

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
CHAMBER CONCERTS

Season 1953-54

SECOND CONCERT

THURSDAY, 12th NOVEMBER 1953

at 7.30 p.m.

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

VIOLONCELLO

MARGARET MONCRIEFF

PIANOFORTE

MARY FIRTH

PROGRAMME

PRICE 1s.

## PROGRAMME

### 1. SONATA in G major for Piano and 'Cello - - - - Bach

Adagio

Allegro ma non tanto

Andante

Allegro moderato

There are three Sonatas by Bach for clavier and viol da gamba, and of these the first, in G major, exists also in a version for two flutes and continuo. The two versions are note for note the same apart from an occasional necessary change of octave. It is a fact, however, that all Bach's Sonatas for two players are really Trios, since the right and left hand of the clavier behave as two independent parts.

Both versions of this Sonata have their charm, but, if anything, the crisp and shapely Allegro movements gain something in vitality when played by the piano and the 'cello. On the other hand, there is a specially beautiful effect obtainable in the Andante only by the haunting impersonal tones of two flutes interweaving in the figure that floats in continuous semiquavers throughout the movement.

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### 2. SONATA for 'Cello and Piano - - - - Debussy

Prologue

Sérénade et Finale

Debussy as a composer was chiefly occupied with experiments in sonority and colour, and with new effects of harmony, all of which expressed themselves most naturally to him in terms of the pianoforte or the orchestra. The problems of chamber-music were never fully explored by him, and the only works in this category which he left

are a string quartet and three sonatas, respectively for 'cello and piano, for flute, viola and harp (a very congenial medium for his idiom) and for violin and piano. Of these the first—for 'cello and piano—is generally accounted the least successful, but nevertheless the literature of chamber-music is enriched by a lesser work from one of the most original of musical imaginations.

The sonata is organised loosely and simply, as befits the nature of its themes, and the best description of it is given by quoting the commentary of the composer, which he made for the 'cellist Rosoor. (Debussy also gave the sonata the sub-title of "Pierrot fâché avec la lune").

Prologue : "Pierrot s'éveille en sursaut secoue sa torpeur, évoque la charme de sa belle . . . .

Sérénade : . . . . à laquelle il va faire une serenade; mais les plus pressantes supplications laissent l'inhumaine insensible . . . .

Finale : . . . Pierrot se console cependant, en chantant un air de liberté, non sans quelque regret . . . ."

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## INTERVAL

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### 3. "VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS" for Piano and 'Cello - Bloch

Moderato

Poco tento

Moderato

Adagio, piacevole

Poco agitato

Allegro

Though it is stated on the copy that this is "the composers own version for pianoforte and violoncello after the Symphonic Poem for orchestra and violoncello obbligato" it appears that the first form of completed work like that of the viola suite, was the present version. As in the case of the earlier work "Schelomo" for 'cello and orchestra, this work is cast in a genuinely Jewish idiom of the most noble character. It represents six "meditations" on the destiny of man.

4. SONATA in F major (Op. 99) for 'Cello and Piano - *Brahms*

Allegro vivace

Adagio affettuoso

Allegro passionato

Allegro molto

The second 'cello sonata, Op. 99, the second violin sonata Op. 100 (in A major), and the trio in C minor Op. 101, "were all produced in the same year, and (like Mozart's last three symphonies produced within six weeks) make an excellent concert programme, their contrasts being, in the nature of the case, exactly what represented the happiest reactions of the composer himself" (Tovey).

The 'cello sonata is probably the most remarkable of these three works, besides being one of the greatest ever written for this combination of instruments. It extends both players to the limits of instrumental capacity from the first passionate utterance of the 'cello to the controlled subtlety of the last movement. Gustav Holst, who "discovered" Brahms for himself late in life, said of this movement "No-one but a very great composer could have written it, the perfect finale is beyond anyone but a genius."

M.G.