



University Music Class Room.

SIX HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

Five of String Quartet Music,
One of Choral Music.

CONCERT I.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1894.

A string quartet is a composition not merely for four instruments, but for four instruments whose parts are more or less of equal importance. No doubt there are quartets in which one instrument reigns supreme, and the other three are a trio of humble accompanists. These, however, are not genuine quartets. The four instruments of genuine quartets must be four distinct individuals with minds of their own.

It is impossible to say who wrote the first string-quartet. Of the symphonies which Camerloher published at Amsterdam and Nürnberg about 1760, E. L. Gerber, the lexicographer, wrote in 1790 that in them was to be found almost the first tone of the concerted string-quartets, which afterwards became such favourites. The Italian G. B. Sammartini, has often been indicated as the model followed by Joseph Haydn, an assertion against which, however, the latter composer protested. But although undoubtedly Camerloher, Sammartini, Agrell, Stamitz, and others assisted in laying the foundation of the quartet, Joseph Haydn may be regarded as the creator of this beautiful and noble art-form, he who gave shape and character to it. And this may be said with full knowledge of the achievements of his contemporary Boccherini.

PART I.

1. QUARTET for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello, in B flat major, Op. 1, No. 1 (composed about 1755), by Joseph Haydn (1732-1809).

- (a) Presto.
- (b) Menuetto.
- (c) Adagio.
- (d) Menuetto.
- (e) Presto.

This quartet is the first Haydn wrote. It was believed to have been composed in 1750, but C. F. Pohl, the biographer, conjectures that 1755 is more likely to have been the year. From the later quartets it is distinguished:—1, By the number of movements (five instead of four, two minuets instead of one); 2, by the little development of the first and last movements; and 3, by the slightness of the subject-matter. But although one must admit the slightness of the matter and working-out, one may also assert the freshness of the one and the masterliness of the other.

2. QUARTET for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello, in C major, Op. 33, No. 3 (published in 1781), by Joseph Haydn.

- (a) Allegro moderato.
- (b) Scherzo (Allegretto).
- (c) Adagio.
- (d) Finale (Rondo Presto).

This is the third of the six "Russian" quartets, also called "Gli Scherzi." The former name was given them because they were dedicated to the Grand Duke Paul; and the latter because they contain instead of the minuet movement a scherzo. The quartet here in question goes also by the name of Nightingale quartet. The warbling of birds in the trio of the scherzo is easily discovered; the recognition of the nightingale in the first movement requires more acuteness.

The advance in matter and form exemplified by this favourite quartet is so obvious that it is hardly needful to be pointed out. On a first hearing the beautiful scherzo cannot but cause surprise, as its character is so different from what we are accustomed to call scherzo since the days of Beethoven.

PART II.

QUARTET for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello, in C major (composed in 1785), by W. A. Mozart (1756-1791).

- (a) } Adagio.
- } Allegro.
- (b) Andante cantabile.
- (c) Menuetto.
- (d) Molto Allegro.

This is the sixth of the six quartets dedicated to Joseph Haydn. The slow introduction to it, on account of its daring accumulation of dissonances, has given rise to much discussion. But although at first there seems to the ear to be nothing but chaos and cacophony, closer acquaintance brings with it light and order. To the eye, if it is not that of a pedant's, the mystery quickly disappears. In fact, the whole mystery consists in the entrance of new dissonances before the old are resolved. With the exception of this short portion, the quartet is all beauty, serenity, and euphony. The singer *par excellence*, the Raphael of music, displays here to the full his most delightful characteristics.

PART III.

QUARTET for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello, in D minor, Op. 76, No. 2 (published in 1800), by Joseph Haydn.

- (a) Allegro.
- (b) Andante and piuttosto Allegro.
- (c) Menuetto.
- (d) Finale (vivace assai).

This is one of Haydn's finest quartets, both as regards importance of matter and elaborateness of form. In the history of the quartet we must not forget that if Mozart had the advantage of being born twenty-four years after Haydn, the latter had the advantage of outliving the former eighteen years.

PERFORMERS:—

Professor NIECKS . . .	<i>First violin.</i>
Mr J. F. GUYER . . .	<i>Second violin.</i>
Mr COLIN M'KENZIE . . .	<i>Viola.</i>
Mr GRANT T. M'NEILL . . .	<i>Violoncello.</i>

PROGRAMMES OF THE FOLLOWING CONCERTS :—

December 12.—Quartet in C major (The Emperor), by Joseph Haydn. Quartet in F major, by Mozart. Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4, by Beethoven.

January 16, 1895.—Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2, by Beethoven. Quartet in A minor, Op. 29, by Schubert. Quartet in E flat major, by Cherubini.

February 13.—Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, by Beethoven. Quartet in D major, Op. 44, No. 1, by Mendelssohn. Quartet in A minor, Op. 41, by Schumann.

February 27 (Choral and Organ Concert).—A motet and parts of the mass “Iste Confessor,” by Palestrina. “Magnificat,” by Durante. A motet and chorus by J. S. Bach. Some Organ solos.

March 20.—Quartets by Brahms and others.

FREDERICK NIECKS,

Reid Professor of Music.