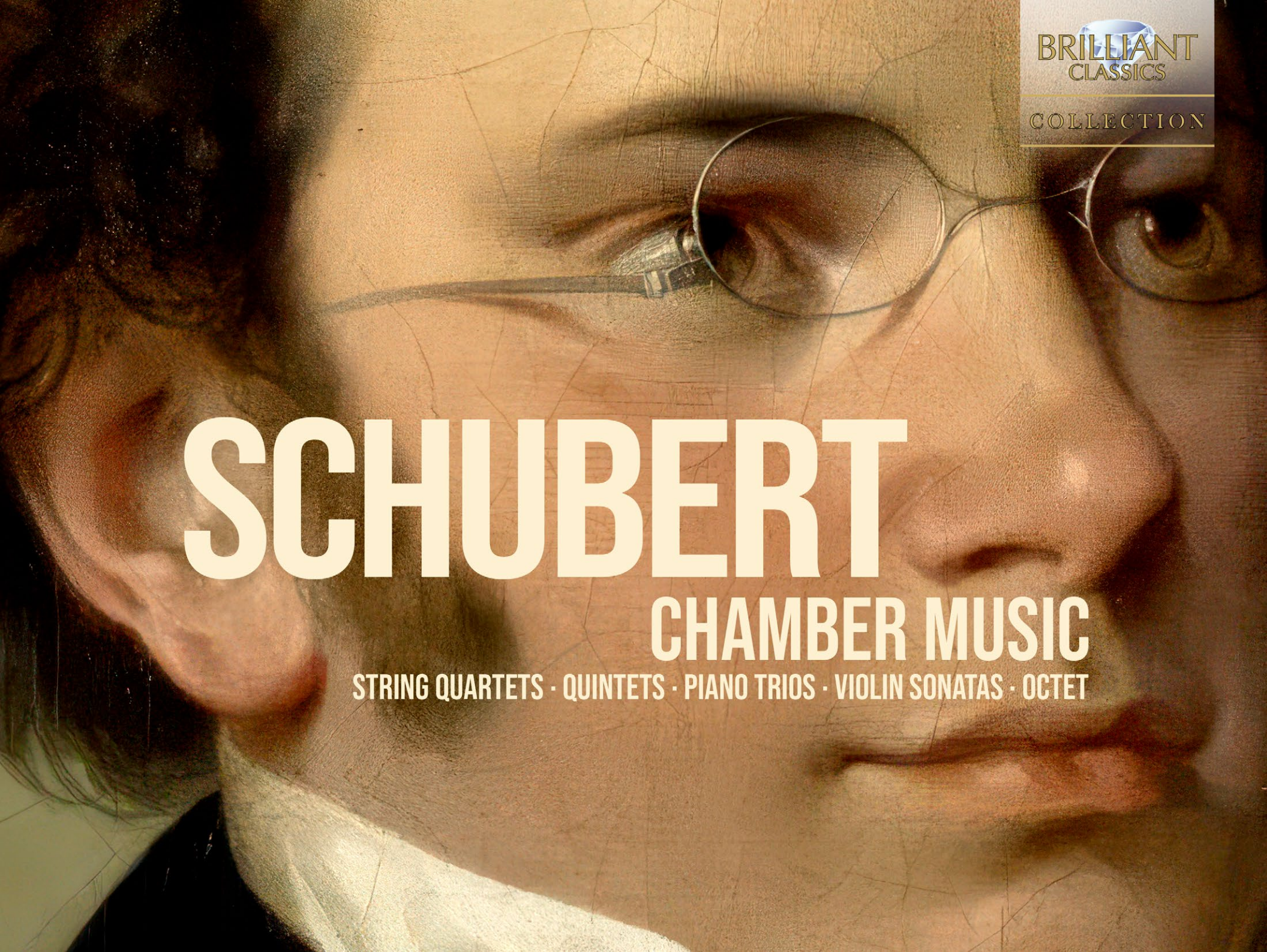




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SCHUBERT

CHAMBER MUSIC

STRING QUARTETS · QUINTETS · PIANO TRIOS · VIOLIN SONATAS · OCTET

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) – Chamber Music

TRACK LISTS

CD1	63'16	CD3	74'20
String Quartet in D D94		String Quartet in G minor / B flat D18	
1 I. Allegro	8'48	1 I. Andante – Presto vivace	5'49
2 II. Andante con moto	5'50	2 II. Menuetto – Trio	3'05
3 III. Menuetto (Allegretto) – Trio	2'38	3 III. Andante	4'03
4 IV. Presto	3'47	4 IV. Presto	4'13
 5 Andante in C D3*	 4'15	 5 Menuets and 5 German Dances D89	
<i>(fragment completed by Christian Starke)</i>		5 Menuet I – Trio 1 – Trio 2	3'45
 String Quartet in A minor D804 'Rosamunde'		6 Menuet II	0'59
6 I. Allegro ma non troppo	13'51	7 Menuet III (early version) – Trio 1 – Trio 2	4'00
7 II. Andante	8'17	8 Menuet IV	0'59
8 III. Minuetto (Allegretto) – Trio	7'23	9 Menuet V – Trio 1 – Trio 2	4'38
9 IV. Allegro moderato	8'22	10 German Dance I – Trio 1 – Trio 2	3'40
		11 German Dance II – Trio 1 – Trio 2	3'32
		12 German Dance III – Trio	2'02
		13 German Dance IV	0'53
		14 German Dance V – Trio 1 (early version) – Trio 2 – Coda	5'42
 CD2	 59'26	 String Quartet in B flat D68	
Overture in B flat D470*		15 I. Allegro maestoso	10'41
<i>(fragment completed by Christian Starke)</i>		16 II. Allegro	7'21
1 Adagio maestoso – Allegro	6'19	 5 Menuets and 5 German Dances D89	
 String Quartet in B flat D112		17 Menuet III (later version) – Trio 1 – Trio 2	4'56
2 I. Allegro ma non troppo	12'42	18 German Dance V – Trio 1 (later version) – Trio 2	3'54
3 II. Andante sostenuto	8'45		
4 III. Minuetto – Trio	5'03		
5 IV. Presto	5'08		
 String Quartet in E D353		 CD4	 71'04
6 I. Allegro con fuoco	7'12	String Quartet in D minor D810 'Der Tod und das Mädchen'	
7 II. Andante	5'24	1 I. Allegro	16'23
8 III. Minuetto – Trio	3'24	2 II. Andante con moto	15'15
9 IV. Rondo: Allegro vivace	5'22	3 III. Scherzo: Allegro molto – Trio	4'06
		4 IV. Presto – Prestissimo	9'06

**First recording of the completed version*

String Quartet in D D74

5	I. Allegro ma non troppo	8'02
6	II. Andante	5'40
7	III. Minuetto: Allegretto	4'58
8	IV. Allegro	5'40

9	Minuet in D D86	1'48
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CD5**71'09****String Quartet in C D46**

1	I. Adagio – Allegro con moto	8'31
2	II. Andante con moto	5'24
3	III. Menuetto – Trio	4'38
4	IV. Finale: Allegro	4'44

Overture in C minor D8a

5	Largo – Allegro	9'06
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String Quartet in E flat D87

6	I. Allegro moderato	10'04
7	II. Scherzo – Trio	2'05
8	III. Adagio	5'42
9	IV. Allegro	7'42

String Quartet in C minor D703

10	I. Allegro assai	9'30
11	II. Andante (fragment)	3'36

CD6**67'00****String Quartet in C D32**

1	I. Presto	4'21
2	II. Andante	5'08
3	III. Menuetto: Allegro – Trio	2'31
4	IV. Allegro con spirito	7'58

String Quartet in B flat D36

5	I. Allegro	9'32
6	II. Andante	4'30
7	III. Menuetto: Allegro – Trio	4'46
8	IV. Allegretto	5'44

String Quartet in G minor D173

9	I. Allegro con brio	6'28
10	II. Andantino	6'07
11	III. Minuetto: Allegro vivace – Trio	3'27
12	IV. Allegro	6'19

CD7**64'23****String Quartet in G D887**

1	I. Allegro molto moderato	22'42
2	II. Andante un poco moto	12'09
3	III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace – Trio: Allegretto	7'30
4	IV. Allegro assai	11'17

Movement for String Quartet in C minor D103**(fragment completed by Christian Starke)*

5	Grave – Allegro	10'39
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First recording of the completed version*Diogenes Quartet**Stefan Kirpal · Gundula Kirpal *violins*Julia Barthel (CD1&2), Alba González I Becerra (CD3-7) *viola*Stephen Ristau *cello*

Recording: 10–11 & 21–22 July 2012 (**CD1**), 3–5 December 2012 (**CD2**), 16–18 December 2013 (**CD3**), 1–3 & 7–8 July 2014 (**CD4**), 24–27 November 2014 & 16 February 2015 (**CD5**), 15–16 February 2015 & 17–19 March 2015 (**CD6**), 7–9 & 13–14 July 2015 (**CD7**)

Himmelfahrtskirche, München-Sendling, Germany

Producer, engineer & digital editor: Christian Starke

© 2012 (CD1), 2013 (CD2), 2014 (CD3), 2015 (CD4-6), 2016 (CD7) &

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CD8	54'09
String Quintet in C D956 <i>for two violins, viola and two cellos</i>	
1 I. Allegro non troppo	20'13
2 II. Adagio	14'06
3 III. Scherzo: Presto	9'52
4 IV. Allegretto	9'55

Brandis Quartet
 Thomas Brandis, Peter Brem *violins* · Wilfried Strehle *viola*
 Wolfgang Boettcher *cello*
with Wen-Sinn Yang *cello*

Recording: 1995, Berlin
 © 2012
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CD9	63'28
Quintet for piano, violin, viola, cello & double-bass in A D667 “The Trout”	
1 Allegro vivace	13'38
2 Andante	7'24
3 Scherzo, presto	4'22
4 Tema con variazioni (Die Forelle)	8'00
5 Allegro giusto	7'02

Amati Chamber Ensemble
 Gil Sharon *violin* · Ron Ephrat *viola*
 Alexander Hülshoff *cello* · Jean Sassen *double-bass*
 Dalia Ouziel *piano*

Sonata in A minor D821 “Arpeggione Sonata”	
6 Allegro moderato	10'47
7 Adagio	3'42
8 Allegretto	8'25

Timora Rosler *cello* · Klára Würtz *piano*

Recording: 1996 (Trout); September 1997, Church Kortenhoef, The Netherlands
 Producer: Marnix Brongers
 Mastering: Jochem Geene
 © 2006 (Trout) & 2010 Brilliant Classics
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CD10	48'50
Piano Trio No.1 in B flat D898	
1 I. Allegro moderato	14'29
2 II. Andante, un poco mosso	8'36
3 III. Scherzo – Trio – Allegro	6'41
4 IV. Rondo – Allegro vivace – Presto	8'50
5 Notturmo in E flat D897	10'12

CD11	41'16
Piano Trio No.2 in E flat D929	
1 I. Allegro	11'33
2 II. Andante con moto	9'07
3 III. Scherzando: Allegro moderato	7'08
4 IV. Allegro moderato	13'25

Klaviertrio Amsterdam
 Joan Berkhemer *violin* · Klára Würtz *piano* · Nadia David *cello*

Recording: November 2006, Dutch Reformed Church, Rhoon (CD10); 10 & 11 February 2009, Onder de Linden, Valthermond (CD11), The Netherlands
 Producer & engineer: Peter Arts, Arts Music Recording Rotterdam
 © 2009 & © 2025 Brilliant Classics

CD12**76'41****Sonata in D Op.137 No.1 D384**

- | | | |
|---|----------------|------|
| 1 | Allegro molto | 4'39 |
| 2 | Andante | 4'26 |
| 3 | Allegro vivace | 4'21 |

Sonata in A minor Op.137 No.2 D385

- | | | |
|---|------------------|------|
| 4 | Allegro moderato | 6'49 |
| 5 | Andante | 7'14 |
| 6 | Menuetto & Trio | 2'23 |
| 7 | Allegro | 4'56 |

Sonata in G minor Op.137 No.3 D408

- | | | |
|----|------------------|------|
| 8 | Allegro giusto | 5'32 |
| 9 | Andante | 4'33 |
| 10 | Menuetto & Trio | 2'37 |
| 11 | Allegro moderato | 4'06 |

Sonata in A Op.162 D574

- | | | |
|----|------------------|------|
| 12 | Allegro moderato | 9'56 |
| 13 | Scherzo & Trio | 4'13 |
| 14 | Andantino | 4'08 |
| 15 | Allegro vivace | 6'26 |

Zefi ra Valova *violin**(Lorenzo & Tomaso Carcassi 1760, Florence – provided by Jumpstart Jr.)*Aapo Häkkinen *fortepiano**(Daniel Dörr 1820, Vienna)*

Recording: 9-11 February 2021, Pitäjänmäen kyläkirkko, Finland

Producer, Engineer & Editor: Mikko Murtoniemi

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CD13**62'43****Octet in F D803, Op.posth.166**

for clarinet, horn, bassoon, string quartet and double bass

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I. Adagio – Allegro | 15'35 |
| 2 | II. Adagio | 10'46 |
| 3 | III. Allegro vivace – Trio | 6'11 |
| 4 | IV. Andante con variazioni | 12'27 |
| 5 | V. Menuetto: Allegretto | 7'37 |
| 6 | VI. Andante molto – Allegro | 10'03 |

Berlin Philharmonic OctetSaschko Gawriloff, Rainer Mehne *violins*Wilfried Strehle *viola*Peter Steiner *cello*Rainer Zepperitz *double bass*Gerd Seifert *horn*Hans Lemke *bassoon*Alois Brandhofer *clarinet*

Recording: 1998, Berlin

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NOTES

CD1-7

Complete Works for String Quartet

Franz Schubert's three great string quartets have long been central works for every quartet ensemble, whereas his early contributions to the genre still linger in the repertoire's shadows. Yet it is exciting to observe and hear how, beginning in 1810, the 13-year-old composer found his own way to the quartet, a path fully independent of his contemporaries. Vienna around the turn of the 19th century was *the* city for the string quartet. Some 400 works published by 70-odd composers bear witness to the boom. The string quartet was the fashionable medium for domestic music-making, and so it was that many composers wrote pieces which could be played by amateur musicians and therefore sold well. There were virtuosic works as well, presented mainly by violinists in the increasingly popular public concerts of the day. Only a few composers like Beethoven held fast to their high artistic ideals without concern for the performability or accessibility of their music. Schubert, too, was not catering for the general public in his early works.

Similar to his attempts at preparing 'the way to a grand symphony' by means of his late quartets, Schubert's early works may be seen as a path to his smaller symphonies, as demonstrated in some of the sketches to those works. As a rule they were first performed in domestic circles with his father on the cello (thus the cello parts are always quite easy), his two brothers Ferdinand and Ignaz on the violins and Schubert on the viola. Schubert himself prepared the parts, which form some of the basis for modern editions. As was then customary, symphonies or entire operas arranged for string quartet were also played on these occasions, surely a reason for the existence of Schubert's overtures and dances for string quartet. Indeed, whatever the participants wanted or needed would be written for any given musical gathering.

Chamber music also played a central role at the Stadtkonvikt, the imperial-royal city college that Schubert entered in 1808 as a chorister and where he received his basic musical training. It was here in the orchestra that he learned the standard repertoire of his time, including the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart. Predictably, one finds numerous thematic references to those contemporary orchestral works in his early string quartets. Apparently Schubert did not distinguish between orchestral and chamber music in his early works, many of which exist in a variety of instrumentations. Through the use of double stops, octave doublings and tremolo, he strove for an orchestral sound in his chamber music – one can hear brass instruments in the numerous fanfares and different orchestral registers in the stark dynamic contrasts. And when

necessary, he simply orchestrated the works. Although repeatedly relying on the music of Haydn and Mozart as his orientation, he nonetheless departed from the 'classical' forms through harmonic experimentation and a completely individual way of varying thematic material, thus posing almost insoluble problems to generations of musicologists seeking to classify his works.

Schubert's early works for string quartet

'But it will probably be better if you put your faith in other quartets than mine, for they have no merit beyond your likely approval – you who like all my compositions.' This extract from a letter of Schubert's to his brother Ferdinand dating from 16 July 1824 long shaped the general verdict on Schubert's early string quartets, persisting until well into the 20th century, that they represented no more than the immature exercise pieces of a teenager (Schubert was aged between 13 and 19 at the time). It is only more recently that they have no longer been judged by the standards of his late, great trio of mature quartets, but on their own merits and in the context of the time of their composition, and again been increasingly performed in concert.

In his first **Quartet D18** (CD3: 1–4), the 13-year-old was understandably still seeking to master form and content and thus often experimenting with them. The absence of a unifying basic tonality is already evidence of lacking relationships that have resulted in the work's designation 'in various keys'. Moving between C minor and D minor, the slow introduction only slowly settles on the key of G minor for the main movement. Even within movements, Schubert does not adhere to the usual 'rules' of harmonic disposition. His feeling for large arcs of tension seems to demand other resources and means. Initially, the string quartet genre, even its instrumentation, was 'only' a practical means for Schubert to apply his musical ideas, trying them out with the family quartet. That explains why, in addition to passages of idiomatic chamber writing, there are many octave doublings, multiple-stopped chords and tremolos that one would more likely expect to find in an orchestral work. Quotations from or formal analogies to contemporary orchestral works show how he sought to develop his own individual style while using established models and themes as a basis. At the same time, the thematically simple fugues in the opening and final movements of D18 show relatively little imagination, recalling the fugal quartets of Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, which had fallen somewhat out of fashion. They demonstrate the extent to which Schubert sought to master basic compositional techniques. The two middle movements are modelled more on Joseph Haydn: the minuet, with its *con sordino* sonorities, is especially

beautiful, while also surprising the listener with its irregular phrase lengths. And the slow movement seems to recall as a model Roman Hofstetter's 'Serenade Quartet' Op.3 No.5 (long attributed to Joseph Haydn), though it repeatedly amazes with its unexpected harmonic progressions.

The **Overture in C minor D8a** (CD5: 5), completed on 12 July 1811, is notable for the fact that, apart from the fragment D470 (CD2: 1) and the lost work D20, it is the only overture in the entire string quartet repertoire. As so often in his early works, Schubert makes no distinction between orchestral and chamber music, and once again the key influence behind the young man's own composition is another contemporary work, namely the overture to *Faniska*, composed by Luigi Cherubini in 1806 and still very popular in Vienna five years later. There are evident similarities between both works not only in their individual themes; Schubert goes as far as to quote passages from Cherubini's work, in particular adopting its operatic structure with a slow introduction, big climaxes and contrasting thematic moods and characteristics, even if in places they sound somewhat less advanced in the work of the 14-year-old Schubert than in the music of Cherubini, 37 years his senior. Schubert appears to have cherished the Overture, since the work also exists in a version for string quintet, albeit not with the additional double bass that the orchestral structure might give one to expect, but with a second viola.

The relatively high number of **D94**, assigned to it in the Deutsch catalogue of Schubert's works, belies the early origin of the **D major Quartet** (CD1: 1–4). Formerly it was dated 1814, but experts now agree that it must have been Schubert's second quartet, composed in 1811 or 1812. Moreover, the abrupt harmonic shifts and the play with musical expanses clearly point towards Romanticism and show how far Schubert, in spite of all of his ties to Classical models, sought from the outset to distance himself from them.

It is impressive to observe how the 14-year-old develops an opening movement out of very simple, formulaic material, taking sonata form to its limits by constantly varying his themes – not just in the development section – and, especially, shedding new harmonic light on them. The connection with Haydn is more readily apparent in the inner movements, where Schubert plays with the listener's expectations in asymmetrical phrases and – not unlike his inspiration – allows himself a joke or two, so that hardly more than a caricature of the classical model is left. In the final movement he also comes close to tossing out the Haydnesque design while approaching the orchestral sonorities so characteristic of his early quartets through double stopping and chains of trills.

The **String Quartet in C D32** (CD6: 1–4) is the third of the Schubert quartets known to us today, composed approximately a year after the overture. At this time Joseph Haydn's works were the guiding light behind Schubert's work. As a

model for his C major quartet, however, Schubert chose not a quartet of Haydn's but his 78th Symphony in C minor, one of the most popular symphonies of the time. Numerous parallels with the symphony's opening movement can be discerned, particularly in the quartet's final movement, both in the way the theme is set out and in the orchestral style of the quartet-writing: this can also be seen in the harmonic structure, starting in C minor before leading towards a radiant C major conclusion. Schubert also borrows from Haydn the use of only one theme in the sonata structure of the quartet's first movement. At the same time Schubert does so in a very individual way, dividing up and then reworking the thematic material in the exposition – a device that in the Classical period was only used in the development of a movement. For his own development, Schubert could then 'only' use the method of varying the theme, particularly by recasting it in a new harmonic context. So it is hardly surprising that Schubert then goes on to break the traditional harmonic sequence of sonata form and does not start the recapitulation in the tonic. Both central movements are very brief, Schubert going back to one of his 12 *Deutsche Tänze* for piano D128 for the Trio of the Menuetto. Large parts of the whole quartet were long thought to be lost, and the first complete edition of Schubert's works in 1890 only contained it in fragmentary form. It was not until the 20th century that two complementary manuscripts in different libraries were identified as pertaining to this work.

The **Andante in C D3** (CD1: 5) poses many questions. Like so many of Schubert's pieces, it is a fragment, though it is unclear whether he never finished the work or if the other movements have been lost. The composition's origins can only be a matter of speculation: is it perhaps an early version of a slow movement from one of the quartets? There are similarities to the corresponding movements of D32 and D36. An almost identical piano version (D29) survives, for which the year of composition has been narrowed down to 1812, and from which we have been able to reconstruct a playable complete version for quartet. The little piece reveals thematic similarities to Mozart's *Figaro* overture and once again proclaims the song-like character of Schubert's chamber music.

Schubert wrote his **String Quartet in B flat D36** (CD6: 5–8) only a few months after D32. Here once again he took a work of Haydn's as a model: this time a string quartet, the 'Fifths' Quartet Op.76 No.2. It is not the theme itself that Schubert borrows, but the constant presence of the main theme throughout the whole movement. As with Haydn it appears in different, constantly changing variations, and the shifting accompaniment lends the theme a very different complexion every time. A second theme, appearing in Schubert's quartets for the first time, is also derived from the main theme. Both central movements have now become fertile ground for Schubert's experiments: in the slow movement he plays with shadowy shifts into major and minor of the kind that we

see in his late quartets; in the ghostly central section the harmony leads us into tonalities as remote as C flat major and C flat minor. The minuet is surprisingly in D major and features a trio largely played *ppp*, the triple pianissimo only rarely used by Schubert. The finale is a typically lively concluding number, with irregular phrases, orchestral sections and an operatic second theme.

The first movement of the **String Quartet in C D46** (CD5: 1–4), with its dramatic outbursts, is also at times reminiscent of an opera overture. It shows in its bass lament, though, introduced in the slow introduction, and the motivic suspensions that arise out of it – with its Baroque sequences, imitative techniques and fugatos – that Schubert was influenced not only by music of his time but also by works of a much earlier age. As in other early works Schubert here again experiments with sonata form, particularly in his key sequences. As he had already done in D32, Schubert develops his thematic material at the exposition stage to such a degree that a separate development section becomes all but superfluous; nonetheless, Schubert did write one, albeit very short, which he subsequently inserted into the composition as a single page, almost as an afterthought. If the slow second movement recalls various comparable movements in Haydn, the Minuet unmistakably alludes to the opening of the final movement of Mozart's G minor Symphony K550. The startling fanfare that precedes the Trio brings us back to the realm of Haydn and his Symphony No.93. What seems at first to start off as a perfectly normal rondo in the finale soon reveals itself to be another operatically varied movement full of surprises and imaginative variations on its theme: for me one of the finest movements in Schubert's early quartets.

An unusual and compositionally extreme approach is found in the two **Quartet Movements D68** (CD3: 15–16). It is fascinating to observe the way in which Schubert constructs these two long movements out of very little motivic material. The smallest – at first seemingly unimportant – rhythmic patterns suddenly take on significance, and Schubert extends them into quasi-rhythmicised sound surfaces in which he further develops the harmony. The rhythmic energy of these motifs constantly infuses the writing with impulses that keep it ebbing and then pressing ahead. Even though Schubert did not make such extreme use of it in his other early quartets, these sound surfaces represent a forward-looking compositional technique that reappears, in a more sophisticated form, in his late quartets. The absence of expansive melodies in these two movements lends them a somewhat brittle character. Although the final movement, reminiscent of Haydn, has a catchy rondo theme, again it is made up of short motivic particles. Furthermore, it owes some of its memorability to popping up a little too often around the three corresponding development sections. Whether these two outer movements once had middle

movements that are lost, or if, on account of their thematic relationship, they were perhaps intended for the Quartet D46, is another of the many open questions and puzzles that surround Schubert's early string quartets.

Schubert was already 16 years old when he composed the **String Quartet D74** (CD4: 5–8), which begins so gently and innocently in D major. He wrote it 'on the occasion of my father's name-day', as he noted on the first violin part. In all probability this was also the occasion for its first run-through by a quartet of Schubert's own family. Besides, Schubert noted on the score, not without a certain pride: *Composés par François Schubert écolier de Msr. De Salieri* ('Composed by Franz Schubert, pupil of Salieri'). Salieri was court composer in Vienna at the time and had made Schubert's acquaintance as a choirboy in the court chapel and recognised his talent; he saw to it that Schubert was accepted in the Stadtkonvikt and thus encouraged his musical education from an early stage. Schubert had also made his first acquaintance with numerous orchestral works of the time in the Stadtkonvikt orchestra, which would have thus had some influence on his early chamber music's orchestral style. This is particularly evident in the opening movement of his D74 quartet. With its three themes and the absence of a development it takes the form of an overture, which is unusual in chamber music. Schubert tries to reproduce the sounds of an orchestra with his string quartet, with expansive climaxes, awkward double-stopping (even at octave intervals), parallel octaves in unison and wide dynamic contrasts. In the coda he actually goes as far as quoting from the overture to Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. The second movement is one of the most experimental in Schubert's early period. It begins with a rather nondescript theme, but phrase lengths later become irregular, and chromatic chords and sequences seem to have no notion of where they are leading, until a long dominant pedal point leads the movement back to a reprise of the beginning. At the end of the movement the Diogenes Quartet play a variant that is only recorded in the first violin's autograph score (the other parts are lost) and has been carefully extrapolated for the other parts. It may well take the listener by surprise! Schubert at any rate was so taken with this movement that he reused it almost note for note in his First Symphony, composed shortly afterwards. Whereas the Minuet and Trio are constructed relatively conservatively, the finale once again draws its energy from the contrast between orchestral- and chamber-style passages. Here wind-like fanfares and tremolo sections further expand Schubert's palette of orchestral stylistic devices.

In the same year, 1813, there are wars of independence against Napoleon in northeastern Europe, but little trace of that is felt in Vienna. It is '*Heurige* time', and the Viennese are loath to let anything spoil their good spirits. In the vineyards outside the city gates the wine is flowing, there is revelling – and,

naturally, dancing. In this festive atmosphere the Schubert family quartet gathers once again. As is often the case, beginning with the Quartet D18, Schubert has written a new work for the occasion. This time, however, it isn't a 'classical' quartet, but rather – as a surprise for his family – a set of dances. He pairs five minuets (and trios) with so-called 'Deutsche' (German Dances), which have just become fashionable and will soon develop into the waltzes in 3/4 time that will have more than just the Viennese awirl.

This story is, of course, pure fiction, for today almost nothing is known of the real story behind the creation of the **Five Minuets and Five German Dances D89** (CD3: 5–14, 17–18), or indeed any of Schubert's other early works for string quartet. His sparse indications often allow only conjecture. For example, does the heading 'Vol.2' in Schubert's autograph parts indicate that apart from the single Minuet D86 there are further works for this instrumentation which have been lost, or does it refer to dances by Schubert for another configuration? And why did he paste over two of the movements with a newer version? Did he intend to use the material for an orchestral work, and therefore replaced both polychoral movements with simpler, though no less charming, alternatives? Did his strict father criticise the highly decorative writing, or did he not much care for the pieces? We simply don't know, so we are confronted with the dilemma of choosing which version to offer as part of a complete recording. Since we didn't want to deprive the listener of either one, we've decided to provide both. It is the original, pasted-over versions that we've integrated into the cycle, because they were certainly intended for string quartet. The movements that Schubert composed subsequently are included at the end of CD3 as a bonus. This way the listener can decide for themselves whether the newer version of the third minuet should be given pride of place as a meditative point of repose, or its original, strongly contrasting predecessor with two trios; or whether the triplet motion of the original trio in the fifth German dance offers a more alluring invitation to the dance than the melody doubled in octaves on the two violins in the later version.

All of Schubert's dances are only stylised versions of their respective dance models. That they were not meant to accompany dancing is clear from obstacles such as the heavy chords in the first trio. The diversity and uninterrupted flow of new ideas in the dances are remarkable: there are Spanish rhythms, Baroque-like chains of suspensions, simple, songlike movements, minuets in the finest Haydn style, and, above all, trios marked by ripely Romantic sonorities. It is also astonishing how elegant and salon-like the minuets seem – genuinely old-fashioned dances – when juxtaposed against the rather coarser, more modern German dances.

The origin of the **Menuet D86** (CD4: 9) is a complete mystery, too. It was probably written at a similar time to the D74 quartet. Whether there is a direct

connection with the other work and the piece – given its identical tonality of D major – is unknown. That it was even originally intended as a minuet movement for the quartet, or whether it was written for a further cycle of dances, we can only speculate.

The **String Quartet in E flat D87** (CD5: 6–9) sounds more mature and perfect than the earlier ones. Shortly after his D74 quartet Schubert had composed his First Symphony, which seemed to mark the end of his experimentation with orchestral chamber music. Moreover, in 1813 he had left the Stadtkonvikt and so was no longer composing his quartets for his own family quartet or an ensemble at the Stadtkonvikt, but now had in mind performances by professional musicians, in the context of Vienna's numerous private musical soirées, and could allow himself a more virtuosic style of composition. The D87 quartet is therefore a pure chamber music work, which surely also partially explains why the publisher of the first edition gave it the high opus number Op.125, together with the E major Quartet D353 (CD2: 6–9), and why it was long assumed to be one of Schubert's late works. Not until the autograph score was rediscovered in the 20th century was it possible to settle on a precise earlier date for the work's composition. The thematic uniformity of the quartet is striking: all the themes refer back to the first movement's sequence of notes, in scales. At the same time there is a startling variety of musical ideas in the opening and concluding movements, which marks Schubert's departure from monothematicism. Each theme is developed out of the preceding theme, creating a consistent, organic impression in spite of the multiplicity of ideas. Both central movements – apparently transposed by the publisher in the first edition – show a further stage in Schubert's development towards an individual mode of expression: for the first time in his quartets we hear a very compact Scherzo that in its terseness recalls Beethoven. The Trio, with its drone fifths, presents a contrast, less reminiscent of country dances than seeming to anticipate, with its sad, frail melody, the 'Leiermann' (hurdy-gurdy man) of *Winterreise*.

The **Movement for String Quartet in C minor D103** (CD7: 5), which has come down to us as a mere fragment, raises more questions than it answers. Only the pages of the first movement up to bar 296 remain from the manuscript score, written in April 1814. A slur in the first violin part might lead us to imagine that the piece could have been completed on pages since lost; but Werner Adelhold, editor of the complete Schubert edition, has also speculated that the composer's writing style, which becomes increasingly sketchy on the final surviving page, could be an indication that Schubert lost interest in the work and broke off its composition.

As so often with Schubert's early period, little is known about the background of the work's composition. In the spring of 1814 Schubert had started work as a supply teacher at his father's school, a job to which he felt singularly unsuited. Perhaps this quartet movement – to speculate yet further – had been intended as another work for the family quartet for which Schubert had written virtually all his string quartets to this point. Or perhaps the tensions with his father over his position at the school had led him to break off the work's composition? Or was the movement intended as the first movement of a larger work? The use of three themes seems rather to indicate an overture, and Schubert had indeed composed overtures for string quartet before.

When Ferdinand Schubert made a record of the works that his brother had left after his death, he listed a string quartet in C minor from 1814. However, it is absent from another list drawn up by Ferdinand of works to offer publishers for sale – which would suggest that even at the time the work was incomplete and as such unsaleable. It is not listed as a fragment in the first complete Schubert edition of 1890 and was first published in 1939 by the musicologist Alfred Orel, in a version Orel had himself completed. Since the fragment probably breaks off at the end of a brief development section, Orel supplied a literal recapitulation of the existing material, adding a very short coda of his own.

The version that I have made, recorded for the first time on this CD, features an additional transition in the reprise, which now begins with the opening gesture of the Allegro section. The key sequence of the three themes has also been changed, which has allowed some modulating passagework from the exposition to be dispensed with. The coda has also been adapted to the end of the exposition and as such contains only the composer's own material. This completion naturally constitutes no more than a makeshift solution to enable this movement, which with its expansive use of three themes, its tonal surfaces and relatively brief motifs, is not always typical of Schubert's early period, to be presented in a meaningful form.

Schubert's **Quartet in B flat D112** (CD2: 2–5) was in all probability written for his family's own ensemble. Composed in 1814, it clearly shows Schubert still searching for the right response to the quartets of the Viennese masters. The opening movement in particular, stringing together short phrases and hackneyed flourishes, sudden interruptions and rapid shifts in character, gives a very disconnected and uneven impression – perhaps explained by the fact that Schubert wrote it in a mere four and a half hours. Indeed, like D470, the first track on CD2, this work wasn't even originally intended for string quartet: we have a fragment of a movement for string trio which, with the same beginning, explains the numerous instances of unison writing within the quartet version. The slow movement's impact is even stronger, with its alternating moods of

profoundest sorrow and supremely jaunty cheerfulness, and the Minuet suggests most clearly the model of Haydn, its orchestral character forming a successful contrast to the tender Trio with its tricky violin octaves and pizzicato accompaniments. The writing for the lower voices in the last movement, with the virtuosic interjections of the first violin, points on the other hand towards Schubert's future, revealing his entirely original conception of the quartet sound.

'It is truly remarkable what a quantity of delights has been posthumously unearthed from the master's treasury ... It is ... Schubert's own work, if somewhat derivative of Mozart ... It contains much of Schubert's original freshness, ingenuousness and charm, if not in its totality reaching the standard of his finest works.' This review of the first public performance of the **String Quartet in G minor D173** (CD6: 9–12) on 29 November 1863, almost 50 years after the work's composition, shows clearly how surprised the musical world still was at the quantity and variety of works that Schubert had left unpublished after his early death – but also how quickly the early string quartets were damned with faint praise and deemed inferior. The reviewer correctly observes that Schubert was no longer primarily influenced by Haydn, but by Mozart and early Beethoven. The inspiration behind this work's composition was this time Mozart's G minor Symphony K550, and Beethoven's Quartet Op.18 No.2. This is most clear in the themes of the opening movement and the Minuet. Schubert's developing style can also be seen in the greater significance of the cantabile subsidiary theme that dominates large parts of the first movement. Once again Schubert experiments with the contrasting moods of major and minor, especially when waiting for the subsidiary theme before returning to the tonic in the recapitulation, leading to the re-emergence of both themes in major and minor. If the slow movement seems more traditional, the final movement positively bubbles over with ideas. The initially rather staid-sounding rondo theme goes through a number of startling twists and turns before building to a dramatic climax.

Unlike the Overture D8, the **Overture D470** (CD2: 1) has come down to us not only as a piece for chamber ensemble, but also in the form of an orchestral version, which Schubert had composed in 1816 as the overture to the 'Cantata in honour of Josef Spendou' on the occasion of a jubilee in the Widows' Institute of Viennese Schoolteachers – though it was never actually performed there. Only the short central section remains of the version for string quartet: whether the rest has been lost, or was never written at all, is unknown. For this recording, a playable version was reconstructed from the orchestral score.

Schubert's later works for string quartet

It was probably not just Schubert's failure to find a publisher for his quartets that led him to realise that the approach he had adopted in his lessons with Salieri was leading him down a blind alley; Schubert was assailed by a creative crisis in seeking a response of his own to the works of Beethoven: there are numerous fragments of pieces in different genres dating from the period between 1818 and 1823 documenting this crisis and this struggle. Among Schubert's symphonic works, the 'Unfinished' D759 is probably the best-known example.

The fragment from the **String Quartet D703 in C minor** (CD5: 10–11) – of which only the first movement was completed and 41 bars of the slow movement have survived – represents a first step towards this personal style. The motor-driven opening, which contains neither a distinguishing rhythm nor a theme but becomes the all-pervading element of the movement, is a radical innovation. The musicologist Friedhelm Krummacher described the piece with reference to 'structural fields', indicating that the composer was working with harmonic and rhythmic soundscapes rather than concrete themes and motifs. At the same time those long-breathed arcs of melody that are so typical of late Schubert unfurl themselves over these tonal surfaces. The accompanying rhythmic models always develop out of the preceding theme in the process, which adds to the movement's greater sense of organic unity. Schubert broke off the composition of the second movement after only 41 bars, which from today's perspective is nothing short of a tragedy, given that the Andante theme is one of the most beautiful cantabile themes Schubert ever composed; it is for this reason that this is the only fragment we have included in this complete recording of Schubert's works for string quartet. Schubert divides the theme up and subjects it to various virtuosic swirling treatments; in the process he leads the A flat movement into such remote tonalities as C flat major and F sharp minor, before – after a brief stopover in D major – the voice of the first violin, alone, continues, before petering out. There is no indication whatsoever how the movement might have continued, so no completion is possible; consequently only the first movement is still performed. The 'Quartettsatz' had to wait a long time before it was rediscovered: it was only in 1867 that Johannes Brahms, who had come into possession of the autograph score, arranged for the work to be published and given its first performance. Since then it has become a fixture in the repertoire of many string quartets.

As his early quartets had never been played in public, Schubert was principally viewed as a composer of songs, not instrumental music, when the **'Rosamunde' Quartet D804** (CD1: 6–9) was first performed. Thus one review of the premiere refers to the composer's 'first-born'. His friend Moritz von Schwind wrote that the quartet was 'very gentle on the whole, but in the manner of songs

in which the melody stays with one, full of feeling and quite distinct.' This characterisation surely applies above all to the slow movement, variations on a theme from the incidental music Schubert composed in 1823 for Wilhelmine von Chézy's play *Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus*, which has given the quartet its nickname. The opening movement already combines melodic beauty with a constant underlying nervous seething. The motivic allusion in the third movement to the lines 'Schöne Welt, wo bist Du?' ('Lovely world, where are you?') and 'Kehre wieder, holdes Blütenalter der Natur' ('Come again, fair flowering age of nature') from the Lied *Die Götter Griechenlands* ('The Grecian Gods') D677 are evidence that Schubert's world of lyrical beauty has developed fissures, which also constrain the dance-like final movement and would ultimately, dramatically, break open in the 'Death and the Maiden' Quartet and *Winterreise* and dumbfound his contemporaries. The 'Rosamunde' Quartet contains the written dedication 'à son ami Schuppanzigh', who was the first to perform the work together with his famous ensemble at one of his subscription concerts. It was a great success, and he also played an important role in arranging for it to be printed. It remained the only of his quartets that Schubert was able to listen to at a public concert during his life and which succeeded in being published.

Scarcely a single other chamber work of Schubert's has attained the same fame as his **String Quartet in D minor D810 'Death and the Maiden'** (CD4: 1–4). Schubert wrote it with high hopes of reaching a wider audience as a composer of instrumental works. He had hoped that Schuppanzigh would once again give it the first performance. But when Schuppanzigh tried out the new D minor quartet, he is said to have dismissed it, saying to Schubert 'My dear friend, that won't do at all; it's best you leave it and stick to your songs!'. This was of course a heavy blow for Schubert, since he had no hope of finding a publisher without a public performance; so his great D minor quartet ended up in the proverbial drawer. There is no record of whether the work was dug out during Schubert's lifetime or even got as far as being performed by a small circle of friends.

One musician, at least, had a genuine appreciation of Schubert's music: Carl Czerny, the piano virtuoso and pupil of Beethoven, bought a large pile of compositions from the composer's estate after his death from Schubert's brother Ferdinand for his musical publishing house, including the D minor quartet. After its publication in 1831 the quartet's fame soon spread. Karl Möser's quartet gave the first verified performance in Berlin in 1833, but from 1849 it was the Viennese Hellmesberger Quartet that played the work most regularly in its concerts. The work was soon given the nickname it bears today, 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' ('Death and the Maiden'), in reference to the variation theme of the slow movement, taken from Schubert's song of the same

name (D531). The musical subjects of the other movements can also be traced back to the theme of this song, giving the quartet a thematic unity that was quite new in Schubert's time. Also new, at least in the context of chamber music, was the work's obvious connection with the words of a poem – a dialogue between a dying girl and death, by Matthias Claudius:

The girl:

Pass by! Pass by!

Begone, fierce skeleton!

I am yet young, go, friend!

and touch me not.

Death:

Give me your hand, you fair, tender creature!

I am a friend, and do not come to punish.

Be of good cheer! I am not fierce;

you shall sleep gently in my arms.

Schubert here transmits something to his chamber music for which he was famous in his songs: he makes the different moods of the text flow directly into his music. This is achieved in the song through the very sophisticated piano writing, which changes according to the content of the text. Without the singer, the poem remains purely as an external 'programme'. The connection with the poem is revealed in the very opening bars of the first movement, when death, with its 'Fate motif', knocks as if it were at the door and is answered by questioning motifs representing the girl. The metaphor is maintained throughout the entire movement as a conflict between life and death until the dotted rhythm symbolising the girl's heartbeat comes to a halt in the final bars, and she dies.

In the variation movement Schubert takes up the poem's dialogue format. Whereas the variation theme only uses the parts of the song that symbolise the wan, cold world of death, the pleading cries of the girl can clearly be heard in the first variation. The second variation is constructed in especially vivid fashion, as the theme is overlaid with three vocal counterparts and Schubert shows in musical form how Death seems to ensnare the girl. The third variation, by contrast, expresses the girl's fear of the fierce reaper, which in the poem is only heard in Death's response 'ich bin nicht wild' ('I am not fierce'). The fourth variation now shifts to an innocent-sounding major key, a sleepy dream world corresponding to the final line of the poem, from which the girl is suddenly wrenched away by the final variation: tempo and dynamics are inexorably ratcheted up, the girl's panic in the face of death becomes tangible, and there is

a final desperate struggle against the inevitable before the death motif turns towards the major and makes way for a transfiguring, redemptive conclusion, an interpretation of the poem not implied in the text itself. Even the Scherzo, with its wild syncopations, has the character of a witches' Sabbath, while the Trio, with its bright major tonality, presents one of the few optimistic sections of the whole work. In the final Rondo the music's momentum is once more whipped up into a wild tarantella, interrupted only by two triumphal interventions, which however can only briefly stem the flurry of agitated quavers.

Perhaps these, alongside the morbid mood of the whole piece, were the characteristics that repelled Schuppanzigh so much that he refused to ever perform the quartet. The string quartet genre was seen as the culmination of absolute music, with Beethoven's late quartets as their supreme example, in which the subjectivity and often triviality of extra-musical programmes had no place. Thus programme music was to play no more than a subordinate role in chamber music right up to the 20th century.

'I composed two quartets for violins, viola and cello [...] and intend to write another quartet...' In a letter to his friend Leopold Kupelwieser, dated March 1824, Franz Schubert announced, in addition to the two quartets D804 'Rosamunde' and D810 'Death and the Maiden', the composition of a further quartet. The set of three was to be dedicated to the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, and Schubert's wish was for all of them to be published and performed as soon as possible.

Yet there were soon several obstacles to Schubert's plan. Schuppanzigh performed only the 'Rosamunde' quartet with his ensemble – which thus became the only quartet performed during Schubert's lifetime. The sombre D minor quartet D810 met with complete incomprehension on the part of Schuppanzigh, which meant that work on the third work planned, **D887** (CD7: 1–4), initially stalled. It was not until June 1826 that Schubert made a fair copy of the work, within the space of 11 days, before like so many others of his late works it disappeared in the fabled drawer.

Probably only the first movement was performed during Schubert's lifetime, by the Schuppanzigh Quartet at a private concert in March 1828. We can no longer be sure whether a run-through of the work, planned for March 1827 with the violinist Josef Slawik and for which Schubert had apparently supplied copies of the various parts, ever actually took place. The parts for the various instruments have been lost – unfortunately, since they might have given us valuable insights into modifications that Schubert, to judge by his working comments in the autograph score, was probably planning. It was only on 8 December 1850 that a complete performance, and thus the effective premiere of the work, was given by the Hellmesberger Quartet, probably using the first

proofs of the first published score, which had itself only been published in 1852, by Diabelli as op.161.

Even Schubert's efforts to get the work published straight away had not been a success. In early 1828 he had offered the G major quartet D887 to the publishers B. Schott's Söhne in Mainz, together with the D minor quartet D810, but in vain. So it was that the manuscript score of the G major quartet ended up in the pile of unpublished works that Schubert's brother Ferdinand offered for sale to various publishers after his death. Even after publication Schubert's last quartet struggled to win acceptance: the technical and musical demands it placed on the performers were excessive, its themes insufficiently appealing and its form too complex for both audience and critics, as can be judged from the review of a performance by the Joachim Quartet in Leipzig in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* from 1871: 'The work is very long, and is outstandingly fine in places. Yet it cannot lay claim to being a true work of art; its entire modular structure is too wild, disparate, shapeless and often notably lacking in genuine musical ideas (i.e. melodies)...'

It is in his G major quartet that Schubert most comprehensively realised his concept of the musical path he wished to pursue. The working and reworking of the thematic material is no longer of paramount importance as it is in Viennese classicism; rhythm and harmonics are now the means used to create tension that form the basis of the work's musical development. This can be heard most clearly in the direct shift between major and minor in the opening chord of the first movement, which generates the whole energy for the motivic and rhythmic gestures that follow.

In a similar way to the later works of Anton Bruckner, a first thematic idea then develops, almost out of nothing, over a kind of pianissimo, tremolo soundscape, extending as it were like a vast vista over the course of an opening movement lasting over 20 minutes. Schubert had already experimented with sound as a critical element in sonata form in his late Quartettsatz in C minor D703. The rapid triplets towards the end of the exposition in the first movement of the G major quartet, with their shifting notes especially in the transitions in the cello part, are clear allusions to the Quartettsatz.

The alternative approach to 'thematic reworking' becomes particularly clear in the second theme. Without changing its basic thematic form it develops further in the same way, as we see later in the works of Johannes Brahms, for example. Schubert contrasts the theme, which always remains the same, with a series of different harmonies, thus allowing the theme to be revealed in different musical forms.

The slow second movement seems at first, with its wonderful cello cantilena, to adopt a traditional structure, until the second section leads in

contrast to violent outbursts, described by Wilhelm Altmann in his *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler* ('Handbook for String Quartet Players') as 'a Romantic ghost of the night'. In the third movement a shadowy, darting Scherzo contrasts with a Viennese Ländler trio, whose melody, presented by the cello, harks back to the second movement.

The final movement in many ways recalls the last movement of the D minor quartet D810, not only in its dramatic 6/8 motoric structure, with light, dance-like passages breaking off from the main pattern in contrast, but above all in the 'fate motif' of the chorale theme, which also alludes directly to the main theme of the D minor quartet. The complete emancipation of the individual voices in the final movement strikes one as especially modern, with accompanying voices suddenly turning into counter-melodies and indeed barely a single note fulfilling a purely accompanying role. This then intensifies and ultimately culminates in the coda in the inevitable climax, before the entire structure collapses.

It is in this final String Quartet in G major that Schubert truly sets out on his own path, departing from Classical tradition and even anticipating modernism in his ideas – and yet looking in a quite different direction from the far better-known late works of Beethoven. In his lyrical A minor Quartet and its dramatic D minor companion piece, in the G major Quartet with its references to Beethoven and in the Quintet as a great all-encompassing finale, Schubert achieved a richness of possibilities and perspectives that showed how the genre could further develop and progress after or beside Beethoven.

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Translation: Richard Evidon & Saul Lipetz

CD8

String Quintet

Schubert's final work for chamber ensemble, the *String Quintet in C* (D956, Op.posth.163) was completed sometime in September or early October 1828, a matter of months before his death, but not performed until 1850 or published until 1853. Schubert submitted it to the publisher Probst for consideration: 'Finally I have written a quintet for 2 violins, 1 viola, and 2 violoncellos...the quintet rehearsal will only begin in the next few days. Should any of these compositions by any chance commend themselves to you, please let me know.' Probst replied, asking only to see some of Schubert's vocal works and requesting more popular piano music. Even at this late stage in Schubert's career, it is obvious that he was valued for his songs and piano music, and was hardly taken seriously as a composer of chamber music.

Schubert's String Quintet owes certain debts to Mozart's K515 Quintet and Beethoven's Quintet Op.29, written in the same key, as well as to similar quintets by George Onslow. The instrumentation is reminiscent of Onslow, who used a double bass in some of his quintets. Most string quintets follow the example of Mozart and add a second viola to the conventional make-up of a string quartet; Schubert, like Boccherini before him, replaced the second viola with a second cello for enhanced richness in the lower register. However, his use of the second cello is very different from Boccherini's, for Boccherini essentially uses the additional cello to create an extra viola line.

In common with other late works of Schubert (e.g. the 'Great' C major Symphony, the B flat Piano Sonata D960 etc.), the opening movement is unusually expansive, accounting for more than one third of the total length. The opening theme of Schubert's work emulates many characteristics of K515's opening theme, such as decorative turns, irregular phrase lengths, and rising staccato arpeggios (the latter appear only in Schubert's recapitulation). The second movement is in three-part ABA form. The outer sections, in E major, are of an otherworldly tranquillity. The central section is intensely turbulent; it enters in the unrelated key of F minor. When the opening music returns, there is a running demisemiquaver passage in the second cello which seems to have been motivated by the turbulence that came before it. In the last three measures of the movement, Schubert somehow contrives to tie the entire movement together harmonically with a quick, brilliant modulation to the F minor of the middle section and an immediate return to E major. The Scherzo is symphonic in scale, with the open strings of the lower instruments generating a volume of sound seemingly beyond the capabilities of five stringed instruments. The trio of this movement is an unearthly slow march that seems to anticipate the sound world of Mahler. The last movement is an exuberant rondo with clear Hungarian influences.

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CD9

In March, 1817, Schubert met the distinguished singer Johann Michael Vogl at the house of his friend Schober. Vogl was to become a close friend of the composer and an important interpreter of many of his songs. In the summer of 1819 the two, curiously dissimilar in appearance and disparate age, set out to visit Vogl's native district of Steyr and it was there that Schubert set to work on the A major Piano Quintet, known from the theme and variations that form as fourth movement as **The Trout Quintet**. It was intended for Vogl's friend

Sylvester Paumgartner, a local amateur who played wind instruments and the cello poser's return there.

At Paumgartner's request the work is scored for the same instruments as Hummel's E flat Piano Quintet, violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano. Hummel was the first to compose for this unusual combination. Over the years his example inspired some other composers as well such as Dussek and Onslow. It seems that Paumgartner also suggested the use of the theme from Schubert's song Die Forelle (The Trout) for the fourth movement.

The delightful first movement has a characteristic principal melody, reminding us of Schubert's genius as a creator of songs, and leads through typically remoter keys during its idyllic progress. This is followed by a second slower movement in the key of F major, in which the piano announces the first melody, leading to two other thematic elements in the more distant keys of F sharp minor and D major and to further harmonic complexity in deceptively simple guise. The third movement, a scherzo and trio, is followed by the famous theme and its lively variations. The fast movement re-establishes the original key of A major, adding a second theme that has about it touches of The Trout. The movement lacks a formal central development, but discusses the proposed thematic material in passing, providing a conclusion in the same happy mood with which the work had begun.

The **Sonata in A minor for Arpeggione and Piano, D. 821**, was written by Franz Schubert in Vienna in November 1824. The sonata is the only substantial composition for the arpeggione (which was essentially a bowed guitar) which remains extant today. It belongs to the same period as the Death and the Maiden Quartet, when Schubert was suffering from the advanced stages of syphilis and lapsing into increasingly frequent episodes of depression. The piece was probably commissioned by Schubert's friend Vincenz Schuster, who was a virtuoso of the arpeggione, an instrument which had been invented only the previous year. By the time the sonata was published posthumously in 1871, the enthusiasm for the novelty of the arpeggione had long since vanished, together with the instrument itself. Today, the piece is heard almost exclusively in transcriptions for cello and piano or viola and piano that were arranged after that time.

(c) BC

CD10-11

Piano Trios

Franz Schubert's two piano trios, probably written between October 1827 and January 1828, are surrounded by questions. Years earlier, when still a teenager, he had composed a one-movement sonata which he rejected and withdrew, and many people blame Schubert's enormous admiration for Beethoven for this long neglect. To a certain extent this is an explanation: Schubert was one of the bearers of Beethoven's coffin in 1827 in Vienna, and composed his trios only after Beethoven's death. Perhaps he wanted to wait until Beethoven was dead and buried, but this doesn't explain why in his symphonies and his string quartets he already had presented some kind of answer to Beethoven's shadow. His trios are, in any case, quite similar to those by Beethoven. Both have four movements – of which three are in the tonic key – and use the piano as its leading instrument. Both composers wrote trios that were intended for performances in relatively small environments (mostly big houses owned by aristocrats and rich citizens) and which greatly expanded the limitations of the genre and its small space. The piano parts are much more virtuosic than those of its most famous predecessors (Haydn and Mozart), and the string parts show a range of dynamics and emotions that prove that Schubert was on the border between Classicism and Romanticism. Schubert's First Trio D898 was first published in 1836 under the title 'Premier Grand trio', which indicates that the piece, by contemporary standards, was a long and demanding work, lasting more than half an hour. The second trio is even longer and more demanding.

The reputation of the pieces was settled in 1836 when Robert Schumann, a great admirer of his older colleague, wrote a favourable review in which he described the B flat trio D898 as 'passive, lyrical and feminine' and the E flat D929 by contrast as 'more spirited, masculine and with a dramatic tone'. Although it is now unfashionable to describe music in these gender-related terms, the differences between both trios are great and obvious, just like the similarities. Schubert, unlike Beethoven, is not very interested in small motives that are almost endlessly transformed in all kinds of directions. He is much more a master of long melodic lines that he likes to repeat almost endlessly with slight variations which function as transitions between the sections of the piece. While Beethoven is a master of instrumental drama, Schubert is a master of lyricism. Schubert's heavenly length, a term used by Schumann in order to describe Schubert's 'Great' Symphony in C, is equally appropriate for the trios.

Just as in Beethoven's trios, the various sections of a sonata form – exposition, development and recapitulation – are clear enough. Beethoven's structural use of harmony is more integrated, while Schubert is much more varied in his use of keys. He often works with keys that are on the one hand far

enough away to make the harmony sound adventurous and dream-like, and on the other close enough to maintain the sense of a solid harmonic centre. Unlike Beethoven, who clearly emphasises in a phrase the strong and weak parts of the bar, Schubert tends to blur this distinction.

Another difference between Schubert and his master is the treatment of counterpoint. Beethoven, like Bach, tends to show off his mastery in the form of complex and ingenious textures, difficult to play and to listen to. Schubert, by contrast, prefers to write beautiful melodies in eloquent dialogues. He felt aware of a contrapuntal deficiency and even decided to take lessons with the academician Simon Sechter during the last months of his life. But the trios are not short of contrapuntal mastery, expressed within his own style.

Although the trios are instrumental pieces, they betray Schubert's great affinity for song. In the second movement of D929, Schubert quotes a Swedish song that was doing the rounds of Vienna while he wrote his trio. It was often performed by a Swedish singer, Albert Berg, who sang it at parties and other occasions attended by the composer. The title of the song (in English) is 'The sun has set', and it is tempting to regard it as a programme for the trio. Schubert himself never explicitly described the content of the piece and was perfectly aware of the idiosyncrasies of both vocal and instrumental music.

In his final years, Schubert took to writing many expansive instrumental pieces, not just these trios. But no matter how long these works sometimes were, they had to fit within a multi-movement composition. This explains the fate of the Notturmo D897. Schubert intended it to be the second movement of D898, but apparently rejected it – perhaps on grounds of length and indeed expressive self-sufficiency. When both trios gained popularity in the concert hall, the Notturmo proved to be an excellent encore. It also explains the fate of the finale of D929. After the premiere, in March 1828, Schubert decided to cut this last movement by a third. He asked his publisher to respect his decision, but we are not sure if Schubert saw the printed proof when it was sent to him.

Following Schubert's death, the trios fell into predictable neglect. The First Trio was only published in 1836, the Second much later, and both known only to connoisseurs. Schumann's judgment on Schubert gave the latter composer's music a reputation of being written for highly sensitive people, mostly women, who preferred sentiment to force and intuition to intelligence.

It took the 20th century to grasp Schubert's voice, very different from Beethoven's, but just as personal and convincing. His language was equally intriguing and showed, especially in his late and long instrumental compositions, a perfect control of architecture, phrasing, harmony, rhythm and melody. As so often recordings led the way: in this case the first recording of D898, made by the pianist Alfred Cortot, violinist Jacques Thibaud and cellist

Pablo Casals. After the war, the trios' reputation was sealed. The music has a vocal touch, but it could only have been written for instruments. It is solidly grounded in the Classical style, but the fluent melodies and the harmony, which often avoid clear marking points in the structure, anticipate the Romanticism of Brahms and indeed Mahler.

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CD12

Schubert's output for violin and piano amounts to only six compositions, four of them dating from his teenage years. The works from his maturity are the *Rondeau brillant D895* (1826) and the more substantial and profound *Fantasy in C D934* (1827). The four violin sonatas, the first three published as Op.137, date from 1816. Being early works, though actually contemporary with the fourth and fifth symphonies, they are not generally regarded as "important", but they may easily be undervalued. Although Schubert called them sonatas, Anton Diabelli misguidedly retitled these pieces as sonatinas when he published them eight years after the composer's death. Clearly Schubert had serious ambitions regarding sonatas, symphonies and string quartets, having already composed several quartets and begun a few piano sonatas, while he had completed five symphonies by 1816. Therefore he would have felt no self-consciousness in using the term sonata for these violin and piano compositions.

The **First Sonata in D** begins with a sunny Allegro molto characterised by simple, unpretentious melodies, the first quietly introduced in unison then repeated with some imitative writing. In the development the triadic intervals are stretched, leading to another imitative passage. A late pianissimo unison statement is followed by a fortissimo conclusion. The Andante movement in A has a middle section in the tonic minor, before the opening melody returns with attractive embellishment in semiquavers in the violin part. In his teenage works Schubert often took a theme by Mozart as a model. For instance, the principal melody of this Andante bears some resemblance to the equivalent movement in Mozart's Violin Sonata K305. The jovial rondo finale in 6/8 has contrasting episodes of more muscular character and includes some imitative counterpoint.

Op.137 No.2 in A minor begins with a theme characterised by many wide intervals including sevenths and ninths. When the violin enters, leaps of two octaves become the norm. The melodic spacing at the beginning of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.14 No.1, though less wide, may well have been the model here. It is difficult to think of any thematic material of comparable angularity in Schubert's music. One would be justified in also proposing that few openings in any music of this period are as poignantly expressive, and furthermore that this

movement is grossly undervalued by music critics in general. Already in this early work Schubert reveals his fondness for three tonal centres – rather than the conventional two – in the exposition (A minor, C and F.) In the fascinating but brief development section (only 21 bars) the violin has long legato phrases as the music enters a new, almost dream-like world. The slow movement has a principal melody of rather hymn-like character. At the introduction of flowing semiquavers in the piano, the violin part recalls the wide intervals of the opening Allegro moderato. The semiquaver figuration itself shows the influence of the equivalent movement from Mozart's Piano Quartet in G minor. A robust minuet with genial trio section is followed by a finale in which there is a marked contrast between the legato of the principal theme and the passages of driving triplets.

Op.137 No.3 in G minor begins with a sturdy theme in dotted rhythm, but as early as bar 18 the piano introduces the smoothly contoured second subject (dolce) in B flat. Again Schubert employs a further key-centre in this exposition, the cheerful third melody – loosely derived from elements of both previous themes – being in E flat. The development is dominated by material which, though indirectly derived from a phrase near the end of the exposition, takes on a life of its own. The serene slow movement has a dramatic middle section which in the course of only twenty bars travels through several keys. Already Schubert's harmonic adventurousness, especially his imaginative and expressive handling of modulation, has become a distinctive element of his music. Strongly Classical in style, the minuet has a contrasting trio based on a genial melody marked dolce. The finale, its principal theme beginning in G minor and ending in B flat, epitomises Schubert's fluent melodic gift. Throughout this movement, and indeed through all the works recorded here, the violin often assumes the accompanying role. The original designation "sonatas for pianoforte and violin" merely reflects an established tradition, but clearly these are genuine duo-sonatas.

The **Sonata in A Op.162** (D574) dates from August 1817, but although chronologically this is no great distance from the three Op.137 sonatas, the advance in maturity and the more ambitious scale are striking. The leisurely opening bars for piano immediately indicate the breadth and expansiveness of this Allegro moderato, an impression immediately confirmed by the long violin melody. This is a strikingly original opening paragraph. Far too much is made of Beethoven's influence on Schubert, when his own musical personality was so confidently established, even in this youthful sonata. Judging from many writers' comments, one would be justified in thinking that Schubert was heavily indebted to Beethoven, unable to ignore his shadow, whereas in fact his own originality is equally striking. Here, with regard to the Sonata in A, Diabelli's retitling "sonatina" is especially misguided. Once again Schubert's fondness for

employing more than the traditional two key-centres in an exposition is exercised here, while the variety of material is impressively wide. In the far from lengthy development section (a mere twenty-five bars) a territory of new and surprising emotional scope is explored. Compared with the music of the first three sonatas this movement breaks new ground in terms of invention, unpredictability and expressive range. The following Presto is a scherzo with irregular phrase-lengths and some syncopation. Beginning wittily with a simple ascending chromatic scale, the trio feels much more relaxed, apart from a degree of restlessness created by further irregular phrasing. While the following Andantino, a rondo in C, has a principal melody of charming innocence, Schubert's harmonic imagination is at its most fertile. An episode in D flat is based on a beguiling dialogue between violin and piano right hand, while the left hand part is subsidiary. The final recall of the opening melody is delightfully combined with a little accompaniment figure borrowed from the middle section. Initially sounding like a reference to the scherzo, with even more rhythmic wit, the Allegro vivace finale continues to show this kinship almost as though Schubert takes elements of the scherzo material as his starting point. In the development section there is a pianissimo passage in which Schubert makes great play with contrary motion. Alternating with a capricious rhythmic character are melodies of characteristic grace and lyricism, but the very end dismisses the previous pianissimo phrases with six bars of emphatic fortissimo.

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CD13

Schubert wrote his **Octet D803** in response to a commission from Count Ferdinand Troyer, master of the court to Beethoven's noble pupil and patron Archduke Rudolph (by then Archbishop of Olmütz). The count, a gifted amateur cellist, proposed that Schubert should write a piece comparable with Beethoven's Septet. Schubert did indeed take the Septet as his model, writing the same number of movements but only adding a second violin to the ensemble. The Octet for string quartet plus double bass, clarinet, bassoon and horn was composed in February and March 1824. It was first performed at the count's residence, with Ignaz Schuppanzigh, one of the leading Viennese violinists of the day, playing first violin. A second, public performance was organised by Schuppanzigh in 1827.

The work opens with a grand, slow introduction to a strongly rhythmic Allegro. In the calm, slow movement the main theme is heard on the pastoral clarinet, accompanied by the strings. The third movement, Allegro vivace, is a scherzo with contrasting trio. The fourth movement comprises a theme with

seven variations, based on the love duet 'Gelagert unter'm hellen Dach der Baume' from Schubert's opera *Die Freunde von Salamanka*. It is followed by a menuet and trio, the latter suggesting a folk dance. The finale also has a slow introduction. The lively Allegro that follows is interrupted shortly before the end by a little drama based on material from the first movement.

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Recordings: between 1995-2021 (see wallets for details)

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