

SUCCESSFUL LONDON RECITALS

WIGMORE HALL, MARCH 3rd, 1939

SUNDAY TIMES, March 5th, 1939.

Few parties would one so willingly trust to construe the later Beethoven. They elected, now, to give Op. 130 with the Grosse Fuge (Op. 133) originally designed as its Finale. In constant consciousness of the whole design they developed the characters of the successive movements while maintaining the ultra-speculative mood which dominates even the lighter ones. It was a feat of collective construction that an occasional trivial individual blemish could scarcely impair. They rounded off the evening into charm with Debussy. (H. F.)

TIMES, March 6th, 1939.

Beethoven's Op. 130, with its original last movement "die grosse Fuge" in place of the substituted Rondo, was the main event in the recital given at Wigmore Hall on Friday by the Kutcher Quartet. Before and after this formidable undertaking the Quartets by Haydn in D, Op. 64, No. 5, and Debussy were heard.

Both these lighter masterpieces were given with point and assurance. The balance and the intonation were mostly steady and the players showed a proper understanding of their relationship one to another.

It was good to hear the Fugue played with gusto. Best, perhaps, was the "Andante con moto," which established just the right mood.

OBSERVER, March 5th, 1939.

Haydn in D, Op. 64, No. 5, was daintily played, the first movement and the trio being especially successful.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH AND MORNING POST, March 4th, 1939.

The Kutcher Quartet began their recital at Wigmore Hall last night with Haydn's Quartet in D, Op. 64, No. 5, and ended it with Debussy's Quartet in G minor. These charming, graceful works were separated by Beethoven's Op. 130, played as it was originally meant to be played, namely, with the Great Fugue as its concluding movement.

Even without this fugue this quartet provides the most arduous tests of musicianship.

It is much to their credit that they gave due consideration to the sub-title of the Andante and due prominence to its gracious ("Poco scherzoso") aspects, avoiding the heaviness which, in other readings, have robbed it of its true value and significance. The rest of the programme was infinitely lighter and easier by comparison; it was well played.

WIGMORE HALL, MAY 11th, 1938

DAILY TELEGRAPH, May 12th, 1938.

Frederic d'Erlanger's Quintet for piano and strings in C minor, which the Kutcher Quartet and Harry Isaacs played at Wigmore Hall last night, proved rather a pleasant experience. It came after Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 59, in F, of which Mr. Kutcher and his colleagues stressed very effectively every unexpected turn of harmony and melody.

After this keen-edged performance, the candour of the d'Erlanger Quintet, its freedom from eccentricity, strictly logical discourse and direct idiom took one by surprise. But if the unadventurous spirit precludes surprises, the melodiousness of the composition has its fascinations.

The Quintet calls for honest, downright playing—which it got from Mr. Isaacs and the Kutcher Quartet. (F. B.)

THE TIMES, May 13th, 1938.

This string quartet gave an intelligent and perceptive performance of Beethoven's Quartet in F (Op. 59, No. 1). Between it and a Boccherini Quartet their programme was diversified by a Quintet for piano and strings by Frederic d'Erlanger. It is agreeable music. The third movement, which holds the place of a scherzo in the four movement plan, was the most attractive.

DAILY MAIL, May 12th, 1938.

The Kutcher Quartet, at the Wigmore Hall, gave a first-rate performance of Frederic d'Erlanger's piano quintet, with Mr. Harry Isaacs at the piano.

AEOLIAN HALL, NOVEMBER 26th, 1937

SUNDAY TIMES, November 28th, 1937.

The Kutcher String Quartet treated us to some exceptionally fine playing at their concert in Aeolian Hall on Friday evening. Their performance of a Hadyn quartet in C (Op. 54, No. 2) was notable for the exquisite balance of the parts ; and in Dohnanyi's quartet in D flat this virtue was still more evident because of the greater opportunities for it presented by the work. Dohnanyi may not be an original driving force in music : but he can generally be trusted to give a quite personal turn to the accepted ways of thinking in music, and in this quartet there is a great deal that is beautiful and distinguished. The work is most skilfully set out for the instruments : the range of string colour in it would have astonished old Haydn, who was no novice himself in that field. The Kutcher people brought out every subtlety in the score. (E. N.)

DAILY TELEGRAPH, November 27th, 1937.

It was intelligent collaboration that allowed the lyrical phrases of Dohnanyi's Quartet in D flat to make their full effect felt, as it was musicianship that ensured a satisfactory balance and blend of tone in the first movement of Beethoven's Op. 95 in F minor—in this respect one of the most difficult of all quartet movements. (F. B.)

GREAT THOUGHTS, February, 1938.

At the Aeolian Hall, the Kutcher Quartet gave one of their all too rare recitals. The work of Haydn in C, Op. 54, No. 2, was beautifully done, the playing being clean and clear from the first bar. Dohnanyi's D flat Quartet gave wider scope for dynamic power and rich colouring, but the Beethoven F minor, Op. 95, was the triumph of the evening, and its noble breadth formed a fitting conclusion to an evening of superlatively good string-playing.

CRITICISMS OF OTHER RECITALS

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC LONDON, 1938

THE TIMES, June 20th, 1938.

Karl Amadeus Hartmann's String Quartet made the deepest impression of all the works in this programme. The opening bars seemed to threaten us with an experiment with quarter-tones, but, though these occurred twice in the same place in the theme, the threat did not materialise. The work belongs as genuine quartet-writing for four equal and independent voices to the tradition of Beethoven's last quartets. It was obviously difficult to play, but the Kutcher Quartet succeeded in solving its technical and rhythmical problems and deserved the warm applause with which the large audience acclaimed them and the composer at the end.

DAME ETHEL SMYTH, D.B.E., Mus. Doc., writing in *Time and Tide* of the performance of her Quartet in E minor.

This opus is a very interior affair, takes more deep-sea fishing, more knowing, and more rehearsing than even the majority of string quartets. And that is saying a good deal. Possibly only a composer can guess what love, what industry, what technical and spiritual mastery lies behind a presentment such as these players achieved. And thus it is with everything they touch.

To me it is one of the mysteries of English musical life that apparently there is no one to tell the public that this home-grown quartet is superior in all the points that really matter to certain much-boasted quartets that come to London.

SUNDAY TIMES.

These fine artists gave us some quartet playing of the best kind at their concert in the Grotrian Hall on Friday ; the Franck quartet in particular was filled with such a glow of life that one more than ever wondered why this excellent work is so neglected. I have never yet heard a performance of Wolf's charming little Italian Serenade that gave me the impression of quite the right tempo ; but the playing of the Kutcher people, and especially of Mr. Kutcher himself, was so exquisitely sensitive in its nuances that it would be hypercritical to wrangle about the question of tempo—which, after all, must be a matter of individual feeling. (E. N.)

DAILY TELEGRAPH.

Familiar matters were discussed by the Kutcher Quartet at Grotrian Hall last night with the competence to be expected from this experienced group. Long association has brought their ensemble to a fine point of finish, and often though they must have played the quartets of Franck and Debussy and Wolf's Italian Serenade, they can still approach the contrasted manners with a freshness of conception that has about it something of the air of a new discovery.

That impression is conveyed to a great extent by their clear-cut and impulsive rhythm, a virtue that gave admirable delicacy to the dovetailing of the parts in Wolf's enchanting little movement, and a compelling breadth to the more spacious designs of the other two works. (C. D. G.)

THE TIMES.

The Kutcher Quartet played Hugo Wolf's Italian Serenade and the quartets of Franck and Debussy at Grotrian Hall on Friday. Their approach to the music was commendably vigorous. But it was in the glittering, ethereal scherzo that the agility of their playing made its best effect. They had been at pains, too, to catch the wit and poise of Wolf's entrancing little serenade, and their admirably interdependent sense of rhythm and that awareness of each other which only a long-standing combination of talents can give resulted in an agreeably exhilarating performance.

EVENING NEWS.

The recital given at Wigmore Hall by the Kutcher Quartet showed what a reputation these players had won, for the hall was crowded ; and well they deserved it !

What gave value to their playing and prevailed in the long run was the strength of their combined personality and the variety and the spirit with which it expressed itself.

The Quartet measured itself successfully against one of Beethoven's finest chamber works.

(W. McN.)

THE STAR.

The Wigmore Hall was packed, people were standing, and for what ? To hear three quartets—Haydn, Beethoven, and Smetana—played by the Kutcher Quartet.

This string quartet is first-rate, its four artists are artists. They invariably attract a huge audience.

Mr. Kutcher and his friends played the Haydn in D, known as "The Lark," with great beauty of tone.

(J. A. F.)

DAILY MAIL.

The Wigmore Hall was crowded for a concert by the Kutcher String Quartet. The hallmark of their programme was a splendid performance of Beethoven's first "Rasumov'sky" Quartet. (E. E.)

NOTICES FROM THE PROVINCIAL PRESS

LIVERPOOL EVENING EXPRESS, December 1st, 1937.

At the third concert of the Rodewald Society, the Kutcher String Quartet played an unusually varied programme of quartets.

The composers represented were Hadyn, Boccherini, Tschaiikowsky, and Turina. The music of the latter is rapidly becoming more popular. It is vivid and colourful writing which has an immediate appeal to the listener as well as to the performer. On this occasion, this quartet, in one movement, and bearing the title "La Oracion del Torero," was given an excellent performance at the hands of the Kutcher ensemble.

LIVERPOOL DAILY POST, November 30th, 1937.

The third concert of the Rodewald Society brought the Kutcher String Quartet to Liverpool in a recital that delighted an unusually large attendance. The programme was well chosen and varied, and the quartet played with its accustomed skill and perception.

The Tschaiikowsky, which was broadcast, was given a splendid performance.

HULL DAILY MAIL, March 22nd, 1937.

The Kutcher Quartet played magnificently to the Hull Music Club on Saturday night.

After hearing this company of strings play Mozart's Quartet in E flat major is to heave a sigh for humanity. The way these four super musicians coloured this thrilling pattern with the rich, deep beauty of their tone, the way they made the menuetto's grace so eloquent confirmed the eldest Dewy in his saying: "Nothing will spak to your heart wi' the sweetness o' the man of strings."

NOTTINGHAM JOURNAL, October 1st, 1937.

It fell to the Kutcher String Quartet to open the Nottingham Music Club's new season, and a very auspicious start it proved to be.

If anything the Kutcher gained by comparison with the several other eminent string quartets which have performed here under similar auspices, and a big proportion of the Music Club's members, which now number close on 500, listened with rapt attention to the exemplary ensemble.

From the performance of the Vaughan Williams' Quartet there emerged a very clear sense of the greatness of the music and the depth of its emotion.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more intense and alive than the playing of the last movement, which in less accomplished hands might become chaotic.

EASTERN DAILY PRESS, October 15th, 1937.

A visit by the Kutcher String Quartet made a brilliant opening last evening to the new season of the Music House Guild.

We who were fortunate enough to be present last night must be satisfied that we heard so fine a quartet enhance the already high reputation they have so securely established, both through the medium of the wireless and their previous visits to the city of Norwich. They were quick to appreciate the almost perfect acoustic conditions of the Music House and the result was one of the most perfectly balanced performances of chamber music that I have ever heard.

The technical brilliance of each of the members of the quartet was especially obvious in the beautiful allegretto in the Beethoven quartet and lively third movement of the Vaughan Williams. But the fine sense of balance was, to my mind, the outstanding feature of the evening's performance, with next to it the delicate nuances of tone colour that the players achieved both individually and in concert.

NORWICH JOURNAL, October 16th, 1937.

This quartet is famous for its brilliant work in the realm of chamber music.

Mention must be made of the magnificent interpretation of Vaughan Williams' Quartet in G minor, where it was at once apparent that the players were in perfect accord with the spirit—and at times almost mystical character—of this splendid work by one of the greatest of living English composers.

Needless to say, the audience was thoroughly enraptured with a delightful rendering of the Beethoven Quartet Op. 95 (F minor), which constituted one of the other major works in the programme.

The evening ended with an almost gossamerlike performance of Hugo Wolf's "Italian Serenade." This work is inherent with an almost sunshine-like charm, and the inspired playing of it by this memorable Quartet must have passed on this impression to all members of the audience.

NEWCASTLE JOURNAL, December 4th, 1936.

The Quartet again captivated with their perfect team-work. This was most noticeable in Mozart's Quartet in E flat major, the delicacy of the later phases of this being admirably brought out and contrasting strikingly with the vigour of the opening movement of Debussy's G minor Quartet, which followed.

The final work was "The Lark," by Haydn, and an equally fine interpretation of it rounded off a most interesting evening.

YORKSHIRE POST, December 3rd, 1936.

The Kutcher String Quartet gave a chamber concert for the British Music Society of York last night, playing Cesar Franck's quartet, Hugo Wolf's Italian Serenade, and Hadyn's Op. 64, No. 5 in D, to a large and appreciative audience.

The key relationship of these items (the works were in D, G and D respectively) was an interesting feature of the programme, giving it a certain unity in addition to the wide contrasts between the sweet seriousness of Franck, the rather nervy sensitiveness of Wolf, and the serene craftsmanship of Hadyn. Cesar Franck's quartet, the last of his chamber compositions, and coming a good ten years later than the quintet with piano, is the maturest example of his explorations into cyclic form, and the interpenetration of the themes gives the work a contemplative character for which the string quartet seems the most appropriate medium of expression. Last night's performance respected this contemplative character, sound team work sustaining the rich textural interest without leaning to the dramatic element which to some extent vitiates the symphony and the quintet. The players were particularly successful in conveying the spidery, gnomish spirit of the muted scherzo and in maintaining glowing, balanced tone in the larghetto.

Wolf's Italian Serenade was deft and vivacious, unassailable as regarded rhythmic ensemble.

(A. H. A.)