

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES    SPRING · SUMMER 2012

# Concerts at The University

Tuesday 7 February 2012

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

**The Edinburgh Quartet**

Tristan Gurney · violin

Philip Burrin · violin

Jessica Beeston · viola

Mark Bailey · cello

Programme of works by HAYDN and BEETHOVEN.



## String Quartet in C major Op.76 No.3 'Emperor'

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

- (i) Allegro
- (ii) Poco adagio, cantabile
- (iii) Menuetto, allegro
- (iv) Finale, presto

The Opus 76 set was commissioned by Count Erdödy and published in 1799. It represents the full maturity of a composer of vast horizons, the creator of vocal, orchestral and chamber works. It was around this time that 'The Creation' was successfully premiered.

The first movement brings together a bold theme and a contrasting semiquaver figure that develops into a peasant-like dance over a drone in the lower instruments.

The Emperor's Hymn, based on a Croatian folk song with which Haydn created the Austrian National Anthem, forms the theme of a wondrous set of variations for the slow movement. Each instrument is given a chance to sing this noble theme.

The third movement is a masterly example of the genre – particularly noteworthy is the major/minor contrast in the trio.

The finale starts in A minor, three block chords introduce a flowing theme and a scurrying quaver triplet phrase. After a masterful development of these two components, the recapitulation ends with a coda in C major giving a surprising and yet inevitable conclusion.

## String Quartet in F minor, Op.95 'Quartetto Serioso'

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

- (i) Allegro con brio
- (ii) Allegretto ma non troppo
- (iii) Allegro assai vivace, ma serioso
- (iv) Larghetto espressivo – Allegretto agitato

Although written in consecutive years, 1809 and 1810, Beethoven's 'Harp' quartet and Opus 95 inhabit very different emotional worlds. While the earlier is happy and at ease with itself, the F minor quartet is introspective and 'serious'.

The first movement opens with a unison outburst that is quietened and followed by leaping octaves for the first violin. The cello, in a fresh key, attempts to bring back the opening semi-quavers, but the other instruments have more lyrical intentions. The second main theme, with its triplet figures, first appears in the viola, then in the cello and second violin. Thus Beethoven announces the thematic material for a first movement that is concise and played without repeats.

The key of D major for the second movement presents a vivid contrast. A fragment of a descending scale for the cello ushers in a lingering, expressive theme which the first violin is instructed to play 'sotto voce'. The movement has two main elements – the first violin's lyricism and the fugal writing initiated by the viola. The contrasting elements do not, however, prove irreconcilable. They share the chromaticism that is characteristic of the whole work and the lyrical theme provides the material for a protracted coda which leads without a break into the third movement, into an intense scherzo in which the trio comes round twice, the second time in the key of the slow movement.

The choice of a playful coda in a major key, for the Finale of a work that the composer himself dubbed 'serioso', gives rise to speculation. Have the dark emotions and the questing at last found release?

## 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 10 February

1.10pm

St Cecilia's Hall

Heather Slade-Lipkin · harpsichord

MARTINU Two Impromptus

RAMEAU Les Soupirs

Les Cyclopes

J.S. BACH Toccata in D major BWV 912

SCARLATTI Sonatas in D major K119, C major K133 and A minor K175

ADMISSION FREE

Tuesday 14 February

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Reid Memorial Concert

Jean Murray · flute

Audrey Innes · piano

GENERAL REID Solos

COPLAND Duo for flute and piano

DEBUSSY Six Épigraphees antiques

ADMISSION FREE