

Program Notes by Chris Darwin. Please use freely for non-commercial purposes.

Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989) String Trio Op. 19 (1943)

Moderato

Adagio

Allegro

In his mid-twenties Lennox Berkeley studied with Nadia Boulanger and Maurice Ravel in Paris where he also met Poulenc, Stravinsky, Milhaud and Honegger. French music was to have a lasting influence on him. In his early thirties he met the 10-year younger Britten in Spain. They became close friends and for a while shared the Old Mill in Snape. Their friendship endured and Britten became godfather to Lennox's son Michael, himself a distinguished composer.

The string trio was first performed at the Wigmore Hall in 1944 by the dedicatees Frederick Grinke, Watson Forbes and James Phillips. Each of the work's movements uses a different classical form: sonata, ternary and rondo respectively. They show in James Rushton's words *'a bitter-sweet, most approachable lyricism whilst maintaining with unfailing clarity rich contrapuntal interest.'*