

fairy scenes are suspended in gossamer webs of sound lending them an unreality vividly matching Shakespeare's fantasy. Of the entractes the Scherzo sets the scene for '*Over hill, over dale*' of Act II, and the Intermezzo reflects the passionate pursuits of the confused lovers though it ends with the assembly of the rude mechanicals and Bottom's '*Are we all met?*'. After Puck has squeezed the antidote into the lovers' eyes so that '*all shall be well*' they sleep to the strains of the Nocturne, and after the play of '*Pyramus and Thisbe*' Theseus opts for a bergomask ('The Dance of the Clowns') rather than a tedious epilogue from the hempen home-spuns. It may seem perverse to put the Overture last in this sequence but in fact Mendelssohn himself brings the score full circle by setting the whole of the last scene as a melodrama based on music from the Overture. Its last quiet lyrical phrase brings Oberon's peace to the silent chambers of Theseus' palace and Puck steals through the last four chords to bid good-night and 'restore amends'.
M.T.

Next Concert: Thursday 24th November St Cecilia's Hall

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

HAYDN Quartet in D major, op. 76 No. 5

TIPPETT Quartet No. 2

SCHUBERT Quartet op. 161 in G major

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EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1977-78

STRING ENSEMBLE

directed by MILES BASTER *violin*

JOHN GOULD
LORNA DUNBAR
ELIZABETH ROBINSON
PAMELA MARKS } *violin*

PAULA SNYDER
COLIN SCOTT } *viola*

ALAN JOHNSON
STEPHEN CARPENTER } *violoncello*

BOYD POMEROY *double bass*

LEON COATES *harpsichord*

St Cecilia's Hall, Thursday 8 December 1977

JOHN BLOW 1649-1708

Suite from *Venus & Adonis*

Overture

Cupid's Entry

Act Tune

A Dance of Cupids

Entry: A Dance by a Huntsman

HANDEL 1685-1759

Concerto grosso in A minor, Op. 6, no. 4

Larghetto affettuoso

Allegro

Largo, e piano

Allegro

INTERVAL

VIVALDI 1675-1741

Le Quattro Stagioni, Op. 8, nos. 1-4

1. *La Primavera*

Allegro—Largo e pianissimo sempre—Allegro

2. *L'Estate*

Allegro non molto—Adagio—Tempo impetuoso d'Estate

3. *L'Autunno*

Allegro—Adagio—La Caccia

4. *L'Inverno*

Allegro non molto—Largo—Allegro

All the music in the concert tonight was written within a period barely exceeding half a century. Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, called a masque but in fact a miniature opera, was composed about 1682 to display to greater advantage the talents of Charles II's mistress, 'Moll' Davies, as Venus and Moll's daughter, Lady Mary Tudor, a tender nine-year-old, as Cupid. The opera, with

a plot satirising court life and manners, was modelled on French works of the court of Louis XIV. Miniscule though its scale is the prologue and three acts find room for a considerable number of instrumental pieces—a French Overture, act tunes, entries and dances.

On paper Handel's A minor concerto is one of the simplest of the Op. 6 set. Typically, two of its movements make no use of the *concertino* group as soloists at all, adopting the layout of a *concerto a quattro* rather than that of a *concerto grosso*. The apparent lack of rhythmic variety, particularly in the bass parts of the first, third and fourth movements, would have defeated almost any other composer. But Handel's inspired though seemingly improvisatorial freedom of phrase structure fully compensates for this.

Vivaldi's Op. 8 was a set of twelve solo concertos published about 1725 under the title 'Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Inventione' of which the first six are all programmatic works. Of these nos. 1-4 constitute 'The Four Seasons', an attempt to depict in purely instrumental music a subject which had often enough been represented in masques of the 17th century. To each concerto Vivaldi prefixes an 'explicatory sonnet' each line of which is precisely related to passages in the music. However, these hardly disturb Vivaldi's usual three-movement form in which *ritornello* structures are prominent.

M.T.

SPRING

Spring has come, and the birds greet it with happy songs, and at the same time the streams run softly murmuring to the breathing of the gentle breezes.

Then, the sky being cloaked in black, thunder and lightning come and have their say; after the storm has quieted, the little birds turn again to their harmonious song.

Here in a pleasant flowery meadow, the leaves sweetly rustling, the goatherd sleeps, his faithful dog at his side.

Nymphs and shepherds dance to the festive sound of the pastoral *musette* under the bright sky that they love.

SUMMER

In the season made harsh by the burning sun the men and the herds languish; even the evergreens are hot. The cuckoo unlocks his voice and soon the songs of the turtledove and the goldfinch are heard.

Soft breezes breathe, but unexpectedly the north wind from its quarter seeks out a quarrel, and the shepherd weeps because he is overwhelmed by fear of the gusts and of his fate.

Fear of the flashing lightning and of the fierce thunder denies his tired body any rest while his furious troop is on the move.

How justifiable is his fear! The sky lights up, the awe-inspiring thunder brings down the fruit and the proud grain.

AUTUMN

With songs and dances the peasants celebrate the happiness of a fine harvest, and after being greatly kindled by bacchic spirits, their rejoicing ends with sleep.

Thus everyone quits both his singing and his dancing. The air is pleasant and moderate, and the season invites everyone to the agreeableness of a sweet sleep.

At the break of day the hunter goes to the hunt with guns, dogs, and horns; he puts the wild beast to flight and tracks him down.

Tired and terrified by the loud noise of the guns and dogs, the beast, now in danger of being wounded, longs for escape, but is overcome and dies.

WINTER

To tremble frozen in the icy snow; to be buffeted by the wild wind; to stamp one's frozen feet; to have excessive cold set one's teeth to chattering;

To pass to a fireside of quiet and contentment, while outside the downpour bathes all; to walk carefully on ice, going slowly in fear of falling;

To slip and fall sharply to the ground, start out again on the ice, and run until the ice breaks apart;

To hear the south wind, the north wind, and all the other winds unloosed in battle: such is winter, these are joys it brings.

There will be a silver collection in aid of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Appeal.

Next Concert: Thursday, 12th January 1978 Reid Concert Hall

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

SCHUMANN Quartet in A major, op. 41, no. 3

TIPPETT Quartet no. 3

MOZART Quartet in C major K465

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1977-78

SINGCIRCLE

GREGORY ROSE director

SUZANNE FLOWERS	soprano
PENELOPE WALMSLEY-CLARK	soprano
NANCY LONG	contralto
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP	tenor
GEOFFREY SHAW	baritone
PAUL HILLIER	bass
SIMON EMMERSON	tape & sound engineer

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 19 January 1978