

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES AUTUMN · WINTER 2011

# Concerts at The University

Tuesday 18 October 2011

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

## The Edinburgh Quartet

Tristan Gurney · violin

Philip Burrin · violin

Jessica Beeston · viola

Mark Bailey · cello

Programme of works by MOZART and PROKOFIEV.



## String Quartet in G major K387

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

- (i) Allegro vivace assai
- (ii) Menuetto Allegro
- (iii) Andante Cantabile
- (iv) Molto Allegro

The Quartet in G, K387 is the first of the set of six which Mozart wrote between 1782 and 1785. These quartets were inspired by and dedicated to Josef Haydn, who claimed that his own earlier set of quartets, Opus 33, was written "in an entirely new and special way", new and special in liberating the three lower instruments from their subordinate role of accompanists and in the development of the musical material. As if to demonstrate the point, bar 5 of the first movement of K387 brings a "conversation" among the top three instruments, there are passages of canonic imitation and it is the second violin which announces the second theme.

The minuet is placed second and is characterised by cross accents and chromatic passages. It is in G major with the trio providing a tonal contrast in G minor.

The slow movement, with its ornamental roudades, mainly for the first violin, suggests the opera composer and, like the Finale, is based on two themes. The contrapuntal structure of the Finale is, however, in sharp contrast. The opening theme with its fugal entries anticipates the Finale of the Jupiter Symphony. A second fugal subject is announced by the cello and works its way up through the other instruments in turn. The movement is not dominated by counterpoint but the two fugal subjects are so devised that they can be combined and, near the end, the main theme is heard from the top downwards in a close stretto. The work seems to combine the styles of the composer both of the *Magic Flute* and the last three symphonies.

George C. McVicar

## String Quartet No. 2 in F major Op. 92

Serge Prokofiev (1891-1953)

- (i) Allegro sostenuto
- (ii) Adagio
- (iii) Allegro

Prokofiev's career differed from that of his Soviet colleagues like Shostakovich, Khachaturian and Kabalevsky in that he did not spend his entire life within the borders of the Soviet Union. In 1918, after completing his formal training at the Petrograd Conservatory, Prokofiev went to New York and for many years his activities alternated principally between France and the United States of America.

The larger part of Prokofiev's output has been for the theatre, orchestra and piano, but his chamber music, although small in quantity, is of considerable importance.

On the outbreak of World War II, Prokofiev was in Russia. In 1941, he was evacuated along with other Soviet artists, poets and musicians to Nalchik, in the foothills of the Caucasian mountains. It was here in early 1942 that he composed his second string quartet.

The rich vein of native folk culture which abounded in this area was a stimulus to him, and he consciously allowed it to influence his work. Characteristic songs and dances are evoked by each of the movements – the central Adagio is a long-spun love song in which the sound of the "kemange", a Caucasian bowed instrument, is echoed. The outer movements are dances that include col legno and pizzicato effects representing some of the plucked instruments of the region.

## 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 Edinburgh Napier and Aberdeen Universities and also collaborates with Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities.

### FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Friday 21 October

1.10pm

St. Cecilia's Hall

Costantino Mastroprimiano · fortepiano

CLEMENTI Sonatas Op. 24 No. 2, Op. 37 No. 3, Op. 34 No. 2

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Friday 21 October

7.30pm

Canongate Kirk

Kammerchor Chemnitz

Wolfgang Richter · director

Edinburgh University Renaissance Singers

Noel O'Regan · director

Germany meets Scotland: celebrating an international choral partnership with music by Renaissance and other composers

TICKETS: £8.00 / £5.00 concessions

available on the door