

also occurs in the serene Adagio. Here the central passage begins with a beautiful variant of the first theme.

The genial third movement has something of the character of a *ländler* with two trios. By contrast the finale is vigorous, though not without an element of stress. The main idea, which begins both exposition and development, does not appear in full thereafter.

L.C.

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

Forthcoming concerts:

Saturday, 3rd December **McEwan Hall**

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
ORCHESTRA

EDWARD HARPER *conductor*

KENNETH BELL *flute*

Works by Beethoven, Mozart & Brahms

Tickets available at the door

Thursday, 8th December **St Cecilia's Hall**

String Ensemble directed by MILES BASTER

JOHN BLOW Suite from '*Venus & Adonis*'

HANDEL Concerto Grosso in A minor, op. 6, no. 4

VIVALDI The Seasons

Admission Free

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1977-78

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

Miles Baster Peter Markham
Michael Beeston Christopher Gough

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 12 January 1978

SCHUMANN 1810-1856

String Quartet in A major, Op. 41 No. 3

Andante espressivo—allegro molto moderato

Assai agitato

Adagio molto

Finale: allegro molto vivace

Schumann considered the quartets of Op. 41 the 'best works of his earlier period', a view with which Mendelssohn agreed, but which has not been shared by posterity. Still, the study of quartets by Haydn, Mozart & Beethoven which he undertook in the spring of 1842 made him aim for tighter, more logical forms, and this A major Quartet makes almost an obsession in the first movement of its opening motive of a falling fifth, on which the waltz measure of its first subject, the second subject on high 'cello, and the whole development are based. The second movement is a kind of scherzo, beginning tentatively but passing through various moods, fugal, lyrical, kinetic. The longish Adagio is the authentic Schumann with hand on heart, its most exquisite touch the delicate pizzicato which accompanies the return of the theme. The Finale is more similar to Schumann's piano music in structure: a suite of episodes is connected by reiterations of a swaggering march tune. As a concession to classical scruples, episodes 1 and 4, and episodes 3 and 6 are related to each other.

R.M.

MICHAEL TIPPETT b. 1905

String Quartet No. 3

Grave e sostenuto—Allegro moderato

Andante

Allegro molto e con brio

Lento

Allegro comodo

While Tippett's first two string quartets closely approach the classical norm, at least in their overall layout, in his third and last quartet the formal balance shifts, in a manner only hinted at in the earlier works. Completed in 1946, two years after the Second Quartet, the Third Quartet reflects Tippett's emergence from the direct influence of classical techniques, and the formulation of a mature and personal approach to musical structure. It is at once a more extended and complex work than its predecessors—it lasts half-an-hour—and yet formally its ideals are clearer, its methods more direct. The 'dramatics' of sonata form are now abandoned; musically the work is all statement.

The five movements of the Quartet are formally arranged in an 'arch'—three fastish fugues alternate with two slow 'lyrics' (Tippett's word for those free-soaring, uninhibitedly melodic movements which pervade his scores). The expressive range of the work is vast, however, and there is no feeling of ultimate return. An intense and rhetorical slow introduction heralds the first of the fugues, an energetic movement whose lengthy subject is propounded exhaustively in all four instruments. The second fugue, the 'rhythmically rigorous middle point in the scheme', is short and very fast, with two alternating subjects. The concluding movement is gentle and lilting, its fugal texture emotionally subordinate to a pervasive melodic motto in contrasting rhythm.

In expressive terms, it is the lyrical element which dominates the work. The two 'lyrics' are strongly contrasted. The first is song-like, and is built around a *cantus firmus* in long notes. The second is rhetorical and stark, its communal cadenza leading without break into the final fugue.

Tippett intended to pursue the sequence with a Fourth Quartet, to be written soon after the Third. But his plans were interrupted by the prolonged composition of *The Midsummer Marriage*—and everything that happened thereafter.

R.McA.

INTERVAL

MOZART 1756-1791

String Quartet in C major, K. 465

Adagio—allegro

Andante cantabile

Allegretto

Allegro molto

It has not been the accepted view to regard Mozart's *Dissonance* Quartet as a joke, although Mozart was fond of musical jokes—the *Rondo alla Turca* is the most hilarious—and the Quartet is one of those dedicated to a great wit, Joseph Haydn, whose pointed 'Russian' quartets had probably suggested to Mozart the composition of this set. But we have in the *Dissonance* a serene uncomplex piece, full of simple divertimento textures, formally lucid, the chromaticism of its slow movement being only tender, not at all dark or portentous. All this preceded by a grimacing slow introduction, the theme of which appears to be a grotesque distortion of the following Allegro. If the finale is thought to return to chromatic ponderings in the bass of its second subject, its coda makes light of this in a cheerful valediction of falling fifths.

R.M.