

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2011

Concerts at The University

Tuesday 22 February 2011

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

The Edinburgh Quartet

Tristan Gurney · violin

Philip Burrin · violin

Michael Beeston · viola

Mark Bailey · cello

**Programme of works by SCHUBERT, TAVENER
and BEETHOVEN.**



String Quartet in C Minor 'Quartettsatz'

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Allegro assai

The work known as the 'Quartettsatz' was intended to be the first movement of a substantial Quartet in C minor. As in the case of the unfinished symphony, it is not known why Schubert decided to abandon something so promising, although when his amazingly prolific overall output is considered, it is not surprising that an occasional jewel should have escaped its setting.

The fragment which exists of the second movement of the C minor quartet was described by Einstein as 'an indescribably rich and tragic andante' and it is to be deeply regretted that this was not also completed.

However, the 'Quartettsatz' has become one of Schubert's most popular chamber works, with the high drama of scurrying violin semi-quavers alternating with the gentle lyricism of long-spun melodic lines.

Ikon of Joy / Sorrow

John Tavener (b.1944)

John Tavener's conversion to the Orthodox faith in 1977 resulted in a stream of choral works influenced strongly by both the Greek and the Russian liturgical traditions. His preference for direct statement - for an almost childlike (and certainly deceptive) simplicity - are particularly apparent in his collection of choral music, the largest section of his entire catalogue. This is especially borne out by his frequent use of the word ikon in the titles of his works - a reflection of his intention to create in music the characteristics of the icon of visual art: a stylised image of Christ, the Virgin Mary or a saint, and revered as a sacred object in the Eastern Church. The realisation in these musical ikons is characterised by a lack of "development" associated with the Western musical tradition, and resulting in music of an almost static quality, in particular where it is coupled with the vocal drone so reminiscent of the Greek Orthodox musical tradition.

Alan Tavener

Quartet in G Major, Opus 18 No 2

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

- (i) Allegro
- (ii) Adagio cantabile
- (iii) Scherzo - allegro
- (iv) Allegro molto quasi presto

The six quartets of Opus 18, written between 1798 and 1800 and dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz, are Beethoven's first published essays in the form. Earlier chamber works had included string trios, but it was the turn of the century before Beethoven could write to his friend Carl Amenda "only now do I know how to write quartets properly".

Of the set, No. 2 in G major is the most light hearted, the best aware of classical objectivity and the one in which Beethoven looks back over his shoulder at Haydn and even Mozart. There is, but not all the time, a feeling of a divertimento.

The mood of the three movements is jocular and often witty. Even the slow movement has a fast section which seems to mock the cadence figure of the slow section. At the beginning of this Adagio the first violin is supreme, the other instruments being assigned an accompanying role, but, come the reprise, the cello takes the lead.

Points which may be of special interest are the appearance half way through the first movement of the opening theme in the remote key of E Flat - a darker shadow - and the main theme of the Finale also experimenting with E Flat and the A Flat. The start of the trio in the capricious scherzo is delightfully witty and the Finale abounds in arresting imaginative writing. When the work finishes, we can certainly consider ourselves to have been entertained.

George McVicar

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

After its formation, the Edinburgh Quartet quickly became established as one of Britain's foremost chamber ensembles, appearing regularly at prestigious venues across the country including London's Wigmore Hall and The South Bank Centre. It achieved international recognition after winning the Contemporary Prize at the Evian-les-Bains String Quartet Competition and has since toured extensively across Europe, the Far East, North and South America and the Middle East. The Quartet has made numerous BBC TV and BBC Radio 3 broadcasts and can also be heard on Classic FM.

Now embarking on in its sixth decade, the Quartet is one of the longest running chamber ensembles in the UK with a busier performing schedule than ever before. The Quartet is resident at Glasgow University and Napier University and also collaborates with Aberdeen and Edinburgh Universities.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Friday 25 February

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Andrew Dean · organ

J. S. BACH, arr. RAWSTHORNE Sinfonia to Cantata 29

van NOORDT Psalm 24

ROSSI Toccata Septima

FRESCOBALDI La bergamasca

J. S. BACH Partite diverse sopra il Corale 'Sei gegrüsset, Jesu gütig'

ADMISSION FREE

Friday 25th February

7.30pm

Reid Concert Hall

Edinburgh University Chamber Orchestra

Will Conway · conductor

Louise Alder · soloist

SIBELIUS Symphony No. 6 in D minor Op.104

MOZART Exsultate Jubilate K.165

Et Incarnatus Est from *Mass in C Minor* K. 427

TICKETS: £8.00 / £5.00 available on the door

For information contact Donald Waters on 07929375608