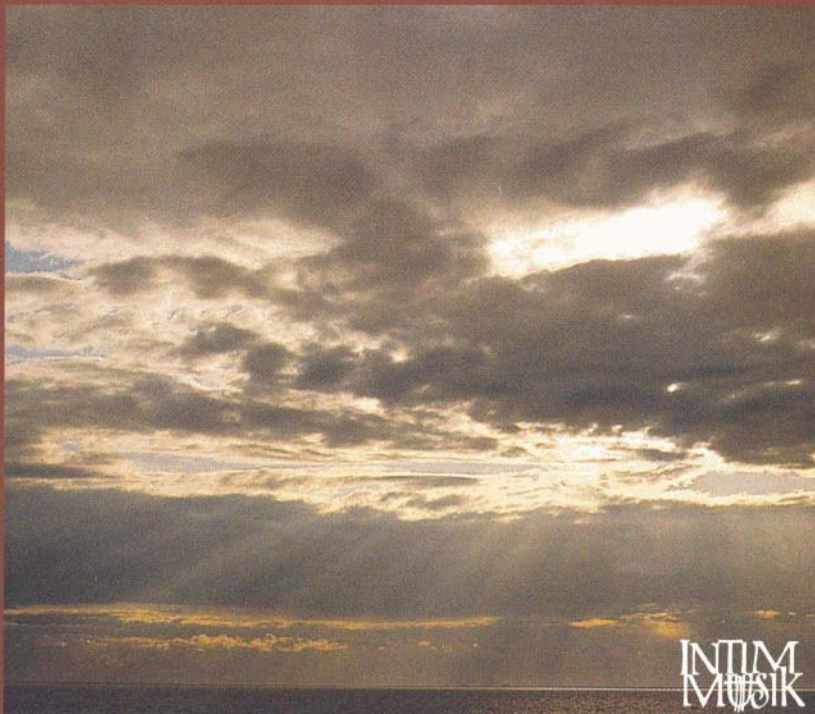




LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN

The Complete String Quartets
Volume VIII Op. 131 & Op. 135

THE VANBRUGH QUARTET



INTIM
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Beethoven String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op.131

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo

Allegro molto vivace

Allegro moderato Adagio

Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile

Presto

Adagio quasi un poco andante

Allegro

Beethoven wrote this great work in 1826 and appears to have thought it his finest. Certainly nothing could surpass its depth, scope, originality, or organic perfection. Although it is continuous and the "movements" are numbered 1 - 7, it can be felt as a five-movement quartet if we regard No. 3 (Allegro moderato - Adagio) as a link between Nos. 2 and 4, and No. 6 as an introduction to No. 7.

The first movement is a wonderful slow fugue; Wagner said it floated over the sorrows of the world, but even that description is too small for it. For the reader who knows something about normal fugue practice, the answer is here on the subdominant instead of the usual dominant, so that the expressive main accent of the subject now falls on the note D. This becomes the key of the quick, fleeting second movement, in a truncated sonata form, almost miraculously contrasted to the fugue. The subdominant inflection in the fugue is now matched in a quite different way by the relationship between this D major piece and the next main movement, a great set of variations in A major, forming the central slow movement (beginning *Andante ma non troppo a molto cantabile*). There are six variations, the last a sublime *Adagio* in 9/4 time, one of Beethoven's supreme inspirations.

The whole of this movement remains rooted in A major, and when the scherzo breaks in, its E major feels more like the dominant of the previous A than like a key in its own right. Beethoven shrewdly avoids fixing E as a tonality, always blunting its own dominant into G sharp minor; when the "trio" (heard twice complete)



slips into A we feel this to be by the force of gravity. G sharp minor, having been active in the scherzo, next becomes the key of No. 6 (Adagio quasi un poco andante), a deeply affecting slow introduction to the fiery C sharp minor finale, in which both the note and the tonality of D may be felt at crucial times with penetrating force. The unfathomable unity of all this makes any description merely topographical and pedestrian, the more so in the attempt to be poetical. Musicians or no, we can be aware of it instinctively, even when we don't know why, when we are moved beyond expression.

Beethoven Quartet in F major, Op.135

Allegretto

Vivace

Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo

Grave ma troppo tratto - Allegro (The difficult resolution)

Apart from the second finale of Op.130, the F major quartet is the last substantial work Beethoven finished. It is smaller in scope and lighter in character than the other late quartets. Profundity is not always weight or elaboration, and the Lento is a piece as deep as it is seemingly simple. The first movement displays a delicately reticulated texture he had taught himself in some of the other late music, and there is no more sensitive quartet writing. The explosively original scherzo takes us by surprise after this, especially its wildly repetitive trio, reaching a hair-raising climax. The tensions that show their teeth in this piece remain beneath the utter quiet of the Lento assai: three very slow variations on a theme of elemental simplicity, the central one in the minor, hushed and fragmented. Deep contemplation without relaxation can be felt in this movement. The finale reacts with an indescribable blend of humour and seriousness, quoting a joke phrase Beethoven wrote in reply to someone who owed him some money and was reluctant to pay, saying "Must it be?" - to which the composer answered "It must be!" in a comically atrocious canon. We should not read too many heavy hidden meanings in all this, so far as the quartet is concerned - but there is something in it nobody will ever altogether fathom, and it is this that keeps the work perennially fresh and fascinating.

Dr Robert Simpson

THE VANBRUGH QUARTET

Gregory Ellis • Elizabeth Charleson • Simon Aspell • Christopher Marwood

The Vanbrugh Quartet is entering its second decade firmly established as one of Europe's finest and most successful quartets. Since winning the Portsmouth (now London) International String Quartet Competition in 1988, they have built up a thriving career, annually presenting around a hundred concerts, together with radio and television broadcasts, in Europe, the Americas and the Far East. This series of recordings marks their first collaboration with Intim Musik, following seven previous CDs covering a wide range of repertoire.

The Quartet is based in Cork, on Ireland's south coast, where they hold the position of Resident Quartet to Radio Telefis Eireann, the national broadcasting service; they are also Artists in Residence to University College, Cork, and founders of the internationally acclaimed West Cork Chamber Music Festival. In 1995 they were presented with Ireland's National Entertainment Award for Classical Music. Beethoven's String Quartets have been central to the Vanbrugh Quartet's repertoire throughout their career, and they have performed the complete cycle on a number of occasions both in the UK and in Ireland. Most recently, in April 1996, the Quartet performed all seventeen quartets in a single weekend to launch the Vanbrugh Quartet Scholarship Fund, a fund to help further the studies of Ireland's aspiring young chamber musicians; a proportion of the proceeds of these recordings will be donated to the Fund.

The members of the Vanbrugh Quartet play on a fine set of instruments on loan from collections at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and the Maggini Foundation, Switzerland.

For further information on the The Vanbrugh Quartet Scholarship Fund, please contact:

Vanbrugh House, Castle Treasure, Douglas, Cork, Ireland.

DAS VANBRUGH QUARTET

Gregory Ellis • Elizabeth Charleson • Simon Aspell • Christopher Marwood

Das Vanbrugh Quartett ist nun schon seit mehr als zehn Jahren eines der vorzüglichsten und erfolgreichsten Quartette Europas. Seitdem es 1988 den Internationalen Streichquartett-Wettbewerb von Portsmouth (jetzt London) gewann, hat das Quartett eine glänzende Karriere gemacht, aufgrund derer es jedes Jahr rund hun-

dert Konzerte in Europa, in Nord- und Südamerika und im Fernen Osten geben konnte, und darüber hinaus fanden zahlreiche Übertragungen im Rundfunk und Fernsehen statt. Diese Reihe von Aufnahmen kennzeichnet die erste Zusammenarbeit des Vanbrugh Quartetts mit Intim Music, im Anschluß an sieben vorherige CDs, die ein sehr umfangreiches Repertoire umfassen.

Standort des Quartettes ist Cork an der Südküste Irlands, wo es sowohl beim nationalen Rundfunksender "Radio Telefís Éireann" als "Resident Quartet" als auch an der Universität von Cork eine feste Anstellung hat.

Darüber hinaus sind die Quartettmitglieder Gründer des West Cork Kammermusik-Festivals.

Während der Karriere des Vanbrugh Quartetts haben Beethovens Streichquartette schon immer den Mittelpunkt des Repertoires gebildet, und das Quartett spielte bei zahlreichen Gelegenheiten im Vereinigten Königreich und in Irland den vollständigen Zyklus. Noch vor kurzem, nämlich im April des Jahres 1996, wurden an einem einzigen Wochenende alle siebzehn Quartette aufgeführt, um damit den "Vanbrugh Quartet Scholarship Fund" zu lancieren, ein Fonds zur Unterstützung von jungen, irischen Kammermusikern. Ein Teil des Erlöses dieser Aufnahmen kommt dem Fonds zugute.

Die Mitglieder des Vanbrugh Quartettes spielen auf vortrefflichen Instrumenten, die ihnen leihweise aus Sammlungen der Royal Academy of Music, London, und der Maggini-Stiftung, Schweiz, zur Verfügung gestellt wurden.

LE QUATOR VANBRUGH

Gregory Ellis • Elizabeth Charleson • Simon Aspell • Christopher Marwood

Le Quatuor Vanbrugh qui entre dans sa deuxième décennie, s'est fermement établi comme étant l'un des meilleurs quatuors d'Europe. depuis qu'il remporté le concours international des quatuors à cordes de Portsmouth (maintenant de Londres) en 1988, le Quatuor a fait une très belle carrière, donnant annuellement près de cent concerts, et faisant des émissions radio et télévision, en Europe, Amérique, et Extrême-Orient. Cette série d'enregistrements marque sa première collaboration avec Intim Music, après avoir fait sept CDs couvrant un vaste répertoire.

Le Quatuor est basé à Cork, sur la côte sud d'Irlande, et c'est le quatuor en résidence de Radio Telefís Éireann, le service de radio-télévision national, les membres du quatuor sont également les artistes en résidence

de l'université de Cork et les fondateurs du prestigieux Festival International de la Musique de Chambre de l'Ouest de Corc. En 1995, le Quatuor a reçu le trophée national d'Irlande pour la musique classique. Tout au long de l'existence du Quatuor Vanbrugh, les quatuors à cordes de Beethoven ont fait régulièrement partie de son répertoire, et ils ont été joués en entier un bon nombre de fois, en Grande-Bretagne comme en Irlande. En avril 1996, le Quatuor a joué les dix-sept quatuors en un seul weekend, pour le lancement de la "Bourse du Quatuor Vanbrugh" – une bourse permettant d'aider de jeunes musiciens Irlandais à continuer leurs études; une partie des bénéfices de ces enregistrements sera versée au compte de la Bourse. Les membres du Quatuor Vanbrugh jouent sur de très beaux instruments, en prêt de collections de l'Académie Royale de Musique de Londres et de la Fondation Maggini de Suisse.

EL VANBRUGH QUARTET

El Vanbrugh Quartet acaba de entrar en su segunda década. Se ha establecido ya como uno de los mejores cuartetos de Europa. Desde que ganaron en el año 1988 el Primer Premio del Concurso Internacional de Cuartetos de Cuerda de Portsmouth (hoy en día de Londres) han ido prosperando, dando aproximadamente unos 100 conciertos al año en Europa, Estados Unidos y Orientales lejanos, así como grabando programas colaborando con Intim Musik, habiendo grabado ya con otras casas 7 CDs que cubren un amplio repertorio. El cuarteto está basado en Cork, en la costa del sur de Irlanda, siendo Cuarteto Residente de Radio Telefís Eireann, el servicio nacional de radio; son también artistas residentes del Colegio Universitario de Cork y fundadores del Festival de Música de Cámara internacionalmente aclamado: West Cork Chamber Music Festival. En 1995 fueron nominados para el National Entertainment Award para la música clásica. Los Cuartetos para Cuerda de Beethoven han sido uno de los ejes centrales del repertorio del Vanbrugh Quartet en su carrera. Han interpretado el ciclo completo varias veces tanto en Inglaterra como en Irlanda. En Abril de 1996 el Cuarteto interpretó los 17 cuartetos en un sólo fin de semana con motivo del lanzamiento del Vanbrugh Quartet Scholarship Fund, una fundación cuyo propósito es ayudar en sus estudios a los jóvenes jóvenes de cámara de Irlanda. Una parte de las ventas de estas grabaciones será donada a la Fundación. Los miembros del Vanbrugh Quartet tocan sobre preciosos instrumentos prestados por la Royal Academy of Music de Londres y la Maggini Foundation de Suiza.

ヴァンブルー弦楽四重奏団は、現在ヨーロッパに於いて十年強もの演奏活動し素晴らしい成功を取めている。1988年の国際ポトマス（現ロンドン）弦楽四重奏コンクールで優勝し、それ以後力強いキャリアを伸ばしている。

現在ヨーロッパ、アメリカ、アジア、又 ラジオ、テレビでのレコーディングを含め年間百余りのコンサートを行っている。インティン、ミュージックとのレコーディングを始め既に幅広いレパートリーで7枚のCDを製作した。

この弦楽四重奏団は、アイルランド南岸のコーク市をベースにしてテレフェイスエイリアン ラジオ国際放送サービスに所属している。コーク大学内での指導の傍ら初めてコーク室内楽フェスティバルを開催した。1995年には、クラシック界のナショナル エンターテイメントの最優秀賞を獲得し国際的にも称賛を浴び始めた。

1996年四月には、アイルランドの若い演奏家達を支援する企画としてヴァンブルー奨学基金を設立するためにベートーベンの17曲全ての室内楽曲を週末コンサートにて全奏した。

使用している楽器は、ロンドン ロイヤルアカデミー 及び スイスのマギーニファンデーションからのコレクションである。

Dr Robert Simpson (programme notes)
Brita van Munster Richter (German translation)
Art et Musique, Madrid (Spanish translation)
Masayo Matsuo (Japanese translation)

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Gregory Ellis

Christopher Marwood

Elizabeth Charleson

Simon Aspell



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Beethoven String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op.131

1	Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo.....	7:07
2	Allegro molto vivace.....	3:01
3	Allegro moderato Adagio.....	0:48
4	Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile.....	14:27
5	Presto.....	5:26
6	Adagio quasi un poco andante.....	2:00
7	Allegro.....	6:36

Beethoven Quartet in F major, Op.135

8	Allegretto.....	7:02
9	Vivace.....	3:25
10	Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo.....	8:51
11	Grave ma troppo tratto - Allegro (The difficult resolution).....	7:00

The Complete String Quartets Volume VIII

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