

15 10

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1974-75

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

Miles Baster Austin Patterson
Michael Beeston David Edwards

Printed by THE SUMMERHALL PRESS LTD
12a West Newington Place, Edinburgh

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 13 February 1975

HAYDN 1732-1809

Quartet in B minor opus 33, no. 1

Allegro moderato

Scherzando (Allegro): Trio

Andante

Presto

Haydn's opus 33 quartets were written in 1781 after a relatively long break from this sort of composition, and the 'new and special manner' which their author claimed for them was no doubt partly the result of this long period of gestation. The quartets continue the process of intensification already begun in the opus 20 set and they add a new feature for which opus 33 received the nickname *Gli scherzi*: the traditional minuet is replaced by a faster scherzando or scherzo, in some cases approaching the pace and temper later adopted by Beethoven.

The set undoubtedly influenced Mozart considerably and the B minor quartet is full of the sort of subtleties which would have engaged his attention. The opening of the allegro is tonally ambiguous and Haydn makes a nice point when it returns as second group material, this time clearly in the relative major and fusing rhythmic figures (previously quite dissociated in the first group) in a single melodic paragraph. The two-note motive from the opening is used with great imagination as a binding force in the movement and it is expanded at length in the recapitulation.

Sudden dynamic changes lend the scherzo a Beethovenian quality emphasised also by the rhythmic domination of its opening motive which is carried through into the charming trio in B major. The slow movement too seems to pluck its opening theme from the scherzo. A chromatic appoggiatura adds richness to the delicacy of its second theme. Slow movements are often the weak point in Haydn's earlier works but this one is a poised and wholly satisfying invention, an admirable foil to the intense and spirited finale.

M.T.

TIPPETT b. 1905

String Quartet no. 2 in F sharp

Allegro grazioso

Andante

Presto

Allegro appassionato

Now seventy years of age, Michael Tippett has for many years

been a dominating figure in British music. Yet it is only recently, perhaps with the success of his operas *The Midsummer Marriage* and *The Knot Garden*, that the concert-going public has ceased to be baffled by his works. The product of an original mind, his music follows no established trend or school, yet it is scarcely conservative. It is rich in detail, yet Tippett's methods are quite opposed to the microscopic workings of some of his contemporaries: it is, perhaps, an understanding of the broad scale of his writing that has eluded his listeners.

His Second String Quartet (1942) was written around the same time as some of his most popular works, among them the Concerto for Double String Orchestra (1939), *A Child of Our Time* (1940) and *Boyhood's End* (1943). Again a far from conventional chamber work, it is nonetheless a structurally simple piece of immediate appeal. Its first and last movements are vigorous and intense; the finale, an almost orthodox sonata form, is an imposing emotional climax. The second, slow movement is a strict fugue. The fast scherzo, with its original compression of the conventional structure, is perhaps the most memorable part of the work. The momentum of the Quartet is rhythmically based, and while one can hear the influences of Bartok and Stravinsky, Tippett's main allegiance is to the English madrigalists and to the Fantasias of Henry Purcell.

R.McA.

INTERVAL

DEBUSSY 1862-1918

Quatuor à cordes, opus 10

Animé et très décidé; assez vif et bien rythmé; andantino, doucement expressif; très modéré—très mouvementé et avec passion.

When Ernest Chausson wrote unfavourably of Debussy's Quartet, in 1894, the composer replied that his critic had been concerned with 'certain aspects of my work to which I attach little importance'. Since he promised to write a second quartet 'in a more dignified form', it seems likely that Chausson had been disturbed by the cavalier attitude to form which the Quartet displays, its cyclic pattern seeming a merely superficial feature.

To this aspect we, too, should 'attach little importance'. The Quartet is an imaginative lantern-show, the very insubstantiality of its ideas, which follow one another with a perverse and mysterious logic, making the atmosphere of fragrant suggestion, of

delicacy and taste, which is its very essence, and conforms to the spirit of the *Proses lyriques* which Debussy wrote in the same year.

The composer would have been happy for poets, not musicians, to write his programme notes. Thus Stéphane Mallarmé:

*Ainsi le chœur des romances
A la lèvre vole-t-il
Exclus-en si tu commences
Le réel parce que vil*

and Paul Verlaine:

*Ecoutez la chanson bien douce
Qui ne pleure que pour vous plaire.
Elle est discrète, elle est légère:
Un frisson d'eau sur de la mousse!*

R.M.

Next Concert: Thursday 20 February

REID MEMORIAL CONCERT
THE REID ORCHESTRA

MICHAEL TILMOUTH *conductor*

ALAN HACKER *basset clarinet*

DAVID NICHOLSON *flute*

FAY DUMMER

ROGER SAVAGE

FRANK BECHHOFFER

} *speakers*

MOZART-REICHA Overture, *Le Nozze di Figaro*

MOZART-HACKER Concerto for basset clarinet

BENDA Melodrama, *Ariadne auf Naxos*

Music by General Reid

Printed by THE SUMMERHALL PRESS LTD
12a West Newington Place, Edinburgh

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1974-75

ALAN WILKINSON
violin

JANET GARE
piano

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 27 February 1975