

BEETHOVEN “Razumovsky” Quartets

VII, VIII & IX (Op. 59, Nos. 1–3)

TOKYO STRING QUARTET



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover and page 7: photos by Christian Ducasse

All texts and translations © harmonia mundi usa

© © 2005 harmonia mundi usa

1117 Chestnut Street, Burbank, CA 91506

Recorded: April 26–29, 2005 at Skywalker Sound,
A Lucasfilm Ltd. Company, Marin County, California

Producer: Robina G. Young

Recording Engineer & Editor: Brad Michel

Recorded, edited & mastered in DSD



LUDWIG VAN **BEETHOVEN** (1770–1827)

String Quartets VII, VIII & IX (Op. 59, Nos. 1–3)

“Dedicated to Count Razumovsky”

CD 1	76:58
Quartet VII in F major Op. 59, No. 1	40:37
1 Allegro	11:05
2 Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando	9:13
3 Adagio molto e mesto	12:19
4 Thème russe: Allegro	7:59
Quartet VIII in E minor Op. 59, No. 2	36:19
5 Allegro	10:15
6 Molto adagio.	12:28
7 Allegretto	7:46
8 Finale: Presto	5:45
CD 2	31:20
Quartet IX in C major Op. 59, No. 3	31:20
1 Introduzione: Andante con moto – Allegro vivace	10:43
2 Andante con moto quasi Allegretto	9:20
3 Menuetto: Grazioso	5:23
4 Finale: Allegro molto	5:51

TOKYO STRING QUARTET

Martin Beaver, Kikuei Ikeda *violins*

Kazuhide Isomura *viola* · Clive Greensmith *cello*

BEETHOVEN The “Razumovsky” Quartets, Op. 59

The Beethoven boom continues apace. No other composer so completely defines our concert life in each important genre – symphonies, concertos, and chamber music – and no other is subject to such ongoing scrutiny of his life and his art. Indeed, with the passing of time and a deeper knowledge of historical incident has come increased appreciation of his breathtaking, path-breaking innovation. Perceived as unique in his own day, he remains so in ours.

Beethoven's early training with Christian Gottlob Neefe affirmed his abilities; the first published notice he received, in 1783, applauded a “youthful genius” (Thayer's *Life of Beethoven*, p. 66) and Neefe praised him as “unquestionably now one of the foremost pianoforte players” (Thayer, op. cit., p. 113). His inevitable migration from Bonn to Vienna – the Imperial capital and artistically pre-eminent – came in 1792, when he was 21 years old.

Haydn, we know, taught him briefly in a mutually unsatisfying relationship, and there also was tutelage with Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, *Kapellmeister* at St. Stephen's Cathedral and the city's foremost teacher of counterpoint, and with Imperial *Kapellmeister* Antonio Salieri. But nothing learnt from these men can directly account for the transformations he later wrought in how music was composed and how it was perceived. Although primarily known as keyboard virtuoso at first, as a soloist and improviser second to none Beethoven quickly won acknowledgement as the composer who would inherit the mantle of Classicism – nobody assimilated as fully the ethos of Mozart and Haydn. Yet, from the start of his Viennese career, he set about consciously to undermine the premises and practices of his artistic progenitors and redefine music's most fundamental assumptions.

Beethoven arrived in the Austrian capital with a modest portfolio; his earliest Viennese works, however, already displayed those characteristics we associate with the mature composer: his “long-range control over bold harmonic action,” (*Grove*, Beethoven entry, p. 379), including melodic concision, rhythmic vigor, and rigorous motivic development.

Among Beethoven's finest works from the 1790s, consensus would include the String Quartets of Opus 18, and to better understand the *Razumovsky* String Quartets of Opus 59 we should take a cursory look at these earlier works. Opus 18 occupied – indeed, preoccupied – the composer from the middle

of 1798 to the end of 1799, and their composition evinced, in Joseph Kerman's words, “care and industry and worry and high seriousness” (*The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 9). Kerman, who wrote the book – literally – on the Beethoven quartets, continues: “The composition of string quartets was important in several ways to Beethoven in 1798. It meant first of all...entry upon a major musical genre which he had not yet tried. This entry itself may be seen as a step in his steady apprenticeship in all branches of composition. There can be little doubt that at this period of his life Beethoven had embarked on a more or less planned assault on the entire territory of music.... Assault was discovery.”

With Opus 18, Beethoven clearly established his Classical bona fides. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, the day's leading periodical for the music-loving public, was at first skeptical of the works, but would come to see them as models of Classicism, praiseworthy for their “unity, utmost simplicity, and adherence to a specific character in each work...which raise them to the rank of masterworks and validate Beethoven's place alongside the honored names of our Haydn and Mozart” (Maynard Solomon, p. 68). The six quartets are imbued, in fact, with more than just the spirit of Mozart and Haydn – No. 4 well might be an homage to Haydn, so keenly does it emulate his style, and No. 5 is most certainly indebted to Mozart, whose A-major String Quartet, K. 464, was its inspiration. Yet, if Beethoven's individuality already was felt, it was not always welcomed.

No quartets had ever sounded quite like these: the openings of Opus 18, No.1, and Opus 18, No. 3, for instance, each contain the melodic and harmonic elements that get exploited as the piece runs its course, and exploited far more extensively than earlier composers would, or could, have done.

Today we accept this music with an easy equanimity, but late 18th-century sensibilities were more finely tuned. It was the D-major quartet, Opus 18, No. 3, to which A. B. Marx, theorist, composer and first of Beethoven's major biographers, referred when he made his now-famous remark, “Mehr Beethoven, als Quartett” – more Beethoven than quartet (Kerman, p. 16), a knowing quip that conveyed a judgment, and perhaps a mild rebuke, that Beethoven's approach was uncomfortably new and overly personal.

This was the context, then, in which Beethoven would revisit the genre, having produced six works that had met with

mixed success. (Interestingly, the fact that Beethoven published the Opus 18 as a set of six suggests how mindful he still was of precedent. Groupings of six were a musical convention that arose in the Baroque, and though it was a convention that Classical composers happily observed, Mozart and Haydn among them, Beethoven did so this one time only.)

The three String Quartets of Opus 59 were composed in 1805 and '06, in response to a commission from Count Andreas Kyrillovitch Razumovsky, naval officer turned diplomat and a Maecenas and amateur musician of the highest attainments, whose connoisseurship and generosity would bring him into fruitful contact with both Haydn and Beethoven at the end of the 18th and the dawn of the 19th centuries.

Only six years separate the quartets of Opus 18 from those of Opus 59, yet, Beethoven and his world had changed dramatically in that short span of time. The opening years of the 19th century presented the composer with a confluence of difficulties both emotional and intellectual, and they elicited a remarkable response. By the late 1790s Beethoven was aware of the progressive degeneration of his hearing – how could it have been otherwise? – and in a bitterly defiant letter of 1801 he mentioned his situation to a confidant, violinist Karl Amenda (Kerman, p. 76). In 1802, Beethoven further acknowledged and openly accepted this loss in the famous Heiligenstadt Testament, as complex a confession as one might imagine. Written as a letter to his two brothers, the Testament emerged *de profundis* and in it the composer bewails his deafness and isolation, and accompanies his lament with strains of “apology, self-justification, self-pity, pathos, pride, hints of suicide, and presentiments of death” (Kerman, p. 91).

In 1803, Beethoven composed his Third Symphony, the *Eroica*, which remains the pivotal work between the artistic sensibilities of the 18th and 19th centuries. It also marks the definitive start of Beethoven's so-called second period, in which his music achieved a scale and a seriousness that were altogether new. As Kerman observes, “After the *Eroica*, Beethoven's quartets, like everything else he wrote, breathe in a different world from that of the 1790s. Hearing the second-period quartets today, one breathes and listens differently than one does to Haydn, Mozart, and the Quartets of Opus 18”.

While the innovative character of the Opus 59 quartets cannot be linked to any specific incident in the composer's

biography, their fundamentally different point of view cannot be denied. Beethoven had rethought the genre's rationale, the relationships among its parts, and its relationship with its audience.

A progeny of the *Eroica* (and thus, birthed by the symphony), the three works are conceived on a large – on a heroic – scale. We are in a new sound-world where polite dialogue has been replaced by sweeping exhortations and where players have assumed new roles. Moments, many moments, in the Opus 59 are designed to confound, and the audience is no longer treated as passive participant but is actively, dramatically, engaged. Walter Riezler (p. 168) characterizes the pieces as “so personal in expression, of such unprecedented individuality, that no other compositions of the same kind will bear comparison with them... they stand alone even among the remainder of Beethoven's own works.” And, according to Kerman (p. 118), the three *Razumovsky* quartets “constitute a trio of sharply characterized, consciously differentiated individuals, beside whom the earlier quartets look, regrettably, like pasteboard.” Conceptually bold, emotionally charged and imaginatively extravagant, they might be said to mirror the relationship in the visual arts, already remarked upon in the 19th century, between paintings of Ingres, flawlessly crafted and Classically influenced, and the frame-busting theatrics of Delacroix.

The greatest of the Opus 59 quartets, it is safe to say, is **No. 1 in F major**, and its greatest movement is its first, which can best be compared not to another string quartet but to the first movement of Beethoven's Third Symphony. “Both movements,” quoting Kerman, “derive their harmonic plan from an obtrusive ‘sore’ note in the opening theme, a note destined to be reinterpreted later in dramatic ways – D-flat in the symphony movement, G in the quartet. Both movements grow enormously expansive in their development section, which in each case develops a fugato that leads into a shattering passage of breakdown. The codas in both movements are momentous. These technical parallels between the two movements dramatize Beethoven's ambition in the *Razumovsky* series in a specially vivid way: the ambition to transform the smooth conversation of the string quartet into the heroic discourse of the symphony” (Joseph Kerman in *The Beethoven Quartet Companion*, p. 15).

“The analogy between the two first movements comes in scope and technique, not at all in mood. Lacking in the quartet is the sense of inner conflict that first drove Beethoven, it would seem, to his heroic vision. He was not doing a *quartetto eroico*; the piece rather resists programmatic imaginings. For all its

powerful drives and sharp explosions and new revelations, the quartet breathes an abstract quality that sets it in a different emotional sphere from the symphony. Its drives and explosions and revelations do not seem to emerge in response to conflict; rather, they are working out certainties, investigating tonal properties. Massive control, even a certain commanding serenity marks this movement...” (Kerman, p. 102)

Let's note some details. The work's opening is extraordinary in its purpose and procedures. It begins with four statements of the same theme, slightly altered with each iteration; beginning in the lowest register with the cello and getting passed up to the first violin, this fills the entire canvas. F major is unmistakably the tonic, but no tonic was ever more diluted. The three notes recalled most vividly – F, G, F – spell out an interval of the second, and it is this interval (the tonic F and its relationships to both G and G-flat; and C, the dominant, and its relationships to D and D-flat) that provides the kernel that will grow and shape the movement.

Beethoven seizes the opportunity in this movement's development section to write his most impressive counterpoint to date, a double fugue of great and stately earnestness (m. 185ff). As in the *Eroica*, the fugue ends in catastrophe, not in the symphony's soul-searching despair but in the dead-end of a diminished-seventh chord (m. 210ff). Motivic material from the opening measures sounds for approximately two-dozen bars, until the movement regains its composure, and its tonic key, with restatements of the theme first heard in measures 19ff.

Another detail is worth mentioning, because it is so singularly odd. In measures 85 through 90 (and in the recapitulation in m. 332ff) half notes splay a series of clouded chords between the highest and lowest registers. Dynamics enhance the mystery; preceded by two measures of vigorous fortissimo for all four parts, the half-note chords are played, suddenly, *piano* (at m. 85). But the voicing is the thing – with its dramatic disparities in register and the precision of its scoring, the passage sounds like nothing so much as Webern *avant la lettre*.

This movement is one of the longest that Beethoven yet had written – with 400 measures, it lasts close to eleven minutes. It – the entire quartet – was a conundrum to the musicians who gave its première. According to Czerny, as related by Thayer, “when [first violinist Ignaz] Schuppanzigh first played [it] they laughed and were convinced that Beethoven was playing a joke...” (Thayer, p. 409) But Riezler's sympathetic assessment is more astute: the movement “unites in an amazing manner

intimacy of expression and softness of contour on the one hand, with a truly symphonic breadth of development and organic closeness of weave on the other” (Riezler, p. 169).

Perhaps more puzzling still was the second movement, marked *Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando*. Its opening tattoo, rapped out in the cello – Tovey's “vision of dry bones” (Kerman, p. 103) – provides a rhythmic motto that unifies the movement, and it is succeeded by gnomic solo statements in the higher strings (in mm. 4–8, in mm. 12–16) that seem like wisps in the wind. But the motto has muscle, too, and after it is played *fortissimo* by all four strings (m. 29ff) it begins a series of large harmonic excursions. The movement is harmonically audacious, ranging widely – experimentally – and most notably so in the recurring *Scherzando* sections. (Kerman's exegesis of these migrations is masterful: *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 106ff.)

As in the opening movement, and serving as a unifying thread between the two, the *Allegretto vivace* has its Webern-like moments, too (mm. 271–274), where sixteenth notes are passed among registers, and, perhaps even more strikingly (m. 72ff), where the instruments dissect and deconstruct what little there is of a melody. Also like the first movement, whose closing measures, tinged with traits from the Lydian mode, facilitate the tonality of this one (it is exceptionally set in the subdominant, B-flat), the closing measures here, with their G-flat and E natural, hint at what's to come.

The F-minor movement that follows, marked *Adagio molto e mesto*, is remarkable both for its key and its content. Slow movements in the tonic minor, rare in Beethoven, are found not only here but also in Opus 59, No. 3, and, tellingly, in the *Eroica*. As for its content, the movement is the embodiment of pathos. Of all the tonic-minor slow movements, Kerman finds that this one “is doubtless the most profoundly tragic in intention, an essay in misery scarcely relieved by any response of sobriety or solace” (p. 110).

Both in this movement and in the *Adagio affettuoso* of Opus 18, No. 1, which is akin in its sentiments of sorrow, Beethoven makes extra-musical allusions, though one only can speculate why or to what ultimate effect. Concerning the earlier quartet, Beethoven said (according to Karl Amenda), that he composed the slow movement with the vault scene from *Romeo and Juliet* in mind, and the words “Les derniers soupirs” – “the final sighs” – are found written on sketches for the work. In Opus 59, No. 1, the slow movement bears a longer inscription: “Einen Trauerweiden- oder Akazienbaum aufs Grab meines Bruders” – “A Weeping Willow or Acacia Tree over my Brother's

Grave” (Kerman, p. 36 and p. 110). Both allusions are equally fanciful, the reference to Shakespeare’s tragedy being purely poetic and the one to a dead brother equally so, since neither of Beethoven’s brothers was dead at the time of the quartet’s composition. The inscription has prompted psychological speculations from Drs. Editha and Richard Sterba, in their study of “Beethoven and His Nephew,” as well as the suggestion that the reference was directed to one of the composer’s brothers in Masonry.

Regardless of the citation’s possible import, the movement is a bleak evocation of desolation and despair, though the authenticity of these feelings is called into question by compositional touches that seem gratuitous: appoggiaturas that plead too insistently, figuration that seems fussy. And the transition to the next movement feels abrupt; rather than bringing such a serious movement to serious close, Beethoven turns his back on tragedy and leads the first violin to a cadenza-like passage that reaches up to the instrument’s highest high C (even as he sends the cello to a C five octaves lower), before the first violin, having tumbled down by now to the C within the staff, begins a trill that is carried over into the start of the Finale, with its jaunty Russian folk-song.

The idea that a “thème russe” should be used in these quartets is attributed to the eponymous Count Razumovsky (Kerman, p. 112), who was not only a patron of elevated tastes but also the Russian ambassador in Vienna. Reworking the raw material of the folksong, Beethoven fashioned an easy and self-satisfied chameleon of a tune: from its forthright first statement, it will become the basis of contrapuntal writing, and will also get slowed down to sound weighty and serious. Engagingly exploiting the tune, the Finale never ventures far afield from convention. Slighter than the two earlier movements – how could their intensity be sustained? – it is an appropriate foil for the preceding *Adagio molto* and a spirited end to an extraordinary work.

The **E-minor Quartet**, the second in Opus 59, is propelled by an energy that is tense and compressed. Its opening gambit sounds defiant, a jump of a fifth in the first violin with the harmony moving from tonic to dominant. After a pregnant measure of silence – anything might follow – we hear a wispy two-bar phrase that expands upon the initial leap of the fifth and cements the tonic of E minor. After another measure of silence – it is difficult to think of an earlier work in which silence speaks so loudly – the same two-bar phrase is repeated, with only the slightest alteration, one-half tone higher. As in the

F-major Quartet, Beethoven again is investigating step-wise relationships, but his focus here is the relationship between the tonic and the harmony built on the flat second degree, the “Neapolitan” second.

Unlike the leisurely explorations of the F-major Quartet’s first movement, the E-minor’s opening *Allegro* is taut and offers an accretion of smaller details. Melodically, the notes E and F, the tonic and flat second degree, (and a fifth above, the notes B and C, the fifth and flat sixth) permeate the piece. And harmonically, “Neapolitan” relationships are prominent. The development, for instance, builds on a bass line that much of the time crawls upwards in semi-tones. “This standard device for melodramatic excitement,” Kerman reminds us, “had not yet grown hackneyed in Beethoven’s time. The quality of chromatic bass ascent gives this development quite another cast from that of the F-major Quartet, with its slow, almost somnolent excursions; the E-minor development is not only exciting, it is positively theatrical” (p. 124ff).

The theatrical is transcended in the *Molto adagio* which follows. Something special is going on here. In the score, Beethoven instructed that the movement “is to be played with great feeling” (*Si tratta questo pezzo con molto sentimento*) and Czerny, well acquainted with Beethoven when this work was composed, relates that the movement occurred to the composer “when contemplating the starry sky and thinking of the music of the spheres” (in Kerman, p. 127).

This sort of music is something new. Beethoven would not venture here often, but when he did he composed works that share a sense of ecstatic contemplation, of time suspended, of a mystical sense of stasis. The sentiments of this *Molto adagio* resemble those in both the Ninth Symphony’s *Adagio molto e cantabile* and the opening section of the “Heiliger Dankgesang” movement in the A-minor String Quartet, Op. 132, though Beethoven here does not take us as far into this ethereal realm as he will in the later compositions. Formally, the *Molto adagio* is cast in conventional sonata form, and it is most memorable for the simple hymn with which it opens and for details that remind us that, even with its exceptional aura, this still is a piece about “Neapolitan” relationships.

The movement which follows feels like a breather, and in fact, after what just has transpired, putting a true Scherzo here, in its expected place, would never have worked. A soft *Allegretto* in a delicate E minor starts off sounding somewhat tentative and halting, and the movement only asserts itself with the Trio section, marked *Maggiore*. But how it asserts itself! Beethoven

bases the *Maggiore* on another “thème russe,” but rather than being deployed discretely, he gives it the full contrapuntal treatment for some fifty measures, until it’s whipped up to a climax and breaks into paired canons (at m. 104ff, first for the cello and viola, then for the two violins) that suggest the tintinnabulation of pealing bells. After the *Allegretto* gets repeated, the *Maggiore*, ear-grabbing and insistent, returns again, before yet another return of the *Allegretto* brings the movement to a close.

With its several large repeats, the third movement has aspects of a rondo, and this helps set the stage for the ensuing *Presto* finale, which is a sonata-rondo, unabashed. Like the first movement of the F-major Quartet, the *Presto* starts off with great harmonic ambiguity. Apparently in the key of C, the opening phrase veers to B two-thirds through its course, a harmonic progression that is mirrored in the cello line, and we realize that Beethoven again has emphasized the “Neapolitan” relationship.

Compared to the Finale of the F-major Quartet, this *Presto* is more coarse and blustery. It begins to feel repetitive, redundant, and as we would expect, it’s permeated with “Neapolitan” touches. Yet, in relation to the preceding three movements – the tense and nervous first, the otherworldly second, the fragile and then ferocious third – it has a heft that nicely balances.

Just as Beethoven looked to Mozart as model for his String Quartet in A major, Op. 18, No. 5, he again invoked Mozart in the last of the Razumovsky series. The **C-major String Quartet** finds inspiration in Mozart’s K. 465, the so-called *Dissonant* Quartet, and as Mozart did, Beethoven plunges both players and their audience into an impenetrable harmonic fog at the outset. Parsing the *Introduzione* reveals a succession of four diminished-seventh chords, diatonic tonal music’s most unstable elements, and their inherent lack of clear internal direction – they can be resolved in multiple ways – lets Beethoven create a passage of maximum ambiguity.

No less settled is the ensuing *Allegro vivace*, marked by irregular phrase-lengths. Beethoven’s music at this time assiduously avoids the conventional tonic-dominant relationships that for decades had been a given, and in this quartet the focus of his harmonic interest is the relationship between the tonic and the supertonic (though not the Neapolitan, flatted second).

Building up to the recapitulation, Beethoven writes a canonic passage of great strength (m. 149ff) that prominently reintroduces the dominant-seventh sonorities first heard in the introduction. If the movement betrays a weakness, it is in its

final fourteen measures, a too abrupt conclusion, though it is worth observing that the hurried closing measures (m. 259ff) allow Beethoven to end his movement with a step-wise ascent in the first violin that mirrors the cello's descent in the movement's murky opening measures (mm. 1–21).

More than in the other Razumovsky quartets, this work's opening movement displays the first violin as soloist (most notably in m. 176ff, leading up to the recapitulation), as will subsequent movements of this piece. This is less a question of increased technical demands than it is of texture. If only fleetingly, Beethoven creates a context in which the first violin is not first among equals but is apart from its colleagues, a true soloist set against an accompanying ensemble. This is not a wholly new concern, for Beethoven's *Romances* for violin and orchestra were completed before the Opus 59, but it is worth noting that Beethoven's Violin Concerto, his most important work for violin and orchestra, was composed shortly after the third Razumovsky quartet, in 1806.

A. B. Marx, commenting on the second movement of the Opus 59, No. 3, found this *Andante* to be "seltsam fremd" – unusually strange (Kerman, p. 149). At first blush it doesn't seem so. With its 6/8 rhythm, its minor-mode melody that might refer to another "thème russe," and its generally restless air, it somewhat recalls Barbarina's cavatina that opens the last act of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. But as it progresses, as an insistent plucked dominant in the cello leads us forward into harmonic regions far from the home key of E minor, as the tentative opening statement introduces more florid melodies, as the tone changes from simple to strange – "seltsam fremd" – we find ourselves in a region with which A. B. Marx and his contemporaries were largely unfamiliar. With the sonorities of the 'harmonic minor' adding an exotic aura (with its flat submediant and sharp subtonic), the theme "might as well have sounded Russian, to early nineteenth-century ears, as Turkish or Bulgarian or Jewish. Viennese, in any case, it very definitely is not" (Kerman, p. 145).

As if to hasten a return to normalcy, Beethoven's *Menuetto*, which follows, is devoid of complexities. It's an Ur-Minuet, of sorts, and ironically, it recalls Kerman's observation about the remarkably complex and provocative *Andante*, that in listening to it "one responds less to the person Beethoven... than to something universal and timeless" (p. 149). This Minuet "evocation," suggests Kerman, "is neither sentimental nor sardonic, but dreamlike, abstracted in all senses of the word, almost affectionate" (p. 141). The Trio has the athletic spring that the Minuet lacks, and with

sharp syncopations in the first violin and energetic inner voices, it injects the movement with rhythmic vigor.

When the Finale, a half-fugue, opens with an excursion into strict counterpoint, we realize we have been prepared for it earlier, by the long canonic passage in the quartet's first movement. The fugue subject, exceptionally, has two internal repetitions that extend it to a length of ten measures, rather than the expected eight; as in the opening movement, Beethoven is still writing phrases of irregular length. He is also, perhaps, recalling Mozart, whose *Jupiter* Symphony also ended with a half-fugue of formidable power and proportions.

A movement of relentless energy, the Finale of Opus 59, No. 3, has been called "symphonic," and the use of this term is lent credence by its raw power; its extensive exploitation of the opening material (it is a contrapuntal workout of 429 bars); and even its use of what soon will be called a "Rossini crescendo." Conceived to fill a large sonic canvas – more Delacroix than Ingres – it is as if Beethoven wanted his quartet to be more than a quartet, to break free of the limitations imposed by his instruments and to transcend the imaginative boundaries set by earlier works, including works of his own. And for all of the movement's glorious noise, there's an element of anger here as well.

Beethoven will take – or will be taken by – his subsequent string quartets in a different direction; the late quartets will lead him down other paths. And the myriad challenges with which he is dealing here, where the Finale's very fabric is almost rent by the ferocity of the instrumental conception, will find more appropriate resolution in compositions for orchestra, in works that are truly symphonic.

The string quartet could be pushed no further than it was by the Opus 59 series and Beethoven had accomplished something enormous. As he already had done with the piano sonata and would continue to do with the symphony, he had reinvented a genre and invested it with principles and practices that would challenge composers throughout the rest of the 19th century, into the 20th and on, into our own.

– GEORGE GELLES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 2, Beethoven entry, p. 379.
2. Joseph Kerman, "Beethoven Quartet Audiences," in *The Beethoven Quartet Companion*, ed. by Robert Winter and Robert Martin, U.C. Press, Berkeley, 1994.
3. Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1967.
4. Walter Riezler, *Beethoven*, Vienna House, New York, 1972.
5. Maynard Solomon, "Beyond Classicism," in *The Beethoven Quartet Companion*, U.C. Press, Berkeley, 1994.
6. Thayer's *Life of Beethoven*, rev. and ed. by Elliot Forbes, Princeton University Press, NJ, 1964.



Clockwise from top:
Kikuei Ikeda, Martin Beaver,
Kazuhide Isomura, Clive Greensmith

TOKYO STRING QUARTET

Martin Beaver, Kikuei Ikeda *violins*

Kazuhide Isomura *viola*

Clive Greensmith *cello*

The Tokyo String Quartet has captivated audiences and critics alike since it was founded more than thirty years ago. Regarded as one of the supreme chamber ensembles of the world, the quartet's members are: violist **Kazuhide Isomura**, a founding member of the group; second violinist **Kikuei Ikeda**, who joined the ensemble in 1974; cellist **Clive Greensmith**, former Principal Cellist of London's Royal Philharmonic, who joined in 1999; and first violinist **Martin Beaver**, who joined the ensemble in 2002.

Officially formed in 1969 at the Juilliard School of Music, the quartet traces its origins to the Toho School of Music in Tokyo, where the founding members were profoundly influenced by Professor Hideo Saito. Soon after its creation, the quartet won First Prize at the Coleman Competition, the Munich Competition and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. An exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon firmly established it as one of the world's leading quartets, and it has since released more than 30 landmark recordings. The ensemble now records on the **harmonia mundi** label.

The Tokyo Quartet has served on the faculty of the Yale School of Music as quartet-in-residence since 1976. The musicians also regularly participate in master classes throughout North America, Europe and Japan.

The Tokyo String Quartet performs on "The Paganini Quartet," a group of renowned Stradivarius instruments named for legendary virtuoso Niccolò Paganini, who acquired and played them during the 19th century. The instruments have been loaned to the ensemble by the Nippon Music Foundation since 1995, when they were purchased from the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.