The period from 1750 to 1880 was a significant one in the history of the string quartet, just as it was in the history of British watercolors. It was in the mid-eighteenth century that the practice of including a keyboard instrument, the *continuo*, in every string ensemble was gradually dropped, making way for a new style of writing for those ensembles. That style was marked by an increased prominence of the viola and cello parts and by a balance between sections in which the voices move contrapuntally and sections in which they move chordally. The first great innovator in four-part writing for strings was Haydn, who was already using the title *Quartet* in the works he published as Opus 1. Later in his career Haydn looked back on his *Quartets, Opus 9*, which he wrote between 1769 and 1770, as being his first true string quartets. His *Quartets, Opus 20*, which date from 1772, are among his best known works in this genre, and they display a musical maturity and freedom of form which one expects to find only in music of later periods. *Opus 20, No. 5* is remarkable for its contrasts, from the eloquent sadness of the *Allegro moderato* to the strength of the *Menuetto* to the beautiful melodiousness of the *Adagio*. The *Finale* is a fugue which communicates a sense of restrained urgency.

In order to find significant string quartets originating from the British Isles, one must look beyond the period 1750-1880. A real flowering of compositions in this genre did not take place there until the twentieth century, when composers such as Britten, Vaughan Williams, and Michael Tippett made their contributions to the quartet repertoire. Although not as famous as those three Englishmen, Kenneth Leighton has received numerous prizes for his compositions and has been appointed to teaching posts both at Oxford and at Edinburgh University. The *Seven Variations* have the nature of an epitaph or elegy, having been commissioned as a memorial to the mother of the artist Maurice de Sausmarez.

Beethoven learned the craft of string quartet writing from Haydn and expanded the medium throughout his career, culminating in works which defy comparison. The quartets of Opus 59 belong to Beethoven's middle period, which was ushered in by the famous *Eroica* Symphony. This was the period in which he expanded and transformed virtually every musical form he had inherited, earning him a reputation among his contemporaries as a relentless iconoclast. Some examples of this iconoclasm in the *Quartet in E Minor* include the early occurrence of changes in tonality in its first movement, the inclusion of explosive climaxes in the second movement, which normally functions as a movement of quiet repose, the five-part structure of the *Allegretto*, which Beethoven's audience would have anticipated as a three-part *scherzo*, and the surprise created by beginning the final movement in the "wrong" key—C major, which requires some subtle modulation to get back to the "home" key—E minor.
PROGRAM

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
String Quartet in F Minor, Opus 20, No. 5 (1772)
Allegro moderato
Menuetto
Adagio
Finale: Fuga a due soggetti

Kenneth Leighton (b. 1929)
Seven Variations for String Quartet Opus 43 (1964)

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
String Quartet in E Minor, Opus 59, No. 2 (1806)
Allegro
Molto adagio
Allegretto
Presto

The Edinburgh Quartet's current tour in the United States is made possible through the financial assistance of The British Council.

In the thirty-three years since its foundation, the EDINBURGH QUARTET has established itself as one of the most successful in Britain and has undertaken numerous tours, both within and outside of the United Kingdom. In addition to repeated invitations to concertize in the United States, Canada, Russia, and the Far East, the quartet has played annually in the Middle East, except for a brief interruption during the Gulf War in 1991. As Quartet in Residence at the Aberdeen, Scotland, International Youth Festival, the members regularly coach students of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in chamber music and take delight in working with schoolchildren of all ages. In addition to coaching at the Aberdeen Festival, the members of the quartet also coach and perform frequently at the Universities of Edinburgh, Strathclyde, and Glasgow.

The Edinburgh Quartet was awarded the first Scottish Society of Composers PRS Award for the promotion and encouragement of the work of living composers, having given more than forty first performances over the years. The quartet has appeared frequently on BBC-TV, ITV, and on international radio broadcasts. Its recordings include quartets by Dvorak, Schubert, Ronald Stevenson, and Thomas Wilson.

Scottish violinist MILES BASTER is the founding member of the Edinburgh Quartet. As a student at the Royal Academy of Music in London, he received the Dove Prize for distinguished scholarship and the Boise Scholarship, which enabled him to study under Louis Persinger in New York City. Mr. Baster was a finalist in the 1956 Carl Flesch Competition and is a silver medalist of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

PETER MARKHAM studied violin at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where his teacher was Joan Spencer. He interrupted his studies at age twenty to become the principal second violinist of the Ulster Orchestra. He also played in the Bergen, Norway, Symphony Orchestra and the Northern Sinfonia in Newcastle before joining the Edinburgh Quartet in 1975.

Violist MICHAEL BEESTON studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music with Frederick Riddle and Alexandre Moskovsky. A winner of the Webster Memorial Prize, he was appointed to the position of sub-principal viola with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and has been a member of the Edinburgh Quartet since 1971.

MARK BAILEY studied at Royal College of Music in London, where he won all the major cello prizes, including the coveted Ivor James Award. Upon leaving the college in 1978, he was invited by Paul Tortellier to study with him for two years, for which he received scholarships from the Government of France, the Countess of Munster Trust, and the Suggia Trust. He was sub-principal cellist in the English National Opera Orchestra when he joined the Edinburgh Quartet in 1985.