

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1967-68

Fifth Concert

THE
EDINBURGH QUARTET

MILES BASTER

AUSTIN PATTERSON

PHILIP CLARK

DAVID EDWARDS

with

GEORGE GWILT *Flute*

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 11th JANUARY, 1968

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

PROGRAMME

I. SERENADE IN D MAJOR, Op. 25 for Flute, Violin and Viola.

Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegro
Tempo ordinario d'un Menuetto
Allegro molto
Andante con variazioni
Allegro scherzando e vivace
Adagio, attacca subito allegro vivace

This is a gem among miniatures. But do not hastily conclude that Beethoven picked up his flute from some Arcadian mantelpiece. Mozart seems to have been not unaware that a flute had accompanied the minstrel boy to the wars, and this little fellow is quick to inform us that he comes straight from the post of chief trumpeter in Lilliput, which his friends rightly consider to be a great joke.

The Minuet pays a gracious compliment to Papa Haydn. Its first trio is monopolised by the two strings in a duet, but the flute receives full reward for his patience in the second trio.

In the Allegro molto (D minor) they all do their best to spite the first beat of the bar but (perhaps at the viola's suggestion) decide to take things easily and in the major for a space.

The air of the variations (G major) is largely harmonised in four parts by the strings, the flute joining them only in the repeats. Three variations are sufficient to give each in turn his treat. The flute having been accorded the place of honour is content thereafter merely to touch in the high lights for the others. The whole brotherly little affair is charmingly rounded off in a Coda.

The Scherzando is just a simple game of dot and carry one; but playful people are often serious at heart, and these three search their hearts a little in D minor before going on with the game.

The Adagio is a melodious introduction to the finale. Here flute and fiddle start off gaily together until the viola suggests that they all scatter a few arpeggios about the place. These leave the strings in possession with the flute quietly standing by until they condescend to come up and play the tune in the proper place, which they quickly do. It is a Rondo of course, and as a first episode they all fall to accompanying as though a fourth person might appear at any moment. But that trick is easy to see through, and they soon fall back again on their previous jokes. For the second episode they decide that they might as well just accompany one another's lively chatter. And so the merry scene goes on until they all fall to begging one another's pardon like three people who are over-polite about going through the door, until they all succeed in going off with a laugh together.

2. TWO FANTASIAS OF FOUR PARTS *Purcell* (1658-1695)

No. 6 in A minor
No. 8 in G major

Purcell composed his nine four-part fantasias for viols in the

summer of 1680. Each is dated precisely, recording that the first seven were written between 10th and 30th June, the last two some weeks later at the end of August. These richly inspired fantasias—so wonderfully inventive and so searching in their harmonies and liberal modulations—are the culmination of the art of a distinctively English genre which flourished over a hundred years from the latter half of the sixteenth century, numbering amongst its finest composers Byrd, Gibbons, Jenkins, William Lawes and Matthew Locke. Three years later with his Twelve Sonatas of Three Parts, Purcell has addressed himself most engagingly to the Italian style, to the violins and the thorough Bass, and the age of the viol fantasia is over (though some feeling for its textural structure and harmonious spontaneity still persists embedded in those first essays in the new style.)

Fantasia No. 6 is designed in four brief sections, the first slow and sustained, the second a closely wrought contrapuntal interplay of three subjects, the third a very brief expressive interlude, the fourth a quick sequential elaboration of two complementary motives or 'points'.

Fantasia No. 8 falls into three sections—a sustained eloquent elaboration of the time-honoured motto of the rising tetrachord and its inverse, an expressive homophonic and modulatory interlude, and finally a brisk fugato busy with stretto from the outset.

3. VARIATIONS FOR FLUTE AND STRING *D. F. Tovey* QUARTET ON A THEME BY GLUCK (Op. 28) (1875-1940)

Tovey composed the major part of his chamber music in the period of six or seven years prior to the 1914 war (the year of his appointment to the Reid Chair at Edinburgh). These Variations, one of his finest works, were written and performed in 1913, and published the following year with dedication to the eminent French flautist Louis Fleury (1878-1926), a splendid musician and a very vital figure in the spreading of interest in the repertoire of wind and various chamber music ensemble (past and present) throughout Europe, well known in the London concerts and a great friend of the composer.

The Theme—Andante espressivo alla Siciliano: non troppo lento—is played by flute with pizzicato accompaniment. Needless to say, it is the harmonic structure rather than the melodic line which is to be chiefly exploited in the ensuing six variations. Of particular importance is Gluck's expressive emphasis upon the Neopolitan sixth (flat supertonic) both in the middle and in the cadence of the first eight-bar phrase and again in the middle of the second twelve-bar phrase of his G minor theme. In Var. I the dotted rhythm of the Siciliano is smoothed away with new melodic realisation of the inherent harmonies. Var. II brings lively imitative entries and a varied repeat of the first half—a contrast of devices within one and the same variation which in Var. III (Larghetto pesante e maestoso) is even more pronounced as forceful cross rhythms in 9/8 time (grouped as 3/4 + 3/8) alternate with quiet sustained lyricism.

Var. IV—*Allegro agitato ma non troppo presto*—is a yet more complex structure, a compound of agitated chromatic lines and forked arpeggio with touches of melodic expansion by the flute. It is 'through-composed', the passages which correspond to repeats being subtly condensed in length. Var. V *Adagio sostenuto* in G major is the melodic 'slow movement' of the set, linked to Var. VI which restores the minor key and the *Andante tempo* of the theme. Here a *pianissimo* quasi-contrapuntal *ostinato* murmurs and chatters on the strings to which at the repeat the flute in low register restores the theme, with viola and later violin in semi-canonic imitation. The whole is extended into a subtle coda of softest sounds which quietly evaporates.

I N T E R V A L

4. STRING QUARTET IN G MINOR, Op. 10

Debussy
(1862-1918)

Animé et très décidé
Assez vif et bien rythmé
Andantina doucement expressif
Très modéré—Très mouvementé et avec passion

This quartet, numbered I by the composer but the only one he wrote, was composed in 1893, four years after César Franck's great quartet in cyclic form, and ten years before Ravel's quartet. Debussy wrote no other chamber music until the last years of his life when he produced the three sonatas in a consciously new style. The quartet is contemporary with the famous "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune", which marks the first full flowering of impressionism in Debussy's art.

Debussy was not within the entourage of Franck's pupils and disciples, and indeed many of the Russian nationalists such as Borodin were more congenial to his artistic outlook than were any contemporary French composers. Nevertheless, Franck's conception of cyclic form had a marked influence upon the structure of this quartet which in turn so clearly influenced Ravel. Debussy's second movement (the 'scherzo', though not so named) is pervaded by an *ostinato* motif (lyrically expanded to form the contrasting section) which is a compact variation of the decisive main theme of the first movement, and in both forms this material plays a very prominent part in the finale. Only the exquisitely beautiful slow movement (*Andantino*) in D flat major lies altogether outside this associative thematic territory; but if I have emphasised the origin of Debussy's thematic and formal structure, it should be added that the style and the harmonic language are essentially personal to Debussy, and the work justly ranks as one of the most original and historically most important works in the chamber music of the last seventy odd years.

S.T.M.N.