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LEGAL AID

Vanbrugh String Quartet

Elton Hall Friday 12 July at 7.30pm

String Quartet in B flat K589

Mozart 1756-1791

Allegro; Larghetto; Menuetto-Trio; Allegro assai

Mozart's last three quartets, commissioned by the King of Prussia, mark the transition to the new style of his later years. Highly finished technically with soloistic cello parts, they are less personal than earlier ones but full of joy and delight in beauty. Completed in May 1790, K589 shows the new contrapuntal style strongly to the fore in the allegro. Interplay between cello and first violin marks the larghetto while the trio, the most noteworthy aspect of the third movement, constantly fluctuates in texture, dynamics and range. The whole of the vigorous rondo is pervaded by counterpoint and there are frequent symmetrical inversions of the themes.

String Quartet No. 14

Robert Simpson b1921

Commissioned by the Vanbrugh Quartet, with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain, this work was composed in Ireland in the spring of 1990. The four movements are laid out in classical sequence with the scherzo second. Largely a fugue, the first movement contains symphonic passages which raise the tension as the music grows to a climax before mysteriously dissipating. Mercurial in temperament, the scherzo is in fast triple time; beginning quietly it has many contrasts, often becoming fiery. The andante is essentially a contemplative fugue in gentle floating tempo. Sweeping energy characterises the finale which has a persistent swinging rhythm and sustained momentum.

INTERVAL

String Quartet in F 'The American'

Dvořák 1841-1906

Allegro ma non troppo; Lento; Molto vivace; Finale: Vivace ma non troppo

In this quartet, composed at the Czech colony of Spillville, Iowa in June 1893, Dvořák expressed all the new impressions of his American visit. Although the rhythm is predominantly American and the overall feel is of American life, all the themes are Dvořák's own. Lyrical and nostalgic, the first movement has been described as 'one of the most beautiful in the whole of chamber music'. The second movement, full of melancholy and longing for home is followed by a cheerful scherzo with a contrapuntal melody for the violins. In the passionate finale, the chorale-like passage suggests Dvořák's improvisations on the church organ at Spillville.

Since the time of the Norman Conquest there has been a house on the site where Elton Hall now stands in unspoilt landscaped parkland. Sir Peter Proby, Lord Mayor of London, was granted land at Elton by Queen Elizabeth I. His grandson, Sir Thomas Proby, completed the main house in 1666 incorporating the 15th century chapel and tower. The house was further enlarged and modified between 1780 and 1815.

An eclectic mixture of

architectural styles, Elton Hall reflects the changing tastes of more than 300 years. Fine paintings and magnificent furniture fill the rooms and the library is one of the finest private collections in the country.

The state dining room where tonight's concert takes place was built in 1860 and is very much an 18th century grand saloon. Completely redecorated in 1983 it shows the collection of old Masters and early portraits in authentic manner.



Since becoming the first British quartet to win the prestigious London International String Quartet Competition, the Vanbrugh Quartet; Gregory Ellis and Elizabeth Charleson, violins, Simon Aspell, viola, and Christopher Marwood, cello, has established itself as one of the leading ensembles in this country and abroad. As resident quartet for Radio Telefis Eireann the players have a busy recording and performing schedule throughout Ireland. They have toured in Europe,

North and South America and have made many broadcasts and recordings. A major tour of North America is planned for 1992.

Robert Simpson is one of Britain's leading composers of quartets and tonight's performance celebrates his 70th birthday. In addition to giving the world premiere of his fourteenth quartet this spring, the Vanbrugh Quartet has received enthusiastic reviews for its playing of his earlier chamber works.

