

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1967-68

*Seventh Concert*

THE  
EDINBURGH QUARTET

MILES BASTER

PHILIP CLARK

AUSTIN PATTERSON

DAVID EDWARDS

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 8th FEBRUARY, 1968

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

## PROGRAMME

### I. QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 50, No. 5

*Haydn*  
(1732-1809)

Allegro moderato

Poco Adagio

Menuetto Allegretto

Finale: Vivace

The set of six quartets Op. 50 was composed between 1784 and 1787, being the next group composed by Haydn after the famous set of 1781 dedicated on their publication in 1782 to the Grand Duke Paul of Russia and consequently nicknamed the 'Russian Quartets', but also known as Gli Scherzi because the composer designated the minuets of that set as such. This F major quartet was composed in 1785 the same year as the lone Op. 42 in D minor—that exceptional work in the whole series which, it may be remembered, was performed at these concerts last season.

The form of Haydn's first movement and of the finale is indeed 'sonata' form, but as Tovey warned the expectant student "from Op. 50 onwards there is no dealing with Haydn's first movements except by individual analysis." To begin with, the trim first subject enjoys the recurrent privileges that rondos believe to be their perquisite, enhancing the repetitions with ever fresh touches of decoration, and turning the outcome in every case who knows whither. Secondly if there is the normal second-subject territory, it is occupied nevertheless by the original subject and the lively passage work that so naturally runs out of it. Somewhat the same is true of the lively dotted and trilled finale which mounts its theme on a single string per phrase. It has all the infection and winning ways of a true rondo and couldn't care less if such a claim were disputed.

The Poco Adagio in B flat is known as 'The Dream', though when and why this name was first suggested seems to remain obscure. It is a comparatively brief movement in simple binary form, a sustained violin melody accompanied by curling smooth harmonies curving now down now upwards, and dissolving at times into a spatter of light chains of staccato. The Minuet revolves upon its first utterance with an omnipresent grace-turn, but keeps a surprise of syncopation in store for its final cadences, the Trio in the minor key resuming the same motive (now forte) and extending with unusual phrase lengths such as thirteen or seven bar phrases.

S.T.M.N.

### 2. QUARTET NO. 1, Op. 25

*Britten*  
(b.1913)

Andante sostenuto—Allegro vivo—Andante—  
Allegro—Andante

Allegretto con slancio

Andante calmo

Molto vivace

The quartet was composed in 1941 when Britten was in America, for the Coolidge Quartet. Though not stated in the title, it is fundamentally a quartet in D major with scherzo in F major and slow movement in B flat. But Britten's clustered harmonies, with much use of concordant seconds and sevenths, are his own language and his methods of modulation very original. So too is his formal design. The two alternating tempi with their extreme contrast between ethereal calm and tempestuously vigorous activity are basic to the first movement, but within the vigorous allegro there is first an extensive singing melody for violin as a main theme (repeated twice again with canonic imitations first at the tenth above and then simultaneously at the third and the fifth. The second subject appears with a certain quietening to pianissimo as a light line of scalic ascent and descent leading to resumption of the introductory Andante now in F. The development arises from the second theme with elements of the first below becoming increasingly prominent and indeed aggressive until recapitulation emerges in full force. Ultimately the extremes of tempo and mood stand side by side in close alternation.

The extreme contrast of dynamics again pervades the staccato scherzo which throws out from its brittle points little jets of triplet figure, now brusque now liquified into a flowing theme, the whole designed on the basis of alternating two ideas.

The Andante calmo, in 5/4 throughout, is a simple song-like movement in ternary form, the central phrase being more animated and adding to elements of the song melody a widely slung declamatory arpeggio figure that revolves about the melodic line, the recapitulation bringing moments of inversion and condensation of the opening song.

The finale kicks off in great good humour with a rough-and-tumble fugato which in time launches the 'cello onto an aggressive ostinato against the voluminous-toned melody poured out by the other strings in unison. All this vigour is eventually whittled away into softest shades and fragmentation from which its motives emerge in wisps of legato and delicate pizzicato before they mount to the ultimate climax with a jubilation of swinging bells.

S.T.M.N.

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I N T E R V A L

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3. QUARTET IN A FLAT MAJOR, OP. 105

Dvorak  
(1841-1904)

Adagio, ma non troppo—Allegro appassionato

Molto vivace

Lento e molto cantabile

Allegro, non tanto.

Although Dvorak began composing his A flat Quartet in 1895 at the end of his stay in the United States, he broke off when he had just begun to sketch the development of the first movement. On returning to his native land he at first had no wish to resume composition, but preferred instead to enjoy the beauties of the countryside that he missed so sorely during his long absence. Two days before Christmas he wrote in this happy vein: "Praise God we are all well, and we rejoice that after three years we can again spend a delightful and happy Christmas in Bohemia. It was so different last year in America, where we were so far away in a foreign land and separated from all the children and friends! However, the Lord has granted us this blissful moment, and therefore we are all inexpressibly happy. Now I am very industrious. I work so easily that I couldn't wish for anything better. I have just finished a new quartet in G major (Op. 106) and now I am coming to the end of a second in A flat; I have completely finished two movements already, I am just writing the Andante, and I think I shall finish the work after the festival."

The Quartet in A flat, which bears a lower opus number than the G major Quartet, was thus the last of Dvorak's fourteen string quartets to be completed. It is one of his best works for this medium, and contains one of his finest scherzos.

The groping introduction to the first movement throws the relative brightness of the Allegro appassionato into relief. The first subject comprises two contrasting elements, the first derived from the introduction and the second a melody with drooping sevenths, but each ends with a similar quintuplet, which together with other elements is important in the development. In the recapitulation Dvorak successfully short circuits the first subject.

The scherzo, in which  $3/4$  and  $3/2$  rhythms succeed one another and are combined together, is a very characteristic example of an idealised *furiant*, a lively dance of Bohemia. The tail of the opening phrase, which becomes the head of "Jacobin," written seven years earlier, for the first violin quotes from this before long, and three-quarters of the way through the Trio a different quotation from the same opera occurs, rising quietly, mainly by semitones at first, over a sustained chord for the lower strings.

In the finely melodious *Lento* the phrases take on a new character when repeated through the addition of counter melodies and changes in scoring. In the middle section Dvorak reaches out into new harmonic colouring by means of pedals and chromatically descending *appoggiaturas*. When the first section returns it is entrancingly scored and reaches a finely impassioned climax.

The finale is curious in being an example of sonata form that has three 'subjects'. There is a principal theme, a transition theme which the 'cello presents unaccompanied, a second subject in the dominant initiated by the first violin, and a 'third subject' that combines quavers and triplets and contains an echo of the Violin Sonatina, which appears in G flat major and is later recapitulated in the subdominant. The work is brought to a brilliant conclusion.