



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Guarneri String Quartet

ARNOLD STEINHARDT, *Violinist* MICHAEL TREE, *Violist*
JOHN DALLEY, *Violinist* DAVID SOYER, *Cellist*

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 9, 1983, AT 4:00
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- Quartet in G minor, Op. 74, No. 3 ("The Rider") HAYDN
Allegro
Largo assai
Menuetto: allegretto
Finale: allegro con brio
- Quartet No. 3 in B-flat major, Op. 67 BRAHMS
Vivace
Andante
Agitato (allegretto non troppo)
Poco allegretto con variazioni — Doppio movimento

INTERMISSION

- Quartet in G minor, Op. 10 DEBUSSY
Animé et très décidé
Assez vif et bien rythmé
Andantino doucement expressif
Très modéré, tres mouvementé, tres animé
RCA Red Seal Records

This program is the first of two performed in this series by the Guarneri Quartet to mark the sesquicentennial of the birth — May 7, 1833 — of Johannes Brahms.

The University Musical Society expresses thanks to Liberty Music Shop for its generosity and service to the community in underwriting the printing costs of this concert program.

Program Notes by JEREMY YUDKIN

Quartet in G minor, Op. 74, No. 3 ("The Rider") FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Haydn's Opus 74 comprises three quartets which, together with the three quartets of Opus 71, were written in 1793 when there was no doubt that Haydn was a fully accomplished composer and a master of the string quartet form.

The G-minor quartet, Opus 74, No. 3, begins with an introductory eight measures whose bouncy grace-notes, together with the first movement's triplets and the off-beat accents of the finale, have contributed to the quartet's title: "The Rider." The first movement proper opens smoothly and with expressive chromatic inflections. The texture tautens, and then dissolves, before a graceful second theme appears. A central development section, ending in mid-air, leads into a varied restatement of the opening, and the movement slowly winds down before the crisp and dogmatic ending. The slow movement, *Largo assai*, in an unexpected key, is evocative and searchingly emotional. The profound expressiveness of this piece is heightened by rich textural contrast, stark harmonic coloration, and a deeply detailed control of rhythmic rhetoric. The movement seems to presage the introspection and personal utterance of the nineteenth century. The *Minuet* is restrained and serious, with four-square articulation. The central Trio returns noticeably to the minor mode, and its descending chromaticism is tinged with the sensibilities of the slow movement. The return of the Minuet highlights these gentle shadows and makes a perfect transition to the last movement. The *Finale* engenders a feeling of repressed intensity at its opening, despite the *brío* marking. The second theme is more lighthearted, though breaks in the flow, long chords, and a wrenching descending passage in unison make for constant ambiguity. The development combines the main thematic ideas, intertwined counterpoint, and powerful declamation, with dramatic pauses and outbursts — all in a little over 30 measures of music. The recapitulation is constantly varied, and the sense of compression and intensity is carried through to the final strong chords.

Quartet No. 3 in B-flat major, Op. 67 JOHANNES BRAHMS

Brahms left only three string quartets, though it appears that the self-critical composer, heavily conscious of the towering examples of the genre created by his forebears, wrote and destroyed many more in his early years.

The Quartet in B-flat, Opus 67, is the third and last of the quartets Brahms considered sufficiently accomplished to be bequeathed to posterity. It was written in 1876 and published the same year. By this time in his career, Brahms was artistically as well as financially secure. He had an international reputation and was even offered an honorary doctorate at the University of Cambridge, though he refused the offer. His self-confidence may be judged by the fact that he was working at the same time on a piece that was published the following year — the massive First Symphony in C minor.

This B-flat Quartet declines any longer to compete with Beethoven, as had the earlier quartets of Opus 51, but looks back affectionately to the work of Haydn and Mozart. The Quartet is a relaxed and lighthearted composition, with a subdued pastoral character.

The first movement suggests the outdoors, with its bouncy opening melody and the dance-like feeling of the second theme. The central section is more densely wrought, with rhythmic and harmonic interplay, but the return of the opening leads back into the open air of the countryside. The *Andante* presents a flowing restful melody over a shifting unfocused background. There is a contrasting section of urgency and drama before the opening melody returns in the form of a nostalgic conversation between the high and low strings. The third movement is constructed as a Scherzo and Trio, with a warm and passionate viola line projected against the suppressed sound of muted strings. The Trio varies the texture with surging lines and rhythmic fragmentation. The coda brings a peaceful close in the major mode. A theme with the flavor of folk music is the subject of a series of variations in the final movement. Toward the end, the music of the opening of the quartet is heard once more, and then finally combined with the folk theme in a final synthesis of form and melody.

Quartet in G minor, Op. 10 CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Debussy composed his String Quartet in 1893 when he was thirty-one. It followed the tone poem after Mallarmé's "L'Après-midi d'un faune" and came just before the wonderful *Trois Nocturnes* of 1895.

The first movement, *Animé et très décidé*, is tightly structural in effect, but rather loose and rhapsodic in detail. The first subject is based on a scale found in the modal music of the Russian folk idiom — a minor scale with a flattened second degree, the phrygian mode. The second subject is stated by the first violin over swirling accompanimental triplets from the other three voices. Its mood is characteristically more yielding and lyrical, thus providing contrast with the stormier first idea. The scherzo, *Assez vif et bien rythmé*, begins with a few preliminary bars of pizzicati, but it is for the most part built up solely from the idea first stated by the viola. The slow movement, *Andantino doucement expressif*, might be described as a compendium of Franck's D-minor Symphony and Debussy's own "Clair de Lune." The principal theme, which appears in almost sunrise fashion, closely resembles Franck's best-known motif but its treatment is completely impressionistic in its yielding, atmospheric gentility. The trio section, an elaborate and deeply impassioned four-way conversation, is one of chamber music's most beautiful moments. A *Très modéré* finale provides an exciting *moto perpetuo* conclusion to a wonderfully consistent, well-balanced work.