

SCOTTISH SINFONIA

leader PHILIP TAYLOR
soloist MILES BASTER
conductor NEIL MANTLE

C O N C E R T

Daniel Stewart's and Melville College Hall

Saturday 19 November at 7.30

programme 5p

MAX REGER
(1873-1916)

VARIATIONS AND FUGUE ON A THEME OF MOZART
opus 132

Theme	Andante grazioso (6/8 time: A major)
Var.I	L'istesso tempo (6/8 time: A major)
Var.II	Poco agitato (6/8 time: F major)
Var.III	Con moto (2/4 time: A minor)
Var.IV	Vivace (2/4 time: E minor)
Var.V	Quasi presto (6/8 time: A minor)
Var.VI	Sostenuto (4/8 time: D major)
Var.VIII	Molto sostenuto (6/4 time: C# minor)
Fugue	Allegretto grazioso (6/8 time: A major)

It was between May and July of 1914 that Reger composed his most mature orchestral work, the Variations and Fugue opus 132, on a theme from Mozart's Piano Sonata K331. At the same time he ended his highly successful period as conductor of the Meiningen Court Orchestra after five years. This conductorship proved beneficial to Reger's creative activities in two ways: firstly, extensive concert tours increased his fame; secondly, his conducting experience helped him lighten his somewhat thick orchestration and increase his palette of tone colours.

Towards the end of his life Reger became increasingly attracted to Mozart, whereas formerly Brahms and later Bach had been his gods. The Variations - the work was first performed in Berlin in February 1915 with Reger himself conducting - clearly illustrate the characteristic features of his creative work, his fugal composition, dominated by a unique musical logic, and his inexhaustible imagination in handling variation form. Incidentally, the peroration of his masterly six-part fugue is a tour de force of the genre: in it Reger combines the original Mozart theme (brass) with his own fugue subject, itself based on Mozart's theme of course (upper strings and woodwind), and the counter-melody of the fugue in the lower strings.

N.M.

- I N T E R V A L -

JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833-1897)

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA IN D MAJOR
opus 77

soloist - MILES BASTER

Allegro non troppo
Adagio
Allegro giocoso ma non troppo vivace

Brahms' sole venture into the violin concerto form was completed in 1878 at Pürtschach-am-See amidst an inspiring landscape near the Italian border where the composer sometimes spent his summers. Brahms once wrote that the air was full of melodies and that he had to be 'careful not to tread on them.' One is almost tempted to take this literally when it is remembered that, in addition to the Violin Concerto, Brahms worked on or finished at Pürtschach-am-See the Second Symphony, the Second Piano Concerto and the G Major Violin Sonata.

The Violin Concerto was written for the great Hungarian virtuoso, Joseph Joachim, who gave the premiere under the baton of Brahms himself in Leipzig on New Year's Day 1879. During its composition the performer often offered the composer advice on violin technique. (Critic Eduard Hanslick termed the work, not inaptly, 'the ripe fruit of the friendship between Joachim and Brahms'.) Several, though not all, of his suggestions were incorporated into the score.

As for the solo part itself, Brahms' biographer, Karl Geiringer, has written that, although the work 'demands exceptional technique on the part of the soloist, virtuosity for its own sake is entirely excluded. For Brahms the artistic idea was always of supreme importance; and just as in his orchestral compositions the sound of the instruments inspired him only in a minor degree, so in the concertos he was not particularly interested in writing gratifying parts for the soloists and impressing the audience. Notwithstanding his small acquaintance with violin technique, tacitly admitted both by Brahms and by his friend Joachim, this work confronts the soloist with a whole series of new and difficult, though by no means insoluble, problems. These, with few exceptions, tax the left hand of the violinist; the greatest demands are made in respect of double-stopping, the ability to span large intervals, and the certainty of attack in playing high notes after low. It is characteristic of Brahms that he conscientiously asked his friend's advice on all technical questions - and then hardly ever followed it.'

EDWARD ELGAR
(1857-1934)

SERENADE FOR STRINGS IN E MINOR
opus 20

Allegro piacevole
Larghetto
Allegretto

This early work shares more than the key of E minor with the Cello Concerto. It was written in 1892, though it is believed to be a revision of the Three Pieces for String Orchestra of 1888. In any case it was Elgar's first masterpiece, imbued with his finest qualities. The first movement, with its favourite dotted rhythm which returns at the end of the finale, is like an aubade. The Larghetto tells us, twenty years before the symphonies, what could be expected from Elgar when he came to write larger-scale slow movements; its elegiac yearning links it emotionally to the Cello Concerto. No wonder he held this work dear: it proclaimed his genius at a time when no-one wanted to listen.

Elgar made gramophone records of nearly all his major works, and to hear his recording of the Serenade, made in 1933, is indeed a refreshing experience, for he treats the work in a delicate, romantic way but does not try to overstate the case as many modern interpreters do by piling on an excess of 'feeling.' The third movement, for example, has in his hands an almost jaunty quality and reflects that 'out of doors' feeling of which he so often spoke in connection with his music.

N.M.

SCOTTISH SINFONIA
(formerly Scottish Sinfonietta)

Violins I

Philip Taylor (leader)
John Hiley
Robert Fraser
Lucy Fisher
Helen Turnell
Briget MacLean
Nicolette Kingsley
Rachael Ebsworth
Sheena Black
Catriona Thompson
Jan Kouvenhoven
Nicola Foot
Lawrence Dunn

Violins II

Susan Kirakowska
Elizabeth Alexander
Morag Campbell
Graham Holton
Irene Horne
Gillian Pickup
Howard Duthie
Pamela Redman
Peter Nelson
Gica Loening
Alex Manning
Yola Jacobsen

Violas

Paula Snyder
Clare Spence
Jurek Kirakowski
Josie Drake
Gary Clemson
Sarah Lupton
Helen Tasker
Alison Dundas
Patrick Criswell
Carrick McClelland

Cellos

Heather Coates
Suzanne Patterson
John Busbridge
Christopher Smith
Alan Anderson
Edward Kingsley
Alastair Neale

Basses

Francis Cowan
Boyd Pomeroy
Fiona Donaldson

Flutes

Peter Lunt
Jean Murray
Barbara Wilson

Oboes

Charles Dodds
Caroline Williams

Clarinets

Vaughan Townhill
Ronald McKie

Bassoons

Bruce Gordon
Graham Fraser

Horns

Dick Rimer
John Maynard
Fiona Elliott
David Pryce

Trumpets

Colin Douglas
Gordon Thomson

Timpani

Anne Douglas

Harp

Winifred Freeman

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Stuart Wilson

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