



University Music Class Room,
EDINBURGH.

FOUR HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

CONCERT II.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1909.

**A Recital of String Quartets
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.**

Performers :

Mr HENRI VERBRUGGHEN,	<i>First Violin</i>
Mr GUY MAGRATH,	<i>Second Violin</i>
Mr D. E. NICHOLS,	<i>Viola</i>
Mr JAS. MESSEAS,	<i>Violoncello</i>

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MOZART'S STRING QUARTETS.

Leaving out of account some divertimenti, an Adagio and Fugue, three quartets originally written for a wind instrument (flute or oboe) and string trio, and a *Kleine Nachtmusik* for string orchestra, we possess twenty-three string quartets of Mozart, very greatly differing in value. Of Beethoven's sixteen string quartets it may be said that every one of them is a great masterpiece and shows the master at his best. Of Mozart's twenty-three string quartets it must be said that only six of them are great masterpieces and show the master at his best. The first quartet, written at Lodi in 1770 (Köchel's Chronologico-thematic Catalogue No. 80), was the work of a boy of genius, but of a boy. The next six quartets, written in 1772 (K. Nos. 155-160), although evidencing progress, are still very slight in make and matter. In the six quartets of 1773 (K. Nos. 168-173) the composer advances more valiantly towards mastery, without, however, quite attaining it—the large space given to canon and fugue and other features prove that these compositions are excellent studies rather than grand masterpieces. All this is changed in the six quartets composed at Vienna between 1782 and 1785, and dedicated affectionately and admiringly to his older contemporary, Joseph Haydn. They were no doubt written in rivalry with the master to whom they were dedicated. Mozart himself says in the dedication that they are *il frutto d'una lunga e laboriosa fatica*. The fruit of long and laborious efforts by a genius of Mozart's power could not but be what it was—glorious. We have in these six quartets the sublimated Mozart as an artist and as a man—his craft and his character in the fulness of their development. They are not only among the most eminent *chefs-d'œuvre* of the master but also of the string quartet literature generally. After the unique six, Mozart wrote only four more quartets. Nothing can account for this strange fact but lack of appreciation by the public. As to the four quartets, they consist of a single one composed in 1786 (K. No. 499), and a triplet of 1789 and

1790 (K. Nos. 575, 589, and 590), dedicated to Friedrich Wilhelm II., King of Prussia. In them there is noticeable a serious falling off. To be sure, they are beautiful, charming, and of finished workmanship, but the sentiment, grace, and elegance, somewhat superficial. We miss in them the earnestness of purpose, sublimity of aim, and intensity of feeling. Of these four quartets Mozart could not have said that they were the fruit of long and laborious efforts. When in 1789 Mozart was in Berlin, the King, a good violoncellist and zealous cultivator of chamber-music, commissioned the Vienna master to write some string quartets for him. Mozart's last three quartets were the outcome of this commission, and in composing them the master did not forget his patron's taste and devotion to the violoncello.

The man and the artist Mozart reflect each other: the qualities of the one are the qualities of the other. Ingenuousness and affectionateness were his fundamental characteristics. Other characteristics were good-nature, generosity, lightheartedness, and joyousness. It should be noted further that his affectionateness was tender, and that in spite of his lightheartedness he was inclined to sweet melancholy. Thence come to his music the softness of the melody, the euphony of the harmony, and the symmetry of the form. Everything in it is sweet and graceful. Apart from the mellowness of the lines there is a mellowness of the sonority which arises from the well-proportioned distances of the simultaneous parts. The sonority of Mozart is quite different from that of Haydn, which is much thinner and more scattered. To carry the comparison further, Mozart is less freakish, frolicsome, and rustic, and more well-bred, grave, and aristocratic. The lyrical quality is the outstanding quality of Mozart's instrumental as well as vocal music. In his great works form is never the slave of conventionalism, but free, living, and infinitely varied. Sublime thoughts and grand passions were not the daily companions of Mozart, but he knew how to rise above his habitual self. He did so often in his best instrumental music, oftener in his dramatic works. Mozart is musically the most gifted being that has ever existed, and in no musician have natural genius and profound learning been so happily conjoined. Whatever other name can be found for him, none is truer than Master of the Beautiful.

Programme

OF

Four String Quartets by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

(1756-1791).

I. In B flat major, No. 172 of Köchel's Chronologico-thematic Catalogue (composed at Vienna in 1773).

- a.* Allegro spiritoso, 3/4.
- b.* Adagio, ♩ .
- c.* Menuetto, 3/4.
- d.* Allegro assai, 2/4.

II. In G major, the first of the six quartets dedicated to Joseph Haydn, Köchel No. 387 (composed at Vienna in December 1782).

- a.* Allegro vivace assai, ♩ .
- b.* Menuetto, 3/4.
- c.* Andante cantabile, 3/4.
- d.* Molto Allegro, ♩ .

III. In F major, the last quartet, the third of the three dedicated to Friedrich Wilhelm II., King of Prussia, Köchel No. 590 (composed at Vienna in June 1790).

- a.* Allegro moderato, ♩ .
- b.* Andante, 6/8.
- c.* Menuetto. Allegretto, 3/4.
- d.* Allegro, 2/4.

IV. In C major, the last of the six quartets dedicated to Joseph Haydn, Köchel No. 465 (composed at Vienna in January 1785).

- a.* { Adagio, 3/4.
Allegro, ♩ .
- b.* Andante cantabile, 3/4.
- c.* Menuetto. Allegro, 3/4.
- d.* Allegro, 2/4.

DATES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE FOUR
HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

Wednesday, November 3, 1909.—A Recital of String Quartets by Joseph Haydn (Op. 1, No. 1; Op. 20, No. 6; Op. 33, No. 3; Op. 54, No. 1; Op. 64, No. 5; Op. 77, No. 1). Performers: Messrs HENRI VERBRUGGHEN, GUY MAGRATH, D. E. NICHOLS, and JAS. MESSEAS.

Thursday, December 2, 1909.—A Recital of String Quartets by W. A. Mozart (in B flat [1773], in G [1782, dedicated to Haydn], in C [1785, dedicated to Haydn], and in F [1790, dedicated to the King of Prussia]).

Wednesday, January 26, 1910.—A Recital of Pianoforte and Vocal Music by R. Schumann. Performers: Miss FANNY DAVIES and Miss JEAN WATERSTON.

Wednesday, February 23, 1910.—A Recital of String Quartets by L. van Beethoven (Op. 18, No. 3, in D major; Op. 59, No. 1, in F major; and Op. 131, in C sharp minor). Performers: Messrs HENRI VERBRUGGHEN, GUY MAGRATH, D. E. NICHOLS, and JAS. MESSEAS.

FREDERICK NIECKS,

Reid Professor of Music.