



apothéosis : mozart VOL. 3 THE STRING QUINTETS

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THE ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET PAUL YARBROUGH, VIOLA

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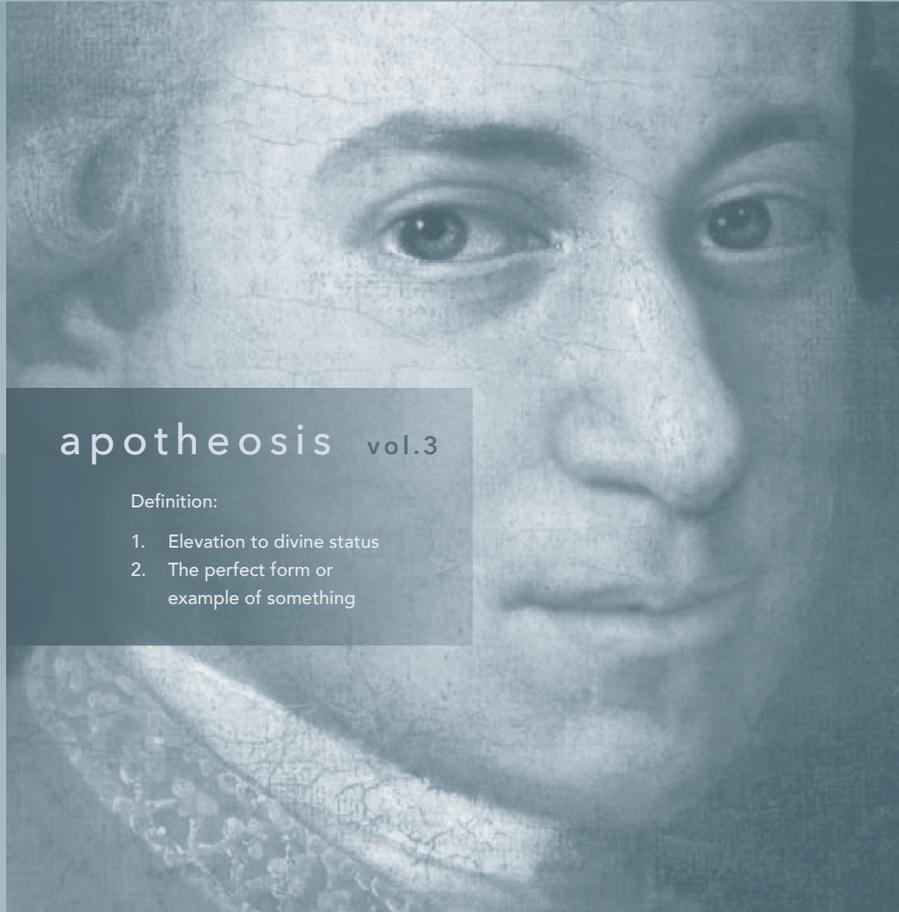


THE
alexander
STRING QUARTET
PAUL YARBROUGH, VIOLA

MOZART
THE
STRING
QUINTETS



apothéosis
vol. 3



apotheosis vol.3

Definition:

1. Elevation to divine status
2. The perfect form or example of something

MOZART : THE STRING QUINTETS

We think of Mozart as a pianist, but he was also a violinist, and a very good one.

After playing a series of concerts in 1777, the 21-year-old exulted: "I played as though I were the greatest fiddler in all of Europe." Yet the role of violinist appears to have had limited appeal for Mozart, and when he played chamber music, he invariably chose to play the viola. There are many accounts, especially during his years in Vienna, of Mozart's playing the viola in chamber performances. These range from the famous "quartet evening" in 1784 (when Dittersdorf and Haydn were the violinists and Vanhal the cellist) to the premiere of his *Clarinet Quintet* in December 1789. Why was Mozart drawn to the mid-range role of the viola rather than the more extroverted role of violinist? Perhaps he liked being in the "middle" of the music, where harmonies shift and unexpected rhythms underpin the more exposed melodic lines. Perhaps he simply liked the husky sound of the viola. Whatever the reason, Mozart felt a particular fondness for the viola, a fondness that showed up in some very particular ways in his chamber music.

Like almost every other composer, Mozart found the string quartet a supremely challenging form. He was usually a fast worker, but it took him several years to compose the six quartets he dedicated to Haydn in 1785, and he readily admitted that those quartets had been "the fruit of long and laborious study." Yet the addition to the string quartet of one more instrument—the viola—appears to have freed Mozart in unexpected ways, and his six string quintets offer a different kind of music from his quartets, magnificent as those are. In his quintets, Mozart did not set out to make the viola the star, but the addition of the extra viola offered him a broader canvas and unlocked new possibilities. His quintets generate a richer, fuller sound—one that can at times emphasize the sound of the viola—and they offer increased opportunities to contrast different groupings of instruments and sonorities. They also provided Mozart with grander vistas: his quintets are in general longer than his quartets (two of these quintets are among his longest chamber works,

longer in fact than any of his symphonies). One senses, in ways hard to define, that Mozart was more comfortable writing string quintets than he was writing string quartets.

Mozart composed his first string quintet at age 17 and his last in the year of his death, so it might seem that he wrote string quintets across the span of his career, but that is not the case. His first quintet was a foray into new territory for the young composer, and then Mozart set the form aside for fourteen years—his final five quintets were all created in the last four years of his life. As such, they represent some of his most sophisticated musical thinking. They offer wonderful music, exhilarating to hear (and to play!), sometimes very moving, and always very beautiful.

String Quintet in B-flat Major, K.174

Mozart wrote his first string quintet in March 1773, just after he and his father had returned from their third and final trip to Italy. No one is sure why Mozart should suddenly, at age 17, have written a viola quintet. Some have thought that on his return to Salzburg the young composer encountered a string quintet that Michael Haydn, then konzertmeister of the Salzburg court, had written earlier that year and wished to attempt the form himself. In any case, Mozart did something quite unusual for him: having written the *Quintet in B-flat Major* in March, he returned to it the following December and revised it, creating a new trio section for the third movement and completely rewriting the finale.

One of the most remarkable things about *Quintet in B-flat Major* is the range of critical reaction it has provoked. Hans Keller dismisses it as “uninteresting,” while Charles Rosen goes to the other extreme in his study of classical style . . . calling this quintet an “astonishing” work, one whose “breadth of conception . . . goes far beyond any of the string quartets” Mozart had just completed. Others have heard here the earliest flowering of the maturity and expressiveness that would shape Mozart’s first “great” symphonies, *No. 25 in G Minor* and *No. 29 in A Major*, composed the following year.

The opening *Allegro moderato* is rich with thematic ideas (including five separate themes), and the opening phrases are noteworthy for the way that the first violin’s flowing melodic line is instantly repeated by the viola—this pattern of emphasizing the first violin and first viola parts will recur in Mozart’s later quintets. The development is brief and extremely animated, deriving most of its energy from the triplet-based theme in the exposition.

It is in the *Adagio*, in E-flat major, that we sense intimations of the Mozart to come. He mutes the instruments for this movement, and over murmuring accompaniment the first violin sings the main idea, very much like an aria from an opera; this is then repeated

by various combinations of instruments. The development section erupts in a stab of pain as that floating opening melody suddenly turns sharp and conflicted, but Mozart quickly relaxes tensions; the warm mood of the opening returns, and the movement winds down slowly, concluding *pianissimo* on a four-measure coda.

The minuet is sturdy and flowing, but a surprise comes in its trio section. This is one of the parts that Mozart revised, and here he replaced a fairly standard trio with one built on echo effects: the second violin and second viola trail behind the other instruments, repeating their phrases very quietly, as if heard from far away.

The finale was also revised nine months after the quintet’s original composition. This sonata-form movement comes as something of a shock after the elegance that has gone before—it is full of a slashing perpetual-motion energy, and the melodic line leaps suddenly between the five instruments. It makes a powerful—and unexpected—conclusion to Mozart’s first string quintet.

String Quintet in C Major, K.515

Mozart spent most of 1787 composing *Don Giovanni*, which would be premiered in Prague that October. During the spring of that year—just as he was beginning work on the opera—he composed two string quintets, one in April and one in May. It has often been noted that Mozart composed works in groups and that specific key signatures had particular expressive significance for him. His final two symphonies, composed within a month of each other, are a perfect example: the symphony in G minor is dark, intense, tragic; the other—in C major—is spacious, noble, and heroic. One sees exactly the same pattern in these two quintets. The *Quintet in G Minor* is powerful and dark, while the *Quintet in C Major* is marked by breadth and grandeur. Both these quintets are also unusually long-spanned works: if all its repeats are taken, the *Quintet in C Major* can stretch out to more than forty minutes.

The *Quintet in C Major* opens with something rare in Mozart’s music: a leading theme played by the cello. This powerful figure begins with a rasping sound of the cello’s lowest note—the open C-string—and rises sturdily, but then it will not stop. This simple chordal theme recurs constantly, modulating through a series of unexpected keys: G major, E major, C minor, and finally D major. Mozart is opening up the widest possible tonal palette as he begins, and only after the initial figure has been repeated six times does he allow the first violin to sing the long and flowing second subject. It is a further mark of this music’s breadth that there is a third theme—a genial, syncopated little tune that arrives just before the close of what is one of Mozart’s longest and most focused expositions. The development is relatively brief, but the recapitulation is extended, and Mozart makes a stunning transition

into the coda: the music comes to a complete stop—then, over a pulsing cello, seeming thematic fragments draw us into the final moments. After all the expansive power of this movement, the music winks out on fragments of its second theme.

The beginning of the *Menuetto* brings a surprise: the opening idea spans ten measures rather than the expected eight, with the violins in pairs, answered by pairs of lower instruments. At the trio, however, the music heads off in new directions entirely. Mozart moves into F major, and now begins an odd and haunting dance, a sort of wistful waltz on winding chromatic lines. This trio goes on at some length—Mozart clearly liked the possibilities he found here—then wends its way back to order with the return of the minuet.

The *Andante* is an extraordinary movement—and not the sort of movement one expects in chamber music. In effect, it belongs to just two instruments, the first violin and the first viola, which sing a duet that is more like a joint cadenza for two virtuoso soloists than chamber music, and it recalls—in sound, spirit, and instrumentation—Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola*, composed eight years earlier in Salzburg. There is something almost jarring about the range of expression here, for this music is by turns consoling, fiery, gentle, furious, brilliant, as Mozart ranges easily between the high, silvery sound of the violin and the darker sound of the viola. Here is one of the moments in the quintets where Mozart fully exploits—celebrates!—the expressive possibilities of the viola.

The concluding *Allegro* takes wing as the first violin soars off with a cheerful eight-bar theme that will clearly be the basis of a rondo. Yet Mozart is Mozart, and quickly the unexpected begins to happen: this cheerful tune develops, grows more complex, and is treated in some rich counterpoint—what had seemed a simple rondo in the opening measures now edges toward sonata form, particularly with the arrival of a second subject, announced by the pair of violins. The writing for the first violin in this movement is quite extroverted: much of the part is high and difficult, and it is on that concerto-like brilliance that the *Quintet in C Major*—some of the most striking and powerful chamber music Mozart ever wrote—sails to its conclusion.

String Quintet in G Minor, K.516

The *Quintet in G Minor*, completed on May 16, 1787, is not just one of Mozart's finest works—it is one of the greatest pieces of chamber music ever written. Everyone who hears this music senses its intensity, and Mozart's biographers have looked for causes in the composer's own life. While this was the period of his father's final illness (Leopold Mozart died on May 28), any connection between this and the music must remain conjectural. What is clear is that into this quintet Mozart poured a depth of expression heard in very little

of his other music. In the darkness of its character, the range of its moods, and the compression of the writing, it is often compared to another of Mozart's great works in G minor, the *Symphony No. 40*, composed the following year. One of the distinguishing features of the quintet is Mozart's constant chromatic writing; in particular, the falling chromatic lines of much of the melodic material give the music extraordinary emotional power. Another feature—and this is rare in Mozart's music—is his subtle re-use of themes: material that shapes one movement will re-appear in different forms later in the quintet, completely transformed on its return.

The dark, grieving opening theme of the *Allegro* establishes a fundamental shape that will give form to the entire movement, climbing and quickly falling back. Mozart's contrasts of sound at the very beginning are remarkable: the opening statement is by the two violins and viola as the second viola and cello sit silent. Within seconds, Mozart repeats the opening theme, but now the violins remain silent as the first viola sings above the accompaniment of the second viola and cello. In just seventeen measures Mozart has created two completely different sound-worlds, and that attention to contrasts of sonority will mark the entire quintet. The rising-and-falling melodic motion that shaped the opening theme also gives form to the second subject, again introduced by the first violin. The key of G minor, as we have seen, was the key Mozart chose for some of his most intense music, and he keeps this second theme in that home key, something he rarely did. Again, the development is brief, but Mozart offers a long recapitulation that continues to develop his themes—and to develop them dramatically. There is something urgent, almost impetuous, about this music: it continues to press forward into darkness, and the movement concludes on two violent chords that remain firmly in G minor.

The cheerful rhythmic spring and open spirit that mark most minuets is utterly absent in this *Menuetto*, and Mozart evades expectations in many ways. This "minuet" powers



forward implacably, and Mozart surprises us by placing violent, explosive attacks on the weak third beat of some of his measures. The trio section lets in a brief brush of sunlight, but—in another twist—Mozart bases this trio on the closing theme of the minuet, now reshaped and transformed into warm G major.

The *Adagio ma non troppo* plunges us into a different world entirely, so unexpected is its sound. Mozart mutes the five instruments throughout this movement, which is remarkable for the variety of its moods as well as its rich sonority. Each of its three themes is radically different, and each generates its own emotional world: the stately hymn-like opening gives way to a grieving second subject (once again based on falling chromatic lines), and this in turn is displaced by the oddly dancing—almost carefree—third idea. Beneath its muted surface, this music wears many faces, moves through many moods.

Something extraordinary happens at the beginning of the finale: Mozart has just come off a long *Adagio*, and now he gives us another one. The mutes come off, but we are back in G minor, and the mood remains intense as the first violin arches high and falls back over quietly throbbing accompaniment. In a sense, this three-minute introduction becomes the emotional crest of the entire quintet, revisiting a darkness already expressed in many ways. And then a complete reversal: it suddenly gives way to a good-natured rondo-finale in G major, based on a buoyant, dancing theme in 6/8. Many have found this cheerful finale anticlimactic after what has gone before, and Mozart himself was aware of this problem: he made sketches for a finale that remained in G minor, but discarded them. Perhaps he was right to do so. Sustaining the mood that he had established to this point would have brought this quintet to its conclusion in utter darkness, and Mozart was finally unwilling to do that. Even in the midst of this gaiety, the two principal themes of this finale bear some relation to their counterparts in the first movement—Mozart has taken those dark themes and made them dance, reinforcing yet again the sense of compressed intensity that informs the entire quintet.

String Quintet in C Minor, K. 406 (K. 516b)

The premiere of *Le nozze di Figaro* in May 1786 is universally regarded as the high point of Mozart's time in Vienna, and over the next year Mozart's fortunes in his adopted city began to wane. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but Mozart suddenly began to have financial problems. His music—always regarded as too sophisticated and complex for general audiences—began to slip out of fashion. He had trouble attracting audiences to his concerts, and he began to find that the revenue streams he had grown used to were now precarious. From 1787–88 came a series of painful letters to friends, asking for loans.

By the spring of 1788 Mozart needed cash, and he came up with what seemed a sensible plan. The previous year he had written the two great string quintets in C major and G minor, though they had not yet been published. Now he decided to sell manuscript copies—in his own hand—of those two quintets, which he announced would be “finely and correctly written.” These would be sold by subscription—but subscriptions usually involved three works. Rather than write a new quintet, Mozart turned to music he had written six years earlier and arranged it for string quintet.

Mozart had composed his *Serenade in C Minor, K. 388* for two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, and two horns in July 1782. Mozart's serenades usually had a “social” function. Most often scored for strings and almost invariably in the bright key of D major, they were intended as background music for social occasions, sometimes held outside, and as such tended to be light and attractive. It is hard to imagine how music as intense as the *Serenade in C Minor* could have been intended as a background to anything. Mozart reserved the key of C minor for some of his most dramatic music, and the serenade's original nickname “Nacht Musique”—an odd fusion of German and French—suggests quite a different character. Mozart omits the march and minuets common to serenades, and the resulting four-movement structure is dark music, somber in sonority and dramatic in gesture. In a letter to his father in Salzburg on July 27, 1782, Mozart wrote: “I have had to compose in a great hurry a serenade, but only for wind instruments,” but no one knows why Mozart wrote so dark a serenade, full of ingenious and tautly disciplined music.

Mozart wrote superbly for wind instruments, and the *Serenade in C Minor* is one of his finest works for them. For Mozart, each wind instrument had its own personality, and he wrote specifically to that identity. With four pairs of quite different sounds, he could play those pairs off against each other, and he wrote specifically to the strengths of wind instruments: phrases tend to be short, and there are wide melodic skips as well as much staccato writing. When he came to arrange the *Serenade* for string quintet, Mozart had to reduce the number of voices from eight to five and negotiate the loss of the distinctive tone colors and the pairings of sonorities that helped make the wind version distinctive. His string quintet version is quite effective, but the two versions can feel somewhat different in their impact on listeners.

The powerful opening of the *Allegro* simply moves up the notes of a C-minor chord, and this fierce beginning is answered by plaintive responses—a wide emotional range has been introduced in the first few seconds. This is passionate, urgent music, full of explosive accents and often chromatic in its development.

The *Andante* is the odd-movement-out in an otherwise dark composition. Mozart moves to radiant E-flat major here, and this is heartfelt music, based on two themes which

are both introduced by the first violin. These two ideas grow more complex as they are repeated, and the movement moves to a swirling climax and a gentle close.

The third movement returns to the C-minor urgency of the first movement. This minuet is in canon, with the trailing voice only a measure behind the lead. Mozart marks the trio section "in canon al rovescio," which does not mean "in reverse," but suggests upside down. It is again a simple canon, but this time the trailing voice is inverted.

The final movement is in theme-and-variation form. The finale is in the home key of C minor, and the first four variations remain within that key. At the fifth, though, Mozart moves to E-flat major, and now the theme takes on a measure of breadth and repose. That calm is short-lived, however, and Mozart returns to C minor for the ensuing variations. The very end has disappointed some listeners: after all the dark places in this music, Mozart slips into C major for an unexpectedly cheerful coda and the concluding fanfares.

Two notes: Mozart's *Serenade in C Minor*, composed in 1782, is listed in the Koechel catalog as K.388. Mozart's arrangement of it for string quintet was originally listed as K.406, which seriously misrepresents where it falls in the chronological sequence of his works. The most recent revision of Koechel catalog now lists the quintet version as K.516b, or immediately following the *Quintet in G Minor*. And the sad news is that Mozart's plan to sell manuscript copies of the three string quintets failed for lack of interest among the public. In June 1788 he announced: "As the number of subscribers is very small, I find myself obliged to postpone the publication of my 3 Quintets until January 1, 1789." (Random thought: what would any of us pay today to own Mozart's own manuscript copies — "finely and correctly written" — of these three quintets?)

String Quintet in D Major, K.593

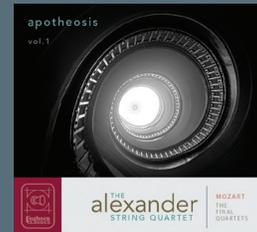
Mozart's final two string quintets come from the last year of his life, and they differ in several ways from the two great quintets of 1787. If the final two quintets seem somewhat restrained in comparison to their predecessors (they are significantly shorter than K.515 and 516), they show Mozart at the height of his powers. Here we find him exploring even more deeply the deployment of the sounds possible from these five instruments, and he does this with the dazzling contrapuntal mastery of his final years. The canvases may be less monumental here, but throughout the two final quintets we sense Mozart's sheer pleasure — his verve — in writing music that manages to be both so exuberant and so complex at the same time.

Mozart composed the *Quintet in D Major* in December 1790, exactly one year before his death. The reason for its composition is unknown, but it may have been commissioned by Johann Tost, formerly a violinist in Haydn's orchestra and now a wealthy cloth merchant

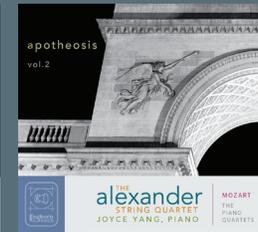
who used his fortune to commission music. (Tost commissioned and received the dedication of a number of Haydn's quartets.) In December 1790, just as the *Quintet in D Major* was composed, Haydn was about to depart for his first extended stay in London, and he and Mozart spent much of that month together in Vienna. They played chamber music that month and are known to have played this brand-new quintet together. Haydn particularly admired it, and some feel that this is one of the most "Haydn-esque" of Mozart's compositions, particularly for its slow introduction (the only one among Mozart's quintets), its movements based on single themes, and the bucolic trio of the minuet movement.

The quintet begins with a *Larghetto* remarkable for Mozart's deployment of his instruments and for its unsettling harmonies. All alone, the cello offers a series of four-note statements that feel like questions and that wander through unexpected keys. High above, the other four instruments respond to these "questions" in different ways, some of them surprisingly plaintive. The music comes to a pause, then steps out smartly at the *Allegro*, and we recognize that this theme has been subtly anticipated in the slow introduction. This will be a monothematic movement: virtually everything grows out of this theme. It is a brilliant movement in many ways, not just for its slashing runs, but more for the interplay of the five

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with Paul Yarbrough
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voices, for the “conversational” quality of much of the writing, and for its canonic mastery. Mozart appears to have been inspired by the possibilities he found here, for he continues to develop his material right through the recapitulation. The ending is unexpected. Mozart brings back the *Larghetto* introduction with its question-and-answer exchanges, then snaps the movement off sharply with the first eight bars of the *Allegro*.

The *Adagio*, in G major, opens with an outpouring of serene song from the first violin, after which Mozart quickly begins to combine and recombine instrumental groups: the two violins exchange the line with the three lower voices, and then the first violin and cello engage in a long dialogue as the middle voices accompany. The first violin offers a plaintive second theme—it feels like a first cousin to the falling violin line in the opening *Larghetto*—and this is treated to a similar extension. At the movement’s conclusion, it is the first violin and viola who wind the music down to its graceful final measures.

The sturdy *Menuetto* feels quite straightforward, though as it proceeds Mozart offers some close canonic writing that intensifies textures without ever clouding them. The trio section is fun. It sounds faintly rustic (and faintly Haydn-esque) as the first violin shoots upward across several octaves above pizzicato accompaniment, but this too is treated to some graceful canonic extension.

The finale is one of the most dazzling movements Mozart ever wrote. It goes like a rocket and can be enjoyed simply for the white-hot virtuosity of Mozart’s writing (the first violin gets the lion’s share of this). But much more is going on here than simple high spirits. A second theme arrives and is instantly turned into a taut fugato. The development brings a second fugato, and at the climax Mozart combines the movement’s main theme with the theme of the first fugato. This moment fuses the most heady compositional procedures with music full of fire and fun, and on this exuberant combination the *Quintet in D Major* sweeps to its close.

No wonder Haydn liked this piece so much.

String Quintet in E-flat Major, K.614

Mozart completed his final string quintet on April 12, 1791, just before beginning work on *Die Zauberflöte*. Although he did not know it at the time, the *Quintet in E-flat Major* would be his final piece of chamber music. If there is a temptation in the popular imagination to think of Mozart’s final months as a time of gloom, marked by illness and work on a *Requiem* that he feared he was writing for himself, this quintet is the perfect antidote to that misconception: This music is dynamic, full of energy, and executed with remarkable technical mastery.

Many commentators detect a “wind serenade atmosphere” in this music, taking their cue from the first measures, where the two violas open with a call that imitates the sound of horns, complete with whirring trills. This fanfare-like figure, powered by those energizing trills, will recur throughout this movement, but it should be pointed out immediately that the real star of this *Allegro di molto* is the first violin. It has a part of unbelievable brilliance, one that sails above the other four instruments on a series of runs, difficult string-crossings, and writing high in the instrument’s register (at one point Mozart sends the first violin up to a high D, almost to the upper extreme of its fingerboard). The first violin has the flowing second subject, which the cello quickly repeats—but it is the energy of the very opening that propels this movement forward, and Mozart continues to develop his themes even during the recapitulation.

The real glory of this quintet is the *Andante*. Its form is simple enough on the surface—a theme with variations—but what is unusual here is what Mozart does in the course of varying his opening melody. That melody, sung initially by the first violin, sounds like an aria and has, in fact, been compared to Belmonte’s aria “Wenn der Freude Thränen fliessen” from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Mozart does some astonishing things with this gentle little theme. The development is a series of repetitions, each becoming more complex and more chromatic until strange dissonances come stinging out of this music. The effect, over two centuries later, is still surprising, and it is a movement like this that helps us understand what a Viennese critic meant when he complained that Mozart’s music was “too highly spiced.” Spiced it may be, but it is also extraordinarily beautiful. This movement proved so attractive that it soon appeared in arrangements for a number of different instruments.

The minuet is more conventional, though the outer sections proceed on canonic phrases, while the *ländler*-like trio dances comfortably along its easy swing; Mozart writes out this extended trio section, which contains no repeats. The final movement, a rondo marked *Allegro*, returns to the manner of the first movement. It is built almost entirely on one theme, announced immediately by the first violin (and bearing a close relation to that instrument’s entrance at the beginning of the first movement). Building an entire movement on one theme was nothing new—Haydn had written many such movements, and many have felt the influence of Haydn in this finale. But what makes this movement remarkable is the concentrated polyphonic writing, for Mozart treats his amiable opening theme to some complex fugal development. That said, just as much a part of this music is its sense of fun: there are starts and stops, unexpected entrances, ever more brilliant writing, and Mozart’s final piece of chamber music sails to its conclusion along a great rush of happy energy.

Notes by Eric Bromberger

The Alexander String Quartet

The Alexander String Quartet stands among the world's premier ensembles, having performed in the major music capitals of five continents. The quartet is a vital artistic presence in its home base of San Francisco, serving since 1989 as Ensemble in Residence of San Francisco Performances. Widely admired for its interpretations of Beethoven, Mozart, and Shostakovich, the quartet's recordings have won international critical acclaim. Founded in New York City in 1981, the ensemble quickly captured attention, initially winning the Concert Artists Guild Competition in 1982, and then becoming the first American quartet to win the London (now Wigmore) International String Quartet Competition in 1985.

The ASQ has performed at Lincoln Center, the 92nd Street Y, the Metropolitan Museum, Jordan Hall, the Library of Congress, and appeared as guests at universities including Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Lewis & Clark, UCLA, and many more. They have established themselves as advocates of new music, regularly commissioning new works from composers including Jake Heggie, Cindy Cox, Augusta Read Thomas, Robert Greenberg, Cesar Cano, Tarik O'Regan, Paul Siskind, Pulitzer Prize winner Wayne Peterson, and Samuel Carl Adams. They are recipients of honorary degrees from Allegheny College and St. Lawrence University and Presidential medals from Baruch College (CUNY). asq4.com



Paul Yarbrough, viola

A founding member, Paul Yarbrough announced his retirement from the ASQ in 2020—but continues to appear as a guest artist with the Quartet in quintet repertory. He also continues to perform as a soloist, while teaching and pursuing personal projects. Dedicated to communicating his love and knowledge of chamber music to audiences and students, Yarbrough has developed many programs to explore connections between music and other disciplines and art forms. His teachers have included Elaine Lee Richey, Lillian Fuchs, Raymond Page, and Sally Peck. A frequent soloist with orchestras, he has also given numerous solo recitals throughout the United States and was principal violist of the Chamber Orchestra of New England. In 1995, Yarbrough and his Quartet colleagues received Honorary Doctorates of Fine Arts from Allegheny College for their service to the arts and education, and an Honorary Degree from St. Lawrence University. Yarbrough was a founding board member of San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music (now InterMusic SF).



Zakarias Grafilo
violin 1

David Samuel
viola

Yuna Lee
violin 2

Sandy Wilson
cello



The Ellen M. Egger Quartet of Instruments

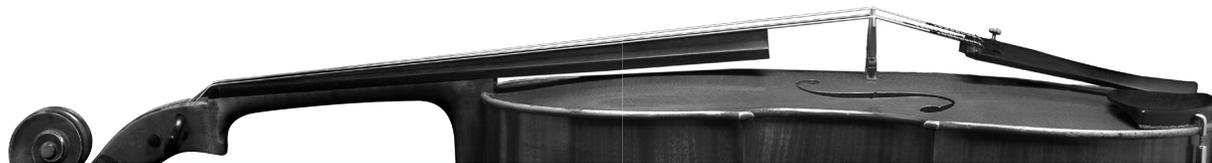
The creation of a matched quartet of stringed instruments was born from a conversation with Fritz Maytag. The Ellen M. Egger Quartet is an enduring memorial to Fritz's sister Ellen, the eldest of four siblings and an accomplished musician and teacher. In the early years, the four instruments, created by luthier Francis Kuttner in 1987, were loaned individually to promising students in far-flung places for an indefinite period, then reassembled once a year for a concert in San Francisco. The first concert was presented, fittingly, by the women of the Franciscan Quartet. Subsequent memorable performances have taken place at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor with such distinguished quartets as the Angeles Quartet, the Pro Arte Quartet, the Lafayette Quartet, the Pacifica Quartet and the Turtle Island Quartet. For several years, it has been the musicians of the Alexander String Quartet who have reunited the two violins, viola and cello in performances and in their second recording in 2009 of the complete Beethoven Quartet Cycle.

*The two violins were made on a 1705 Stradivari "P" form.
The viola is made on a personal model.
The violoncello was constructed on a modified "B" form of Antonio Stradivari 1709.
The labels are dated 1987.*

(On this recording of Mozart's String Quintets, the second viola is also a Kuttner instrument, created in 2012.)

Read more about Francis Kuttner on next page.

*Instrument photos:
violin (front and back shown here)
viola (below)
violoncello (see inside back cover)*



Violin Maker Francis Kuttner (1951–2023)

Thoughts on the Passing of a Friend

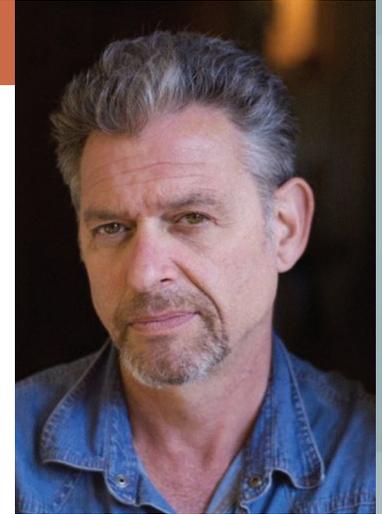
The relationship between instrumentalists and instrument makers is a close one. We're fiercely loyal to our own and occasionally even reverent (I'll skip the "going to meet my maker" jokes). But beyond that, Francis was a great friend. From the time the ASQ located in San Francisco in 1990, we waited for news of his return to that fair city from his other home in Cremona, Italy, to plan repairs, adjustments, glueings, bridge fittings, bass-bar replacements, and, of course, parties!

His fine-tuning of the Egger Quartet and our own Kuttner instruments was a pre-occupation, as he seemed to have as much at stake in our performances and recordings as we did. I always made an effort to schedule my adjustment visits just before dinner time so we could conclude our work with a burrito from "La Taqueria" or some other local establishment. It was always a joy to spend time with him whether in California, New York, Amsterdam, or Poland, and he leaves behind a tremendous void. I recently reached out to other luthiers to bring in my Kuttner viola for some attention and was touched by their deep regard for him: "I'm not taking much repair work these days, but I'd be honored to work on one of Francis's instruments." So someone will take care of our instruments, maybe even grab a burrito...but his friendship is impossible to replace.

Francis didn't have any children, but truly, he had hundreds of offspring, each a thing of beauty and essential to filling the world with music. His creations will be singing and inspiring artists for centuries: a remarkable form of immortality.

— Paul Yarbrough

Francis Kuttner studied violinmaking at the Scuola Internazionale di Liuteria in Cremona, Italy, and worked privately with accomplished violinmaker/woodcarver Francesco Bissolotti, a proponent of traditional Cremonese violinmaking. Working from original Stradivari models and forms provided a comprehensive and insightful method of construction. Kuttner was awarded numerous Gold and Silver Medals in Paris, New York, Manchester, and Cremona. Designated "Hors Concours" by the Violin Society of America, he served on many international juries.



In his San Francisco studio, Francis demonstrates the traditional method of attaching the rib. At right, he adjusts the Egger cello (while Sandy looks on).



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Recorded at

St. Stephens Episcopal Church,
Belvedere, California
June 7–10 and 13–16, 2022
September 12–15, 2022

Produced, engineered and mastered by

Matt Carr | mscrecording.com

Instruments:

Ellen M. Egger Quartet, all by Francis Kuttner,
San Francisco, 1987 | kuttnerviolins.com

Yarbrough viola, by Francis Kuttner, 2012

Samuel bow by Matt Wehling
| mattwehling.com

All other bows by Arcus | arcus-bow.de

Insurance by Clarion Insurance
| clarionins.com

Mozart portrait (frontispiece):

detail from family portrait (1780–81)
by Johann Nepomuk della Croce

Mozart portrait (page 5)

by Joseph Lange (for details,
see michaelorenz.blogspot.com)

Photography

Cover images, Paul Yarbrough, instruments:
Rory Earnshaw | roryearnshaw.com

ASQ group portraits:
Martyn Selman

Francis Kuttner portrait and bottom left:
Charlie Kuttner | imdb.com

Francis Kuttner bottom right photo:
Photographer unknown

Manufactured by

Sienna Digital | siennadigital.com

Design: Poulson Gluck | poulsongluck.com

Acknowledgements

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| sfperformances.org

Thanks to these sources of holographic
scores which appear behind the text:
K. 515 Library of Congress
K. 516 michaelorenz.blogspot.com
K. 614 British Library (omifacsimiles.com)

FOGHORN CLASSICS : CATALOG

- FCL2024 Apotheosis vol. 3 Mozart String Quintets — with Paul Yarbrough, viola (3 CDs)
FCL2023 British Invasion — with William Kanengiser, guitar
FCL2022 Brahms String Quartets
FCL2021 Brahms & Mozart: Clarinet Quintets
FCL2020 Dvořák: Locale
FCL2019 Mahler Song Cycles: In meinem Himmel — Kindra Scharich + ASQ
FCL2018 Apotheosis vol. 2 Mozart Piano Quartets — Joyce Yang + ASQ
FCL2016 Apotheosis vol. 1 Mozart Final Quartets (2 CDs)
FCL2015 Cindy Cox: Patagón
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FCL 2007 Brahms/ Cano: In Friendship, with Joan Enric Lluna, clarinet
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FCL2005 Beethoven Cycle, includes Early/Middle/Late Quartets (9 CDs)
(FCL1996/1999/2002)
FCL 1995 Mendelssohn/Schubert Afiara + ASQ
FCL 1994 Peterson Quartets: Retrospections
FCL 1988/1991 Shostakovich Cycle — with Roger Woodward, piano (6 CDs)
FCL 1985 Mozart "Haydn" Quartets: Homage (3 CDs)
FCL 1983 Mendelssohn/Schumann (piano quintet with James Tocco)

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THE STRING QUINTETS

Zakarias Grafilo, violin 1
Frederick Lifnitz, violin 2
David Samuel, viola 1
Paul Yarbrough, viola 2
Sandy Wilson, cello

DISC 1

**String Quintet in B-flat Major,
K. 174** 26:43

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|
| 1 | Allegro moderato | 9:29 |
| 2 | Adagio | 7:19 |
| 3 | Menuetto ma Allegro | 4:03 |
| 4 | Allegro | 5:54 |

**String Quintet in C Major,
K. 515** 36:39

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 5 | Allegro | 14:02 |
| 6 | Menuetto: Allegretto | 6:13 |
| 7 | Andante | 8:41 |
| 8 | Allegro | 7:43 |

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 63:23

DISC 2

**String Quintet in G Minor,
K. 516** 34:09

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Allegro | 10:52 |
| 2 | Menuetto: Allegretto | 5:27 |
| 3 | Adagio ma non troppo | 7:59 |
| 4 | Adagio – Allegro | 9:51 |

**String Quintet in C Minor,
K. 406 (K. 516b)** 23:10

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 5 | Allegro | 8:55 |
| 6 | Andante | 3:57 |
| 7 | Menuetto in canone | 3:50 |
| 8 | Allegro | 6:28 |

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 57:19

DISC 3

**String Quintet in D Major,
K. 593** 27:04

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Larghetto – Allegro | 10:02 |
| 2 | Adagio | 6:23 |
| 3 | Menuetto: Allegretto | 5:24 |
| 4 | Allegro | 5:16 |

**String Quintet in E-flat Major,
K. 614** 24:45

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|------|
| 5 | Allegro di molto | 7:39 |
| 6 | Andante | 7:22 |
| 7 | Menuetto: Allegretto | 4:07 |
| 8 | Allegro | 5:36 |

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 51:50