

God's grandeur

Andante sostenuto largamente

SOPRANO
The world is charged with the gran-deur, the gran-deur of

ALTO
The world is charged with the gran-deur, the gran-deur of
largamente.

TENOR
The world is charged with the gran-deur, the gran-deur of

BASS
The world is charged with the gran-deur, the gran-deur of

Soprano
God. It will flame out, like shi ning.

Alto
God. It will flame out, like shi ning.

Tenor
God. It will flame out, like shi ning.

Bass
God. It will flame out, like shi ning.

KENNETH LEIGHTON MEMORIAL CONCERT

Sunday, 30 April 1989

Reid Concert Hall, University of Edinburgh

KENNETH LEIGHTON



1929 — 1988

KENNETH LEIGHTON

Kenneth Leighton was born in Wakefield on 2 October 1929 and was a chorister at Wakefield Cathedral. He studied Classics at The Queen's College, Oxford from 1947-50 completing the B.A. Degree and subsequently gained the Degree of B.Mus, studying composition with Bernard Rose. In 1951 he was awarded the Mendelssohn Scholarship and studied in Rome with Petrassi before holding the Gregory Fellowship in Music at Leeds University between 1953 and 1956. In 1956 he was appointed to the Faculty of Music at the University of Edinburgh where he subsequently became Senior Lecturer and then Reader. In 1968 he became University Lecturer in Music and Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford before returning to Edinburgh in 1970 as the Reid Professor of Music.

Leighton was one of the most distinguished and prolific post-war British composers, and his music is widely performed and broadcast in Britain and abroad. His output includes 3 symphonies, 10 concertos, the opera 'Columba', and a large number of chamber and piano works. He also made an important and substantial contribution to the music of the Church and to the organ repertoire. Among many prizes awarded to him for composition were the Busoni Prize 1956 (Fantasia contrappuntistica for piano), the City of Trieste Prize for a new symphonic work (Symphony No. 2), the Bernhard Sprengel Prize for chamber music (Piano trio Op.46) and the Cobbett Medal for distinguished services to chamber music (1967). In 1960 he was awarded the Doctorate of Music by Oxford University and in 1977 he was made an Honorary Doctor of the University of St. Andrews. In 1982 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Music. He was an outstanding pianist (his performances of Haydn sonatas being especially memorable) and was a frequent recitalist and broadcaster. He regularly conducted performances and broadcasts of his own music.

His compositional style is firmly rooted in the English tradition; Elgar and Vaughan Williams in particular meant much to him. Other important influences include Bartók and, both spiritually and technically, Bach, whom he greatly revered. Technical assurance is a characteristic of Leighton's music but, beyond this, it has great expressive intensity, directness and integrity. He was a composer who was always true to himself.

E.J.H.

A programme of music by Kenneth Leighton

God's grandeur (Gerard Manley Hopkins)
Chorale Es is genug (harmonisation by Bach)
Edinburgh University Chamber Choir—Director: Michael Turnbull

Fantasy on a Chorale (Es is genug)
Daphne Godson: violin Leon Coates: organ

Piano Quintet Op.34
Colin Kingsley with the Edinburgh Quartet

Sonata Op.64
Peter Wallfisch: piano

Concerto for Recorder, Harpsichord and Strings Op.88
John Turner: recorder John Kitchen: harpsichord
Edward Harper: conductor

*String orchestra of past and present Music Faculty
students led by the Edinburgh Quartet*

**God's grandeur — motet for unaccompanied choir
(words by Gerard Manley Hopkins)**

Edinburgh University Chamber Choir
Michael Turnbull: director

Written in 1957, this early work reveals just how quickly Leighton matured as a composer and how naturally he wrote for voices. His response to the opulence of Hopkins's imagery is highly personal, vivid and imaginative and perfectly conceived for the medium.

E.J.H.

Chorale — Es ist genug (harmonisation by J.S. Bach)

Fantasy on a Chorale (Es ist genug) Op.80 for violin and organ

Daphne Godson — *violin*
Leon Coates — *organ*

This work was composed in 1979 to a commission from the American violinist Jean Harmon and first performed in Washington D.C. in May 1980.

The Chorale *Es ist genug* is by the 17th-century composer J.G. Ahle and was made famous by J.S. Bach in his Cantata 60 (O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort). Bach's setting was in turn quoted by Berg in his Violin Concerto. Indeed the first phrase of the tune sounds 20th-century: four notes ascending by whole tones and thus outlining the tritone, the most unstable and ambiguous of intervals. The tritone plays an important part, both melodically and harmonically, in the development of the Fantasy, which is in one movement but divided into five sections based on the five different phrases of the Chorale. The music tries to illuminate the words of the Chorale and the sections are as follows:

- I. *Es ist genug* "It is enough"
The solo violin states the opening theme, the organ coming in with supporting chords. Then the organ has the theme, and a dialogue between the two instruments ensues, growing louder and faster until the breaking point.
- II. *Herr, wenn es dir gefällt* "Lord if it please thee"
A slow and intense duet between violin and organ, the theme is passed back and forth through various rhythms until the violin gives a 'pre-echo' of the next theme and the music almost fades away until the organ starts —
- III. *So spanne mich doch aus* "Do thou unyoke me now"
A toccata-like section with changing rhythms (mostly 6/8). This continues into the next chorale phrase as a compositional and emotional entity.

IV. *Ich fahre sicher hin mit Frieden* "Secure in peace I journey thither"

The organ has the first theme, in 4/4, while the violin continues for a while in 6/8. The violin then takes the theme in 4/4 and the organ goes off in triplets until another breaking point. There is a solo cadenza for organ (ending with the fifth phrase of the chorale) and then one for violin. The organ quietly comes in with J.S. Bach's harmonisation for the words *mein grosser Jammer bleibt darnieden* "My great distress is left behind me". This is the psychological climax of the piece.

V. *Es ist genug*

Both the first [fear] and fifth [resignation] chorale phrases (both are to the same words) are used to begin this short section, but the fifth phrase gradually becomes metamorphosed into the first. Growing ever softer, tone clusters rise in the organ as the violin quietly soars ever higher, bringing the work to a hushed and serene conclusion.

It is enough: Lord, if it thou dost please,
do thou unyoke me now. My Jesus comes:
so then good night, O World! I go toward
Heaven's home; secure in peace I journey
thither; my great distress is left behind
me. It is enough, it is enough.

Quintet for pianoforte and strings Op.34

Allegro con moto
Adagio sostenuto
Scherzo- Prestissimo
Passacaglia-Adagio-Presto

The Edinburgh Quartet

Miles Baster — *violin*
Peter Markham — *violin*
Michael Beeston — *viola*
Mark Bailey — *violoncello*
with
Colin Kingsley — *piano*

This work was written during 1958 and 1959, in response to a BBC commission for the 1959 Cheltenham Festival and first performed by the London String Quartet with the composer at the piano.

The texture is mainly contrapuntal, and when the treatment is not antiphonal, the piano is often given a single line within the string texture.

The first movement is modest in dimensions and its material (particularly the motto C D E flat D flat) is not fully worked out until the finale. The mood is one of restlessness (opening theme on unison strings) and the agitation grows through a transition passage, leading to a secondary idea marked 'più dolce e grazioso'. The middle section consists of a single extended paragraph in which counterpoint of rhythm adds to the feeling of development. An extended coda in moderate tempo returns to the restraint of the opening, using almost entirely the descending sequential figure of the second subject.

The slow movement is lyrical and elegiac. Solo 'cello announces the theme, and there is a contrapuntal middle section punctuated by a rhythmic figure (on the piano) which grows in dimensions as the movement proceeds.

The Scherzo is exuberant and rhythmic, with a Cantabile second theme heard first on the piano. In the middle section pizzicato strings accompany the rapid figuration on the piano and then vice versa. The Cantabile theme returns in triumph at the end.

The Passacaglia returns to the motive of the first movement, which is presented first in a series of entries on strings. Five variations follow, though the effect is one of a continuous paragraph, gaining in speed and tension all the time. The piano leads off in a final fugue and eventually against the fugal figuration (and in a different tempo) the piano introduces a slower tune, this time a majorish version of the motto. The chord of C major makes clear the basic tonality of the whole work.

INTERVAL

Sonata Op.64 (1972)

Lento e Chiaro — più mosso
Chorale with Contrasts
Toccatas and Chorale

Peter Wallfisch — *piano*

This sonata was composed for Peter Wallfisch who has for many years been an outstanding and most perceptive interpreter of my piano music, not only solo piano music but also concertos and chamber music in which the piano is included.

There are three distinct movements and the first begins with a slow bell-like, yet chromatic theme which provides a clue to the whole work with its conflict between major and minor modes. The movement is largely monothematic and proceeds with mounting tension and increasing pace, culminating in a violent declamatory return of the opening, and ending with a mysterious and hushed agitato section which both stifles the argument and acts as a miniature recapitulation.

The slow movement enfolds on two distinct levels in a way perhaps similar to that of other chamber works and in particular to that of a Piano Quartet in which strings and piano speak quite independently of each other. The Chorale is very quiet and serene throughout, but against it, and with rising dynamic tension, there proceeds an independent and eventually violent commentary which eventually gives way to a slow and expressive final section. This is a first attempt to apply to a solo instrument the idea of simultaneous and quite distinct levels of expression. The final movement also tries to embody similar conflicts but here the process is more clearly defined.

The first part of the movement consists of a series of toccata-like sections, closely related to the first movement, but more virtuosic in style. A soft chorale appears at the climax and this quite quickly stills the violence and agitation of the Toccatas. The achievement of serenity and equilibrium is in the end complete and the chorale persists through to the final chord accompanied by gentle rocking motives which extend over the whole range of the piano.

The work as a whole thus attempts to express a search for stillness amid the conflict and turmoil of experience.

Concerto for Harpsichord, Recorder and Strings Op.88

Largo Sostenuto-Allegro molto-Lento
Scherzo-Presto e precipitoso
Elegy-Adagio e sostenuto

John Kitchen — *harpsichord*

John Turner — *recorder*

Edward Harper — *conductor*

This work was composed during the second half of 1982 in response to a commission from Alan Cuckston, John Turner and the Northern Chamber Orchestra of Manchester. The first performances were given by these artists in February 1983.

The harpsichord is an intense and lyrical instrument and it is mostly these qualities which are exploited here.

The first movement opens with a solemn motive (marked "Fiero") which returns at various points and also at the end of the whole work. It is in fact the unifying factor both melodically and harmonically. Only in the short Scherzo is no reference made to it.

Structurally the piece is closely knit but elaboration and improvisation are in the nature of the harpsichord and both first movement and Elegy lead at climactic points to cadenza-like paragraphs. The music is mainly extrovert and optimistic until the final movement which perhaps contains the main emotional weight of the work.

* * * * *

Except for the first, all tonight's programme notes were written by the composer.

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EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CHAMBER CHOIR

Sopranos

Jane Chalmers
Kate Cockburn
Jane Elders
Christine Garratt
Lucy Maxwell-Stewart
Judith Plint
Rebecca Saunders

Tenors

Nicholas Cook
Andrew Sinclair
Dave Watkins

Contraltos

Carole Clarke
Kirsteen Davidson Kelly
Juliet Elles
Philippa Gardner
Shona McLuskie
Hester Marriott
Alison Prain

Basses

Rawdon Christie
Neil Coleman
Kenneth Taylor
Benedict Warren

STRING ORCHESTRA

Violins

Miles Baster
Peter Markham
Elizabeth Cawood
Alastair Henderson
Tina Ramnarine
Alison Rushworth
Rebecca Saunders
Virginia Strawson

Violoncellos

Mark Bailey
Heather Coates
Alasdair Mitchell
William Schofield

Violas

Michael Beeston
Hilary Forbes
Sophie Hay
Sally Robinson

Double basses

Boyd Pomeroy
Fiona Donaldson
Allardyce Mallon

Handwritten musical score for two staves, labeled *Hpa* and *Str-a*.

The *Hpa* staff (top) features a melodic line with a slur and the annotation *Rit poco*. The *Str-a* staff (bottom) features a harmonic accompaniment with a slur and the annotation *rit*. The score concludes with a double bar line and the word *rit* written twice.

Handwritten notes at the bottom right indicate the date and location: *Lam Dao* and *(Eau-b 19/11/82)*.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
FACULTY OF MUSIC

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7.30 pm

Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square

admission free

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String orchestra of past and present Music Faculty
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in the University of Edinburgh
invites you to*

THE KENNETH LEIGHTON MEMORIAL CONCERT

*on Sunday 30 April 1989
at 7.30 pm
Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square
admission free*

*Following the concert
there will be a
reception on the platform*

*RSVP Faculty of Music,
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