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EDINBURGH
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS

1976-77

THE REID ORCHESTRA
Miles Baster leader

EDWARD HARPER
conductor

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Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 4 November 1976

ELGAR 1857-1934

Serenade in E minor for strings

Allegro piacevole
Larghetto
Allegretto

Written in 1892 this was one of the earliest of the composer's works to become established and remained a favourite of his. Predominantly gentle and lyrical, it stands at the opposite extreme from Elgar's more extrovert *Pomp and Circumstance* style. It is a perfectly balanced work, with material from the first movement returning in the last to round the piece off. The most intense expression is to be found in the expansive melodic lines of the *Larghetto*, one of the finest movements in all Elgar.

EDWARD HARPER b. 1941

Fantasia I

This work was commissioned by Alasdair Mitchell for his Camerata Orchestra, and first performed by them in March this year. It is in one continuous movement lasting fifteen minutes and reworks and develops material taken from my chamber opera *Fanny Robin*. The work begins in a tense mood with agitated phrases on the lower strings. From these emerges a long, rising melodic line. This derives from Fanny's final despairing *arioso* in the opera, after being rejected by her lover. The climax of this first section is followed by a more tranquil passage, introduced by quiet vibraphone notes. The music for this, and the fast section it leads into, comes from Fanny's second *arioso*, in which she looks forward to her forthcoming marriage. The section ends with quiet distant bells which, however, are interrupted, the music returning to the darker mood of the opening.

This third section, starting in the lowest regions of the orchestra, contains the main development and climax of the piece. The contrasted material of strings and wind is emphasised at the climax, where the sustained string chords gradually subside under the *staccato* wind and brass chords. The elegiac final section is an extension of the *epilogue* from the opera, which is itself derived from the lament from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*.

INTERVAL

SCHUBERT 1797-1828

Symphony no. 9 in C.

Andante—Allegro ma non troppo
Andante con moto
Scherzo—Allegro vivace
Finale—Allegro vivace

This huge symphony was written in the last year of Schubert's life and, tragically, he never heard it performed. Indeed the manuscript lay untouched for many years until Schumann found it, and sent it to Leipzig, where it received its first performance under Mendelssohn in 1839. Schumann's remarks on the work make interesting reading.

'I must say at once that he who is not yet acquainted with this symphony knows very little about Schubert; and when we consider all that he has given to Art this phrase may appear to many exaggerated.' . . . 'of late we have had few orchestral works of consequence . . . most have been pale reflections of Beethoven; not to forget those tiresome manufacturers of symphonies who recall the powder and perukes of Mozart and Haydn, but not the heads that wore them. Berlioz belongs to France . . .'

'The symphony produced such an effect among us as none has done since Beethoven's days . . .' 'Here we find, besides the most masterly technicalities of musical composition, life in every vein; colouring down to the finest gradation; meaning everywhere; sharp expression in detail, and in the whole a suffusing romanticism . . .'

All Schumann's remarks about the scale of the work ('heavenly lengths') its constant, unending melodic invention, its fine orchestration and its vast range of dramatic expression remain true; it is one of the most original, beautiful and majestic symphonies ever written. E.H.

Next concert: Thursday 11 November

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

BERG Lyric Suite
SCHUBERT Quartet in D minor, *Death and the Maiden*
