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EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1973-74

CONCERT IN HONOUR OF
LUIGI DALLAPICCOLA

NEW MUSIC GROUP OF SCOTLAND

EDWARD HARPER
musical director

JANE MANNING
soprano

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EDWARD HARPER *conductor*

David Nicholson *flute and piccolo*
 George McIlwham *piccolo*
 Margaret Rennie Moncrieff *oboe*
 Rodney Mount *cor anglais*
 Janet Hilton *clarinet*
 Geoffrey Haydock *clarinet*
 Philip Greene *base clarinet*
 Edgar Williams *bassoon*
 Michael Thompson *horn*
 Richard Thomas *horn*
 Trevor Green *trumpet*
 Kevin Thompson *trombone*
 Sanchia Pielou *harp*
 Edward Harper *piano*
 Ian Robertson *piano and celeste*
 Louis Carus *violin*
 Edna Arthur *violin*
 James Durrant *viola*
 Gillian Thomas *cello*
 Valerie Botwright *double bass*

While the second part of this concert is devoted to works by Dallapiccola, the first part pays homage to Schönberg and Webern, two figures of paramount importance in the development of music in this century, whose influence on many composers including Dallapiccola has been far-reaching.

As Dallapiccola himself wrote, 'Schönberg left his successors an enormous territory to evaluate—a territory which is so large that perhaps only future generations will be able to chart it to its full extent. Every one of the problems which a musician can pose for himself has been anticipated, at least in part, by Schönberg.' It is interesting to note, in terms of the relationship between the three composers in tonight's concert, that Webern's *Concerto* is dedicated to Schönberg on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday and that Dallapiccola's *Sex Carmina Alcae* were dedicated to Webern on his sixtieth birthday and later, after his tragic death in 1945, dedicated to his memory.

SCHONBERG 1874-1951

Chamber Symphony No. 1 in E, opus 9

This work was composed in the summer of 1906 and, like his second *String Quartet*, presents a fascinating balance between what was traditional and what was new in the musical language of the time. The melodic lines and much of the harmony constantly recall Strauss and Wagner (the former particularly in the opening allegro, the latter in the slow movement). On the other hand, Schönberg's consistent use of chords built up in fourths and of the whole tone scale, combined with his own incredible contrapuntal virtuosity, lead to passages of the utmost tonal freedom. The short, slow introduction epitomises this balance of old and new. A chord in fourths is built up which is quite non-committal in its tonal implications, until the parts slide chromatically into an F-major triad. Tonality is still a basic structural feature of the design, though often the counterpoint conceals it for long periods.

While cast in one movement, the *Symphony* has all the elements of a four movement work. After the slow introduction the horn leads into the allegro which has several ideas, including a much slower second subject. At the moment where one would expect the development, Schönberg introduces a scherzo and only after this does the development section appear. This builds up to one of the biggest climaxes in the work, after which an extended statement of the fourth chords which opened the work introduces the slow movement. The recapitulation of the main allegro follows, together with a coda which combines and re-examines most of the material found in the work.

The first performance of the *Chamber Symphony* in 1907, met with incomprehension on the part of large numbers of the audience. Parts of the score even now sound bewildering in their complexity, but the ease with which Schönberg introduces idea after idea, the great exuberance and vitality of the fast sections and the expressive beauty of the slow movement make this one of his finest and most attractive works.

WEBERN 1883-1945

Concerto, opus 24

Etwas lebhaft
Sehr langsam
Sehr rasch

It is hard to imagine a greater contrast in style between the music of Schönberg and that of his pupil, Webern. Even after adopting

the twelve-note technique Schönberg still wrote music which used long, romantically conceived lines and involved, complex textures. Webern, the most radical of musical thinkers, reduced his musical material to its absolutely basic elements. Thus, in this *Concerto*, not only are the melodic intervals found in the row basically just a semitone and a major third, but the melodic lines are reduced to their most concentrated form, no instrument, with the exception of one passage, ever having more than three notes consecutively. From these fragments Webern builds sections which constantly reshape and vary the material, sections of short duration but within which is found great intensity of expression. To play or to listen to Webern demands a very high degree of concentration.

In their general aspects the three movements are clearly contrasted in mood. The first is dramatic, with sudden changes of tempo and dynamics; the second is slow, a calm and most lovely piece of music, and a lively march brings the work to its conclusion.

INTERVAL

Music by Dallapiccola b. 1904

Divertimento in Quattro Esercizi

Introduzione
Arietta
Bourrée
Siciliana

Due Studi—for Violin and Piano

Liriche Greche

Cinque frammenti di Sappho
Due liriche di Anacreonte
Sex Carmina Alcae

Of these works by Dallapiccola the first, *Divertimento* is relatively early, dating from 1934, while the others were written in the 1940's—a time when the composer's style was undergoing perhaps its most important change. The *Greek Lyrics* (1942-45) are in fact the earliest works in which Dallapiccola makes consistent use of the Schönbergian twelve-note method and, especially in the *Sex Carmina*, of the canonic techniques so beloved of Webern. Yet the most important thing to observe is that these works do not sound in the least like Schönberg or Webern, but

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are unmistakably by Dallapiccola, by the composer of the *Tre Laudi* and the *Canti di Prigionia*. The ability to absorb outside influences without basically altering one's style presupposes a very strong musical personality, which Dallapiccola undoubtedly has. It should also be remembered that he comes from a very different musical tradition from that of Schönberg and Webern.

'... composers by common consent are tending to simplify their forms; in their desire to escape from 19th century romantic subjectiveness and to write direct music... they are turning to a resplendent and impeccable example, the music of the 18th century.'

Thus wrote Castelnuovo-Tedesco in 1929, in an essay which embodied the ideals of the music of the time, to which the term 'neo-classical' was applied. Dallapiccola's *Divertimento* is very much in this tradition; though, while the formal shapes of the vocal lines and rhythms are reminiscent of the 18th century, the madrigalian features of the word-setting and the modality of some of the harmonies point to music of the 15th century and 16th century and earlier. The text is composed of 13th century poems.

The sheer beauty of vocal line and general simplicity of the harmonic structure found in this work also characterise the *Greek Lyrics* even though the compositional techniques involved here are much more sophisticated. It is probably the overwhelmingly vocal quality of his lines which gives Dallapiccola's twelve-note music its distinctiveness. While strictly applying the most involved contrapuntal procedures, Dallapiccola, in these songs, succeeds in creating an atmosphere of the most refined beauty and expression. Everything is subservient to the words and to the vocal line; the effect is quite unlike that of any other composer.

It is not surprising to find that the great majority of Dallapiccola's output involves word-setting of some kind. However, the *Due Studi for violin and piano* are a fine example of his instrumental style. They were written in 1946-47 to be played by the composer and Sandro Materassi, a violinist with whom Dallapiccola had long worked. The two contrasted movements reveal the two sides of the composer. Both are highly contrapuntal, but the first, a gentle Sarabande is a lovely example of the composer's most expressively lyrical side. The second, a fugue preceded by a Fanfare displays a brutality of expression which, while not often manifest, is never far below the surface in the composer's most serious works.

E.J.H