

THE THREE BEARS

FROM THE FAIRY STORY

PHANTASY FOR THE PIANOFORTE BY
ERIC COATES

Price 4 net

The story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" lends itself admirably to picturesque instrumental treatment and the fact that every hearer is familiar with it will make this work easily intelligible. The following are, in brief outline, the incidents depicted in the score:—

An emphatic statement of the principal theme of the work at the opening gives the rhythm of the bears' indignant exclamation, "Who's been sitting in my chair?" as a kind of musical motto. This subject is then used in diminution for the description of Goldilocks as she gets up and dresses in the morning. A figure in the flutes and oboes stands for the robin who warns her of impending danger. She steals quietly downstairs and listens to the ticking of the clock, which suddenly strikes five-it is evidently a cuckoo clock. As she makes her way to the bears' house, we hear a second important theme, which will be recognised by its syncopation and by the arresting crossrhythms with which it is combined. Her knock at the door is accompanied by the robin's warning, but she enters the deserted dwelling without fear. A new section, in slow waltz time, is approached as she lies down on the small bear's bed and falls asleep. The arrival of the bears is unmistakable; the theme heard at the opening is amusingly transformed and treated in the manner of three fugal entries, the oboe representing the small bear, the clarinet the medium bear and the bassoon the big bear. Disconcerted by the disorder in their sittingroom, they run upstairs and there is a flutter of excitement as they discover Goldilocks, who wakes up with a start and runs away, with the three bears in hot pursuit. The chase is graphically depicted and the breathless pauses in the rhythm soon makes it obvious that the bears are not equal to it; there is a suggestion of swelling anger followed by a sigh of resignation. As they decide to make the best of things and return home in excellent humour, the principal theme is jauntily distorted into a jazz rhythm. Meanwhile Goldilocks continues to run in the opposite direction and her return journey, together with the story of her adventures she tells her grandmother, give the composer the opportunity of a recapitulation that imparts structural unity to his piece. The peroration is again concerned with the bears and there is a touch of drama at the close, where they put up the warning notice of "Three Hungry Bears Live Here."

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