck musical gallant in Love's Labour's Lost (III. 1); and human feeling is heard through Julia's quibble "He plays false, father," when in disguise she learns of Proteus' treachery. Older critics have blamed as incongruous the quibbling of the musicians who have come to play at Juliet's wedding and are told that she is dead. Their professional talk really helps to make the scene. Their wit is feeble; but the awestruck practicality of that first remark, "Faith, we may put up our pipes, and be gone," and Peter's invoking of cheerful
songs like "Heartsease," or "Some merry dump, to comfort me," are in no joking sense "tragical mirth," a forlorn attempt at keeping up the spirits under the shadow of calamity. Music is one strand in the gossamer web of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Not only do the fairies' songs give atmosphere, but wonderful sound-pictures strike on the ear from time to time—the description of the song of the "mermaid on a dolphin's back," and the hunting-impression already alluded to. In *The Merchant of Venice* music has an organic function, and a curious one. It is, bluntly, to make us forget Shylock and reality. In the first romantic climax of the play, when Bassanio "comments on the caskets to himself," and Portia soliloquises in musical images, the one lyric in the work is heard. It gives Bassanio a fairly broad hint, but it also anticipates the spell of the songs in *The Tempest*. It seems to hang in the air. It lightly propounds a query, lightly answers it, and "rings Fancy's knell." The action of the play swells to its climax in the Trial scene; then music, in the Fifth Act, vies with poetry in drawing a gorgeous romantic veil over the real world and its denizens, one of whom—Shylock—has lately come so terribly alive. This last act, up to a point, is bathed in music. The lovers' antiphony, heard in the moonlight, is such a harmony of words that under its spell we feel the loud calls of Launcelot,

"Sola, sola! wo ha ho! sola, sola!"

to be only another kind of music breaking in upon it. Now the musicians come forward; Lorenzo weaves golden eloquence round the Pythagorean notion of the music of the spheres, and delivers his well-known judgment—one that suits his nature and possibly the young Shakespeare's—on "the man that hath no music in himself." Portia and Nerissa now enter, and talk about the fit seasons for music. Then Portia's words,

"Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion,"

silence the strains, bringing back intrigue and the light of common day.

Richard II, sensitive and petulant, is distracted by music ill rendered; he reviles it when it first reaches his ears in prison; then his self-absorbed mind gives a personal application to "time broke in a disorder'd string" (v. 5). In Hotspur we meet with a robust scorn of the whole business. "I had rather hear Lady, my brach, howl in Irish," he declares, when a Welsh song is to be sung by Lady
MUSIC IN SHAKESREARE 489

Mortimer (1 Henry IV, iii. 1). The same attitude can be traced in the later comedies. Benedick admits the mystery of the art when he wonders that "sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies," but he comments as rudely as Hotspur himself on Balthazar's singing of "Sigh no more, ladies." Shakespeare does not overlook the point of view of the man who cannot or will not be impressed. As You Like It, bright with lyrics that sing its sunny philosophy, and mellow with the forester's horn, has in Jaques a professed railler at music and at most generous things. He growls curmudgeonly at Amiens, the singer, who apologises (as singers do) for a "ragged voice" that cannot please him: "I do not desire you to please me; I do desire you to sing." The music-makers in this play get scant courtesy. "God be with you; and God mend your voices," says Touchstone to the pages who have just sung "It was a lover and his lass." Is it possible that in such utterances a mood personal to the dramatist peeps out—a touch of exasperation, a hint of raw nerves, as the first shades of the dark period fall on him?

Twelfth Night, the loveliest of all comedies, is musical in conception through and through. Orsino at the outset strikes its emotional keynote. In doing so he lays bare the mind of the noble dilettante, the luxuriating lover; that mind is "a very opal." He calls again for the strain that has a "dying fall"—a lingering cadence, enhanced probably by a diminuendo. Old Gaunt, before him, talks of the compelling sweetness of "music at the close." No cadences can be more beautiful than the best Elizabethan examples. But Orsino plays with music as he plays with love. His mind is too languid to treat as a living thing the art he professes to adore. To him, a song is beautiful when it is "old and plain" and he can take it in without trouble. To such a man the living art of his day is always too uncomfortably "modern," too "brisk and giddy-paced" for his comprehension. The underplot of Twelfth Night is in musical accord with the main story. The characters in the latter brood and luxuriate to music, or, like Viola, find heart-satisfying meanings in it; but it is in the revelling scene of the two knights that the Clown, music's mouth-piece, sings the most perfect lyric of all, bright yet poignant with the sense of the vanishing of youth. The uproariousness of this scene, the bawling of the catch, the guying of Robert Jones's song "Farewell, dear heart" are somehow not mere riot and foolery. They are a
protest; a surge of the spirit of life against the languor of the main story, and against the melancholy and poignancy of the more serious lyrics. They are that, surely, more than they are the protest of "cakes and ale" against Puritanism. And the protest is a vain one. For life passes, beauty passes; the deepest notes of this play ring with their passing.

The bitter, tragic days came; we find naturally less music in this period, but what there is is significant. In a lyric, here and there, the pathos of a whole work is distilled, as in "Take, O take those lips away." In this song of broken vows and vanished joys the lowering clouds of Measure for Measure break for an instant in rain. The "Willow" song in Othello, traditional in music and partly so in words, has a significance at least threefold. As a folk-song, it echoes griefs from past ages; it distils the heartbreak of Desdemona; and, occurring where it does, it strikes an appalling note of coming catastrophe, which Verdi, in his opera, well knew how to translate and develop in terms of his own art. We have touched on Hamlet's amateur interest in music, an interest quite in the vein of the Elizabethan gentleman. At the climax of the play-scene, his excitement finds vent in random ballad-tags; Ophelia's mental distraction, later on, finds a similar outlet. This prepares us for the chief function of music in King Lear. We give the word a strange, sorry sense, but we think a legitimate one, in making it cover the ballad-snatches of the Fool and the feigned madman Edgar. For the Fool's cutting and whimsical tags, flicking the King's mind with vain appeals to reason, and the wilder tags of Edgar, smacking more of folk-ballad and mother Earth, form one strand in a terrible sound-web of many voices, let loose as the bleak winds begin to ruffle, and the thunder smites the heath. The symphony of distraction reaches its height, the external noises and the tempest in the King's mind acting and reacting on each other. At length the storm passes, and to "soft music playing" Lear recognises Cordelia. Here is a supreme instance of the healing function of the art in Shakespeare. The soft music, by the way, is purely instrumental. Singing, shouting voices have for three long acts been workers of distraction. Voices of any kind would be hardly tolerable. Stringed instruments, or perhaps recorders, with their quiet wood-notes, help to play the King back to a childish, comparative sanity.

The fierce imaginative energy of Macbeth gives an exceptional
vividness to its sound-impressions. We recall the storm on the night of Duncan's murder, the voices heard by Macbeth as he leaves the King's chamber, the knocking at the gate, the alarm of the rung bell. This last impression, which has a parallel in Othello, leads us to think of other allusions to bells in Shakespeare. All the more remarkable references have fateful associations. There are the eerie night-sounds in Lucrece, as Tarquin "moves toward his design"; and the strange simile:—

"For sorrow, like a heavy hanging bell,
Once set on ringing, with his own weight goes:

there is the allusion to the midnight bell in King John's murderous instructions to Hubert, there is the "surly sullen bell" of Sonnet LXXI, and the supreme intensity of the sound-pictures in Macbeth's "dagger" speech, where Tarquin is again mentioned. We seem to trace some old impression of fear and fatality, associated with bells; one which lay for many years at the back of the poet's mind.

As the clouds of tragedy lift, in Shakespeare's last period, music begins to point him to the realisation of his youthful vision in The Merchant of Venice; the dream of a pervading, controlling harmony in the whole scheme of things. We find a hint of this in the authentic portions of Pericles. In the storm scene in the Third Act, tragic human fate is framed in elemental confusion as in Lear, but no discord comes from the mortals. Pericles is the guiltless plaything of fate, as he says his lament over his queen Thaisa, and she is cast "scarcely coffin'd in the ooze." The elements, at the height of their fury, play enthralling word-music, above all in that impression, so piercingly apt, of the seaman's whistle, which is "as a whisper in the ears of death, unheard." In Pericles' own lament, too, anguish passes finally into still music, gentle as the sea-depths:

"And humming water shall o'erwhelm thy corse,
Lying with simple shells."

In the final scene, where at last Fortune smiles on him and he realises that he has found his lost daughter Marina, he calls out suddenly that he can hear "the music of the spheres." The idea is thrown crudely at us; his hearers plausibly think him a little mad; they humour him, and he falls asleep. But the hint, crude as it is, prepares us for a fuller development of the conception in The Tempest, the most musically conceived of all the plays.
The remoteness of this work from human conditions makes it less movingly and poignantly musical than *Twelfth Night*. All the nearer, for that very reason, does Shakespeare come to hinting at a cosmic function for the art. As Dr. Richard Moulton has pointed out, music has a part in every one of the scenes of enchantment in the play. "Its movement," he writes, "is the unfolding of a supernatural scheme of providential government." Music is one of the chief instruments of this government. It is the natural language—as natural as speech itself—of the spirit Ariel, the chief servant of Prospero, who is the overruling Providence of the play. In Prospero's godlike scheme, music works to beneficent ends. It casts over sorrow a calm deep as the sea. In the lines we have quoted from *Pericles*, the hum of water alone sounds over the drowned Thaisa; but Ferdinand in *The Tempest* hears a voice in the air, singing of the "sea-change" of the father he thinks drowned. Mysteriously, the songs of Ariel comfort him:—

"This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air."

The tremendous appearance of Ariel to his master's enemies (III. 3) depends for external effect on scenic contrivances. Though music, first "solemn and strange" and then mockingly soft, has its part in the scene of the airy banquet, the poetic essence of the whole vision is concentrated in Alonso's words:—

"O, it is monstrous! monstrous!
Methought the billows spoke and told me of it;
The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass."

Here the elemental sound-impressions are enhanced by a splendidly-conceived musical figure that shows us the speaker fearfully plumbing the depths of his guilt. Music in this scene is both actually and figuratively an instrument of retribution. Space would fail us to show its other functions in the beneficent, forgiving scheme worked out in his little cosmos of an island by a man who has won the power of a god. Shakespeare, in Sir Walter Raleigh's words "a passionate friend to order," has at last realised his vision of music as the symbol of an ordered harmony in the moral and spiritual worlds.

But that is not all. If music in this play is a controlled agent, yet
it is free. Voices and "twangling instruments" strike capriciously from the air; the most musical speech in our language is put into the mouth of a savage. The freest of all the arts declines to be permanently bound. And it is folly to bind down its treatment by the greatest of poets to an ordered scheme of any kind. Ariel was at last set free. As the beautiful, moody, high-mettled spirit goes to haunt the cowslip's bell, we may think him the spirit of music in its unfettered, primal form, before it was caught by the schools, or made to minister to human emotions. Shakespeare knew that spirit; its breath touched him when his songs got nearest to music's own essence. Meredith, too, felt the beat of its wings as he sang:

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"That was the chirp of Ariel
   You heard, as overhead it flew;
The farther going, more to dwell,
   And wing our green to wed our blue;
But whether note of joy or knell
   Not his own Father-singer knew,
Nor yet can any mortal tell;
   Save only how it shivers through
The breast of us, a sounded shell,
   The blood of us, a lighted dew."
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