

CONCERTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Spring - Summer 2017

Tuesday 7 February 2017

1.10pm

City of Edinburgh Methodist Church

Eilidh Gillespie · flute

Nick Byrne · cello

Ian Buckle · piano

Programme of works by MARTINŮ and WEBER



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano

Bohuslav Martinů (1890 – 1959)

1. Poco Allegretto
2. Adagio
3. Andante – Allegretto Scherzando

Bohuslav Martinů was born on 8 December 1890, in the church tower of Polička, east Bohemia. Anticipating another child to feed, his father had successfully applied for the post of Keeper of the Church Tower of St Jacob's; the family of four then settled in their unusual quarters. Martinů was deeply affected by his years in the tower, and by the vast view across the land. He later wrote of feeling "completely cut off from the rest of the world, as if in a lighthouse...everything in miniature...and above it all a great, boundless space. It was this space that I had constantly before me, and that I am forever seeking in my compositions. Space and Nature, not people."

From an early age Bohuslav descended the 193 steps to attend school and take violin lessons with the local tailor. The violin won out; he was playing before he was reading. At ten he had begun to compose; his first composition was a string quartet. He continued his progress on the violin, and gave a successful recital in 1905.

The following year Martinů enrolled at the Prague Conservatory, but academic life was not to his liking. He was drawn to other interests, theatre and literature among them. He was expelled from the Conservatory for "incorrigible negligence" in June 1910; nonetheless he remained in Prague, taking advantage of the wealth of musical activity in the metropolis. Here he first encountered the music of Bruckner and Mahler, Stravinsky, Bartók, and Debussy.

During World War I Martinů avoided conscription by returning to Policka and working as a teacher. By the war's end he had joined the second violin section of the Czech Philharmonic, which gave him an intensive exposure to the workings of a fine orchestra. A small stipend then allowed him to move to Paris, then the centre of world affairs. There he came into the orbit of Roussel, who helped him immensely. As Martinů said, "With him I found everything I had come to Paris to seek."

Martinů is in that lineage of Czech composers that began with Smetana and Dvořák and reached its most exuberant flowering in the late works of Janáček. As with Janáček, Martinů's music was influenced by the rhythm and cadence of the Czech language. Like Janáček, he builds large structures through the repetition, variation, and expansion of small cells, patterns and motives. The result, especially in fast movements, is akin to looking through a kaleidoscope: colourful, distinctive fragments combine and recombine in mosaic-like patterns, propelled by an infectious rhythmic vitality.

The *Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano* (composed in 1944) meets the expectations of the listener-reader: inexhaustible invention. I would add only that the cello, that most soulful of instruments, lends the *Trio* a welcome gravitas and warmth.

Fenwick Smith

Trio for Piano, Flute and Violoncello in G minor op.63

Carl Maria von Weber (1786 – 1826)

1. Allegro moderato
2. Scherzo, Allegro vivace
3. Schäfers Klage, Andante espressivo
4. Finale, Allegro

Published in 1820, the Trio in G minor for piano, flute and violoncello, op.63, is one of Weber's few pieces of chamber music. Its genesis can be briefly retraced from the sketchy entries in the composer's diary. The first, dated 8 April 1818, reads "worked on trio"; another, dated 12 May 1818 in Dresden, informs us that he probably began by composing the rondo. Following a long hiatus due to illness Weber resumed work on the first movement and the scherzo in July 1819. The piece was finished on 25 July 1819: "Trio G minor pf flute, violoncello completed."

The third movement, *Schäfers Klage* ("Shepherd's lament"), is not mentioned in the diary. It probably derived from an Andante with variations for violoncello and piano which Weber composed in Prague in 1813 and reworked for piano, flute and violoncello (or perhaps viola) as early as 1815. This piece, like the later op.63 trio, was written for Weber's friend Dr. Philipp Jungh, a physician and accomplished cellist whom he had met in Prague in 1813.

The title *Schäfers Klage* has long been the cause of much speculation. Matthias Viertel, in his book *Die Instrumentalmusik Carl Maria von Webers* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), points out that the theme of this movement harks back to a lied with the title *Schäfers Klagelied* from Wilhelm Ehler's *Gesänge mit der Begleitung der Chitarra* (Tübingen, 1804). Its words, which were set many times by other composers (including Schubert), were by none other than Goethe. Besides the quotation from this lied in the third movement, we also find several allusions in the finale to what is probably Weber's most famous work, *Der Freischütz*. This is hardly surprising as Weber composed the trio at the same time as he was working on the opera.

Henrik Wiese

Eilidh Gillespie is a member of Royal Northern Sinfonia, with whom she features regularly as principal flute, soloist and chamber musician. She was previously a member of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and held the position of Principal Flute with the Hong Kong Sinfonietta.

Besides her work with Royal Northern Sinfonia, Eilidh enjoys a busy freelance career with other orchestras around the UK and abroad. She has worked with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia, BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra among others.

Eilidh grew up in Chester, and then studied at Edinburgh University, where she gained a first class honours degree in music. She went on to complete her postgraduate studies, with distinction, at the Royal College of Music in London where she studied flute with Simon Channing, Jaime Martin, Celia Chambers and Paul Edmund Davies, piccolo with Stewart McIlwham and baroque flute with Rachel Brown.

Nick Byrne was born in Liverpool into a large musical family. He took up the cello aged eight and began lessons with Gethyn Jones. Winner of the Andrew Brown Performance Prize and the Sir Thomas Beecham Scholarship, Nick studied at the Royal Academy of Music with David Strange and Colin Carr. He continued studying in Canada, winning the University of Manitoba Concerto Competition and making numerous recordings for CBC National Radio as cellist with the contemporary music group Groundswell New Music.

Nick is now cellist in the acclaimed Liverpool String Quartet, giving numerous World and European premiers. He has appeared as concerto soloist across the UK and North America and often performs as orchestral musician with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic and BBC National Orchestra of Wales, regularly appearing at The BBC Proms and on Radio 3.

Ian Buckle enjoys a varied freelance career working as soloist, accompanist, chamber musician, orchestral pianist and teacher. He maintains especially strong relationships with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the John Wilson Orchestra, having appeared with them as soloist on numerous occasions; and has also played concertos with the Royal Philharmonic, Opera North, Sinfonia Viva and the Manchester Concert Orchestra.

Current CD releases include transcriptions for cello and piano with Jonathan Aasgaard, a recital of new works for clarinet and piano with former BBC Young Musician winner Mark Simpson, and a disc of English music with clarinettist Nicholas Cox.