

# UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

F. W. KELSEY, President

A. A. STANLEY, Director

## EXTRA CONCERT SERIES, 1920-1921

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SECOND SEASON

FOURTH CONCERT

No. CCCLIII COMPLETE SERIES

### THE FLONZALEY STRING QUARTET

ADOLFO BETTI, First Violin

ALFRED POCHON, Second Violin

LOUIS BAILLY, Viola

IWAN D'ARCHAMBEAU, 'Cello

MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 1921, AT EIGHT O'CLOCK

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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### PROGRAM

#### I

QUARTET IN F MAJOR, Op. 59, No. 1 . . . . . *Beethoven*  
Allegro: Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando;  
Adagio molto e mesto—Allegro (Thème russe)

#### II

QUARTET IN A MAJOR, Op. 41, No. 3 . . . . . *Schumann*  
Andante espressivo—Allegro molto moderato; Assai agitato;  
Adagio molto; Allegro molto vivace

#### III

"BY THE TARN" . . . . . *Goosens*  
"MOLLY ON THE SHORE" . . . . . *Grainger*

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The next concert in the FACULTY CONCERT SERIES (complimentary) will be given Sunday afternoon (January 16) at 3:00 o'clock.

The next concert in the CHORAL UNION SERIES will be given by THE DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, OSSIP GABRILOWITSCH, CONDUCTOR, Monday evening, January 24.

The final concert in the EXTRA CONCERT SERIES will be given by THE NEW YORK CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY, February 28.

The next concert in the MATINEE MUSICALE SERIES will be given by SASCHA JACOBINOFF, February 8 (High School).

## ANALYSES

### QUARTET IN F MAJOR, Op. 59, No. 1

Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven was born December 16, 1770, at Bonn; died March 26, 1827, at Vienna.

In the year 1805, when Beethoven was harassed by the difficulties attending the production of "Fidelio" (November 20), he turned to the composition of two string quartets, Op. 59, which, dedicated to the Russian Ambassador, Count Rasoumoffsky, have since then been known by his name. After the creation of the one on our program (probably in 1806), it was included in the same Opus as No. 1, the two whose composition falls in the earlier year being listed as Nos. 2 and 3. Beethoven's connection with the string quartet was of prime importance, for in this, as in all other forms, his touch ennobled and gave added distinction to a type of composition that had responded to the influence of Haydn and Mozart so fully that it only awaited the advent of a greater master to reveal its inherent possibilities. In what measure these possibilities were realized by Beethoven is shown by the composition on our program, which many hold to be the greatest quartet ever written. Beethoven's unerring judgment and masterly reserve are shown by the fact that he, unlike many of his successors, never transgressed the legitimate boundaries of the form to intrude on the domain of the orchestra.

Before proceeding to a brief analysis of the work, it may be of value to emphasize essential differences between an orchestra and a string quartet. In the orchestra we have a great variety of contrasting colors, unlimited dynamic resources, and masses of tone to enlist the attention; in the string quartet we have only varying shades of the same general color, the dynamic effects are limited, and instead of masses of tone we have single voices. The distinctions are largely along the same lines as those we note in comparing an oil painting with an etching. In the quartet we have purer tuning—a universally recognized fact—and, in a certain sense, greater individuality in the parts, but, failing the arresting features of the orchestra, it is more difficult to appreciate a quartet than a symphony. It makes greater demands on the intellect through the absence of the sensuous element, but the reward is all the more worth while. It has been said—and with truth—that no better standard by which to estimate the musical culture of a community exists than its attitude toward this refined and spiritual type of music. May we take this to heart!

As notated illustrations are not available—they are never met with in chamber-music programs, where, in reality, the need is greatest—whatever may be gained through analysis must be won through other means.

As the first step towards a clearer understanding of the vital problem of listening intelligently, one must realize that the ear can grasp the contour of a musical phrase as easily as the eye can recognize the outline of a design. The contour of a phrase is its outline, while the harmonies, vitalized by appropriate combinations of the tone-qualities of the instruments employed, add light and shade. This three-fold appeal is greatly aided by the operation of a well-nigh universal law, viz.: Everything else being equal, the lyric element finds expression in curves, the dramatic in angles and jagged lines, while between the two extremes are many nuances—many of them subtle—corresponding somewhat to middle tints in painting. The words "middle tints" suggest that the differences noted above condition both the harmonic and color-schemes. Finally, with a modicum of training it is possible so to seize upon and retain an important musical phrase that the processes of its development may be followed. This statement further implies the possibility of an extension of the process whereby several phrases may thus be made our own.

Having attempted to compress a thesis into a few sentences, it remains to point out that, in the following analyses, it has been thought wiser to emphasize a few of the most important themes rather than to construct a labyrinth of technicalities. This by no means implies that we must ignore the stimulus of a free imagination, and, if it is possible—as it is to the musically trained—to visualize the notation, so much the better.

To come to our analysis—the initial theme of the first movement—F major, *Allegro*, common time—falls to the violoncello. In the first four measures of this theme we meet with an easily noted phrase, which, continued for another four measures, leads to its further development by the first violin. Twelve measures from the *fortissimo* chord, through which the principal subject merges into a short supplementary section, comes a "subsidiary" heard first as a duo by the violins above sustained chords by the viola and violoncello and repeated by these instruments unaccompanied. The attention is next arrested by a solo passage for the violoncello, after which eight measures of *ensemble* lead to the second subject. In the course of its development we hear a sustained tone by the first violin ( $g^3$ ) which ends in a triplet figure. This figure must be especially noted, as it is of structural importance. Provided the four points noted have been impressed on the memory—for it is well not to attempt too much—the various developments of the form may be followed, if not fully, at least sufficiently to give one greater enjoyment than can be won by mere passive yielding to the pleasure of the moment. If the attempt to listen in the manner indicated results in confusion and loss of enjoyment, the "passive yielding" is to be preferred.

When the first cyclical form, the Suite, yielded to the more important Sonata, the Minuet, one of the dances included in the earlier form, was retained. As in other cases, Beethoven realized its possibilities and, while retaining its structure, through the substitution of a different content transformed it into the modern Scherzo.

The second movement in the quartet under consideration—B flat major, *Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando*, 3-8 time—is a perfect example of this metamorphosis, and presents thematic material easy to comprehend. The rhythmical figure at the opening, followed by the witty theme for second violin—*pianissimo* and *staccato*—its repetition by the viola and first violin (A flat major), with the succeeding four measures ending on a sustained chord, lead into a two-measure phrase, which is repeated. The entire movement becomes an open book to those who have followed the sequence noted.

In the third movement the expression-mark—*Adagio molto e mesto*—is of more significance than the key-signature—F minor—or the designation—2-4, for in his slow movements Beethoven lays bare the innermost secrets of his soul. After the first violin and violoncello have in turn put forth the broad and mobile principal theme, we have an interesting illustration of the individuality of the different instruments as they take up the plastic motive started by the violoncello. Through the entire movement this process is so consistently maintained that the auditor is urged to listen to it as one would to a serious conversation in which each person contributes to the discussion of a subject of the highest spiritual importance.

Through an extended cadence for the first violin ending in a trill we come to the second, and final, division, which is a utilization of a Russian theme, possibly intended as a tribute to the nationality of the man whom Beethoven honored, and whose name he perpetuated through the dedication of these marvellous quartets. This is not the only case in which he relied upon this particular national expression, although it may not be generally known that one of the phrases in the first violin part of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony is a South-Russian folk-song. Possibly at this point it is best to give one's self over to an unfettered enjoyment of the music as it unfolds itself and not attempt to fathom its structure.

#### QUARTET IN A MAJOR, Op. 41, No. 3 . . . . . Schumann

Robert (Alexander) Schumann was born June 8, 1810, at Zwickau; died July 29, 1856, at Endernich, near Bonn.

In 1842 Schumann turned to a field of composition hitherto untouched by him, viz., the string quartet. As a proof of the spontaneity of his genius, and the fact that at this time he must have been seething with the impulse to create, one has but to mention that the three superb quartets known as Opus 41, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, were composed between June 21 and July 22 of that year. The sequence is as follows: No. 1, June 21-24; No. 2, July 2-5; No. 3, July 18-22. Thus the quartet on our program was written in five days, the two last movements in one day each—a veritable *tour de force*.

Introduced by a short section of seven measures—A major, *Andante espressivo*, common time—the first movement proper—*Allegro moderato*, 3-4 time—begins with a compelling and naive theme, the first measure of which is based on the first two notes of the short phrase for the first violin with which the introductory section opens, and which, as held by the violin in the closing measure, awakens expectancy. Particular attention should be given to this, the principal subject, as it is a controlling factor in the building up of the entire movement. At the ninth measure a new phrase enters which is subjected to that species of initiative treatment already referred to which, resembling a conversation between the four instruments, is responsible for the *intime* atmosphere so notable an attribute of string-quartet music. This section loses itself in restatements of the principal subject in a series of contrasting tonalities through which we gain the second subject. This is a broad melody, first given by the violoncello, which presently yields it to the first violin, and so compels attention that it is easily noted and retained. With the completion of this subject the "exposition" section comes to an end. From this point the developments run along the usual course of the sonata-form and are easily followed provided one has a firm hold on the two leading subjects.

The second movement—F sharp minor, *Assai agitato*, 3-8 time—is made up of several broadly conceived divisions, each complete in itself and combining in a quasi-rhapsodical version of the scherzo-form. In content it is typically Schumannesque. This is shown by the constant employment of syncopations—restful rather than restless—through the greater part of the first main division. Following the strong fugal section in 2-4 time, and preceding the bold proclamations of the *Tempo risoluto* (3-4 time), the genial transformation of the mildly impetuous first subject into a restful slow movement—*Un poco adagio*—reveals his touch no less surely. The resistless melodies of the final section, ending in a sustained *pianissimo* chord (F sharp major), form not only a beautiful conclusion to the movement, but leave one in the proper mood to appreciate the beautiful slow movement that follows.

The sustained power of this movement—D major, *Adagio molto*, common time—makes itself felt immediately and dominates its every measure. In dignity, poise, and sustained melodic utterance it stands unrivalled in the literature of the quartet, and every secondary

feature appears to exist that these attributes may be emphasized. Thus, when, after the *ritard* at the end of the first subject the original *tempo* is resumed, the questioning phrases of the first violin (E flat major and C minor) are answered in the eighth measure by a quotation from the original theme, a structural feature is introduced which, continuing through various tonalities, gives urgency to the query. Responding to this urgency, the entire first subject is now stated with added intensity until, after a repetition of this treatment, the final hesitating queries of the first violin ("Warum?") receive their final answer through a concluding section eloquent in its finality.

Some one has said, "Before Bach commenced to write his great G minor organ-fugue he threw off his wig, turned down his shirt-collar, and rolled up his sleeves." Schumann in this last movement—A major, *Allegro molto vivace*, Alla-Breve time—written in one day—must have thrown to the winds every hampering restriction, for it appears to have been written at a white heat. The impact of the virile rhythms of the first subject; the mighty sweep of the interjected section in F sharp minor, later repeated in A minor; the geniality of the Quasi Trio (F major, 42 measures)—indeed its introduction; his long tarryings in the keys of C major and A minor; the energy with which he resumed the principal subject and the brilliancy of the concluding section lead one to infer that he threw his treatises on form on the floor or through the window. This inference would not be entirely correct, for however rhapsodical his treatment may have been, the movement complies with every fundamental concept of form, although it might be criticized by those to whom "the spirit killeth, but the letter giveth life."

One of the greatest joys a musician may know is to sit in the quiet of the study and call up memories of works heard, it may be years before. Such retrospective viewing—to the musician *hearing*—not infrequently yields a clearer insight into a work, and often results in a more subtle evaluation of its merits and demerits than is gained through actual performance. Such statements may not appear sane to many, but "We musicians know."

Contemplating the two quartets to which we have just listened from a point of view somewhat akin to that mentioned, two observations may be made. The first is this—in spite of the fact that the composers are held to belong to two distinct schools, the essential differences in their musical idioms are not so great as might be assumed, nor do their treatments on the whole bear out the ordinary interpretations of the terms "classic" and "romantic." The second is, that, viewing the Schumann work as a whole, one can realize how his inspiration gathered strength (momentum?) as he proceeded, and arrive at the conviction that he conceived the work as a whole as surely as though it had been written at one sitting. In other words, there was no break in the continuity of his inspiration, for which reason each movement appears to be the prophecy of the next instead of standing by itself or "afar off," as occasionally happens in the case of ultra-moderns. As one visualizes the master in the act of committing his glowing inspirations to paper, it is easy to imagine the calm and reverent attitude he assumed as the slow movement took form and substance under his hand. In view of the possibilities involved, it may be urged that reflection, after a concert, may so enhance the pleasure received during a concert that listening may become not alone an act of intelligence, but be elevated to a real art.

"BY THE TARN" . . . . . Goosens  
 "MOLLY ON THE SHORE" . . . . . Grainger

Eugène Goosens, who was born May 26, 1893, at London, and who is still living, is named by that most competent of English musical critics, Ernest Newman, as one of "The two chief representative modern composers in England who succeed best of all in that attempt to translate into music by means of a subtle realism those visualized effects" which Mr. Newman considers "the main object of music today." The other recipient of Mr. Newman's eulogy is Lord Berners (Gerald Tywhill), whose star has not yet risen in our Western sky. With what measure of success Mr. Goosens attains "those visualized effects and how clarifying his "realism" is left to "By the Tarn" to demonstrate rather than to prophecy. This may be critical "hedging," but in the case of ultra-modern apostles of the subliminal it is advisable, as it follows the leadings of the modern ubiquitous legend—"Safety First."

Percy Grainger, who represents the Antipodes—he having been born July 8, 1883, at Brighton, Australia—in his compositions, as in his pianoforte-playing, is the embodiment of virility of the out-of-doors type. His interest in folk-lore and folk-song is not limited to the products of the British Empire, but extends to the folk-products of our own country. He is a firm believer in the artistic possibilities of our native folk-music, including the songs of the Kentucky and Tennessee mountaineers and the Southern negroes, and is insistent in presenting these homely tunes in various versions to his audiences. It is a pertinent query whether those who look upon certain of these melodies as "vulgar" would do so were they labelled South-Slavic, Bohemian, or Scandinavian. Frequently, the pseudo-critical mind "moves in a mysterious way its wonders to perform," and it behooves one not to attempt to sound its depths—or shoals. To maintain this comforting attitude of detachment may be made easier through listening to the jolly "Molly on the Shore" which concludes our program.