

*Next Concert: Thursday 13th November*

PETER WILLIAMS *organ*  
DAPHNE GODSON *violin*

J.S. BACH           The Art of Fugue BWV 1080  
                          (The First Eleven Contrapuncti)  
PROKOFIEV       Sonata for Solo Violin Op. 115  
LEIGHTON       Fantasy on a Chorale 'Es ist genug' Op. 80  
                          for violin and organ *British premiere*

*15 pence*

EDINBURGH  
UNIVERSITY  
CONCERTS

1980-81

PETER WILLIAMS  
*organ*

DAPHNE GODSON  
*violin*

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 13 November 1980

J. S. BACH 1685–1750

The Art of Fugue BWV 1080 (The First Eleven Contrapuncti)

That handful of real connoisseurs who suspects the *Kunst der Fuge* to be the most important piece of music of the diatonic period does so because in it the composer attempted to explain the nature of music's most basic elements: what a minor scale is, what a cadence is, how to harmonize (a fugue after all is only a series of harmonizations of a given theme), how to make invertible counterpoint, how to combine themes, how to control developing material. The title of 'The Art of Fugue' could quite as accurately be 'How Music Behaves'. It is no coincidence that the key is D minor – *tonus primus, le premier ton*, the key of good tuning in mean tone and other temperaments before Equal, that in which the composers 'explain' their perceptions, write their Requiems or explore their last Symphony. It is not the ingenuity of the Art of Fugue that is special but the beauty of its harmony and logic.

Organ is not specified by the composer, but since its first publication in 1751, editors have pointed out that all the pieces fit into the compass of two hands. This performance is based on my new edition for Eulenburg pocket scores, the third to be prepared in Edinburgh (Tovey 1931, Hans Gal 1951). P.W.

INTERVAL

PROKOFIEV 1891–1953

Sonata for unaccompanied violin(s) Op. 115

*Moderato*

*Andante dolce (Theme and Variations)*

*Con brio (Allegro precipitato)*

Prokofiev composed this sonata in the autumn of 1947, after the completion of his *Sixth Symphony* and his *Ninth Piano Sonata*. Its composition was something of an experiment. He had attended an exhibition concert, given by young performers, at the Bolshoi Theatre, where he had heard some of Bach's music for solo violin played in unison by an ensemble of twenty or more students. He was inspired to write a sonata in contemporary style specifically for unison performance.

The style of the piece is deliberately approachable and uncomplicated, partly because of its educational purpose, but also in keeping with a general trend towards lyrical melody and structural clarity in most of Prokofiev's late music. There are modest echoes too, of the Bach works which inspired its composition – in the opening of the first movement, in the central variation figurations, and in his frequent use of concealed two-part textures. The Sonata was published at the end of 1947 but for various reasons, not all of them musical, it met with little immediate enthusiasm on the part of young players. Since its première as an ensemble work in March 1960, it has been more frequently played, in a slightly modified arrangement, by solo performers. R.McA.

LEIGHTON b. 1929

Fantasy on a Chorale (*Es ist genug*) Op. 80  
for violin and organ

This work was composed in 1979 to a commission from the American violinist Jean Harmon and first performed in Washington D.C. in May of this year.

The Chorale *Es ist genug* is by the 17th century composer J.G. Ahle and was made famous by J.S. Bach in his Cantata 60 (O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort). Bach's setting was in turn quoted by Berg in his Violin Concerto. Indeed the first phrase of the tune sounds 20th century: four notes ascending by whole tones and thus outlining the tritone, the most unstable and ambiguous of intervals. The tritone plays an important part, both melodically and harmonically, in the development of the Fantasy which is in one movement but divided into five sections based on the five different phrases of the Chorale. The music tries to illuminate the words of the Chorale and the sections are as follows:

I. *Es ist genug*

The solo violin states the opening theme, the organ coming in with supporting chords. Then the organ has the theme, and a dialogue between the two instruments ensues, growing louder and faster until the breaking point.

II. *Herr, wenn es dir gefällt*

The theme is passed back and forth through various rhythms until the violin gives a 'pre-echo' of the next theme and the music almost fades away until the organ starts –

III. *So spanne mich doch aus*

A toccata-like section with changing rhythms (mostly 6/8). This continues into the next chorale phrase as a compositional and emotional entity.

IV. *Ich fahre sicher hin mit Frieden*

The organ has the first theme, in 4/4, while the violin continues for a while in 6/8. The violin then takes the theme in 4/4 and the organ goes off in triplets until another breaking point. There is a solo cadenza for organ (ending with the fifth phrase of the chorale) and then one for violin. The organ quietly comes in with J.S. Bach's harmonisation for the words *mein grosser Jammer bleibt darnieden*. This is the psychological climax of the piece.

V. *Es ist genug*

Both the first and fifth chorale phrases (both are to the same words) are used to begin this short section, but the fifth phrase gradually becomes metamorphosed into the first. Growing ever softer, tone clusters rise in the organ as the violin quietly soars ever higher, bringing the work to a hushed and serene conclusion.

It is enough: Lord, if it thou dost please,  
do thus unyoke me now. My Jesus comes:  
so then good night, O World! I go toward  
Heaven's home; secure in peace I journey  
thither; my great distress is left behind  
me. It is enough, it is enough.

*Next Concert: Thursday 20th November*

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

MOZART Quartet in B flat K 458

CAMILLERI Quartet

BEETHOVEN Quartet Op. 59 No. 2

Charles Camilleri will be giving a lecture on 'Structured Improvisation and its inherited sources' in the Lecture Room, Alison House at 5pm on Thursday 20th November. The lecture is open to members of the University and to the public.

15 pence

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Miles Baster Peter Markham

Michael Beeston Christopher Gough

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