

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1957—58

*Second Concert*

THE NEW  
EDINBURGH QUARTET

ROBERT COOPER

CHRISTOPHER MARTIN

ANNE CROWDEN

JOAN DICKSON

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 24th OCTOBER, 1957

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

## PROGRAMME

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QUARTET IN D MAJOR, OP. 76, No. 5

Haydn  
(1732-1809)

Allegretto : Allegro  
Largo : Cantabile e mesto  
Menuetto—Allegro  
Finale : Presto

In all the largesse of Haydn's quartets, proffered for the most part in handfuls of six at a time, the Opus 76 set stands supreme, surpassed only perhaps by the two quartets of Op. 77 belonging to the same year, 1799. The set includes those known as the 'Quinten,' the Sunrise and the Emperor.

The D major is essentially a sunny quartet, and even though the Largo cantabile in the luxuriant and romantic 'newfoundland' of F sharp major is marked 'mesto,' it is but a nostalgic sorrow that tinges its radiant beauty. The opening Allegretto rides easily with a great spread of sail upon a broad current of melody, which flows on through changing lights and foreign keys before any sterner stress falls upon its path. And this is but a passing phase from which it emerges with enhanced beauty of decoration. Thereafter it breaks away of a sudden before a stiffer breeze into a sparkling Allegro.

The Minuet and Finale come altogether closer to the territory of Haydn's late symphonies. Indeed the Finale is a brilliant and thievishly humorous counterpart to the Military Symphony (No. 100).

S.T.M.N.

STRING QUARTET No. 2  
(First Performance)

Kenneth Leighton  
(b. 1929)

Molto Adagio—Allegro—Presto  
Marcia Lenta  
Allegro Energico  
Epilogo : Lento.

This work was begun in 1956, alongside the composer's first quartet, and completed in June of this year. (The first quartet was commissioned by the B.B.C. in connection with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Third Programme, and was first performed by the Aeolian Quartet in October, 1956).

The opening Adagio presents what might be called the motto-theme, a wedge-shaped tune which moves chromatically outwards, and is characterized by the semitone and whole-tone relationship. The rest of the material in both Allegro and Presto sections derives

from this opening, except for a syncopated scale-figure which first appears in the Presto. At the climax of the movement the theme of the Adagio is brought back by the 'cello in counterpoint against the lively material of the Presto.

Viola and 'cello begin the Slow March with a tune in dotted rhythm, but the second subject (of a more lyrical and sustained character) is soon heard on the first violin, poised above the march-tune. A mysterious transition leads to an extended working-out of the second subject, *sempre alla marcia*.

The third movement is in the manner of an energetic Scherzo which gives little respite to either players or audience. There are two distinct themes. The first uses the mixture of major and minor thirds; the second (heard first on the viola) derives its character from repeated notes and unequal rhythms. 5/8 here becomes the basic pattern. The development of these two tunes is mainly contrapuntal, but a contrasting middle section allows the first violin to soar with a more lyrical version of subject II. The two tunes then unite to form a single fugue-subject, and from here to the end there is little time to breathe.

The Epilogue is played pianissimo almost throughout, and its first chromatic theme has an obviously close relationship to the motto-theme. The second tune, on the other hand, aims to be as simple as possible and completely diatonic. Towards the end of the movement the two ideas come together; the chromatic theme fades into accompaniment, enclosed by the diatonic tune above and below. But it is clear which of them triumphs in the end.

K.L.

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## INTERVAL

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QUARTET IN E MINOR, OP. 59, No. 2

Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

Allegro  
Molto Adagio (con molto di sentimento)  
Allegretto  
Finale : Presto—Più Presto.

The three quartets of Op. 59 were composed in 1806-7, and dedicated (on publication in 1808) to Count Rasumovsky, the Russian ambassador at Vienna. Rasumovsky, himself a violinist, formed his own quartet in 1808 with Schuppanzigh as leader, and this famous quartet continued long after Rasumovsky had left Vienna, indeed until Schuppanzigh's death in 1830.

Although it opens with the sharpest possible point of definition, this first movement is so freely plastic in its phrasing, so sensitive in its emotional reactions—now tentative, now plaintive, now

exuberant, again imbued with a quiet lyrical ecstasy—that a summary analysis of the whole is impossible. The tension which underlies the whole is focussed in the great impasse of a minor-ninth which is reached in the coda and relaxed though scarcely resolved in the final bars.

It has been claimed by some that the human capacity for thinking in slow motion does not allow of a beat slower than about two seconds' duration except some intermediary points are introduced and perceptible enough to carry one over the span of the pendulum's swing. Be that as it may, we have in the opening melody of this glorious E major slow movement a most profoundly beautiful illustration of the space embraced in a melody that moves with a quite exceptionally slow pulse. The melody itself permeates a great part of the movement (which is in sonata form), but is clothed with exquisite though simple decorative rhythmical patterns which set up their own quicker pulses, sometimes of quietly alert fanfare, sometimes of even flowing lines.

The quiet and persistent sway of syncopation in the Allegretto mounts at times to an impasse of fortissimo but resolves always into the lighter touch of its earlier measures. The major Trio section with which this twice alternates celebrates that same Russian theme which Moussorgsky was to use in the coronation scene of Boris Godounov. It is essentially a repetitive theme, and so Beethoven uses it with cumulative effect culminating in a glorious jangling collision of multiple-canon.

The finale is a rondo of sturdy humour which, in a manner much akin to that of the G major Pianoforte Concerto (No. 4), uses a perversely oblique approach with the utmost relish. The pathway it has to tread (ultimately) is E minor, but it starts in C major, and the moment it comes anywhere near to E minor it slides or stamps its way around to C and starts off again. Eventually it moves on to find its second subject in B minor but soon after starts chasing its tail like a dog in a tight spin, and comes out of this game only to start marching away in C major again. But the rest of the tale needs no telling.

S.T.M.N.