

Edinburgh University  
Concerts  
Thursday, 18th January  
7.30 p.m.  
THE REID ORCHESTRA  
KENNETH LEIGHTON  
conductor.  
HAMISH MILNE piano.  
Haydn: Symphony No. 12 in E.  
Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 2.  
Kurt Weill: Symphony No. 2.  
REID CONCERT HALL  
Admission Free

# EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1978-79

THE REID ORCHESTRA  
*Miles Baster leader*  
KENNETH LEIGHTON  
*conductor*  
HAMISH MILNE  
*piano*

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 18 January 1979

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missing was a commentary from Peter O'Sullivan.

The centrepiece of the evening was the Second Piano Concerto by Brahms in which Hamish Milne was a thoughtful and efficient soloist. The approach at times was rather deliberate, and although the surging passion was well realising with much felicitous phrasing, the momentum was not always maintained. If there were times when Jacob appeared to be wrestling with

## DAVID GRIFFITHS

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Kurt Weill is not normally associated with angels, nor for that matter with symphonies, opera being his forte. However, his Second Symphony is a skilful and most attractive work. When presented with Kenneth Leighton's penetrating musicianship it lays a formidable claim to a more prominent place in the general repertoire.

HAYDN 1732-1809  
Symphony No. 12 in E

*Allegro*  
*Adagio*  
*Finale—Presto*

Three of Haydn's early symphonies, Nos. 12, 13 and 40 are known to have been composed in 1763, and all three are very different from each other. No. 12 is a small-scale 'miniature' symphony in which Robbins Landon finds distinctive qualities which place it 'on the threshold of the Viennese classical symphony'. As usual in his very early essays in the form Haydn uses a small orchestra consisting of 2 oboes, 2 horns and strings and the warmth of the key plus an emphasis on string tone lend the work a particular radiance and brightness. There is also an intimate quality about the music which is immediately apparent in the quiet opening and in the somewhat Mozartian second subject which also begins *piano*. The normal thing was of course to begin *forte*.

During his early experimental years Haydn employed in his symphonies elements of other musical forms including opera. So the rather grave slow movement for strings alone with its siciliano rhythm displays the manner of an operatic aria if not its actual form.

The Finale has a delightfully racy theme, simple but subtle with accents on the up-beat, and its pace and energy look forward to many longer and more elaborate Haydn finales. It seems that the composer was so full of high spirits that he forgot to finish his manuscript with the usual 'Laus Deo'.

BRAHMS 1833-97

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat Op. 83

*Allegro non Troppo*  
*Allegro appassionato*  
*Andante*  
*Allegretto grazioso*

'I must inform you that I have written just a little piano concerto with quite a tender little scherzo. It is in the key of B flat major.' Thus in his frequently ironical style Brahms informed his friend Elizabeth von Herzberg of the completion, in 1881, of one of the most massive concertos in the repertoire. He is also said to have remarked that the long and complex first movement was too 'simple' ('plain' or perhaps 'obvious') and he therefore added

the impressive scherzo-like second movement. The first performance took place at Meiningen in 1882 with the composer as soloist. Written more than twenty years after the youthful but almost equally massive first concerto, the work uses classical forms in the composer's own handling of relationships between little that is orthodox in his handling of the traditional kind are soloist and orchestra. It is in fact a concerto for piano *with* orchestra, and although there are extended passages for solo piano throughout the concerto, solo cadenzas of the traditional kind are missing, and both piano and orchestra share an uninterrupted symphonic argument. The first movement contains several original and daring features e.g. the wide-ranging modulation of the second subject on piano solo. The Scherzo is one of the most passionate and tightly knit of all Brahms' symphonic movements, everything growing out of the three motives stated in the first six bars. It is in fact a remarkable combination of sonata form and minuet and trio.

Several thematic links, conscious or subconscious, can be found between the movements, the most obvious one being the fact that the first six notes of the lovely solo cello tune in the *andante* are the same as those of the opening theme of the concerto, in a different order and almost retrograde. The *andante* while the rondo, with its strong element of Hungarian gypsy style, is undoubtedly the lightest and most brilliant of all Brahms' finales. As a whole this is one of the most masterly works of the composer's maturity, and the piano part, though difficult and exhausting to play, has tempted almost all the great pianists of past and present.

INTERVAL

KURT WEILL 1900-50

Symphony No. 2 (1933)

*Sostenuto—Allegro molto*  
*Largo*  
*Allegro Vivace*

Weill is still best known for his successful and deeply moving operas, *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*. Only quite recently has interest been shown in his instrumental works, including the two symphonies.

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In the 1920's the avant garde believed (as some of them do now) that the symphony was a thing of the past and that the atonal symphony was an impossible proposition. In the thirties however several attempts were made (in particular by Hindemith and later Stravinsky) to revive the symphony and Kurt Weill was the first German composer to attempt a reconciliation between his own personal language and the symphonic tradition. Weill was a pupil of Busoni and through him had access to a neo-classicism quite distinct from that of Stravinsky or even Hindemith.

Formally the second symphony has a slow introduction (which contains the thematic essence of the whole work) followed by an Allegro in sonata form, a slow movement in the manner of a funeral march and again with definite characteristics of sonata form, and finally a rondo. The language is a striking and highly personal amalgam deriving on the one hand from the popular elements of his theatrical works (Weill thought of jazz as an 'international folk-music') and on the other from his life-long admiration of Mozart and Haydn. The result is well described by David Drew (the most distinguished commentator on Weill) as 'a symphony unlike any other in the modern repertoire'.  
K.L.

HAMISH MILNE was born in Salisbury (U.K.) where he received his early musical training as a chorister in the cathedral. He won scholarships to study under the late Harold Craxton at the Royal Academy of Music, where he is now a professor, and during his studentship he won many prizes including the Chappell Medal. He subsequently studied for two years in Italy with Guido Agosti in Rome and at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, where he won first prize in the Alfredo Casella competition. Shortly after his return to England he was awarded the Harriet Cohen Commonwealth Medal. In 1977 he was elected Collard Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

*Next Concert: Thursday 25 January*

**THE EDINBURGH QUARTET**

MENDELSSOHN Quartet Op. 13 in A minor  
BARTOK Quartet No. 6  
MOZART Quartet in G major K 387

*Please note change of programme from that advertised in 'Music in the University'.*

15 pence

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