

But the other movements are equally distinguished: the fanfare-like theme of the first allegro is developed with the highest rhythmic and contrapuntal skill. In the minuet brilliant ornamentation lends a wonderful sense of exhilaration, while the rather curious bagpipe effect of the trio led to the symphony being known in Germany as "mit dem Dudelsack". (In England it was known as the "Letter V").

But the greatest exhibition of virtuosity comes in the Finale, an immensely vigorous sonata-rondo and one of the most intricate and brilliant movements that Haydn ever wrote. The invention here is astonishing particularly at the point where after returning rondo-like to the tonic key he suddenly launches into a *fortissimo* canon between upper and lower strings — a canon which continues bar after bar to our delight and excitement.

K.L.

Next Concert: Thursday 21st February

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

BEETHOVEN	Quartet Op.18 No. 4
BARTOK	Fifth String Quartet
TCHAIKOVSKY	Quartet in D major Op.11

15 pence

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EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1979-80

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

Miles Baster	Peter Markham
Michael Beeston	Christopher Gough

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 21 February 1980.

BEETHOVEN 1770–1827

Quartet in C minor Op.18 No. 4

Allegro ma non tanto

Scherzo: andante scherzoso quasi allegretto

Minuet: allegretto

Allegro

The six quartets of Op.18 were published 1800–1801, and the C minor quartet takes its place amongst them as the darkest and most earnest utterance. The soft opening theme is full of chained energy which makes it surge, almost at once, two octaves and a fifth up into the clouds, with interruptions of fierce chords as though a coda were prematurely trying to dam the flow. Like Haydn, Beethoven chooses, on reaching the relative major key, not to invent a new theme but to modify his old, narrowing its range and giving it a gentle charm.

The Scherzo is in sonata rather than ternary form, and contradicts the country-dance ancestry of all scherzi by being almost wholly concerned with *fugato*. Neither is the Minuet a relaxed country-dance: it is earnest and chromatic, the trio reversing traditional roles by making the leader accompany the other three players. The finale, in a straightforward rondo form, is one of those *alla zingarese* pieces familiar from Haydn and Brahms.

BARTOK 1881–1945

Fifth String Quartet

Allegro

Adagio molto

Scherzo – alla bulgarese

Andante

Finale

Bartók's imagination, a combination of perversity, high idealism, infinite inventiveness and technical abstruseness, reaches its apogee in the Fifth Quartet. He liked to take traditional material and distort it into something rich and strange, then present the process in reverse, the most grotesque distortions appearing first. Here the material is an utterly banal diatonic tune with *Alberti* accompaniment, marked to be played "mechanically" and "with indifference" just before the end of the last movement. Who would guess that its nursery rhyme rising scale could be the basis of the crabbed, obsessive unison outbursts at the beginning? This forbidding opening leads into a galaxy of little aimless trills, then a

strong rhythmic accompaniment figure with no melody to accompany, and at last the flowing second subject presented by the second violin. During the development our accompaniment at last acquires a melody – a fragment of the first subject – and the recapitulation is reversed in order, with all themes inverted and the whole score upside-down, giving the second subject initially to the viola.

As in the Fourth Quartet, the second and fourth movements form a pair: in the Adagio a slow chorale frames a passage of "night music" (named after the piano piece *Night Sounds*), and the Andante refers to the chorale in shuddering tremolandi. Between them, the Scherzo offers two ingratiating tunes in Bulgarian rhythm, the rapid beats in groups of 4 + 2 + 3, and inverts them on reprise.

In the Finale the main subject of the first movement is enthrallingly transformed, stage by stage, into the "indifferent" tune which forms an anti-climax in the true sense of that word. Then the figures whizz faster and faster to converge at last on the B flat which seems to be the Quartet's key note.

INTERVAL

TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893

String Quartet in D Op.11

Moderato e semplice

Andante cantabile

Scherzo (allegro non tanto): Trio

Finale (allegro giusto)

Tchaikovsky's D major Quartet is famous for its slow movement, based on a Russian folk-song, which may remind us that it dates from the nationalistic period of the first two symphonies. The elegance of the rest – in the first movement curling florid lines grow out of gentle repeated chords, while the Scherzo is not far from Delibes' ballet-music – is ruffled only when the finale, resembling a Cossack dance, accelerates to its close in the best Red Army manner.

R.M.

Next Concert: Thursday 28 February 1980

DREAMTIGER

MARGARET FIELD *soprano* KATHRYN LUKAS *flutes*
ROHAN DE SARAM *cello* DOUGLAS YOUNG *piano*

'Five Portraits'

LIGETI Sonata for solo cello
DOUGLAS YOUNG Lignes for piccolo and claves
HENRI POUSSEUR Echos II de Votre Faust
IANNIS XENAKIS Kottos for solo cello
GEORGE CRUMB Vox Balaenae

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