UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

# CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1955-56

## *Seventh Concert*

# RECITAL

BY

TIM ORMEROD (Clarinet)

CHRISTOPHER MARTIN (Viola)

MARY GRIERSON (Pianoforte)

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 1956

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

# *PROGRAMME*

1. Sonata for Viola and Painoforte in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1. *Brahms*

Allegro appassionato
Andante un poco Adagio
Allegretto grazioso
Vivace

The two sonatas for clarinet and piano were the last chamber-music works written by Brahms. He arranged both sonatas for viola and piano, and for violin and piano—in the case of the latter modifying not only the clarinet part but also the piano part. It is said that Joachim was very fond of playing the violin versions, but the viola arrangements are obviously the more suited to public performance, and make a valuable addition to the literature of the instrument. In spite of the similarity of range, the transcription offers several serious difficulties ; as Tovey points out, the viola is apt to be " querulous and strained " just where the clarinet is richest in cantabile ; and it has on the other hand a fine sonorous bottom register, where the tone of the clarinet is eerie and hollow. It is difficult to say which of the two sonatas is more effective in the viola version, but on the whole the balance would seem to be tipped in favour of the more dramatic and vigorous F minor.

The first movement is in a mood of " impassioned melancholy," and—although the piano sets that mood in an opening phrase in bare octaves—is characterised by great richness of colour and texture. It culminates surprisingly in a solemn coda in which an elegiac theme in the piano (developing the figure of the third bar of the opening) is followed in canon by inversion in the clarinet. Whether the listener recognises the device matters little ; the effect is extremely impressive. The middle movements are both in the same key of A flat—a most unusual proceeding—and both are short. The second movement is a simple lyrical ternary movement, with the first theme returning for its first strain in a sombre lower octave, with delicate figuration in the accompaniment. The third movement is, according to Tovey, " the most Viennese of all Brahms' scherzos." The Finale returns to the main key, but in the major mode, and is a gay and spacious rondo somewhat in the mood of the Finale of the B flat piano concerto. The three bell-like notes of the introductory bars are responsible for much of the lively humour which pervades the movement.

2. Sonata for Clarinet and Pianoforte in E flat, Op. 120, No. 2 *Brahms*

Allegro amabile
Allegro appassionato
Andante con moto

In complete contrast with the first sonata, this work opens with a most mellow and serene movement (the term " amabile " almost always carries this meaning with Brahms). The first theme embodies the quintessence of the clarinet in its lyrical character, and there is great beauty in the continuation where the piano takes up the figure in the bass before expanding in the more powerful terms which are part of its character.

The second movement is an impassioned scherzo (in a " Ländler " tempo) in E flat minor, with a solemn and sonorous contrasting section in the major (B major = C flat major).

The Finale is a set of variations on a graceful flowing theme. The variations culminate with a lively fifth variation in the minor, followed by a serene return to the major mode and a coda which has an unexpectedly and refreshingly vigorous end.

*INTERVAL*

3. " Märchenbilder " (Fairy Tales) for Viola and Pianoforte, Op. 113 *Schumann*

Andante
Con spirito
Vivace
Molto moderato

These four short pieces are less well-known than they deserve to be. Although a late work, they are at once simple and subtle, and show the almost childlike quality that is so disarming in Schumann's style. The tempo indications are translated above from the German ; the fourth piece has the additional direction " in a melancholy mood."

## 4. Trio for Pianoforte, Clarinet and Viola (K.498)

*Mozart*

Andante
Menuetto and Trio
Rondo—Allegretto

Mozart had a special genius for understanding the nature of instruments, and in this Trio he combines the piano with the two instruments which he did so much to develop. The combination is a very lovely one, and it gives great pleasure to a pianist to be allowed to deliver the first phrase *immediately* after the clarinet, thereby demonstrating that Mozart (like other great writers for the instrument) believed that it was the business of the piano to be able to sing !

The first movement is on simple lines with a short development, and is dominated by the first theme. The Menuetto starts in straightforward fashion and expands in beautifully flowing lines ; the Trio is on a larger scale than usual and has a brilliant viola part in triplets. The Rondo is one of the most enchanting of all Mozart's rondos, with the most beguiling main theme. The first episode—in the minor—is dominated by the viola ; the second is characterised by the sweetness of " added thirds," and the movement finishes with a luxurious coda.

M.G.