

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES AUTUMN · WINTER 2010

Concerts at The University

Friday 19 November 2010

1.10pm

St. Cecilia's Hall

Melanie Piddocke · clarinets

John Kitchen · fortepiano

Programme of works by Beethoven, Mozart
and Burgmüller.



Sonata for Basset horn Op. 17

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

- (i) Allegro moderato
- (ii) Poco adagio, quasi andante
- (iii) Rondo: Allegro moderato

All of Beethoven's chamber works for wind date from his early years in Bonn. The quality and technical demands of these works suggest that he had at his disposal wind players of a high calibre. Amongst these works is the sonata for horn op. 17, heard today in its version for basset horn. Apparently feeling the lack of a solo work for his instrument from the great composer, Josef Friedlowsky, a prominent clarinettist in Vienna and friend of Beethoven's, approached the composer to request permission to arrange the horn sonata for basset horn. Permission was duly given, resulting in the work heard today. Friedlowsky has remained largely faithful to the original horn part, only occasionally making use of the extended low range of the basset horn which sets this instrument apart from others in the clarinet family.

Grand Sonata KV. 581

[18th-century reworking for clarinet and piano of the Quintet KV. 581]

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

- (i) Allegretto
- (ii) Larghetto
- (iv) Allegretto con variazioni

Not to be confused with the basset horn, which is pitched in F, the basset clarinet is pitched a third higher in A, but unlike the regular clarinet in A, has an extra third at the bottom of its range. It is for this instrument which Mozart wrote his Clarinet Concerto KV. 622 and the Quintet KV. 581, both for his friend Anton Stadler. Stadler's instrument was made by the Viennese court instrument maker Theodor Lotz and was the only one of its kind at the time. Some time before his death in 1812 Stadler's instrument was lost (some accuse him of having pawned it) and it has not survived to the current time. No model of his instrument was therefore available, and scholars and musicians could only attempt to imagine its form from vague contemporary accounts. In the 1990s, however, a concert programme was found in Riga from Stadler's performance of the Concerto there in early 1794, clearly depicting his basset clarinet. The instrument played today is based on that drawing.

Duo for clarinet and piano Op. 15

Norbert Burgmüller (1810–1836)

Allegro — Larghetto — Allegro

Burgmüller's Duo for clarinet and piano Op. 15, composed in 1834, is a little-known gem of the clarinet repertoire. Burgmüller writes skilfully for both the technical and lyrical aspects of the clarinet, and treats both the piano and clarinets as equals - this is by no means a clarinet sonata. Burgmüller is himself also comparatively little known, a fact attributable to his early death at the age of just twenty-six. Despite his tender years, Burgmüller produced over twenty works, including symphonies, an opera, songs, string quartets and solo piano works. A friend of Mendelssohn's, Burgmüller is perhaps an archetypal Romantic composer. After a broken engagement to an opera singer, he began to suffer epileptic fits. Some years later a second failed relationship followed, shortly after which Burgmüller died while taking the spa cure in Aachen under circumstances which remain unclear. Drowning during an epileptic fit is considered a possibility, but suicide has also been suggested.

M.P.

The instruments

Basset horn – by Peter van der Poel, based on surviving basset horns by Theodor Lotz

Basset clarinet – by Peter van der Poel, based on the 1794 Riga programme

Clarinet – by Peter van der Poel, based on the only surviving clarinet by Theodor Lotz in the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva.

Fortepiano - The keyboard instrument used in today's concert is a Viennese-action fortepiano inscribed "Ioh. Fried. Kuhlbörs Orgel und Instrumentenmacher in Breslau No. 69". It is typical in most respects to the product as built in Vienna itself. The compass is five and a third octaves, from FF - a^{'''}, the instrument being double strung from FF - g, and triple strung above that to the top of the compass. It has a knee lever to lift the damper pedals, and possibly originally (or early on) had a moderator stop which is no longer extant. The instrument forms part of the Rodger Mirrey Collection, gifted to the University in 2005, and was restored to playing condition prior to its arrival in Edinburgh.

Originally from Australia, **Melanie Piddocke** began her musical studies there on modern clarinet, completing a Bachelor of Music with Honours at the Queensland Conservatorium. She then moved to Holland to pursue her interest in historical performance practice, studying for four years at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague with Eric Hoeprich. She is currently undertaking a PhD in organology at Edinburgh University, researching the wind instrument maker Theodor Lotz, as well as performing as a freelance musician with orchestras and ensembles throughout Europe.

John Kitchen is a Senior Lecturer in Music and University Organist in the University of Edinburgh. He also directs the Edinburgh University Singers, is Director of Music of Old Saint Paul's Episcopal Church and Edinburgh City Organist with duties at the Usher Hall. He gives many solo recitals both in the UK and further afield, and also plays regularly with several ensembles, covering a wide range of musical styles. In addition, he is much in demand as a continuo player, accompanist, lecturer, writer and reviewer. John has recorded extensively for both Priory and for the Edinburgh-based label, Delphian Records. Recent Delphian publications include a highly-acclaimed recording of the complete organ music of William Russell, played on the 1829 Bishop organ in St James's, Bermondsey in London, and a CD of Handel overtures and suites played on two of the harpsichords from the Raymond Russell Collection of Early Keyboard Instruments, housed at St Cecilia's Hall. A Delphian recording of nine instruments from the recently-bequeathed Mirrey Collection at St Cecilia's was released in August, and has already featured several times on BBC Radio 3. John was also heavily involved in the recently-released Organs of Edinburgh publication which comprises recordings of 22 Edinburgh organs.

FORTHCOMING CONCERT:

Friday 19 November

7.30pm

Reid Concert Hall

Edinburgh University String Orchestra

Edinburgh University Singers

William Conway · conductor

John Kitchen · chorus master and organ

Programme to include

JANÁČEK Suite for Strings JW VI/2

SCHUBERT Mass No.2 in G major D167

TICKETS: £6.00 / £4.00 students

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