

Raphael Wallfisch recital

RAPHAEL WALLFISCH steered clear of the standard cello repertory in his recital with the pianist Richard Markham at Edinburgh University last night. He even brought novelty value to Brahms by playing a cello arrangement of the G major violin sonata, Op 78. Transposed into D major, however, the music was bound to lose much of its upper-register rapture which Mr Wallfisch's lower-register richness did not wholly replace.

The effect was akin to Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau singing something usually performed by Christa Ludwig, but it was not uninteresting and not unmoving. The big adagio melody (and its return during the finale) gained grand resonance in its cello guise, especially with a performer of Mr Wallfisch's eloquence to expound it. On the whole it was the piano which failed to become airborne, even when it took over notes normally played by the violin.

Between this and Martinu's Sonata No. 1 at the end of the programme, the young performers were heard separately in Kenneth Leighton's Sonata for solo cello, Op 52, and Faure's Theme and Variations for solo piano, Op 73. Leighton's elegiac score, almost Brittenish in its directness, seemed made for Mr Wallfisch's firm-fingered artistry. Each movement was incisively etched, and the performance reached an imposing baroque climax in the final Flourish, Chaconne, and Coda.

"Musical diarrhoea" was the rude description by the "Times" of Martinu's output, and towards the end of the Czech composer's sonata the words seemed amply justified. Earlier, however, Mr Markham made much of the piano part

Conrad Wilson

EDINBURGH
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS
Thursday, 26th October 7.30 p.m.
Raphael Wallfisch
(cello)
Richard Markham
(piano)
Works by Brahms, Leighton, Faure
and Martinu.
REID CONCERT HALL
Admission Free.

RAPHAEL WALLFISCH, pupil of Piatigorsky and winner of last year's Cassado International Cello Competition in Florence, is to give a recital at the Reid Concert Hall, Edinburgh, on Thursday with Richard Markham as pianist.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1978-79

RAPHAEL WALLFISCH *violoncello*
RICHARD MARKHAM *piano*

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 26 October 1978

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BRAHMS 1833-97

Violoncello Sonata in D major, Op. 78
Vivace ma non troppo—Adagio—Allegro molto moderato

This is an arrangement of the G major violin sonata of 1879 by Julius Klengel (1859-1933) who was the leader of the cello section of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra for much of his career, and teacher of Suggia and Feuermann.

Such an arrangement adds to the cello repertoire a Brahms sonata of limpid beauty and tenderness to contrast with the sterner characteristics of the E minor and F major authentic cello sonatas. The singing qualities of violin and cello are equally suitable for the theme of the finale, based on the two songs 'Regenleid' and 'Nachklang', for the long lyrical melodies of the first movement whose development section provides the only glimpse of true Brahmsian tension in this serene and relaxed work and for the grave beauty of the melody of the Adagio which reappears as the central episode of the rondo finale. A more substantial difference of texture, is likely in the piano part, as a result of the downward transposition of a fourth the 'rain effects' of the finale in particular perhaps acquiring a darker character.

KENNETH LEIGHTON b. 1929

Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello, Opus 52
Lament and Pizzicato
Toccata and Cradle Song
Flourish, Chaconne and Coda

Composed during 1967 this work was first performed by Joan Dickson during December of the same year in the National Gallery of Scotland.

The first movement is really a triptych, opening and closing with sustained melodic lines, punctuated from time to time by two funereal pizzicato notes, which later return towards the end of the work.

The second movement opens with restless buzzings, the lullaby serving as a Trio, at first tender and later more passionate. In the Finale the opening Flourish and the ensuing variations on a ground are easy to follow, and they culminate in a return of the grave and elegiac music of the first movement.

K.L.

INTERVAL

FAURE 1845-1924

Theme and Variations in C sharp minor, Op. 73 (1867)
for piano solo

In Faure's large output of piano music, this stands as his most substantial piece. The theme has been considered to show some affinities with that of Schumann's 'Etudes Symphoniques', which are also in C sharp minor, but as Faure's eleven variations become twists of harmony of an increasingly personal nature become apparent. The tenth variation has the character of a scherzo, and the work concludes quietly with its only variation in the major key.

MARTINU 1890-1959

Sonata No. 1 for cello and piano
Poco allegro—Lento—Allegro con brio

Martinu was a Czech composer who, both by choice and circumstance, led a life of a more cosmopolitan nature than Dvořák, Smetana and Janáček. After a somewhat chequered career as a student he spent the 1920s and '30s in Paris and absorbed influences from composers such as Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Honegger, with their neo-classical tendencies, motor rhythms and frequently clear linear textures. However, the influence of the spirit of his native country—that highland region which separates Bohemia from Moravia—is never entirely expunged throughout his prolific, if uneven output. This sonata was written in 1939, dedicated to Pierre Fournier and first performed in 1940 shortly before the composer fled to America.

The first movement employs features both of traditional sonata form (of a monothematic type), and of the earlier baroque *ritornello* style. The dominant idea of the movement is heard at the outset in the rising arpeggiated triads.

An 'arch-like' form is used for the slow movement. After the initial tranquil theme on the piano the cello plays a melody which seems to grow from this. Tension builds up and as this subsides the cello plays its melody before concluding the movement with its own statement of the piano's opening bars.

The main ideas of the finale are the initial jerky semiquaver motif, a 'scherzando' cello theme over a piano *ostinato* and by contrast a syncopated dance-like episode in which perhaps we hear a trace of a Czech village band. After some development of the basic material, this episode reappears in a more strenuous manner and leads into a recapitulation of the earlier material of the movement. An increasingly wild whirl of activity concludes the sonata.

L.C.