

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1963-64

Seventh Concert

THE EDINBURGH
WIND QUINTET

GEORGE GWILT

RONALD MACKIE

MARGARET R. MONCRIEFF

DOUGLAS BERTRAM

SUSAN HALL

with AUDREY INNES (Pianoforte)

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY, 1964

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

PROGRAMME

1. WIND QUARTET IN B FLAT

Rossini
(1792-1868)

(No. 4 of a set of six quartets for
flute, clarinet, horn and bassoon)

Allegro vivace
Andante
Rondo

2. QUINTET IN E FLAT FOR PIANOFORTE, OBOE, CLARINET, HORN AND BASSOON (OP. 16)

Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Grave—Allegro ma non Troppo
Andante cantabile
Rondo: Allegro ma non Troppo

Until 1800, the year in which the Septet and the Horn Sonata were composed, Beethoven devoted a great deal of his attention to the wind ensemble in his chamber music, but thereafter never again reverted to this guise. This magnificent quintet published in 1801 was indeed composed in 1796, and with the two violoncello sonatas (Op. 5) of that year is amongst the first works in which he was to show the world a near conception of spacious design. The quintet is clearly inspired by and in general modelled upon Mozart's E flat quintet for the same ensemble (K. 452) of twenty-two years earlier. There is the same kind of broad introduction (of 20 bars), a very similar emphasis upon the pianoforte as *primus inter pares*, and a Rondo finale. But the differences are the more remarkable. In the first place Beethoven tends to give the lead in the wind ensemble to the clarinet in place of the oboe; secondly he gives more expansive scope to the individual members of the wind ensemble, in solo and duo; and thirdly the pianoforte part both in its technical address and in its enhanced share of thematic material is elevated to that of a concertante protagonist, a feature which inevitably excites the response of concertante excursions by other instruments; and lastly the design and every phase of it is on an altogether bigger scale. Indeed those who rightly emphasise the bigness of design exhibited in one great work after another in Beethoven's 'middle period' beginning with the Eroica Symphony, would do well to remember that middles have beginnings—for nothing could be more astonishing than the conception and mastery of size shown by this young composer of twenty-six.

INTERVAL

3. KLEINE KAMMERMUSIK FÜR 5 BLÄSER (OP 24, NO. 2)

Hindemith
(1895-1963)

1. Lustig
2. Walzer
3. Ruhig und einfach
4. (Introduction)—5. Sehr lebhaft

Variety of instrumental resource and timbre constituted a particular fascination for Hindemith from his earliest years as a composer, and wind instruments received their full meed of attention from him both in chamber music and in the selective orchestral ensembles which he frequently employed. His Opus 1 in fact was a Trio for Clarinet, Horn and Pianoforte, and his early chamber music includes a Clarinet Quintet (1924); whilst in later life he composed within five years eight sonatas each for a different wind instrument with pianoforte.

This "Little Chamber music" for wind quintet (of 1922) is the companion piece to his "Chamber music for small orchestra" (Op. 24 No. 1), and was written for the Frankfurt Wind ensemble. Its four short movements all adhere to the same general ternary design with contrasting central episode, and in some cases a brief touch of coda. The thievish merriment of the first movement disports itself upon a persistent dactylic rhythm that is not repressed by the more florid eloquence of the second theme. The quiet walse, opening with bassoon, horn and clarinet, uses the fine pencilling of the piccolo to decorate its repeated phrase, and the oboe to lead its central ternary section, and ends in retrospective mood. Flute and Clarinet set the mood and colour of the lyrical slow movement, whose middle section resting upon a very quiet texture of rhythmical ostinato (flute, clarinet and muted horn) brings an expansive oboe melody, underlined at length by bassoon. In the short introduction which heralds the finale, each actor briefly makes his bow, completely in character, before they all fall to with the robust and sturdy drone that gives full substance to its pulsing dance measure, which persists in a quiet sway of ostinato beneath the florid flute melody that provides the main contrast.

4. DIVERTIMENTO FOR FLUTE, OBOE AND CLARINET (OP. 37)

(1952)

Malcolm Arnold
(b. 1921)

Allegro energico	Andantino
Languido	Maestoso
Vivace	Piacevole

5. SEXTET FOR PIANOFORTE AND WIND INSTRUMENTS *Poulenc*
(1899-1963)

Allegro vivace—presque le double plus lent—Tempo I
Divertissement: Andantino—le double plus vite—Tempo I
Finale: Prestissimo—subito très lent

Poulenc wrote a number of chamber works for wind ensemble of one or another kind, with or without pianoforte, strings or voice, and of these this sextet composed in 1930-32 and seemingly revised before 1939, is the most substantial.

The work is characteristically compounded of cyclic recurrence, development and transformation of themes on the one hand, and on the other of contrasting melodies of gaiety and humour which are often naively frank in their happy swagger (though dexterous and quick witted in their tonal opportunism—much as is the case with Dohnanyi) which somewhat emphasise a sectional design in the sequence of events. Poulenc was himself a brilliant pianist, and the pianoforte writing is eloquent of his own personal relish in the instrument. For considerable stretches it provides a continuum of percussive or of pulsating harmonic background to the terse melodic figures or more extended themes of the wind instruments, but frequently discarding this role it commands the arena in rich pianistic soliloquy, as for example at the opening of the quiet, slow central episode of the first movement to which the intruding melodic recitative of the solo bassoon diverts the hitherto prevailing pungent humour and vivacity. Now this beautiful pianoforte melody, so new in its impression, is nothing new in its germinal essence, for it is transformed out of the flourish or turn of figure that tops the initial spilling scale that starts the work, and is the motive to which the reflective coda of the finale reverts when it brings a sudden hush to the more boisterous proceedings of that rondo-like movement.

A full analysis can serve no useful purpose unless supported by ample quotations, but a word may be added about Poulenc's recapitulatory methods. The return in the first movement is prompted with dry humour by the bassoon, but when it comes the wind themes are at first all transposed a fifth from their original ground with the pianoforte remaining undisplaced, and the eventual alertly marching coda is an entirely unpredicted conclusion. Unpredicted too is the gaiety of the central section of the romantic Divertissement, which movement opening very expressively in D flat major at length is recapitulated in A flat major, shadowed at the very last moment by the minor.

S. T. M. N.