

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1967-68

Third Concert

THE AMPHION
WIND QUINTET

DAVID NICHOLSON *flute* PHILIP GREENE *clarinet*
MARGARET R. MONCRIEFF *oboe* JOHN DEAS *horn*
LAURENCE TAYLOR *bassoon*
with MICHAEL LESTER-CRIBB *pianoforte*

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC
THURSDAY, 9th NOVEMBER, 1967
AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

PROGRAMME

1. 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.

2. QUINTET IN E FLAT (K.452) FOR PIANOFORTE, OBOE, CLARINET,
HORN AND BASSOON
Mozart

Largo—Allegro moderato

Larghetto

Rondo: Allegretto

In a letter of 3rd March 1784, Mozart listed twenty-two concerts at which he was performing between 26th February and 3rd April, including his own three weekly private concerts (or 'Academies') with orchestra, and two theatre concerts, eventually reduced to one on April 1st. It was at this concert that the Quintet, completed only three days earlier, received its first performance. Mozart also played "a brand new concerto" K.451, completed on 22nd March, and conducted three symphonies! Only on 15th March had he completed the previous concerto (K.450 in B flat). By the time that he wrote to his father about these events on 10th April he had already completed a further concerto (the G major K.453 for Barbara Ployer). Of the Quintet Mozart remarks not only that it was wonderfully played, but also that he regarded it as the finest work he had by then composed. Beethoven was undoubtedly moved by this model to write his Quintet Op. 16, but there is this difference of emphasis that with Beethoven the clarinet may be said to lead the wind group, whereas with Mozart it is the oboe; and whilst all instruments are *concertante* the pianoforte is particularly so, contrasted with the wind ensemble as a whole.

INTERVAL

3. TRIO SONATA IN G MINOR FOR FLUTE, OBOE AND BASSOON
Vivaldi
(c. 1680-1743)
- Allegro ma cantabile
- Largo
- Allegro non molto

The composer styled this 'Concerto', but that must be understood as equivalent to the French 'Concert'—a chamber music ensemble. No continuo is mentioned, and although realisation of the unfigured bass on the harpsichord would be appropriate it is not indispensable.

4. 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 of 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.