

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
CHAMBER CONCERTS

SEASON 1954-55

Fifth Concert

THE NEW
EDINBURGH QUARTET

ROBERT COOPER CHRISTOPHER MARTIN

ANNE CROWDEN JOAN DICKSON

Clarinet:
TIM ORMEROD

Double-bass:
ROY GWILLIAM

Pianoforte:
SIDNEY NEWMAN

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 27TH JANUARY, 1955

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

PROGRAMME

1. PIANOFORTE QUARTET IN E FLAT (K. 493) *Mozart*
(1756-1791)

Allegro
Larghetto
Allegretto

This, the second of Mozart's two works for this ensemble, was completed early in June, 1786, being his first composition after "The Marriage of Figaro." Mozart's first biographer, Nissen, recounts that the G minor Quartet, composed at the end of the preceding year, was to have been the first of three such works which Hoffmeister had agreed to publish, but that since Hoffmeister complained that "the public found the work too difficult" Mozart released him from the contract and the scheme was abandoned. However, the E flat Quartet, published by Artaria, must certainly owe its origin to Mozart's original plan of establishing this new genre of work with more than one example.

There is a pronounced element of *concertante* in the writing for the pianoforte, both in the first movement and more particularly in the final rondo whose central episode is somewhat akin to the impetuous central episode of dark "minor" colouring in the slow movement (Romanze) of the D minor Pianoforte Concerto. The chief melodic themes are distributed fairly equally amongst violin, viola and pianoforte, but when these are discoursed upon the violoncello also assumes a melodic role with profound effect.

The antiphonal contrasts between pianoforte and strings which may be remarked in the first movement form a yet more prominent feature of the exquisitely tender Larghetto in A flat, whilst in the rondo finale, where deliciously impertinent good humour is allied both with serene melody and with dramatic turbulence, the liberal use of antiphonal processes makes for a design of wide span but with a certain looseness of texture for which full amends are made in the coda.

2. CLARINET QUINTET IN A MAJOR (K. 581)

Mozart

Allegro
Larghetto
Menuetto (with two Trios)
Allegretto con Variazioni

Upon whomsoever the radiant light of this perfect work shines, let him remember with gratitude Mozart's friend and fellow Mason, Anton Stadler (1753-1812), the first notable clarinet player of Vienna, for whom Mozart composed both this quintet and the later Concerto in A. In a similar way a century later Brahms was inspired to compose his clarinet quintet and two sonatas by the artistry of Richard Mühlfeld of the Meiningen orchestra.

The luminosity of an A major chord always appears to be at its maximum when crowned with its fifth, as for example in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Mozart opens all the three movements which are in this key with such an effect. But most remarkable is the wide spacing of the strings in the very first chord, a position which affords room for perfectly rounded curves of contrary motion. The development section of this first movement provides the perfect rejoinder to anyone who ventures to hint that it is the function of that part of a sonata design to develop the main first or second "subject," for the fantasy of modulation upon which we here embark wells from the same spring as that which modestly interjected a gentle cascade of clarinet arpeggio between the lines of the opening melody with seeming unconcern.

The Larghetto in D major opens with a clarinet melody of great repose accompanied by muted strings. This gives place to expressive dialogue in a more ornate style between violin and clarinet, extended by modulation to form a contrasting central episode, followed by simple recapitulation and again the dialogue, now fashioned more briefly into a coda.

The Minuet alternates with two Trios, the first in A minor for strings only in which the initial hints of canonic possibilities

are not overlooked by the viola, the second in the major being led by the clarinet.

As every variation is itself a comment upon a theme we may forbear to add further variation. Suffice it to observe that there are five variations and a coda, that Var. III in the minor employs only the string quartet and the Var. V is an Adagio; and for the rest let us revel in the exquisite and adroit plunges and arpeggios of an art in which the clarinet is inimitable.

I N T E R V A L

3. PIANOFORTE QUINTET IN A MAJOR (THE TROUT), OP. 114

Schubert
(1797-1828)

Allegro vivace

Andante

Scherzo: Presto

Theme and Variations: Andantino—Allegretto

Finale: Allegro giusto

In 1819 Schubert went on a summer holiday into Upper Austria with his friend Vogl, the Court singer. This quintet was composed at the request of a friend of Vogl whom Schubert then met and who took especial delight in Schubert's charming little song "The Trout," which provides the theme for variation in the fourth movement of this work.

Although one recurring passage in the F major Andante brings a touch of Schubertian melancholy, the dominant note of the whole work is that of sheer joy and exquisite delight. The addition of the Double Bass to the string ensemble frees the pianoforte to a very large extent from the basic duties of accompaniment and allows it to trace intricate and airy lines of octaves in the high skies to an extent quite unparralleled in any other work. Only in one respect does the finale seem to fail in its cheerful task. The lack of any coda makes the end appear to be unduly sudden and in fact a trifle inconsequential.

S. T. M. N.