

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1963-64

Second Concert

THE
MARGAND QUARTET

MICHÈLE MARGAND

ROSELINE PIVETEAU

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REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 24th OCTOBER, 1963

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

PROGRAMME

I. QUARTET 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.

2. STRING QUARTET No. 3 (Op. 22)

Hindemith
(b.1895)

Fugato (Sehr langsam—Lebhafter—wie am Anfang)—
Schnell. Sehr energisch
Ruhig
Mässig schnell—
Rondo: Gemächlich und mit Grazie

When in the nineteen-twenties the fame of Paul Hindemith began to spread quickly throughout the musical world his reputation rested no less upon his stature as a performer (viola soloist and chamber music player) than upon the striking buoyant personality and spirit of live adventure exhibited in his compositions. All his music, and especially his chamber music of all genres, of which he has composed a great amount throughout his life, reveal the sure touch—one might say the personal relish—of the performer-composer. For seven years from 1915 he led the orchestra of the Frankfurt Opera; thereafter until 1929 he was the viola of the Amar-Hindemith Quartet. From 1921 onwards his works appeared annually in the programmes of the Donaueschingen Festival; but special interest attaches to the performance of his 2nd Quartet at the special festival of contemporary music held at Salzburg in 1922, for it was from that ad hoc enterprise that there evolved within a few months the International Society for Contemporary Music, at whose earliest festivals in particular several of Hindemith's chamber works first came to be heard.

The third quartet (first performed at Donaueschingen in November 1922) followed close upon the second, but already it pursued novel methods both as regards tonality and also in variation of the quartet texture by some fairly extensive passages of duo and trio, and also of solo concertante, as witness in particular the toccata-like fourth movement, and the contrapuntal duo opening of the Rondo. But perhaps the most arresting feature of this quartet is its rhythms—not only the rhythmic vitality as in the energetic second movement, or the relaxed pulse that persists almost throughout the open airy third movement, but the variety and complexity of free rhythm that inspires the opening fugato (requiring barring of variable length), and similarly but with utterly different effect the dynamic aftermath of the second. (The movement headings noted here are partly abbreviated from the technical tempo instructions, merely to serve as a useful guide.)

S.T.M.N.

INTERVAL

3. STRING QUARTET (1957) *Andre Riotte*
(b. 1928)
 (First performance in Britain)
 Allegro vivace
 Scherzo
 Fugue
4. STRING QUARTET IN F *Ravel*
(1875-1937)
 Allegro moderato
 Assez vif—très rythmé
 Très lent
 Vif et agité

This work was written in 1902—the year in which Debussy produced “*Pelleas et Mélisande*”—when Ravel was twenty-seven years of age. It is dedicated to “*mon cher maître, Gabriel Fauré,*” and, if any influence is traceable in the style, it is surely that of the fastidious elegance of that composer.

The first movement opens with a flowing melody containing in its first bars a figure which, if not quite an “*idée fixe*” keeps finding its way into later movements. The second theme, of which two bars would identify the composer, is scored two octaves apart with light accompaniment. A fine flow of melody carries the development to a big climax after which the recapitulation follows quite in the classical tradition, with, however, the adroit management of the second theme which, although given a quite different harmonic slant, reappears at exactly the original pitch.

The second movement exhibits a wealth of devices exploiting the possibilities of colour obtainable from four strings—ranging from the guitar-like *pizzicato* of the opening to the variety of effects displayed in the muted middle section. In hesitant mood the third movement begins, bringing with it presently soft reminiscences of the opening theme of the Quartet. An expressive theme appears in the viola and as it dies away, the little figure steals in again and the mood of hesitancy returns. A new theme emerges in the second violin, and leads eventually to an impassioned climax. The climax subsides and the first movement figure combined with fragments of the opening of the movement intervenes, leading to the recapitulation. The fourth movement vigorously dispels the languors of the third with a $5/8$ figure in persistent double-bowing. The second group of themes are derivatives of themes from the first movement—the “*cyclic thematic development*” which Ravel used in several of his chamber-music works. After the recapitulation a short brilliant coda concludes the work.

M.G.