The University Musical Society

of

The University of Michigan

Presents

Guarneri String Quartet

ARNOLD STEINHARDT, *Violin*
JOHN DALLEY, *Violin*
MICHAEL TREE, *Viola*
DAVID SOYER, *Cello*

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 17, 1977, AT 2:30
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 18, No. 6 . . . . BEETHOVEN

Allegro con brio
Adagio ma non troppo
Scherzo
La Malinconia, adagio; allegretto quasi allegro

Quartet in F minor, Op. 95 . . . . BEETHOVEN

Allegro con brio
Allegretto ma non troppo
Allegro assai vivace, ma serioso
Larghetto espressivo; allegro agitato

INTERMISSION

Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4 . . . . BEETHOVEN

Allegro ma non tanto
Scherzo
Menuetto
Allegro

Quartet in F major, Op. 135 . . . . BEETHOVEN

Allegretto
Vivace
Lento assai, cantabile e tranquillo
Grave ma non troppo tratto; allegro

This concert is the fifth and last program of the complete Beethoven quartet cycle performed by the Guarneri Quartet during this 1976–77 season.

RCA Red Seal Records

Ludwig van Beethoven

(Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn; died March 26, 1827, in Vienna)

Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 18, No. 6

Beethoven's six string quartets, Op. 18, were composed during the period between 1798 and 1800, and were published in two volumes of three quartets each in 1801 by Mollo of Vienna. They were dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz, a great friend and admirer of Beethoven and an excellent violinist, who spent large sums of money in order to satisfy his passion for music. These quartets constitute Beethoven's first published works in this form. They were conceived during a very difficult period in the composer's life. He was experiencing his first signs of deafness, though he concealed the fact from his friends. Yet, while he was suffering inwardly, he composed these essentially bright quartets. Joseph de Marliave called them the first of Beethoven's "splendid lies."

A strange mixture of styles and moods is to be found in the Quartet No. 6 in B-flat major, Op. 18, No. 6. The opening *Allegro con brio,* with its rather robust high spirits, sounds more Haydnesque than Beethovenian. The shadow of Haydn also seems to hang over the serene, uncomplicated, and beautiful *Adagio ma non troppo.* Beethoven's own personality emerges in the Scherzo, *Allegro,* whose main section is full of tantalizing cross-rhythms, with contrast provided by the relative rhythmic regularity of the trio—or middle section.

With the arrival of the final movement, the whole mood of this heretofore untroubled quartet undergoes a startling series of transformations. To begin with, there is an extended section headed *La Malinconia, Adagio,* and bearing the further indication, in Italian, "This movement must be played with the greatest subtlety." The deep emotion, the wrenching harmonies, the sudden shifts from loud to soft—all this presents the composer in an expressive new light. For a few moments, he seems to be revealing a bit of his inner self in music suggesting a transition from his early to his middle creative period. Then suddenly, this mood of melancholy is dispelled by a bright *Allegretto quasi allegro.* At first, there appears to be no relation between the two sections of this movement. Eventually, however, the *Adagio* returns, plunging the music into a dark mood once more. It takes two attempts before the *Allegretto* is able to resume. At the very end, it appears for an instant as if things were to become serious again; then Beethoven casts all care to the winds as he concludes the movement with a short, exuberant *Prestissimo.*

— Paul Affelder

Quartet in F minor, Op. 95

Concise, compact, and simply projected, this F-minor quartet is intensely expressive and often spoken of as the most intimate of Beethoven's work. It was composed in 1810, and is dedicated to Herr von Zmeskall. The opening movement, *Allegro con brio,* begins brusquely with a subject voiced in unison by the four instruments. An atmosphere of drama is thus established, to prevail throughout the entire movement. The turmoil is over and in the second movement, *Allegretto ma non troppo,* there is a pervading calm, gently touched by sorrow. The characteristic energy of Beethoven's scherzo movements is found in the third movement, *Allegro assai vivace.* After a poignant diminished seventh chord comes the final movement, *Larghetto,* music of deep feeling, which yields to the closing *Allegretto.*

Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4

The origin of the Quartet No. 4 in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4, is shrouded in mystery. No preliminary sketches of this quartet have ever been found, though it is almost inconceivable that, as de Marliave suggested, it could have been composed in a single effort. It is the only one of the six quartets in this group that is in a minor key; this gives it a different mood and coloring that set it apart from its five brothers.

The first movement is an expressive, soaring *Allegro ma non tanto.* An unusual feature of this quartet is that it has no slow movement. Instead, the second movement is a delicate scherzo, marked *Andante scherzoso quasi allegretto,* which opens with a little fugato, and thereafter pokes much of its fun in learned counterpoint. The third movement is a fairly serious-minded Menuetto, *Allegretto,* which returns to the darker mood of the opening movement, though its trio—or contrasting middle section—is somewhat brighter. The final *Allegro,* a spirited rondo, has a principal theme that begins like a variation in the minor of the popular Gypsy Rondo in Haydn's Piano Trio in G major.

— Paul Affelder

Quartet in F major, Op. 135

Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 135, is his last completed work, with the exception of the substitute finale to the B-flat major Quartet, Op. 130. The Quartet was finished in October of 1826. In this final work, Beethoven makes what must have been a conscious return to his own past, to his own former models. The opening *Allegretto* has been said to be suggestive of both Haydn and Mozart, the humor and spontaneity of the former balanced by the formal symmetry of the latter. The second movement, a lively scherzo much rougher than the first, belongs to the composer's outdoor scenes, as in its relative Sixth Symphony. The *Lento* which follows is exactly the opposite, the music flowing evenly and smoothly, which the composer referred to as a "tender song of praise."

Over the score of the last movement Beethoven wrote . . . "the resolution is taken with difficulty" and in the opening *Grave* section there appears the questioning motto "Must it be so?" and the emphatic reply, "It must be!" Although it has been often suggested that these musical motives might have some metaphysical interpretations, others have maintained this question-and-answer depiction was just another of Beethoven's musical jokes!

The Op. 135 Quartet, the 16th and last of these masterpieces, was performed for the first time at a memorial service for Beethoven, after his death.

. . . from tin foil to paprikash
The Guarneri Quartet Speaks Out on Recording

by

JOHN and SUSAN HARVITH © 1977

Harviths: As we explained to you, this interview will be used as part of a November 1977 University of Michigan exhibition, catalogue, and set of symposia dealing with the 100th anniversary of the invention of recording.

Dalley: Oh, I though this was going to be about music.

Soyer: The Russians invented recording, didn't they?

Steinhardt: The 100th anniversary of what?

Harviths: Of recording by Edison.

Dalley: The invention of recording? It can't be that old. What was the first record?

Steinhardt: It was a wax cylinder, wasn't it?

Harviths: No, it was tin foil.

Soyer: Who made that, who made that?

Harviths: Edison.

Soyer: Edison made that too? Were the first recorded words "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes?" Was that it?

Harviths: The question is, what do you think of recording? Do you feel that your playing is faithfully captured by recording, for instance?

Soyer: No.

Steinhardt: Probably not entirely. There are some artists who record better than they play, but mainly it's vice-versa. Most artists have a lot more presence and a lot more expressive and dynamic qualities live than they do in the recording studio by the very nature of the beast. It's a mechanical thing and it's an artificial situation that you're creating without an audience and recording piecemeal, as we do nowadays. I think it was probably much, much better in the 78 days, because one had to go in and play five minutes without interruption.

Soyer: What do you mean? We do that just as much.

Steinhardt: We also stop and start and stop and start.

Dalley: The advances in recording make it more difficult to capture what it is you're putting on tape faithfully. Because as the mikes get better, or they put them closer, or they have more of them, you have all of these peripheral problems that make it harder to give the effect of a concert hall. You're sitting in a room, and you have a very immediate setup with microphones. In a concert the audience is what—maybe 30 feet away, on the average, or 40 feet. They're at quite a distance, but microphones are not. And microphones also pick up everything, whereas human ears don't. So it's a combination of factors that make it difficult to give the impression of a concert, or to capture those things that happen in a concert hall. Movies are the same way. For movies, actors don't act, in a sense. Because if they did in the movies what they did in the theater, it would look ludicrous.

Tree: The fact is that this new technique of being able to splice almost within a note as well as between notes has made it all too tempting for us to indulge in attempting to produce a perfect product, as opposed to a spontaneous style of playing that might contain mistakes, or that might involve risks. On the concert stage we do things that we can't afford to do on records, and the fact that they can splice so carefully causes us to be a little clinical in our own approach to recording, which is not good. We have to fight that tendency all the time, and we have to let an occasional slip or a wrong note go by if the overall mood is good.

Soyer: I think what John was trying to bring out is that the recording companies', recording experts', record collectors' concept of what a recording should be is probably not the same as ours, or a musician's in general. Because I don't think they're attempting to make concert hall conditions, or reproductions of performances in the sound or in the ambiance of the live performance.

Harviths: Are you striving for a concert hall sound when you make recordings?

Tree: It's really out of our hands now.

Dalley: No, I think it's another medium entirely, and perhaps we're just reluctant to face that fact.

Harviths: Would you rather have recordings made from live performances than from studio performances?

Soyer: I think we would rather if everyone else did that, yes. But in a sense that's a difficulty because of the problem of the expectation of perfection. Technical, instrumental perfection is a big psychological factor when one is in the studio making records. If all artists recorded concert performances, and those were the recordings that were used, yes—we would certainly prefer that. But the tendency of recordings is to iron out the eccentric, idiosyncratic, personal things that happen in the concert hall that are stimulated by the moment, the excitement, the audience, and the event itself. In recordings you just don't have that element . . . a microphone is not an audience.

Harviths: What was your reaction the first time you heard your own recording?

Steinhardt: Oh, it was horrifying. It was like looking at yourself in one of those three-sided mirrors, and suddenly seeing a side of yourself that you never see, like from the back or from the side. Aren't you kind of startled and horrified to see what you really look like?

Soyer: I was pleasantly surprised when that happened.

Dalley: I don't know about the cello, but as a string player with an instrument that is held and is really a part of the body, I hear it in a different way, as you hear your own voice differently. If you're a pianist the piano is just there and produces a sound. But the piano is not connected to you. It doesn't make your own bones rattle, the way your voice makes something rattle inside your head.

Steinhardt: Talking about panicking in front of a microphone or having different reactions to it, Bartók as a young man wanted to collect folk music from the peasants in Hungary. He had an Edison machine, and he went into the country. He had his horn, he'd get there, he'd put the cylinders on, and he'd say in Hungarian, "Would you sing into this horn?" And the peasants wouldn't do it. They were scared out of their minds that if they did it they'd lose their voices, that the horn would swallow up their voices. And so a lot of them just wouldn't do it.

Soyer: And after that time he used to go around with a big pot of chicken paprikash to induce them to sing in front of the microphone. Big ladles full of it . . .

Tree: That makes me very hungry. I want to go and eat.

Steinhardt: Incidentally, he'd have the microphone in the paprikash and say "Sing into the paprikash, would you?"

Tree: Is there a good Hungarian restaurant in this town? That's what I want to know.