

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1969-70

Eighth Concert

VIOLIN SONATA
RECITAL

DAPHNE GODSON

VIOLIN

AUDREY INNES

PIANOFORTE

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 5th FEBRUARY, 1970

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

Programme

1. SONATA IN A MAJOR, No. 1, Op. 13
FOR PIANOFORTE AND VIOLIN

Fauré
(1845-1924)

Allegro molto

Andante

Allegro vivo

Allegro quasi presto

This sonata was Fauré's first essay in chamber music. It was composed in 1876, four years before the earliest of Brahms's published sonatas made its appearance, and exactly ten years before the Franck violin sonata. This is worth bearing in mind, for Fauré's latest chamber works belong to the period of the war and the post-war years, and thus belong to an altogether different age, and in fact a different world. The A major was performed by the composer and Paul Viardot (to whom it was dedicated) at one of the concerts of the 1878 Exhibition in the Trocadero. It soon achieved great popularity, especially, we are told, in Germany.

The first movement opens with a fine impetuous melody on the pianoforte, completed by the violin whose entry is delayed. A scale motive of four rising notes becomes temporarily prominent in broken octaves on both instruments. This short dialogue leads immediately to the second subject in the dominant, a more lyrical and peaceful phase which terminates with the reappearance of the scale motive mentioned. The extensive development retains a lyrical mood almost throughout. In turn the two themes and the scale motive are adopted as providing a generous basis for indulgence in melodic adventures. The middle section thus only expands the matter and the mood already established, rather than affording any strong contrast with the statement and restatement of the themes. The virtuosity of the broken octaves is outstanding in the coda, though room too is found here for a gentle reminder of the opening theme.

The Andante (in D Minor) opens with a gentle rocking nine-eight theme on the pianoforte to which the violin adds phrases of quiet melancholy. This passage is immediately repeated with the relationship of the instruments reversed. A brief passage of dialogue leads to the second subject in F major, a more continuous melody (in contrast to the somewhat tentative first theme), expanding and modulating, transferred at length from the violin to the pianoforte. Beginning in F major the first theme is now extensively developed rising at length to an impassioned climax whereafter the recapitulation proceeds regularly as from the secondary phrase of the theme. The second subject makes its reappearance in D major and brings the movement to a happy and peaceful conclusion.

The Scherzo is a remarkable movement. Its time signature of a quick one in a bar is nothing more than a very convenient and satisfactory notation for constantly changing rhythms which a composer of today would have shown by bars of variable length. As one commentator aptly describes it, this is "a Scherzo of the lightness of thistledown, sparkling with swift

darting passages and bounding pizzicato." The contrasting middle section consists of an expressive melody in gentle $\frac{3}{4}$ time whose oft recurring opening phrase is harmonised now in F sharp minor and now in A major.

In the finale the *pianissimo* pulsing chords of the pianoforte provide the background to a violin melody whose passionate and vigorous spirit may be guessed from excitement of its pulse, though at first it is disguised by a quiet *dolcissimo* tone, and on its transference to the pianoforte by the use of the soft pedal. The vigorous urge of this melody first makes itself unmistakably felt in an upward chromatic figure which soon assumes an energetic syncopated form, and discarding the expanded melodic phrases of the violin assails the key of F sharp minor by storm, in which key the second subject is declaimed with tremendous emphasis on violin and pianoforte in turn, to the accompaniment of the persistent syncopated figure. A quiet lyrical passage immediately follows which at length restores to us the first theme but not the tonic key. This theme is developed at some length, and combined with a new effective counterpoint on the violin. There is little dynamic emphasis until the brief climax which launches the recapitulation in C major. From this new angle of approach the second subject is reached in A minor leading at length to the re-establishment of the tonic major key in a coda notable for the brilliant virtuosity of a nimble flight of staccato upon the violin, but once again relying little upon dynamic emphasis.

S.T.M.N. (1939).

2. SONATA No. 2 FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

Bartok
(1881-1945)

Bartok's two sonatas in this genre were both composed for Jelly d'Aranyi in 1921 and 1922 respectively. They are his only chamber works employing pianoforte in the ensemble apart from the much later three pieces for violin, clarinet and pianoforte entitled "Contrasts," which is perhaps the more remarkable seeing that it was Bartok's own development of a unique personal pianoforte technique which led to his expressing his harmonic thought with such directness. The two sonatas belong then to the middle of that decade which separates the second and the third of the string quartets, a period of experiment that was to produce works of very different characters at least in style of construction. Here we see Bartok at what may be termed the extreme of his art as an expressionist with no hint of the neo-classicism and *ultima* classicism which were to follow over the years. Indeed the free expressionism of this second sonata, comprising two movements played in continuity, is such that no guiding tempo marks can possibly be given which would stand for each movement as a whole. It must suffice to say that the first movement, rhapsodic in character, with constant changes of tempo and of motion springing out of extreme repose, is fundamentally a slow movement, and that the second is a quick and strongly rhythmic movement whose alertness varies from a gentle Allegretto to passages of volatile speed and dexterity in which ostinato patterns of accompaniment play a major role. Overall a wide range of space and colour is used by both instruments, but this tends to be more concentrated in the vigorous or speedy passages which tighten the rhythms and the thematic material employed.

In the first diffuse movement one remarks in particular, firstly, the lyrical violin phrase which immediately succeeds the preliminary rhetorical gesture, which not only concludes this movement, but also at the one end of the work re-emerges in a transfigured quasi-Lydian major form in ecstasy which quietsens to the final cadence; and secondly, the tranquil and smooth

ascending and descending arc of a motive in quintuple measure which, in contiguous or in open intervals, emerges both on violin and pianoforte. This too reappears, even though unobtrusively, in the course of the succeeding quick movement. But this latter, using great variety of speeds, of rhythmical self-perpetuating patterns, and of texture, springs its novelties chiefly out of two basic concepts, first that heard at the beginning pizzicato on unaccompanied violin (later spilled into rapid *arco* phrases), and secondly, the pianoforte here punctuated with syncopation that first appears *pianissimo* (*lontano*) but later reappears in stark fortissimo with biting tang of harmony.

S.T.M.N. (1970).

INTERVAL

3. SONATA IN G MAJOR, Op. 96

FOR PIANOFORTE AND VIOLIN

Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegro moderato

Adagio espressivo

Scherzo: Allegro

Poco Allegretto—Adagio—Allegro

Of Beethoven's ten violin sonatas (or "duets for pianoforte and violin" as they were very properly described at the time) all but this last were composed between 1798 and 1803. Op. 96, the second sonata in G, owed its origin to the visit of the violinist Rode to Vienna in December, 1812. Just as the preceding sonata in A of nine years earlier had been composed for a particular violinist, Bridgetower, (with whom however Beethoven subsequently quarrelled so that on publication the sonata was dedicated to Kreutzer instead) so this G major sonata was written expressly for performance by Rode and the Archduke Rudolph, Beethoven's pupil and friend, to whom the work was dedicated upon publication in 1816. It was performed by them in December 29th at a private Concert chez Prince Lobkowitz, and a notice appeared in the Linz Musical Paper shortly afterwards, in which the correspondent rightly recognised the work as surpassing all that Beethoven had previously written in that genre. Nearly all the duo sonatas are composed with a careful regard not only to the balance of interest as between the two instruments but also to the opportunities of technical display, though this is never pursued merely for its own sake. The latter is more noticeable in the Kreutzer sonata than here, for the Kreutzer inclines towards the concerto. But it is evident from a letter of Beethoven to the Archduke that in the G major finale he had to take special account of what Rode considered to be sufficiently fast passages for the exhibition of his dexterity to advantage.

The first sketches of the last three movements were made in a sketch book devoted chiefly to the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies. It has been remarked that the Sonata bears some resemblance to the latter symphony in its range of joyous emotion. But the difference is all important, and the surest clue to its character may be sought in its key. As Bekker happily expresses it, G major for Beethoven "represents a half-demonstrative, half-pensive gaiety." In the earlier Sonata in the same key the stress was on the first half of this definition. Here it is conspicuously on the latter. The first movement has all the ease and freshness of a pastoral, induced by the first trill of its tentative melody and sustained by the breezes that fill its radiant arpeggios and send them floating down the sky.

This gentle mood is not far from that of the Mozart G major Variations (Sonata No. 11) or of the Brahms Sonata (Op. 78). Almost inevitably such breezes will ruffle the dreamer to bestir himself. But when d'Indy threw himself down on the idle hill of summer in the Austrian countryside he must have been a dreamer of nursery days if he thought he could hear soldiery in the melody which suddenly sets his senses alert. Some people apparently cannot see a dot without thinking of a drum. But that innocent trill which spins the prophecy of G major's sunny skies has itself proved a casus belli. To turn or not to turn, that is the question. And on one famous occasion at least violinist and pianist went their own ways about it.

For the further description of the movement it is sufficient to call attention to the swaying dance of triple measure to which the subject is transformed after the secondary theme, the chains of thirds waved like grass beneath the breeze, and the pleading theme of the cadence whose motive sways onwards through much of the development. In the coda those arpeggios are sent down the sky in a chromatic drift, but the shades of sun-down are again illumined by the last rays.

The Adagio (in E flat) opens with a quiet melody richly harmonised upon the pianoforte. The violin enters to echo "das Lebewohl" of the cadence, and then to sing a melody of greater breadth and slower motion to the pulsing accompaniment of the pianoforte. A moment of florid decoration evokes a more lively murmuring accompaniment. A short cadenza leads to the resumption of the first melody now played by the violin, whilst the pianoforte in turn assumes the previous role of the fiddle, with much quiet decoration. With this the veil of sleep falls upon the movement from which it is suddenly awakened by the forceful rhythm of the G minor Scherzo and its stabbing cross accents. The E flat trio intervenes to smooth these away with the swaying rhythm of a walse whose oft repeated line of melody soon throws off syncopated countersubjects to imprison itself in the web of its own triple counterpoint. The scherzo on resumption is rounded off by a short coda in the major.

The theme of the finale (which may perhaps owe something to a song from an operetta of Hiller) suggests a rondo, but proves to be a set of variations linked without intermission. The theme is quite unrepentantly obvious in its two bar phraseology, with the one exception of its side step into the key of B major. There are six variations of which the fifth is Adagio.

S.T.M.N. (1937)

USHER HALL, EDINBURGH

WEDNESDAY, 25th FEBRUARY

at 7.30 p.m.

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E.U.M.S. CHOIR

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