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MOZART 1756-1791

Concerto in D minor for piano and orchestra, K466

Allegro

Romanze

Rondo, Allegro assai

Peter Evans *piano*

Orchestral ensemble, Alison Moffat *leader*,
conducted from the keyboard

Following on his two successful concertos, K456 and 459 in B flat and F major, Mozart turned in 1785 to this, his first minor key piano concerto. The significance of the key for Mozart invests the work with the qualities of deep emotionalism which are the high points in his career, and on this account alone many historians label this concerto the forerunner of Beethoven's.

The first movement makes great play of dualism between the soloist and orchestra, the piano's solo material being characterised by an almost lamenting quality. For the slow movement Mozart chooses, just as in the later G minor symphony, the key of the subdominant of the relative major, B flat. The return to D minor in the Finale brings with it intensified and refined passions and pathos, the pessimism of the work only being conquered finally in the coda. J.G.

Next concert: Thursday 11 May

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

A MOZART EVENING

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EDINBURGH
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CONCERTS

1971-72

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

MILES BASTER AUSTIN PATTERSON

MICHAEL BEESTON DAVID EDWARDS

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 11 May 1972

MOZART 1756-1791

Quartet in Bb K458 'The Hunt'

Allegro vivace assai

Menuetto and Trio - Moderato

Adagio assai

Duo in G for Violin and Viola, K423

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo Allegro

INTERVAL

Quartet in D minor, K421

Allegro

Andante

Menuetto - allegretto

Allegretto ma non troppo

"Vienna

1st September, 1785

To my dear friend Haydn

A father who had decided to send out his sons into the great world, thought it his duty to entrust them to the protection and guidance of a man who was very celebrated at the time and who, moreover, happened to be his best friend.

In like manner I send my six sons to you, most celebrated and very dear friend. They are, indeed, the fruit of a long and laborious study."

This celebrated letter, dedicating to Haydn the six quartets written between 1783-5, expresses Mozart's feelings as the junior partner (at this time) in one of the most fruitful relationships there can ever have been between two

composers. Mozart's debt to Haydn as a quartet composer is particularly great. Haydn's quartets opus 17 (1771) and, more especially, those of opus 20 (1772) represent a period of vital development for the composer. In these works he constantly tries new techniques, new methods of handling material, in an effort to expand his musical language. (The use of the fugal finale is the most obvious example of Haydn adopting a procedure which inevitably changed the relationship between the four players). In 1773 the young Mozart went to Vienna and in that summer wrote the six quartets, K168-173. These, modelled on Haydn's, show a change of style from the Italianate, and generally uncomplicated, earlier works. Haydn's next set of quartets appeared nine years later than opus 20, in 1781, composed, in the composer's words 'in an entirely new and special manner.' Two years later the first three of Mozart's set of six dedicated to Haydn were written, the D minor being the second of the 'sons' (the Bb is the fourth).

The absolute equality between the four instruments which both composers achieve in these quartets makes possible the greatest freedom and flexibility in treating the musical ideas. In the first movement of the D minor quartet, for instance, the two most distinctive elements of the opening idea (the falling octave of bar 1 and the dotted rhythm of bar 2) are isolated, together with a tiny triplet motif from the end of the exposition, and reworked to form a development section of great intensity. The beautifully fluid counterpoint in this section (notably the striking fugato treatment of the octave idea, and the passage which follows it) shows how completely Haydn's earlier fugal style had been integrated into a real quartet style. But what distinguishes this quartet from its companions is the extraordinary luxuriance of its harmonic language. Almost everywhere in the quartet is found that elaborate yet controlled use of chromatic harmony and melody which Mozart makes so much his own, and which gives the music its particular blend of dark restlessness and poignant beauty.

Immediately at the outset the first subject, pre-

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sented *sotto voce* with subdued diatonic harmony, repeated 'f' with an extremely expressive chromatic reharmonisation. This particular kind of colouring goes through most of the work, the only real relaxation coming from the outer sections of the slow movement, and the serenade-like trio section of the Menuetto.

The three later quartets of the six are generally more relaxed in style. Compared with the other three they are 'somewhat lighter, but at the same time excellent compositions', as Mozart's father wrote. The B $\flat$ quartet is the one which is most obviously Haydnesque in spirit, particularly in the boisterous, straightforward gaiety of the outer movements, and in the irregular phase structures of the Menuetto. The new quartet style is found here (notably in the intensive development of a five-note motif in the middle of the first movement) but applied to much simpler and generally more extrovert material than in the D minor. The Adagio, with its blend of nobility and profound expressiveness, is one of Mozart's greatest movements. EJJ

Mozart wrote his two Duos for violin and viola during a visit to Salzburg in 1783 for Michael Haydn who was ill and unable to complete a commission from the Archbishop for two works in this form. Mozart's Duos in B $\flat$ and G were handed to the Archbishop in Michael Haydn's name.

Like its companion piece, the G major duo has a remarkable fullness of texture for a string duo. As in the Sinfonia Concertante, the special qualities of each instrument are heard to equal advantage. Violin and viola take turns in melodic and accompanying passages, at times almost in the manner of a dialogue. However, a stricter contrapuntal manner is exploited in the canonic passages of the middle episode of the Rondo. LC

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