

EDINBURGH
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS

1976-77

MICHAEL BEESTON

viola

DAVID LLOYD

piano

Printed by THE SUMMERHALL PRESS LIMITED
12a West Newington Place Edinburgh (031-667 5506)

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 24 February 1977

HUMMEL 1778—1837

Sonata in E flat, opus 5, no. 3

Allegro moderato

Adagio cantabile

Rondo con moto

Hummel was a virtuoso performer on the piano, and the many compositions from his large output which feature his instrument show a keen sense of pianistic effect. His style has a polish and grace which owes something to the influence of Mozart, with whom he stayed for a time as a boy, although his melodic fertility is occasionally marred by an element of squareness. His friendship with Beethoven left surprisingly little mark on his own style.

This work, perhaps the first written specifically for viola and piano is filled with engaging, richly ornamented melodies, such as the two subjects of the first movement and the main themes of both the serene slow movement and the *Rondo* finale, often introduced on the piano and echoed on the viola. However, he begins the first movement's development section with a new theme on the viola, while also entrusting the initial statements of both episodes of the *Rondo* to that instrument.

RAINIER b. 1903

Sonata

Allegro ricercare

Andante tranquillo

Presto

Priaulx Rainier is a South African composer who after studying at the South African College of Music, studied with the Scottish composer J. B. McEwen at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she became a professor in 1942.

Her work is characterised by spareness of harmony and texture, with an emphasis on extension and development of thematic ideas.

The first movement of this sonata, composed in 1945 is dominated by the rhythmic features of both the piano (in a two-note Scotch snap) and of the viola in their initial statements.

After an almost dirge-like slow movement a note of brilliance is struck in the finale, in which main ideas are the initial falling and rising minor thirds, (later recapitulated in a rhythmically and melodically varied form) and a rising *cantabile* melody on the piano.

INTERVAL

MILHAUD 1892—1974

Première Sonate

Entrée

Française

Air

Final

Milhaud's enormous output encompasses works of almost every description, while his style varies from the harsh polytonal textures of works such as the third symphony, through experimentation with jazz and Latin American techniques to elegant, classically orientated works exemplified by this the first of his two viola sonatas composed in 1944. It is based on unpublished themes of an anonymous eighteenth century composer, and with its piquant harmonies, its clean linear textures and its charm and wit, the sonata presents some of the most attractive features of the composer's idiom.

The relaxed manner of the first movement disguises the fluency of the free-flowing counterpoint. By contrast the second movement, *Française* has vigorous bouncing rhythms, and is dominated by continuous running semiquavers. The *Air* is a serene melody, in which the opening stretch of melody acts as a kind of recurring refrain. The *Final* begins with a fiery *fugato* before relaxing into a broad melodic idea. More tense contrapuntal development leads to final brief statements of the *fugato* idea with a brusque finish.

BRAHMS 1883—97

Sonata in E flat, opus 20, no. 2

Allegro amabile

Allegro appassionato

Andante con moto (with final Allegro)

The artistry of the clarinetist Mühlfeld (whom Brahms met in 1891) stimulated a remarkable sequence of late works involving the clarinet; the clarinet trio, clarinet quintet and the two sonatas of which this is the second. Fortunately for viola players, Brahms also arranged the latter as viola sonatas, allowing the viola repertoire to be enriched by some of the mellow, autumnal music of the final decade of Brahms' life.

The opening passage of the first movement establishes the

serene, lyrical dialogue between viola and piano which pervades the movement, interrupted occasionally by moments of stress. A more stormy atmosphere predominates in the outer sections of the second movement, balanced by a richly sonorous trio section. The work closes with a calm reflective theme with variations, and a rumbustious final passage.

L.C.

Next concert: Thursday 3 March

JOSEPHINE NENDICK *mezzo-soprano*
ROBERT SHERLAW JOHNSON *piano*

Songs by Purcell, Blow, Debussy, Ives, Webern and Ravel

LISZT *Vallée d'Obermann*

ROBERT SHERLAW JOHNSON Piano Sonata, no. 3

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13

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