John Rose

String Quartets 1 & 2
Essay on DSCH
Two Preludes and Three Fugues

The Edinburgh Quartet

Robert Melling piano
Music by John Rose

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<td>Prelude and Two Fugues, Op. 20b (2001) **</td>
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Total CD duration 74.14

* The Edinburgh Quartet

** Robert Melling, piano

All these works are published by Eden Music Publishing


The two short slow introductory sections, Moderato – Comodo, foreshadow material developed in the succeeding fast movements. Molto Animato, a sonata-type movement, ends inconclusively with a return to the ideas of the first Comodo section. These are extended to lead into the Allegro Molto e Con Brio (Fugue). This has three counter-subjects drawn from a) the Comodo sections, b) the subject of the organ fugue Op. 8, and c) the previous Molto Animato.

The work is played without a break.


Prelude and Fugue, Op. 20a; Prelude and Two Fugues, Op. 20b

Prelude – Fugue,  Prelude – Fugue – Fugue – Codetta

The rising and falling of a minor third pervades both the first prelude and its fugue. Prelude 2 provides two motifs for the succeeding two fugues. The motif contained in bar 3 of the prelude also ends it, and is the basis of the first fugue.

The falling scale-wise motif of bars 1-3 of the prelude is extended in the syncopated note values of the second fugue. The work concludes with a recollection of the first three bars of the prelude, which contain both motifs.
**Essay on DSCH for piano, op. 7 (1970)**

The Essay originated in a germinal motif from Psalm XLII for chorus and orchestra (a major second widening semi-tonally to a major third) which turned out to be another arrangement of the notes formed by the motive DSCH. This motif is prominent in Quartet No. 8 and Symphony No. 10 by Dmitri Shostakovich. Both forms of the motif are developed in the Essay, though there is no adherence to the actual pitch of the notes D-S-C-H.

Formally the work could be described as a variation of sonata form. What appears to be a second subject (calmo), is a major version of the main idea and leads into a development section. This gathers momentum, varies several motifs from the exposition, and culminates in a short choral-like section. After a pause note, there follows a more exact recapitulation of remaining materials. This breaks off abruptly, and the work is rounded off by an epilogue (molto adagio).

**String Quartet No. 2, Op. 17 (1999)**

*Lento–Andante–Tempo giusto; Meno mosso–Ground (Allegro–Adagio)*

The composition of this quartet (1999) followed closely on the completion of String Quartet No. 1 (1997).

Briefly, the first section of the work could be said to be a rhapsodic exploration of two motifs: a) of the opening three bars, and b) of a rising and falling three note motif.

Its relationship to the ‘Mus es sein?’ and ‘Es mus sein!’ motifs of Beethoven’s Op. 135 Quartet becomes explicit and leads to further development. This section breaks off abruptly and is followed by a moderato, which quotes and extends an idea from Psalm XLII for chorus and orchestra, which received its first performance during the quartet's composition.
A passage on harmonics then introduces a short series of nine variations on a 12-tone ground. This consists of four three-note motifs, also related to Op. 135. The last variation brings the work to an elegiac conclusion, and full circle to the tonality and material of the opening bars.

The opening motif of this work came to form the basis of the final section of the motet, ‘Spem in Alium Nunquam Habui’ for chorus, brass, tympani and organ (2001), at the words ‘Respice humilitatem nostram’.

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The string quartets were recorded at St. Michael’s Parish Church, Inveresk, Musselburgh, Scotland, on 17 December 2009 (Quartet no. 2) and 18 December 2009 (Quartet no. 1).

The piano works were recorded at The Reid Hall, Edinburgh University, on 27 March 2010.

The composer specifically required that the works be included complete as one track each and not sub-indexed.

Engineered, edited and mastered by Paul Baxter
Executive producer John Rose.

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John Rose was born in London in 1928 of Dutch parents who emigrated to Cape Town in 1940. There he was educated at the Diocesan College where, under the aegis of Claude Brown, major choral works were performed in association with the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra. The orchestra also performed two of his works. Subsequently he studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and at Oxford under Edmund Rubbra.

After a long creative hiatus, he resumed composing in 1993, with works which were firmly rooted in this background, such as the two definitive organ works (recorded by Kevin Bowyer), ‘Psalm XLII’ for chorus and orchestra and ‘Spem in Alium Nunquam Habui’ for chorus, brass, tympani and organ. Two quartets followed and two piano works, ‘Essay on DSCH’ and ‘Two Preludes and Three Fugues’, all of which are included on this recording.

From 1996 song-writing marked a change of direction. This comprises mostly settings of ancient Chinese poetry from the Book of Odes (1027 - 476 BC), and from the poets of the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907), in particular Li Po. The songs share with his other works a distinctive linear style of writing.

His other occupations have been in adult education as founder and conductor of the St. Albans Chamber Choir, extra-mural lecturer to universities and Lecturer in Further Education, Glasgow.
The Edinburgh Quartet was founded in 1959 and quickly established as one of Britain’s’ foremost chamber ensembles, appearing regularly at prestigious venues across the country including London’s Wigmore Hall and The South Bank Centre. It achieved international recognition after winning the Contemporary Prize at the Evian-les-Bains String Quartet Competition and has since toured extensively across Europe, the Far East, North and South America and the Middle East. The Quartet have made numerous BBC TV and BBC Radio 3 broadcasts and can also be heard on Classic FM. 2009 marks the Quarter’s fiftieth anniversary and it is now one of the longest running chamber ensembles in the UK with a busier performing schedule than ever before.

The Quartet is resident at Glasgow University and Napier University and also collaborates with Aberdeen and Edinburgh Universities. In addition to a regular classical concert series at each of these institutions, the Quartet is committed to nurturing talent and championing new music. The ensemble has worked on many important and prolific composers of our age, including the Quartet’s patron, James MacMillan and Michael Tippett, who selected the Edinburgh Quartet’s recording of his First Quartet for re-release on EMI shortly before his death.

This recording is representative of the Edinburgh Quartet’s extensive discography available on various labels such as Delphian, Linn, Meridian and RCA. Recent recordings include the complete Hans Gal String Quartets (‘Editor’s Choice’ Gramophone Magazine, 2007), the complete Kenneth Leighton String Quartets (‘The unanimity of their ensemble, even at the densest polyphonic moments in flying scherzo tempo is very impressive.’ BBC Music Magazine), as well as discs of Bartok, Robert Crawford, Haydn, Schubert and Thomas Wilson. Future releases include the complete Matyas Seiber Quartets on Delphian Records, which were featured on a live broadcast by the Edinburgh Quartet on BBC Radio 3.
The Edinburgh Quartet

l-r:
Philip Burrin
Tristan Gurney
Mark Bailey
Michael Beeston

Robert Melling
Robert Melling was born in Plymouth, educated in York and moved to Glasgow in 1991 when he won a scholarship to study at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Whilst at the Academy, Robert won all duo and accompaniment prizes including the principal’s overall prize. He performed regularly both as a soloist and accompanist for singers and instrumentalists in master classes with Roger Vignoles, Geoffrey Parsons, John Street and Martin Isepp at the Britten-Pears School. Awarded a commendation in the Maggie Teyte Competition at Covent Garden, Robert was also chosen to perform in Graham Johnson’s Songmakers’ Almanac master classes and in concerts at St John Smith Square, London.

Robert’s concerto performances include Shostakovich’s Second Piano Concerto, Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue and Jolivet’s Concertino for Trumpet, String Orchestra and Piano and he has performed both in Britain and on the continent, most notably in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Wigmore Hall, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Auckland Palace Durham and extensively throughout Scotland and Iceland. Robert has also worked with the Chamber Group of Scotland, the BT Scottish Ensemble, Paragon, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Capella Nova, Robert Mcfalls Chamber, and the John Currie Singers. He has also performed in recitals for Radio 3 at the National Portrait Gallery and for Radio Scotland.

As well as being the official accompanist for the Perth Music Festival and the Festival International de Musique et des Arts de Latour de France, Robert also continues to enjoy performing on the recital platform, most notably with a voice and piano recital at the Louvre for Radio France and a Dutch Radio recital in s’Hertogenbosch, that was repeated in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In collaboration with the Scottish based composer John Rose, Robert has just recorded his Preludes and Fugues and his Essay on DSCH. Robert recently gave a solo recital in the South of France performing music by Mozart, Debussy, Schubert and Kokkonen and a voice and piano recital in Switzerland.
Robert’s opera experience includes work with the RSAMD, Manan Opera, Opera Alba, British Youth Opera, Opera Galactica and he has conducted Carmen with Opera on a Shoestring. He was also the musical director for their touring production An Evening in Paris. Robert’s theatrical experience has seen him performing at the Citizens Theatre, Theatre Cryptic, Suspect Culture and the National Theatre of Scotland with whom, as the musical director for Wolves in the Walls, he made his US debut performing on New York’s Broadway.

Alongside his performance work Robert also teaches piano at Glenalmond College Perthshire and at the High School of Glasgow.

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John Rose

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