



CHANDOS

BEETHOVEN

STRING QUARTETS, VOL. 3

OP. 18 NO. 3 · OP. 59 NO. 3 · OP. 74 · OP. 132 · OP. 135

DORIC STRING QUARTET



First page of autograph manuscript of the first movement of Op. 59 No. 3, showing Beethoven's revision of the tempo marking

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Complete String Quartets, Volume 3

COMPACT DISC ONE

String Quartet, Op. 18 No. 3 (1798 – 1800) **24:04**

in D major • in D-Dur • en ré majeur

À Son Altesse Monseigneur le Prince Regnant de Lobkowitz *etc. etc.*

1	Allegro	7:56
2	Andante con moto	7:15
3	Allegro – Minore – Maggiore	2:43
4	Presto	6:09

String Quartet, Op. 59 No. 3 (1806) **30:05**

in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur

À son Excellence Monsieur le Comte de Rasoumoffsky

Conseiller privé actuel de

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies *etc. etc.*

5	Introduzione. Andante con moto – Allegro vivace	10:29
6	Andante con moto quasi Allegretto	8:30
7	Menuetto grazioso – Trio – Menuetto da Capo – Coda –	5:12
8	Allegro molto	5:52

	String Quartet, Op. 74 (1809)	29:45
	in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur	
	('Harp')	
	(German edition:) Dem Fürsten Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz gewidmet	
9	Poco Adagio – Allegro	9:44
10	Adagio ma non troppo	8:52
11	Presto – Più presto quasi prestissimo – Tempo I – Più presto quasi prestissimo – Tempo I –	4:48
12	Allegretto con Variazioni – Un poco più vivace – Allegro	6:20
	TT 83:55	

COMPACT DISC TWO

String Quartet, Op. 132 (1825) 43:27

in A minor • in a-Moll • en la mineur

Dédié à Son Altesse Monseigneur le Prince Nicolas de Galitzin,
Lieutenant Colonel de la Garde de Sa Majesté Impériale de toutes
les Russies

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| [1] | Assai sostenuto – Allegro – Adagio – Allegro – Adagio –
Allegro | 9:52 |
| [2] | Allegro ma non tanto – L'istesso tempo – L'istesso tempo –
Da Capo al Fine | 8:48 |
| [3] | Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen
Tonart (Canzona di ringraziamento offerta alla divinità da un guarito, in
modo lidico). Molto adagio –
Neue Kraft fühlend (Sentendo nuova forza). Andante – Molto adagio –
Andante – Molto adagio. Mit innigster Empfindung (Con intimissimo
sentimento) – | 15:21 |
| [4] | Alla Marcia, assai vivace – Più allegro – Presto – Poco adagio – | 2:09 |
| [5] | Allegro appassionato – Presto | 7:15 |



Doric String Quartet

© Zuzanna Special

	String Quartet, Op. 135 (1826)	27:22
	in F major • in F-Dur • en fa majeur	
	Dédié à Son Ami Jean Wolfmeier	
6	Allegretto	6:58
7	Vivace	3:21
8	Assai lento, cantante e tranquillo – Più lento – Tempo I	6:36
9	Der schwer gefaßte Entschluß. Muß es sein? Grave – Es muß sein! Es muß sein! Allegro – Grave ma non troppo tratto – Adagio – Allegro – Grave ma non troppo tratto – Allegro – Poco adagio – Tempo I	10:25
		TT 70:49

Doric String Quartet

Maia Cabeza violin

Ying Xue violin

Emma Wernig viola

John Myerscough cello

The members of the Doric String Quartet perform the Op. 18 Quartets using a set of classical bows by Luis Emilio Rodriguez Carrington.

Beethoven: Complete String Quartets, Volume 3

The quartets offered in this pair of CDs not only cover all three creative periods of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) – early, middle, late – but also represent the later phases of the second and final periods. The Quartet in C belongs to the set of three composed for Count Razumovsky in 1806; the E flat is one of two independently composed quartets, written a few years later. Similarly, the Quartet in A minor belongs to the set commissioned by Prince Nicolas Galitzin, who provided the impetus for Beethoven's last, visionary creative period; the F major was one of two additional products of the final years.

Beethoven's record of chamber music composition suggests a hesitancy in tackling the genre of string quartet. Two years after his arrival in Vienna, in 1792, Beethoven began work on a set of piano trios (his Op. 1), followed by a trio for violin, viola, and cello in 1795 (Op. 3, a six-movement work modelled on Mozart's late Divertimento, KV 563, for the same forces) and, a few years later, three more string trios, which were published as Op. 9. Other sources, however, suggest that his interest in quartet composition was kindled

very soon after he arrived in the Austrian capital: a score of Haydn's Op. 20 No. 1 in his hand dates from 1794. This was followed by the copies, in whole or in part, of two of Mozart's quartets dedicated to Haydn. These documents may be thought of as studies preparatory to the composition of quartets of his own.

String Quartet in D major, Op. 18 No. 3 (1798 – 1800); published by Tranquillo Mollo & Co., Vienna, June 1801; dedicated to Prince Franz Joseph Maximilian von Lobkowitz

The impetus to compose Op. 18 probably came in the summer of 1798 from Prince Franz Joseph Maximilian von Lobkowitz (1772 – 1816), a Bohemian nobleman and a highly skilled musician in his own right, who had already been acquainted with Beethoven's artistic skills for some years. He had commissioned a set of quartets from Haydn earlier that year (only two of these were completed, the pair known today as Op. 77). The early sketches show that Beethoven worked on the quartets in two

subgroups, completing the first three in the late spring of 1799, the last three a year later. He then went back over the first three works, revising at least the first and third substantially.

The Quartet in D major is, in some ways, a work of modest, understated beauty. Each of its four movements begins with a dynamic marking of *piano*, and all but the first also end quietly. There is also a more even distribution of thematic material among the four players than one often encounters in quartets of the late eighteenth century. The long notes which initiate the first movement, though part of an expansive phrase, are well suited to providing interplay among the instruments, as they not only can form part of a steady accompaniment but also provide a point of imitation: at the start of the *Allegro*, the first violin's opening interval of a seventh is taken up, in turn, by each of the lower instruments and is subject to variation throughout the movement.

Op. 18 No. 3 is also a fast quartet. Not only is the slow movement marked *Andante con moto*, its shorter note values provide the episodic sections with contrast to the statements of the main, chorale-like theme, which is set in a sombre register, the first violin instructed to play the theme *sul una corda*, i.e. on the G string. The ensuing *Allegro* and its trio section likewise begin in a low register,

to which the final *Presto* provides a spirited contrast.

String Quartet in C major, Op. 59 No. 3 (1806); published by the Bureau of Arts and Industry, Vienna, January 1808; dedicated to Count Andrey Kyrillovich Razumovsky

In 1804, Beethoven considered writing a new set of quartets, to follow Op. 18, but other projects – especially his opera, *Fidelio* – prevented him from returning to the genre at that time. The quartets that make up Op. 59 were begun and completed in 1806, an extraordinarily fertile year which also saw the composition of the Fourth Piano Concerto, the Fourth Symphony, the Violin Concerto, and the revisions for a new production of *Fidelio*.

The quartets were composed quickly. The autograph manuscripts of all three works survive, and all are to some extent composing scores, showing a considerable amount of refinement in the part-writing (and sometimes overall shaping). The quartets were published in order of composition and dedicated to Count Andrey Razumovsky, who was then the Russian ambassador to the Viennese court. A fine amateur violinist himself, he engaged a string quartet led by the legendary Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who regularly performed Beethoven's chamber music at gatherings

of Viennese society. (Together with Prince Lobkowitz, Razumovsky also received the dedication of the fifth and sixth symphonies.)

The C major quartet has long stood in the shadows of its longer, more intricately developed companions. On the surface, it is more conventional. The third movement is cast in simple A – B – A minuet form; its Coda leads directly to a fugal *Allegro molto* that is reminiscent of the eighteenth-century tradition of fugal quartet finales, which dates back at least to Haydn's Op. 20 (1772) and includes the first of Mozart's quartets dedicated to Haydn (KV 387), a work which Beethoven knew well. The *galant* textures, broad four-bar phrasing, unclouded harmonies, and clear sonata-form plan in Op. 59 No. 3 invite further comparison with Mozart's quartet, of 1782.

The emotional weight of the quartet is thus felt mainly in its first two movements. For the first time, Beethoven appends to a quartet an introduction, although its tempo marking was changed in the autograph score from *Poco adagio* to *Andante con moto*. One is reminded here of another of Mozart's 'Haydn' quartets, KV 465, known as the 'Dissonance' on account of its daring chromatic harmonies; but while KV 465 begins with a quietly pulsating C on the cello, Beethoven starts brazenly with a loud diminished seventh chord, almost compressing

into a single sonority what Mozart had stretched out over two full bars. And while Mozart stabilises his opening idea by moving towards the dominant, Beethoven takes his introduction ever further from its goal, the preparation of the ensuing *Allegro vivace*: the initial diminished seventh chord does not resolve until the viola slips down by a semitone in the final bar of the introduction.

The *Andante con moto quasi Allegretto*, in A minor, also begins strikingly, this time with cello *pizzicato* providing a pulse for the bowed strings above it. In this movement, the cello plays *pizzicato* nearly two-thirds of the time, as if to suggest a fracture in the ensemble. In addition, much of the bowed material is played in octaves by pairs of instruments, often emphasising angular, chromatic lines. Thus, a conventional four-part, bowed quartet texture appears only rarely, in the short imitative sections of the second subject.

String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 74
(completed autumn 1809); published
by Clementi & Co., London, September
1810, and by Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig,
November 1810, with a dedication to Prince
Franz Joseph Maximilian von Lobkowitz
There are hints in the sketchbook from the late
summer and autumn of 1809 that Beethoven

was then planning to write more than one quartet, but the Quartet in E flat was issued as a single work. It was finished rather quickly, in time for a private performance in November, and was the most substantial of a group of works which the composer offered to the London-based publisher Muzio Clementi. Clementi had been a guest of Countess Erdödy in Vienna, at whose home Op. 74 was performed again on 31 March 1810. His edition appears without a dedication; only the German edition is dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz.

The inward-looking introduction to the first movement initially questions the tonality of the piece. In the ensuing *Allegro, pizzicato* figures begin to appear as soon as the main theme has been stated. Towards the end of the development, these become arpeggios in the lower strings – in increasingly faster note values, which have given rise to the work's apocryphal nickname, 'Harp Quartet.' The *pizzicati* return in the lower strings in the coda, providing harmonic underpinning at the start of a furious violin solo which brings the movement to a dramatic conclusion.

The second movement is in a five-part rondo form, A – B – A – C – A with coda. The first episode is set entirely in the parallel minor; the second begins in the subdominant

but there are hints of the parallel minor both here and in the coda. The autograph score shows that Beethoven deliberated on the description of the tempo and character of this movement. He originally wrote 'Adagio cantabile,' then changed this to 'Adagio ma non troppo' and placed the word 'cantabile' only in the first-violin part (the lower strings are instructed to play *mezza voce*, i.e. at a moderate dynamic level). The choice of time signature (3 / 8) and the intricate rhythms in the parts accompanying the final presentation of the main theme further suggest a lightness in character. So does the tempo marking of quaver = 72, which Beethoven assigned to the movement when he published a set of metronome marks for his first eleven quartets in 1816; improbable as it may seem, such a tempo at least serves as a warning not to over-sentimentalise this heartfelt piece.

The third movement is in C minor, and its main section is based on the short-short-short-long motif immortalised in the Fifth Symphony, possibly as a nod to Lobkowitz, one of that symphony's dedicatees. The trio section also recalls the Fifth: it is set in C major, and the texture is built up contrapuntally, beginning with the cello and moving upwards.

The finale comprises a theme and variations. Characteristically, each successive

variation proceeds in faster note values: quavers in variation 1, triplet quavers in variation 2, semiquavers in variation 3. But Beethoven includes neither the traditional minor-key variation nor a slow, decorative variation. The extended final variation (*Un poco più vivace – Allegro*), in which the previous rhythmic patterns return, ends with a bravura passage which quotes the third variation. The quiet cadence with which the movement ends is puzzling: did Beethoven want to remind us of the more intimate character of much of what preceded it?

String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132
(composed January to August 1825);
published by Schlesinger, Paris and Berlin,
August 1827; dedicated to Prince Nicolay
Borisovich Galitzin

The late quartets have their origins in a commission from a twenty-eight-year-old Russian nobleman, Nicolay Galitzin, himself a fine amateur cellist, who wrote to Beethoven from St Petersburg on 9 November 1822 with a request for 'one, two, or three new quartets, for which labour I will be glad to pay you what you think proper'.¹ Beethoven

¹ un, deux ou trois Nouveaux Quatuors [*sic*], dont je me ferais un plaisir de vous payer la peine ce que vous jugerez à propos de marquer

did not reply until more than two months later; he stated his financial terms and, with characteristic over-optimism, assured the prince that he would receive his first quartet 'at the end of February, or at the latest by the middle of March'.²

In fact, he was extremely busy at the time with other major projects: the *Missa solemnis* was not quite finished, work on the 'Diabelli' Variations was about to be resumed after a break of nearly four years, and the composition of the Ninth Symphony had recently got underway. He was therefore unable to devote himself seriously to quartet composition until the summer of 1824, well over a year after delivery of the first work had originally been promised. Although the delay was a cause for concern for Galitzin, the prince remained patient and even agreed to purchase a subscription copy of the Mass. And during the long wait for the first of his quartets, he organised a charity performance of the Mass, in St Petersburg, on 7 April 1824, the only time that work was performed complete during Beethoven's life.

Though it was assigned a higher opus number, Op. 132 was the second of Galitzin's quartets to be composed, preceding Op. 130.

² à la fin du mois de Fevrier, ou au plus tard à la mi-mars



Alexander James

Doric String Quartet during the recording sessions

It is broadly conceived in four movements. The first is in sonata form, but it presents a new theme in the development and what can best be described as a double recapitulation, in which the ideas of the first part of the movement return twice, but in different keys. The second movement is a large-scale ternary form, of which the 'trio' section (based on an early *Allemande* for piano solo) is set off from the main sections not by a change of key or tempo but by exploiting different registers and textures, including an extended passage for the two violins. In the *Heiliger Dankgesang*, contrast between the chorale sections (the 'song of thanksgiving') and the episodes in which the composer expresses his 'feeling [of] new strength'³ is achieved in almost every conceivable way: changes in key, tempo and metre, texture and register. The final *Allegro appassionato* is in rondo form. It is of more unified character than any of the preceding movements until the start of the coda, at which point Beethoven ratchets up the tempo (*Presto*) and assigns the melody to the cello at the top of its range. Soon afterwards, he changes the key from A minor to A major, thus dispelling the anguish and sadness expressed in all that had come before;

³Neue Kraft fühlend

one is reminded of such earlier works as the Quartet Op. 95 and the *Egmont* Overture.

The *Alla Marcia* is often regarded as a movement in its own right, which enables one to view the late quartets as gradually increasing in scope: Op. 127 is in four movements, Op. 132 in five, Op. 130 in six, and finally Op. 131 unfolds in seven unbroken sections. But it is so short, and undeveloped, that one can better view it as part of a transition which, together with the instrumental recitative to which it yields, separates the *Heiliger Dankgesang* from the *Allegro appassionato* and bridges the immense emotional gap between them. It thus performs a similar function to that of the slow introduction to Mozart's Quintet in G minor, KV 516, a work with which Beethoven was familiar.

String Quartet in F major, Op. 135
(composed July to October 1826);
published by Maurice Schlesinger, Paris,
August 1827); dedicated to Johann
Nepomuk Wolfmayer

Beethoven had initially promised to dedicate his C sharp minor quartet (Op. 131) to Johann Wolfmayer (1768 – 1841), a wealthy Viennese cloth manufacturer and a great admirer of his music. But Beethoven

changed his mind, perhaps because he felt a more immediate obligation to another patron who had helped him at a time of personal crisis. Wolfmayer instead received the dedication of Beethoven's next – and last – quartet, Op. 135, which is the shortest, technically easiest, and most accessible of the late quartets. With it, Beethoven returns to the conventional quartet plan of four self-contained movements. The work is, however, no less 'late' in style, having more transparent textures than are found in the previous quartets. The main theme of the first movement, for example, is created from ever-varied combinations of three principal motifs, each presenting a different melodic gesture with its own characteristic rhythms. The autograph score shows, moreover, that Beethoven made subtle changes in these rhythms as he worked out the course of the theme.

The ensuing *Vivace* is, on the face of it, a straightforward scherzo and trio, but its unconventional tonal plan and disruptive harmonies give the movement a distinctively subversive character. Once the extremely brief, skittish main theme has been played twice, a unison E flat throws the harmony off course: the remainder of the scherzo section is devoted entirely to restoring the original key

of F and so dispenses with more conventional modulations, e.g. to the dominant. The trio section appears at first to relieve the hectic pace of what has come before, and there are even elements of eighteenth-century *galant* style. But Beethoven ratchets up the tonality by whole steps, from F to G and eventually A major, which leads to a furiously demonic dance, the high-register first violin accompanied by a five-note *ostinato* figure played no fewer than forty-seven times in succession before the original key is restored by chromatic slippage,

F sharp – E – F sharp – G sharp – A
 F sharp – E – F sharp – G **natural** – A
 F sharp – E – F **natural** – G – A
 F **natural** – E – F – G – A

leading to a return of the main scherzo section:



Transitional passage restoring the original key before the return of the opening material

The theme of the slow movement, in D flat major, was initially intended for a

‘sweet song of peace’⁴ to conclude the Quartet in C sharp minor. Transferred to Op. 135, it initiates a set of four variations of which the second, set in the key of C sharp minor, is slower and reveals an emotional intensity that is reminiscent of that of the *Cavatina* from Op. 130.

Once again, Beethoven is compelled to bridge the gap between the end of the final variation and the last movement of the work, and so he devises a slow introduction, marked *Grave ma non troppo tratto*, which became immortalised by the composer’s subtitle *Der schwer gefaßte Entschluß* (‘The Resolution Taken with Difficulty’) and the inscriptions he used to underscore the motivic relationship between introductory and main themes of the movement: *Muß es sein? ... Es muß sein!* (Must it be?... It must be!). Such connections between slow and fast themes are not uncommon – they feature in several of Haydn’s symphonies from the 1790s – and it is a mistake to take Beethoven’s play on words at more than its face value: just as a verbal phrase means something different when the word order is reversed, so a musical motive can change character when its notes are rearranged, when its rhythm and tempo are changed, and, above all, when

a troubling interval (here a diminished fourth) is transformed into something more reassuring (perfect fourth). Of particular note is the reappearance of the *Grave* midway through the movement, before the reprise of the main theme: this is an idea with which we can see Beethoven toying in the sketches for other works (e.g. the last piano sonata, Op. 111), but one which he finally puts into practice here.

The composer marked the repeat of the development and recapitulation of the movement as optional: ‘si ripete la seconda parte al suo piacere’ (repeat the second part if you wish). One is reminded of similar repeat marks in the first movement of the ‘Waldstein’ Sonata and the first two movements of the first Razumovsky quartet, all of which Beethoven removed before these long middle-period works were first published. The observance of the repeat in the finale of Op. 135 not only enables the listener to savour the return of the introductory *Grave*, in its more menacing form, it also prolongs the wait for the enchanting coda. It is as if Beethoven were delaying the final moments of his long and extraordinary creative output until the last possible moment.

⁴ süßer Ruhegesang

Praised by *The Daily Telegraph* for its 'luminous beauty of sound', the depth and integrity of its interpretations winning it fans across the world, the **Doric String Quartet** brings elegance and intimacy to both the classical canon and new music. Having performed complete cycles of the quartets of Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Bartók at venues such as the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Wiener Konzerthaus, and Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, the players have turned to the works of Beethoven and Britten. *The Times* praised the first instalment of their recorded Beethoven cycle, released in 2023, as 'a joy'. The series will culminate in 2026 – 27, in time for the 200th anniversary of the composer's death. Their intellectual rigour has led the players to use specially made original-style bows when performing classical repertoire from Haydn to Mendelssohn. Known for their refined performances of this repertoire, they are also committed to new music, performing works by composers such as Brett Dean, Thomas Adès, Héroïse Werner, Eleanor Alberga, and Andrea Tarrodi. Their curiosity and flexibility are documented by a discography, ranging from Purcell to John Adams, of more than twenty recordings for Chandos, with whom they have recorded exclusively since 2010. The

Quartet's regular tours in Australia, Japan, and the US have included a sold-out concert at Carnegie Hall in spring 2025. During the 2025 / 26 season, the players made their début at Shanghai Symphony Hall, and will soon return to the Concertgebouw and Wigmore Hall; commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the composer's death, they will present the complete Britten cycle at De Bijloke, in Ghent.

The Quartet often performs repertoire for string quartet and orchestra. This includes Elgar's Introduction and Allegro and John Adams's *Absolute Jest*, which has become a firm part of its repertoire since it gave the Austrian première, with the Wiener Symphoniker and John Adams, at Wiener Konzerthaus. In recent years, it also gave the Dutch première of the piece with the Radio Philharmonisch Orkest, and has performed it with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra. Its Chandos recording, with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Peter Oundjian, was named Recording of the Month by the magazine *BBC Music* for its 'sumptuous sweetness and laser-like clarity'. The group collaborates regularly with Jonathan Biss, Benjamin Grosvenor, Anna Prohaska, the Marmen Quartet and Quiroga Quartet and has recently appeared at the Festspiele

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Grafenegg, West Cork, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Thaxted, and Tivoli festivals. Having benefitted from coaching by groups such as the Hagen, Alban Berg, Artemis, and LaSalle quartets, the Doric String Quartet is dedicated to supporting young musicians and has been Teaching Quarter in Association at the Royal Academy of Music since 2015. Maia Cabeza plays a 1754 Michele Deconet violin, Ying Xue a 1754 Giovanni Battista Gabrielli violin, Emma Wernig a viola made by Jason Viseltear in 2019, and John Myerscough a 1587 cello by the Brothers Amati.



Also available



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Volume 2



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Schubert
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'Death and the Maiden'

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Recording producer Jonathan Cooper
Sound engineer Jonathan Cooper
Editor Jonathan Cooper
A & R administrator Karen Marchlik
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BEETHOVEN: COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS, VOL. 3 – Doric String Quartet

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770 – 1827)

COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS, VOLUME 3

COMPACT DISC ONE

- 1-4 **STRING QUARTET, OP. 18 NO. 3** (1798 – 1800) **24:04**
in D major • in D-Dur • en ré majeur
- 5-8 **STRING QUARTET, OP. 59 NO. 3** (1806) **30:05**
in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur
- 9-12 **STRING QUARTET, OP. 74** (1809) **29:45**
in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur
(‘Harp’)

TT 83:55

COMPACT DISC TWO

- 1-5 **STRING QUARTET, OP. 132** (1825) **43:27**
in A minor • in a-Moll • en la mineur
- 6-9 **STRING QUARTET, OP. 135** (1826) **27:22**
in F major • in F-Dur • en fa majeur

TT 70:49

DORIC STRING QUARTET

MAIA CABEZA violin

YING XUE violin

EMMA WERNIG viola

JOHN MYERSCOUGH cello

The members of the Doric String Quartet perform the Op. 18 Quartets using a set of classical bows by Luis Emilio Rodriguez Carrington.

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BEETHOVEN: COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS, VOL. 3 – Doric String Quartet

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