

The ANCOATS RECREATION COMMITTEE,  
1912.

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Music Appreciation.  
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THE BRODSKY QUARTET

Dr. BRODSKY.  
Mr. SIMON SPEELMAN.

Mr. C. RAWDON BRIGGS.  
Mr. CARL FUCHS.

7.30 to 9.15.

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The SECOND of SIX CONCERTS on  
WEDNESDAY, 23rd OCTOBER, 1912,  
In the NEW ISLINGTON HALL, MANCHESTER.

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**MENDELSSOHN.**  
Quartet, Op. 12, in E Flat.

**GRIEG.**  
Two Movements from an unfinished Quartet in F.

**BEETHOVEN.**  
Quartet in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1.

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As an aid to full appreciation, Mr. WILLIAM ELLER has kindly  
added notes to the programme.

# Programme.



QUARTET OP. 12, IN E FLAT . . . . . *Mendelssohn*

Adagio non troppo—Allegro non tardante.  
Canzonetta—Allegretto.  
Andante espressivo. Molto allegro e vivace.

TWO MOVEMENTS FROM AN UNFINISHED QUARTET IN F. *Grieg*

Sostenuto—Allegro vivace e grazioso.  
Allegro scherzando.

QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 59, NO. 1. . . . . *Beethoven.*

Allegro.  
Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando.  
Adagio molto e mesto  
Allegro—Thème russe.

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## MENDELSSOHN.

### Quartet, Op. 12, in E Flat.

This is by far the best-known of Mendelssohn's quartets. It was written in London, in the rooms where he lodged, 35, Bury Street, St. James', and is dated Sept. 14, 1829. Three days later he was thrown out of a gig and laid up for two months. He was then 20 years of age.

The work is astonishingly mature as the product of a youth not yet of age.

#### I. ADAGIO NON TROPPO—ALLEGRO NON TARDANTE.

I am not aware that the indication "non tardante" (not to be held back) occurs as a heading to any other composition.

The 16 bars of introduction show unmistakably that the young composer is completely master of his medium—he moves with perfect ease and freedom in the enormously difficult region of the string quartet.

This becomes even more apparent when the allegro begins.

The first subject, though neither great nor deep, is melodious and dignified. It is followed by a continuation in the same vein, and the whole is worked out with Mendelssohn's unerring taste. The second subject is given to the 2nd violin, and is closely related to the first. That is, indeed, the weak point of the movement—the two principal subjects are too closely allied, and the advantage of contrast thereby lost.

But Mendelssohn's faultless instinct takes care that the hearer is not fatigued, and he handles his themes in such a way that the listener remains interested to the very end.

Please take care to keep both the subjects in your mind. They both re-appear in the last movement.

## 2. CANZONETTA—ALLEGRETTO.

Another unique title for a movement—but then it is a unique movement. Of its kind, a sort of plaintive folk-tune (canzonetta means little song), it is quite perfect. It has a kind of trio in G major (the canzonet is in G minor) marked "più mosso" (rather quicker), in which the two violins, and afterwards the viola and the 'cello, play a theme in semi-quavers against sustained chords by the other instruments. Then the canzonet is repeated, the end being a stroke of genius in its simplicity and quiet effectiveness.

For those interested in coincidences I may mention that Schumann has hit upon the same theme. He has used it twice: as the second subject of the last movement of the B flat symphony, and (in 6/8 time) as the last of the "Kreisleriana."

## 3. ANDANTE EXPRESSIVO. MOLTO ALLEGRO E VIVACE.

The andante—which is further marked "largo" in three places—is a fine, rich introduction to the last movement, into which it merges. This last movement is an extremely brilliant, very Mendelssohnian, piece of work. It is admirably worked out, the instruments being treated in masterly fashion: and the composer has taken good care in this instance that his second subject shall be in complete contrast to his first.

By-and-by comes an exciting unison passage in rapid triplets, then a *ff* long note, and then—the appearance of the second subject of the first movement. It soon disappears again, and the rhythm (12/8) and subject of the last movement are resumed. Then again the unison passage, leading to the coda in which firstly the second and then the first subject of the first movement are heard. Indeed, the latter finally dominates the work, and holds the field to the finish. In fact, the end of the quartet is note for note identical with the ending of the first movement.

# GRIEG.

## Two Movements from an unfinished Quartet in F.

This composition has been substituted for the Dvôrák Scherzetto owing to the fact of Madame Grieg being on a visit to Dr. Brodsky. It is hoped that she will be present to hear it.

Edvard Grieg (he dropped his second baptismal name, Hagerup, later on in life) was born in Bergen, Norway, in 1843, and died there in 1907, aged 64.

In 1745, after the battle of Culloden, many Scotsmen found it eminently desirable to seek fields and pastures new. Among them was an Aberdonian merchant, Alexander Greig, who took ship to Norway, settled down in Bergen, and in course of time altered the orthography of his name to conform with Norwegian pronunciation. The family always kept up their connection with this country, and both the son and grandson of Alexander Greig, or rather Grieg, were British Consuls in Bergen. The distinguished composer was the great-grandson of the Scottish exile.

Schopenhauer asserts that men of genius inherit the gift from their mother—and in the present instance it is certainly the case. Edvard Grieg's father had no particular bent towards the art, but his mother was a first-rate and highly cultivated amateur pianist. From her he received his first instruction (he was one of 5 children, 2 boys and 3 girls) at the age of 6.

In 1858 he came under the influence of the famous Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, who discerned something more than ordinary talent in the boy of 15, and by his advice young Edvard was sent to study at the famous conservatoire of Leipsic, then still mourning the loss of its greatest ornament, Felix Mendelssohn, who had died two years previously.

In 1862 he left Leipsic, and returned to Norway, to Christiania for a time, settling down finally in his native city of Bergen. In 1867 he married his cousin, Nina Hagerup, the gracious lady whom we hope to have in our midst to-night. From that time till his death, his history is the history of his music, as he lived for that alone, and only went abroad to expound and perform it.

He belongs to the small group of composers who may be called "national." Always a fervent admirer of Chopin, I cannot help thinking (though I have no authority for the statement) that his aim has been to stand to Norway as Chopin stood to Poland.

A noble aim indeed, and one in which he has *not* failed. For, if ever a man's music embodied the poetry, the aspirations, the feelings and the character of a race, of a surety that man was Edvard Grieg, and that race the Scandinavian. And to be able to speak (musically) for a whole people is a high and noble achievement.

At his death there was found the MS. of an unfinished quartet. It consisted of :—(1) and (2) two complete movements, (3) a slow movement not quite finished, and (4) a finale of which only the themes were set down. His friend Röntgen (not he of the "rays") filled out the slow movement, and wrote a last movement on the themes left by Grieg.

To-night only the two actually completed movements will be played—the first and second.

1. SOSTENUTO (sustained—rather a vague indication, but meaning usually slow and stately) leading to ALLEGRO VIVACE E GRAZIOSO (bright and delicate).

After a short introduction in common time, the movement (in 6/8 time) starts. It is romantic and pastoral in character. This movement, in Dr. Brodsky's opinion, is more closely knit and fully worked out than any other in Grieg's chamber-music. The first and second subjects are both beautiful and well contrasted.

The "working out" starts with a statement of the first subject in slow time; gradually the music works up until a kind of storm is indicated: this subsides, and the idyllic and pastoral character of the movement returns and remains to the end, which is quiet and peaceful.

2. ALLEGRO SCHERZANDO (playful, lively).

A pastoral dance breathing the harmonies and rhythms of Grieg's native land in every bar. This is folk-music idealised and infused with the poetry of the composer.

The trio is more wild. The whole movement is full of intricate part-writing, and is of extreme difficulty technically.

## BEETHOVEN.

### Quartet in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1.

In 1801 Beethoven published his first set of quartets, Op. 18. It was seven years later, in 1808, that the second set saw the light, the composer being then 38 years of age. This set of three is the famous Op. 59, the "Rasumoffsky" quartets.

It would be interesting to speculate on the reasons that have induced the public to call certain of Beethoven's works by the name of the person they are dedicated to.

Every one—I think every one—of his piano sonatas bears a dedication, but none interest the general public, save one, the "Waldstein." Why? Only one of the piano-forte and violin sonatas is distinguished in the same way, the "Kreutzer." Why? No one ever speaks of the "Lobkowitz" quartets (op. 18), but everyone who knows anything of chamber-music knows the "Rasumoffsky" quartets. Why? The subject is mildly interesting in a "notes and queries" sort of way. Can any one of my readers answer my "why?"

Count Rasumoffsky was a distinguished Russian nobleman, not unknown in England—indeed he had served in our Navy as well as his own. He had been Russian Ambassador to several European Courts, and in 1792 was appointed to the same post in Vienna, where he remained for twenty years. He was a fine musician, and formed a famous quartet party in which he himself played the 2nd violin.

Not much is known of his actual relations with Beethoven, but there is no doubt that there was something like friendship between the two: for Beethoven dedicated to him the three magnificent quartets known by his name, and also, conjointly with Prince Lobkowitz, the C minor and Pastoral symphonies. Enough glory for any one individual.

As I have mentioned, the three quartets, Op. 59, were published in 1808, but there is ample proof that they had been played (probably at the Count's) before the beginning of 1807.

To-night's quartet, the first of the three, has an inscription in Beethoven's own hand, on the first page of the MS. score, that it was begun on May 26th, 1806.

It shows an enormous advance in the composer's powers over the earlier Op. 18 quartets. This will be clear to every listener to-night who was here a fortnight ago. Indeed it may be said that nothing finer in the way of chamber-music has ever been written than the "Rasumoffsky" quartets. I say this with full knowledge of the austere and unearthly beauties of the last quartets.

#### I. ALLEGRO.

The bright and happy first subject is announced at once—in the 'cello, and taken up directly by the 1st violin. Then—but to do justice to the movement I should have to take you through it bar by bar—and should then fail. The workings of genius are not to be set forth in black and white like a problem in mathematics. I must ask my readers to trust to their own ears rather than to my feeble pen. There is but one word for the movement. It is masterly from the first bar to the last—and by the way, there is a wonderful passage at the end where the

1st violin soars to the high heavens, flutters there for five bars like a lark, and comes to earth again, singing as he drops.

2. ALLEGRETTO VIVACE E SEMPRE SCHERZANDO (bright, lively, and gaily throughout).

This is a long movement—and a wondrous one. The 'cello starts it, solo, with three bars on a single note—just hammering the rhythm home. Then the 2nd violin—also solo—emits the daintiest and brightest little theme—also of three bars. The viola and the 1st violin between them repeat the performance, but a seventh higher. Having thus precluded, the full quartet starts the movement, and you will hear for yourselves what the composer makes of it, how he plays with the themes, how he laughs with and at them, how they gambol and tumble over each other like puppies at play. There is no trio; the piece just ambles along in the same way as the famous allegretto scherzando in the 8th symphony until Beethoven judges that it should come to an end—which it does, and leaves one more filled with admiration and wonder each time one hears it.

3. ADAGIO MOLTO E MESTO (very slow and sad).

Beethoven has called this movement (in his sketch-book) "A weeping willow over the grave of my brother." One wonders what he meant. He had three brothers, two were alive when he wrote the quartet, and the third had died 23 years previously. What did he mean?

This piece is as full of poignant sadness as anything in music, apart from which its treatment of the various instruments is quite extraordinary—one seems at times to hear much more than four voices. It ends with a brilliant bravura passage for the 1st violin, and goes straight on to

4. ALLEGRO THÈME Russe (Russian theme).

The theme, announced in the 'cello (just as in the first movement), is of course put in<sup>7</sup> as a compliment to the Count. It is unmistakably Russian, but as far as I am aware, it has never been "placed," that is to say, its origin has never been traced. (In the 2nd of the quartets there is again a Russian theme, which, however, has been "placed.") This movement is quite on a par with its predecessors. It is brilliant in the extreme, and full of interest to the listener. It ends with the theme played adagio, followed by a presto rush that just gives the final touch to a glorious work.

WILLIAM ELLER,



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