

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1965-66

*First Concert*

THE  
EDINBURGH QUARTET

MILES BASTER

PHILIP CLARK

AUSTIN PATTERSON

DAVID EDWARDS

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 14th OCTOBER, 1965

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

## PROGRAMME

### 1. QUARTET IN G MAJOR (Op. 64 No. 4)

Haydn  
(1732-1807)

Allegro con brio  
Minuet : Allegretto  
Adagio (Cantabile sostenuto)  
Finale : Presto.

The six quartets of Op. 64 published in 1790 were dedicated as had been the preceding two smaller sets of Op. 51 and Op. 54 (of 1788-9) to Johann Tost who about this time, having married advantageously, became a respected cloth merchant. He was himself a violinist and may perhaps be identified with the Johann Tost who had played in the Esterhazy orchestra during the seventeen-eighties. These twelve quartets present Haydn in full maturity, and are especially striking for the variety of inventiveness (and the unpredictability) with which Haydn handles his material and his forms. Tovey, commenting that the Op. 64 set bears some resemblance to Op. 33 (the so-called "Russian" quartets) of nine years earlier, sums up their character in general as "gloriously developing the lighter side of Haydn's art forms". This development is indeed fascinating, for it allows on the one hand of simplicity itself as in this Minuet and the lyrical Adagio (which as in three other quartets of this set extends its song in full length phrases and with decorated repeats around a contrasting minor episode in the same vein), and on the other hand of extraordinary plasticity and condensation in handling sonata form as in this opening Allegro, and in the final Presto which has all the air of a rondo finale without indeed being such. It is only a half-truth to say that the first movement is based upon a single subject — but the first subject does invade the secondary group and this is so volatile in its complexity of minor-major tonality, chromaticism, forthright sturdy virtuosity, and simple tunefulness (codetta), all in quick succession, that one is left guessing as to where the composer will place his emphasis in subsequent restatement. And rightly so, for nowhere does Haydn give a more fascinating demonstration than he does here that sonata form is a living principle of inventive design and not a formula.

### 2. QUARTET NO. 2 (Op. 92)

Prokofiev  
(1891-1953)

Allegro sostenuto  
Adagio — Poco piu animato — Tempo I  
Allegro — Andante molto — Allegro

Sergei Prokofiev, virile and productive composer and brilliant pianist, received his training at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. His teachers in composition included Rimsky-Korsakov, Liadov and Tscherepnin, and for pianoforte Annette Essipov. He had already begun to establish a reputation as composer-conductor (e.g. with "Classical Symphony" 1918) before he left Russia for some years to live and work in the U.S.A. and in Paris, but returned to Russia in 1927. His first string quartet (Op. 50) was commissioned in 1930 by the Library of Congress, Washington. This second quartet was composed in 1942 whilst Prokofiev was living in the Caucasus whither he had been evacuated by the authorities the previous year.

Fascinated by the vivid character of the folk music of Kabarda and Balkara, he drew upon it for the thematic material of this quartet, in which the sturdy rhythm of the folk dance melody and the modal character of the lyrical themes are conspicuous.

Though the title does not state so, the quartet is in F major (with slow movement in the Phrygian-Aeolian realm of E minor-A minor) and there is a basically classical adherence to tonality apart from occasional development in polytonality. The first movement indeed is as clear an exemplar of simple sonata form as one could find in this century.

The Adagio after setting a quiet harmonic background in gentle pulsing rhythm introduces its first simple melody on the 'cello. An overlay of florid arabesque extends about the continuance of this melody (often doubled by violin and 'cello two octaves apart). The triplet motion then assumes a new piquant staccato character as the central episode brings the animation of a delicate violin allegretto accompanied pizzicato or by a spattering of dancing bows, the recapitulation resuming at enhanced pitch with the arabesque enriched melody.

The virile finale quickly juxtaposes the gist of its first two main themes and then opens out in a full scale rondo. The very sturdy strong rondo theme recurring in different registers (and sometimes changing its stamp to a tip-toe dance) alternates with two episodes — the first an impassioned melody above a powerful moto-perpetuo ostinato, the second of delicate tuneful relaxation. Then unexpectedly the touch of a violin scale at the cadence is taken up in all seriousness by the 'cello in an impassioned cadenza (Andante molto) opening out the powerful melodic central episode to which a condensed recapitulation succeeds.

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## INTERVAL

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### 3. QUARTET IN E FLAT MAJOR (Op. 51)

Dvorak  
(1841-1904)

Allegro ma non troppo  
Dumka : Andante con moto — Vivace — Tempo I — Presto  
— Vivace  
Romanze : Andante con moto  
Finale : Allegro assai

This, the third of the eight quartets published during Dvorak's lifetime, dates from 1879, at which time Dvorak's chamber music was beginning to receive recognition outside Bohemia. The prevailing mood of the first movement is that set by the suave mellow sounds of the opening theme, although abundant latent energy is soon released by excitement of the little dactylic motif which adorns the first melodic phrase, so that the second theme becomes a veritable dance.

The principle of the Dumka (meditation), as most commonly interpreted by Dvorak for his own purposes (though with no apparent justification by tradition or etymology), is the alternation of pathos and quiet

rhapsody with outbursts of rhythmical vigour of a scherzo-like vivacity. Here the opening melody (G minor) with its thrummed pizzicato accompaniment has already found relief and ease in alternation with a quiet major episode, before it abandons itself (in note and in deed) to a vivacious scherzo in the major key. But as these alternations are thereafter re-enacted the tables of tonality are turned upon this scherzo.

The Romanze in a nocturne-like manner sustains and freely elaborates a single melodic conception throughout, but illuminates this with magically sudden changes of light and harmonic colouring that lie about the pivot of B flat and G major.

The Finale with the frankest gaiety confesses itself to be in a syncopated mood. One is prepared for the lyrical episode in which this high-spirited rondo finds relief, but much more contrapuntal excitement lies beyond this than one at first surmises.

S. T. M. N.