

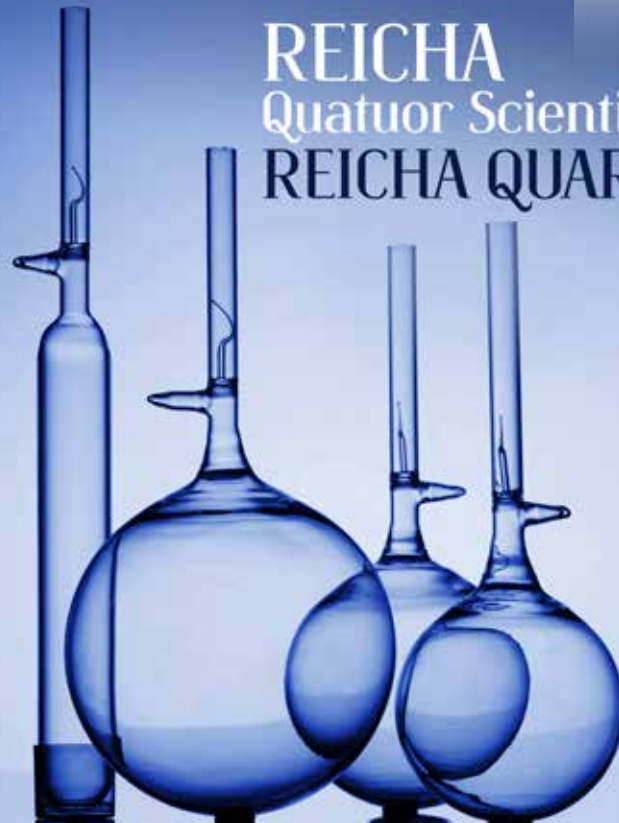


Libor Mašek · Veronika Manová · Ivan Iliev · Michal Dušek

REICHA

Quatuor Scientifique

REICHA QUARTET



ANTON REICHA 1770–1836

La Pantomime

Fantaisie pour deux violons, alto et violoncelle

- 1 Andante poco adagio – Tempo di marcia – Tempo primo –
Allegro – Lento – Andante un poco allegretto – Tempo primo 11'04

Quatuor scientifique

consistant en XII morceaux de musique pour deux violons, alto et violoncelle

- 2 I. Adagio – Allegro – Tempo primo – Allegro – Tempo primo 5'22
3 II. Fuga: Allegro vivace 3'49
4 III. Fuga: Poco andante 3'54
5 IV. Fuga: Allegro moderato 3'09
6 V. Fuga: Allegro moderato 2'27
7 VI. Fuga: Allegro 2'39
8 VII. Fuga (Thème de W.A. Mozart): Allegro 2'35
9 VIII. Allegro assai 5'12
10 IX. Fuga: Allegro 3'42
11 X. Menuetto: Allegro non troppo 5'43
12 XI. Fuga (Thème de J. Haydn): Allegro molto moderato 2'55
13 XII. Finale (Mesure composée): Allegro un poco vivo 6'12
- 58'52

Reicha Quartet

Ivan Iliev *violin*

Veronika Manová *violin*

Michal Dušek *viola*

Libor Mašek *cello*

The most scientific of the quartets – *Quatuor scientifique* by Anton Reicha

Anton Reicha is well known for his writings on music theory, ideas he also applied while teaching at the newly formed Paris Conservatoire in 1818. However, his compositional legacy should not be overlooked. Creating and codifying the wind quintet as a musical genre was what earned him his reputation. However, his innovative compositional practices, which were reflected in his writings, also influenced his other works. Reicha's interest in modernising the typical baroque form – the fugue – shines through not only in his pieces for keyboard instruments, but also in his string quartets, particularly those from his Vienna period. The composition of the comprehensive quartet *Quatuor scientifique*, (the scientific quartet), falls into this period.

Anton Reicha was born in Prague to a baker and was baptised on 27 February 1770. His father died before Anton's first birthday, and he had to become independent from a young age. In his desire for education, at the age of 11 he ran away to his paternal grandfather who lived in Klatovy. He was then sent to his father's brother, Joseph Reicha, in Swabian Wallenstein, and it was there that he received his musical education. After moving to Bonn, where his uncle had been appointed Kapellmeister at the electoral court, Anton enrolled at the University of Bonn, studying there concurrently with Beethoven. It was during this time that the young Reicha befriended his peer. While in Bonn, they both received an offer from Joseph Haydn to come and study with him in Vienna. Beethoven took up the offer immediately. Reicha, however, went to Hamburg to escape the approaching French army. In Hamburg, he abandoned his career as a professional musician and instead dedicated himself fully to teaching and composition. Five years later, he went to Paris, at the time of Napoleon's establishment of absolute power. The turbulent political and social situation in the French capital forced Reicha to leave for the countryside; a year later he decided to leave for Vienna. He arrived there in the autumn of 1801, almost ten years after Beethoven. Although Joseph Haydn was not giving lessons anymore, they became close companions and Reicha, thanks to his language skills, also acted as an interpreter for French-speaking visitors. Reicha's stay in Vienna lasted until the autumn of 1808, when, worried by the rise in tensions between Austria and France, he decided to leave for Paris, where he settled permanently. In January 1818, he was appointed Professor at the Paris Conservatoire, later gaining French citizenship and receiving the National Order of the Legion of Honour. He enjoyed universal recognition until his sudden death on 28 May 1836. Although Reicha's main pedagogical and compositional work falls into his long Parisian period, his time in Vienna had a great influence in shaping his personality as a composer.

Quatuor scientifique, composed mainly during Reicha's stay in Vienna, was never published and has thus escaped the attention of performers. The manuscript was stored in the archives of the Music Department at the National Library of France in Paris, marked 'MS 12020'. It contains a total of four neatly written parts and its full title, *Quatuor scientifique, consistant en XII morceaux de musique pour deux violons, alto et violoncelle* (a scientific quartet, consisting of 12 movements for two violins, viola and violoncello) appears on the title page of the first violin part. The manuscript bears no date; it is assumed, however, that the work was created after the publication of Reicha's most famous piano work, the *36 Fugues pour le pianoforte, composées d'après un nouveau système* (36 Fugues for piano, composed according to a new system), in Vienna in 1803 (the second edition, published in 1805, was accompanied by Reicha's explanatory essay, *Über das neue Fugensystem*). Three of the 12 movements of the *Quatuor scientifique* are based on the piano fugues in this collection. The date of composition for the *Quatuor scientifique* is further supported by the way it was archived. There is another manuscript shelved under the same catalogue number in the National Library, this time signed by Reicha himself. It is the score of a fantasy in one movement for two violins, viola and cello, titled *La Pantomime, Fantaisie pour deux violons, alto et violoncelle*. This composition has also never before been published or recorded. The author himself wrote down the date and place of its origin: Vienna, Austria, 24 April 1806. The fact that both manuscripts were catalogued under the same number thus seems to support the conclusion that the *Quatuor scientifique* dates from the same period. This information can be found in the library catalogue, as well as in other comprehensive texts on Reicha's work such as the large Reicha monograph that includes a catalogue of his works compiled by Olga Šotolová and the study on *Quatuor scientifique* by Maria Teresa Arfini. His wife Bernard de Raymond also makes the same suggestion in her doctoral thesis. It is, however, still questionable whether storing both manuscripts under the same number is indeed proof of their connection. It could simply be the result of a mistake while cataloguing the extensive collection of Reicha's work or due to the similarity in their names: the score of *La Pantomime* may have been mistaken for the score of the first movement of *Quatuor scientifique*, which exists only in parts, and is preceded by the header, *La Pantomime – Introduction*. It is interesting to note that this header appears in a different ink and in a handwriting other than Reicha's in the handwritten parts that survive. Although the storage of both manuscripts in the same location may be random, the compositional character of *Quatuor scientifique* puts it in Reicha's Viennese period and it is therefore likely to have been composed between 1803 and 1808.

Maria Teresa Arfini suggests that both pieces are not only linked by their date of composition but also by their content. According to her, the much longer *La Pantomime – Fantaisie* might originally have been intended as an introduction to the quartet, which in the end was 'replaced' by a shorter and simpler variation movement in the same key, *La Pantomime – Introduction*. What, then, lies hidden in this mysterious *Fantaisie* for string quartet? Here, too, the title page of the score reveals how the overall work title changed. Under the main title, '*La Pantomime*', the subtitle '*Fantaisie*' appears in a darker ink, written in Reicha's own hand. This 271-bar, single-movement composition contains several sections that alternate homophonic parts with exposed sections for the first violin in which the other strings only play an accompanying role. Most of these virtuoso sections, which show the influence of the *quatuor brillant* – a form that was popular in France at the time and which elevated the early string quartets from amateurish compositions to virtuosic pieces played by professional performers – are exceptional in other ways too. Most of them include instructions in German, linked to the music. They can therefore be seen as an early example of a programmatic string quartet, which shows that Reicha was ahead of his time. The individual homophonic quartet sections almost always end with a short four-bar motif, which plays the role of ritornel, followed by a section of programmatic content. The first such section comes after a brief introduction and illustrates the arrival of the 'Genius' who 'searches but finds no one' (*Der Genius tritt auf, er sucht, findet Niemand*), 'goes to the grove and returns with the goddess of immortality'. 'The Goddess walks up the stairs; Immortality illuminates the sacrificial altar'. The subsequent *Tempo di marcia* illustrates the Genius leading the god Mars. The return to the original tempo and ascending and descending scales in the first violin part illustrate the Genius bringing Love. There follow 'general astonishment' and 'everyone kneels'. Genius brings four more characters. Then comes the 'solemn silence'. The subsequent tremolo in *allegro* represents the approaching thunder. After the thunder, 'three Fateful Sisters' appear, solemnly marching in dotted rhythm, then the 'fire atop the pier' ignites; the same theme is used for 'the Fatal Sisters are fleeing'. The whole composition ends with the return to the opening theme.

Arfini sees other connections with *Quatuor scientifique* besides the aforementioned tonality. The figure of the Genius, or the allegory of creativity, is subordinated to the intellect in subsequent fugues. In its structure, *Quatuor scientifique* is actually rather sophisticated. There are a total of eight fugues inserted between the standard four movements of a quartet (1, 8, 10 and 12). Reicha described the form of the fugue as 'scientific'. Fugues appear throughout his entire oeuvre – probably due in

part to the fact that he was teaching counterpoint at the Paris Conservatoire – and are most daringly used during his time in Vienna. The sophisticated counterpoint and fugue form had a rich tradition in Vienna, largely thanks to the work of Johann Joseph Fux, the author of the widely recognised study on counterpoint, *Gradus ad parnassum*. In the last third of the 18th century, interest in the fugue and other traditional Baroque forms was reignited with the rediscovery of old masters like Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel, and also thanks to Gottfried van Swieten. Fugues became part of the early Viennese quartets, where they were used as second or fourth movements. This can be seen, for example, in the works of Johann Georg Albrechtsberger or Joseph Haydn, musicians with whom Reicha would have been in contact. However, Reicha's view of the fugue was different, more modern. Contrary to contemporary opinion about the traditional form of the fugue, Reicha was convinced that the answer to the subject of the fugue may lie in any key (not just the dominant key as prescribed by the traditional rules) and that any melody can be used as the theme of the fugue. For two of the fugues from the *Quatuor scientifique* (Nos. 7 and 11) Reicha used subjects from composers he admired – J. Haydn and W.A. Mozart. Both fugues, along with Fugue No.5, were originally part of the *36 Piano Fugues*. Reicha himself rewrote them for the quartet. He was not the only one arranging piano fugues for string quartets; in Vienna his contemporaries and predecessors were arranging fugues of other composers too: see, for example, Mozart's arrangement of several four-part fugues from the second part of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* by J.S. Bach.

Reicha's innovations in the field of the fugue weren't always appreciated. Commenting on the original use of the fugue in the first part of what would later become the *36 Piano Fugues* (12 fugues had already been published in Paris in 1800), Beethoven wrote in a letter to their publisher Breitkopf & Härtel on 18 December 1802 that 'such fugues are no fugues'. The two composers knew each other well and Reicha may well have heard this from Beethoven in person. Arfini suggests that the composition of *Quatuor scientifique* can be viewed as Reicha's answer to this critique. The fugues in this quartet are considerably less bold in their use of formal innovations, they do, however, include three imaginative fugues originally written for piano. The surviving, neat manuscript of *Quatuor scientifique* includes a brief preface, which suggests that it was intended for publication. This, however, never happened. *La Pantomime* too survives only in the form of a manuscript, full of edits in Reicha's handwriting from which it is nonetheless possible to deduce the final shape of the piece. Both pieces are recorded here for the first time.

Jana Franková

The **Reicha Quartet** focuses on the repertoire from the curious time of the Enlightenment that formed the 18th- and early 19th-century musical landscape. With the shift in view of oneself and of the outside world, the means of musical expression underwent a similar change. Among other transformations, the ongoing developments in style and technique led to the rise of the string quartet, which found a new form of expression and gained a social significance never before experienced by an ensemble form.

Having met during their studies at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, the members of the Reicha Quartet decided to establish a performance-orientated chamber group that would allow them to explore the late Classical and early Romantic repertoire whilst maintaining a strong emphasis on research and on the periods' performance practices. Since then the ensemble has mainly performed in the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, offering its audiences a mixture of entertainment and historically informed journeys into the 18th and 19th centuries.

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