

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1958—59

*Seventh Concert*

THE NEW  
EDINBURGH QUARTET

ROBERT COOPER  
ANNE CROWDEN

CHRISTOPHER MARTIN  
IAN HAMPTON

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
THURSDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1959  
AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

## PROGRAMME

### 1. QUARTET IN B FLAT, Op. 130.

Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

Adagio, ma non troppo *alternating with* Allegro  
Presto  
Andante con moto, ma non troppo  
Alla danza tedesca (Allegro assai)  
Cavatina (Adagio molto espressivo)  
Finale

Of the five "late" Beethoven Quartets, this is perhaps the most immediately appealing, in somewhat the same way as is Op. 110 of the late pianoforte sonatas; but it is also one which never fails to astonish by the subtleties and beauties which are revealed at every re-hearing. No programme-note can do more than indicate one or two points that are of note. The opening Adagio is an integral part of the first group of themes and, although it does not appear in the Recapitulation, it plays an important part in the terse development and in the beautiful coda. The second group appears in the richly contrasting key of G flat, balanced in the recapitulation by D flat, the opposite number of this pair of keys a third from the home tonic; the dynamics which involve crescendos which suddenly fade into the distance are also characteristic of Beethoven's "late" style.

The second movement is a scherzo in the tonic minor, opening quietly but with vigour; the contrasting section is in the major in a different time, and the return reveals the underlying dramatic force.

The third movement (in D flat) is marked "poco scherzando" but provides relief from the intensity of the second movement in the lyrical beauty of its themes. After two opening bars, the viola enters with the first clause of a theme over a quietly moving staccato; the violin takes it up and completes it. Two more short themes follow and then the first clause forms the basis of the transition to a second subject which contains one of the most intimate and touching phrases in the whole of Beethoven. There is no development, but, after a cadential trill at the end of the recapitulation, a spacious coda completes the movement.

In contrast to this gracious movement there comes (with the vivid change of the key to G major) the movement "like a German dance" (*alla danza tedesca*) in quick triple time with a theme of child-like simplicity. This is varied on its return; it disperses in fragments blown about like thistledown, and then quietly reassembles for a straightforward close.

The deeply solemn slow movement opens in E flat with a melody expanding to a long paragraph—with frequent cadential echoes. Re-iterated triplets and a change of mode lead to the second theme in broken accents; this gives way to a return of the first theme, considerably curtailed, completing the simple ternary scheme.

Beethoven originally ended this work with the fugue now known as the "Grosse Fuge," Op. 135. He replaced it after the first performance with the present Finale, which is actually the last composition he wrote. The intense vitality of the movement is remarkable under any circumstances, but as a last

work it is almost incredible. The unique theme enters aslant the main key and balances this opening with a second strain equally astonishing in its harmonic angles. The whole is worked out as an enormously spacious rondo.

### 2. QUARTET No. 4

Béla Bartók  
(1881-1945)

Allegro  
Prestissimo con sordino  
Non troppo lento  
Allegro pizzicato  
Allegro molto

This quartet was written in 1928 and has five movements, in contrast to the third quartet, written a year before, which has only two. The first movement opens with a vigorous chromatic theme which in the sixth bar evolves a figure in the 'cello which plays an important part throughout. Following a climax, there is a second theme in more flowing style and characteristic cross-rhythms. The movement—which has a development, recapitulation and coda—exploits the dissonances of a simultaneous tone or semitone, either thematically or in rhythmic formulae, and contains, in the development, unusual glissando figures.

A fleeting, ghostly picture expressed by the muted strings, in almost perpetual motion, constitutes the second movement. This is followed by a slow movement beginning with a rhapsodical theme in the 'cello, accompanied by sustained upper strings, who are directed specifically when to play with, and when without, vibrato. The first violin then intervenes with what suggests bird-calls, and the second violin takes up a continuation of the 'cello's rhapsodising. When the 'cello resumes, the first violin enters in dialogue; the movement dies away with the bird-like figures.

The fourth movement exploits *all* the possibilities of pizzicato. It is of ternary design with a flowing first theme which emerges on the viola; the contrasting theme is rhythmical in character.

The finale has more powerful dynamics and more forceful rhythms than the other movements. The main theme (preceded by several bars of rhythmic chords) is derived from ideas heard originally in the first movement, and is expanded to considerable length before a second theme (using the same figure) is heard; a climax with the chord rhythm closes the section. A contrasting section in lighter texture is accompanied by recollections of another figure from the first movement which presently supervenes, to be followed by the recapitulation and an effective coda.

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INTERVAL

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I. QUARTER IN C (K.465)

Mozart  
(1756-1791)

*Adagio leading to Allegro*

*Andante cantabile*

*Menuetto (Allegretto)*

*Allegro molto*

This is the last of the famous set of six quartets which Mozart dedicated to Haydn. It commences with a short *Adagio* introduction of three phrases moving in poignant chromatic harmony over a falling bass to a climax on the threshold of the key. The *allegro* disperses the shadows with the quiet serenity of its first theme, which in fact dominates the movement; its initial figure forms the cadence to the end of the second, more lively, group of themes, and the development is almost entirely concerned with it; it even has the last word—with a delicate chromatic inflection—in the coda.

The *Andante* is a simple lyrical binary form, the first theme of which is enriched with beautiful chromatic detail and further ornamented on its return. A little figure in dialogue carries the transition and plays an important part in the whole. The second theme starts with a short imitative phrase; over quiet semi-quavers in the 'cello this theme also leads the coda, and the imitations induce more profound modulations before returning to the home key. Then occurs one of Mozart's lovely afterthoughts—accompanied by the transition figure—so simple and so sublime.

The minuet is rich in texture and supple in rhythm, and is followed by a contrasting trio in the minor, led by the first violin until the return of the first phrase, which emerges in the cello.

The last movement starts with a gay rondo-like theme, though the movement is in fact not in rondo but in sonata form. The second group begins with the two violins alone and has a compelling series of falling chromatics which are enriched on repetition. This is followed by a light dancing theme which prolongs itself in whirling figures, the last of which fades out to give place most unexpectedly to a slower-moving tune in a glorious foreign key; this returns soon to G major (again with compelling chromatics in the bass) and the remaining themes of the second group. The development is short and close-knit, in a much more serious vein than might have been expected and with modulations ranging far and wide. In the recapitulation the unexpected incident in the second group is further extended with the 'cello leading the theme in canon in a still darker key. A short and rich coda ends this beautiful work.

M.G.