

Prokofiev wrote comparatively little chamber music but pieces like the G minor quintet and the cello sonata are among the best of his earlier and later works respectively. Like Beethoven's G minor sonata, Prokofiev's Op.119 was written for a leading virtuoso — in this case Rostropovich who gave its first performance in 1949. The first movement is predominantly lyrical in character but has contrasting episodes in a quicker tempo and builds to a considerable, cadenza-like climax just before the close.

Prokofiev's colourful juxtapositions of unrelated tonalities are well in evidence in all movements and there are some felicitous details of scoring which succeed in bringing his keen sense of orchestral imagination to a chamber work.

The whimsical second movement is a kind of burlesque march not far from the world of ballet, with a slower middle section in triple time, a *pas seul* for the prima ballerina perhaps, all sinuous curves and gracious voluptuousness. The finale is a simple rondo with strongly contrasted episodes, the central one in a slower time and with an accompaniment of feathery delicacy from the cello when the piano takes up the tune. A coda of great brilliance (in fact there are two versions of it, one more flamboyant than the other) brings the sonata to a close with a reference to the opening of the first movement.

M.T.

Next Concert: Thursday 4th December

EDNA ARTHUR *violin*
LEON COATES *piano*

MOZART Sonata in B flat K454
DELIUS Sonata No.2
BRAHMS Sonata in A major Op.100

15 pence

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1980—81

EDNA ARTHUR
violin

LEON COATES
piano

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 4 December 1980

MOZART 1756–1791

Violin Sonata in B flat K454

Largo – Allegro
Andante
Allegretto

Early in 1784 a young Italian violinist Regina Strinasacchi visited Vienna, and was provided with this sonata by Mozart for her concert on the 24th April. However, such was the task involved in this composition that she only acquired the violin part on the morning of the concert, while Mozart played the piano part from a rough sketch. Nevertheless, the work in no way suffered in quality through these circumstances, and is amongst the finest of his violin sonatas.

Introduced by a spacious *Largo* the *Allegro* movement features elements of almost concerto-like display in both instruments. Apart from its opening four bars, the short central passage of the movement is freely improvisatory in character eschewing development of earlier material. The *Andante* is remarkable both for the beauty of its melodic dialogue and for the wide-ranging modulations of the central passage, which momentarily introduces a moment of tension. The final Rondo concludes with brilliant flourishes for both instruments.

ERNEST BLOCH 1880–1959

Nigun from *Baal Shem*
(Three Pictures of Chassidic Life)

At one time the reputation of the Swiss composer Ernest Bloch, (the centenary of whose birth is currently being celebrated) stood much higher than today though a revival of interest is surely overdue. His interest in his Jewish background became increasingly prominent throughout his middle years and culminated in the 'Sacred Service' of 1933. The three violin pieces of *Baal Shem* of which *Nigun* (Improvisation) is the second were composed in 1923, and also show his personal interpretation of a Jewish musical idiom.

DELIUS 1862–1934

Sonata No. 2

The second of Delius' three violin sonatas was published in 1924. It is in a single movement, although three sections can be discerned, with thematic inter-relationships between each. After an exuberantly melodic introductory passage, the principal idea of the work, a jerky descending two-bar motif, appears on the violin. The subsequent passage *poco piu tranquillo* provides a contrasting lyrical melody, although this had originally appeared as an expansion of the main idea. The central *Lento* section of the work is in a serenely melodic vein, disturbed in the middle by an appearance (*Vivace*) of the principal idea. References to material from both of the first sections are contained in the final section '*Molto vivace*'.

INTERVAL

BRAHMS 1833–1897

Violin Sonata in A Op. 100

Allegro amabile: Andante tranquillo – Vivace: Allegretto grazioso (quasi Andante)

This sonata is one of the fruits of a holiday in a villa by the lake of Thun in the summer of 1886. The soprano Hermine Spies visited him there and sang various songs by the composer, of which at least one *Wie Melodien* seems to find an echo in this sonata (as the second subject of the first movement). Like the *First Violin Sonata in G Op. 78*, which has much more explicit references to songs, this work concentrates on the *cantabile* qualities of the violin, though the outer movements are not without moments of stress. The second movement combines aspects of slow movement and scherzo in subtle juxtaposition.

L.C.