



EDINBURGH
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS

1977-78

A Concert of British String Music
STRINGS OF THE REID ORCHESTRA
Miles Baster leader

KENNETH LEIGHTON
conductor

ENID BANNATYNE
soprano

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Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 20 April 1978

ELGAR 1857-1934

Introduction and Allegro

GERALD FINZI 1901-1956

Dies Natalis

Interest in pre-war British music has grown to a considerable extent during recent years, not least among young musicians, some of whom have rediscovered the originality of composers like Ireland, Cyril Scott and Gerald Finzi.

Finzi's range of expression was limited, as he himself was the first to recognise, and he is remembered mainly for his songs (of which he left about sixty); his contribution in this field is impressive and original. He had a fine and practised taste in English poetry and a melodic gift nourished, as he said, on folksong but not fashioned by it. Indeed the most potent influence on his vocal and choral idiom was probably that of Parry.

Dies Natalis (composed in the late 1930's) remains his most successful extended work and is a setting of three poems and an excerpt from 'Centuries of Meditation' by the English metaphysical poet, Thomas Traherne. The beautiful and mystical vision of infancy expressed in Traherne drew from Finzi music of extraordinary tenderness and strength, not merely pastoral meanderings but strong counterpoint and a textural intensity unmatched in his instrumental works. His word-setting is both spontaneous and meticulous as always, and the immediacy of his reaction to the words is sustained throughout from the characteristically English false relations of the opening Intrada to the linear expressiveness of the final ostinato (Salutation).

INTERVAL

KENNETH LEIGHTON b. 1929

Concerto for String Orchestra

Lento Sostenuto

Molto Ritmico

Adagio Maestoso—Allegro

Completed in 1961, this work was written for Harvey Phillips, and first performed in London by the Harvey Phillips String Orchestra in the same year. Since then it has been widely performed both in this country and abroad and has been recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

It sets out to obtain full resonance from the medium, not by dividing the orchestra into two, but by large scale use of *Divisi*, which couples together not only various sections of violins, but also at times violins and second violas, or first cellos and violins, etc.

The first movement is elegiac, and moves from a restrained fugal opening to a high-pitched climax of feeling. The thematic material is contained in the viola theme heard at the outset.

The second movement is a Scherzo for strings pizzicati, again fugal and monothematic in structure.

The finale is the most extended movement, starting like a French Overture and launching into a strenuous Allegro. In the final section the time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/8, and the violas sing out in a positive manner against the subdued figuration of the Allegro. Their song gradually spreads over the whole orchestra and leads to a diatonicised transformation of the 'French Overture' theme.

K. L.

Next concert: Thursday 27 April **Reid Concert Hall**

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

with JAMES DURRANT *viola*

MOZART Quintet in C major K515

MARIE DARE Phantasy Quartet

BRAHMS Quintet in F major op. 88

Admission Free
