

CONCERTS

AT THE UNIVERSITY

AUTUMN–WINTER 2014

Tuesday 30 September 2014
1.10pm
Reid Concert Hall

Uli Fenner · violin
Robin Mason · cello
Peter Evans · piano

Programme of work by **SCHUBERT**.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Piano Trio in B-Flat Major, Op. 99, D. 898

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

- (i) Allegro moderato
- (ii) Andante un poco mosso.
- (iii) Scherzo: Allegro
- (iv) Rondo: Allegro vivace

'One glance at Schubert's Trio (Op. 99)—and the troubles of our human existence disappear and all the world is fresh and bright again.' So wrote Robert Schumann of this radiant and cheerful piece, with its wealth of melodic beauty, rhythmic inventiveness, and rich, Romantic harmonies. But what Schumann does not suggest in this quote are the many surprises that Schubert provides in this exciting musical journey. While following traditional forms, Schubert furnishes many twists and turns in the usual structural organization. Movement one, for example, is in sonata form, and he arrives at the recapitulation in the usual way—and then makes three false starts in wrong keys before turning to the 'right' key. Likewise, in the second movement, organized in A-B-A form, he returns the opening A section, but bends the melody quite a bit out of shape when he finally reaches the expected key. And by calling the last movement a Rondo, he leads us to anticipate a principal theme that is repeated with contrasting episodes between each return of the melody, but instead makes each appearance of the refrain a transformation of the original melody.

Schubert probably composed the B-flat trio, the first of two works in the form, during the summer of 1827. Although the work was not publicly performed nor published during Schubert's lifetime, there was a private performance in Vienna on January 28, 1828, given by Carl Maria von Bocklet, piano, Ignaz Schuppanzigh, violin, and Josef Linke, cello.

The trio opens with a noble theme played in octaves by the strings. The piano's right hand plays repeated eighth notes (two to a beat), which create a rhythmic tension with the triplets (three to a beat) of the melody. The swaggering figure in the left hand of the piano adds an extra dash of vitality to the proceedings. After allowing this theme to grow and expand, Schubert introduces the second theme, a lovely, cantabile melody played high in its range by the cello. The spacious exposition leads to a leisurely development. Then follows the three false recapitulations before the piano brings back the opening theme in the proper key, starting the regular recapitulation. A short, quiet coda ends with two abrupt, loud chords.

Schubert presents the exquisite cantilena theme of the second movement much as he does the vocal line of his songs; here the cello sings out the theme while the

piano plays an accompaniment that contributes to its expressivity and sets it into clear relief. Violin and piano statements of the theme follow, each with countermelodies in the other instruments. A complex repeated accompaniment figure with syncopations in the strings signals the start of the contrasting middle section in which the new melody is first heard in the piano. At the conclusion of this section, the violin seems to be bringing back the principal theme—but in the 'wrong' key. Finally, the music arrives at the expected key (E flat) and the piano plays a melody related to, but different from, the first theme, which seemingly completes the symmetrical feeling of the A-B-A structure.

The Scherzo finds Schubert impishly and playfully racing through the scintillating phrases to build to a climax at the very end. The wisp of a trio is an unabashed waltz—a brief, charming interlude before the Scherzo returns.

Although titled Rondo, the architecture of the buoyant last movement is closer to sonata form, with a substantial development section and no clear repetitions of the principal theme, the hallmark of a rondo. In his book on Schubert, Alfred Einstein points out the Rondo theme's resemblance to the composer's 1815 song, 'Skolie,' which has these words: 'Let us in the bright May morning take delight in the brief life of the flower, before its fragrance disappears.' Undoubtedly, the same joyful impulse that led to the creation of the song melody influenced its use in the vivacious concluding movement of the trio.

--Note from Melvin Berger's Guide to Chamber Music, ©1985

Uli Fenner was born in Luebeck, Germany and studied violin at the Hochschule für Musik in Saarbrücken with Ulrike Dierick where she was awarded a distinction for her final postgraduate recital.

Uli has performed and broadcast with some of the leading musicians in Germany, including the clarinetist Eduard Brunner and the pianist Stefan Litwin. She has also toured throughout France, Italy and Germany as leader and soloist with the Saarländisches Bach Collegium and the RicerCare Chamber Orchestra.

In 2005 Uli visited Kenya where she appeared as soloist with the Nairobi Orchestra and gave a number of violin workshops in the city.

With pianist Peter Evans she has given recitals in Saarbrücken, London and throughout Scotland. Now living in Edinburgh, Uli teaches pupils of all ages, has given performance workshops at Edinburgh University and is a founder member of the Roxburgh Quartet. She has also appeared as guest with the Scottish Ensemble, Hebrides Ensemble, the Orchestra of Scottish Opera, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Robin Mason has worked for many years as a freelance musician based in Edinburgh. As a cello recitalist, he played for several years with the late Michael Lester-Cribb, and more recently with Marilyn Boulton. As an ensemble player, Robin's experience is wide and diverse including the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of Scottish Ballet, the Nairobi Orchestra and the jazz/world quartet, Steve Kettley's Odd Times.

Robin has played with and composed for dance and theatre companies including Curious Seed, Indepen-dance, Scottish Dance Theatre, Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, Giant Productions, Bench-tours, National Theatre of Scotland, Catherine Wheels, Dundee Rep and Perth Rep. Other compositions have included *Repose*, a short film score for Fortsunlight animation.

Robin has also recorded and performed with 'Various Moons' - the songs of Colin Donati - and other singer/songwriters including Storm Gordon, Julie Dawid and Talitha Mackenzie.

With Bench-tours, he has run music workshops in East Lothian for adults with learning disabilities, culminating in performances at the Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh. Robin also teaches cello at St.Andrews University Music Centre.

Peter Evans enjoys a varied career as pianist, chamber musician, conductor and teacher. He studied at Edinburgh University and the Vienna Hochschule. Since returning to live in Scotland in the mid-1970s he has given concerts throughout Britain and Europe as well as the USA, the former USSR, Japan and Kenya. He has also given masterclasses at festivals in both Britain and the USA.

Peter has made over 80 broadcasts for BBC Radio, several appearances on BBC Television and commercial recordings for Hyperion, Unicorn-Kanchana, BMG Classics, Linn, NMC and ASV Records. He has been principal conductor of the Meadows Chamber Orchestra since its formation in 1972, is co-founder and was for twelve years an artistic director of the Hebrides Ensemble, and was for six years a member of the Scottish Arts Council. Other long associations include hundreds of concerts with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra since its formation in 1974 and fifteen years of touring, broadcasting and recording with the cellist Steven Isserlis.

Peter is married to violinist Uli Fenner and teaches piano, jazz and conducting at Aberdeen City Music School as well as in Edinburgh.