

The Forum Players: First organised in the fall of 1971 in Rome by U.S. composer James Dashow, *The Forum Players* is an international group of young musicians dedicated to the performance of contemporary music. Their highly successful first season was climaxed by a tour of eight Mediterranean cities that brought them before audiences in Istanbul, Athens, Belgrade, Tunis and Madrid. They participated in the III Semana de Nueva Musica in Barcelona last February, and in a slight departure from their contemporary repertory they presented an exciting new fully-staged production of *L'Histoire du Soldat* to Italian audiences early in the year. The repertory of *The Forum Players* follows no one particular school of thought, and in fact draws on material from an international roster of composers. New pieces have been and are being written specifically for the group by young composers from Italy, France, Great Britain, United States of America, Germany, Spain and Canada. The concerts in Scotland are the first performances for the group in Great Britain. J.D.

Edinburgh University acknowledges the financial assistance of the Scottish Arts Council.

Next concert: Thursday 8 November

THE REID ORCHESTRA

EDWARD HARPER conductor

EDNA ARTHUR violin

HAYDN Symphony No. 86 in D major

BARTOK Rhapsodies 1 & 2 for violin and orchestra

TCHAIKOWSKY Romeo and Juliet

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EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1973-74

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

Miles Baster Austin Patterson

Michael Beeston David Edwards

with

MARIKE OVERBERG

cello

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 15 November 1973

BOCCHERINI 1743-1805

Quintet No. 46 in C major

Allegro con moto

Minuetto con moto

Trio

Grave

Rondo: Allegro con moto

Luigi Boccherini began his professional career in the opera house, playing in the theatre orchestra of his native Lucca: he ended it inscribing chamber and choral works to 'citizen Lucien Bonaparte' and even to 'the French nation and republic'. But the greater part of his life was spent in court circles, particularly in Madrid, as chamber musician to the Infante Don Luis, and in Berlin, where he held a post at the court of Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, that cellist monarch to whom Mozart dedicated his last quartets. In such secluded environments Boccherini's art became a largely self-sufficient one, showing little sign of the influence of his great contemporaries. We know that he admired Haydn, but so independent is his style that Fétis, surveying his achievement from the middle of the 19th century, was 'tempted to believe that he knew no music but his own.'

Boccherini's development as a composer did not lead him into the richer harmonic and tonal regions explored by Haydn and Mozart; nor did he share their interest in the intensive working out of the musical figures. In some ways—the elegance of the lyricism, the clarity and euphoniousness of the textures—he seems almost as close to those earlier Italian masters who had most deeply impressed him in his youth, Corelli and Palestrina.

Yet even Boccherini once posed problems. One contemporary critic found his early music 'dark and indistinct . . . indulging in unnecessary complications . . . on the whole evoking horror.'

D.K.

WEBER 1883-1945

Quartet, Opus 28 (1938)

Mässig

Gemächlich

Sehr fließend

Weber's ability to achieve both unity and variety through the absolute minimum of material is nowhere better demonstrated than in this quartet. It has often been pointed out that, although the basic row of the work is 12 notes long it consists, in fact, of three statements of B.A.C.H., which effectively reduces the

melodic material to the intervals of a semitone and a minor third (with their various octave transpositions). This economy is matched by an extraordinary melodic simplicity, particularly in the first movement. Here short phrases, moving in minims or semibreves, and contrasted with faster moving *pizzicato* notes, are built up into sections which constantly reveal different aspects of the basic material, these sections separated, as always in Webern, by numerous *ritenuti* and tempo changes. The effect is of a remote but extremely expressive type of musical language: the very simplicity of the material seems to emphasize the sheer beauty of instrumental sound.

The second movement corresponds to a scherzo and trio, the scherzo being mainly good-natured *pizzicato* writing, the trio a more extended melodic statement of the material. The last movement is the most dramatic in effect. Here Webern uses a wider range of dynamics and instrumental colour, and the sections are more strongly contrasted. In the end, though, the impression the quartet leaves is that of an intensely lyrical composer, whose intimate style is particularly suited to this medium. E.J.H.

INTERVAL

SCHUBERT 1797-1828

Quintet in C (D.956)—op.posth.163

Allegro ma non troppo

Adagio

Scherzo—Presto, Trio—Andante Sostenuto

Allegretto

It would be hard to find a performance which was not a premiere for somebody. So much has been written about this work that the listener for the first time is faced with an embarrassingly large quantity of passionate criticism regarding Schubert's last chamber work, written in the year of his death. Since the personal myth of Schubert the man can be said to have begun with his death, it is the romantic side to his life and work which has inspired most of the accumulated writings until we come to the present time, when we are told by one writer that the composer would surely have revised the last two movements had he lived longer, and warned that we are bound to feel disappointment in the middle section of the first movement on technical grounds.

Perhaps the C major Quintet reflects nothing so much as the way a composer is bound to be influenced by the musical atmosphere which surrounded his earliest years. It is a coincidence

no doubt, but certainly an interesting one, that his first work still available to us was a string quintet, scored for the combination favoured by Mozart and Beethoven, of two violins, two violas and violoncello. It is an overture in C minor, very closely modelled upon the overture by Cherubini to his opera *Faniska*, and it helps us to identify the effect of the chamber music played in Schubert's home during his boyhood. It is notable that his chamber output includes very little that has to do with wind instruments, without prejudice to the Octet. The Quintet in C might almost seem to owe its origin to the one theme in the first movement which is inseparable from its original scoring for the two cellos employed in the work, a theme which amongst all the comment of the 19th century produced the mutely eloquent quotation of its opening notes on the tombstone of an English quartet leader, John Saunders.

Much has also been said of the presentiments of death as revealed in the *Trio* of the *Scherzo*, which assumes a character unlike that of most trios. Be that as it may, Schubert had already set his hand to the task which he had felt it necessary to face, namely the acquiring of greater formal contrapuntal skill, after he had finished the *Quintet*. But it is doubtful whether the great *Kontrapunktistenmacher* of Vienna, Simon Sechter, teacher of Bruckner and Hanslick, could have added very much to Schubert's instinctive part-writing; this knowledge was based upon his longest memories in a short life—the sound of stringed instruments. C.K.

Next concert: 22 November

THE REID ORCHESTRA

KENNETH LEIGHTON *conductor*

DAPHNE GODSON *violin*

AUDREY INNES *piano*

HAYDN Symphony No. 52 in C minor

DALLAPICCOLA Tartiniana No. 1

DALLAPICCOLA Piccolo Concerto per Muriel Couvreur

HAYDN Symphony No. 94 in G.

This concert is presented on the occasion of the award of the honorary degree of Doctor of Music to Luigi Dallapiccola

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1973-74

SONATAS AND CANTATAS
of the
ENGLISH BAROQUE

LEONARD FRIEDMAN *violin*

DAPHNE GODSON *violin*

MICHAEL TILMOUTH *cello*

LEON COATES *organ and harpsichord*

CAROLYN COXON
soprano

St Cecilia's Hall, Thursday 29 November 1973