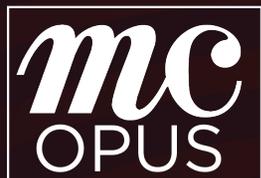
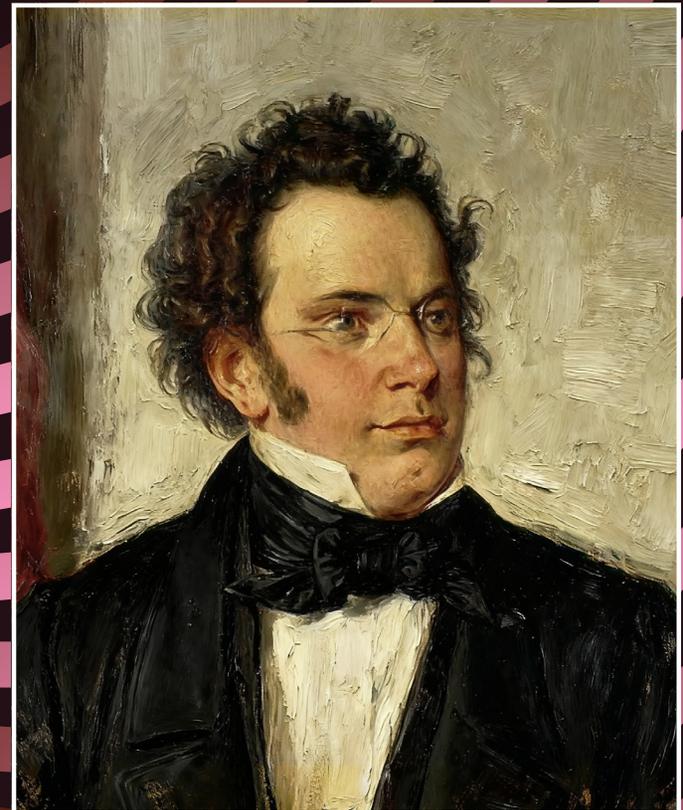


SCHUBERT

String Quintet in C Major, D956

Aeolian String Quartet with
Bruno SCHRECKER, cello



Franz Schubert

String Quintet in C Major, D 956

1	I. Allegro ma non troppo	15:46
2	II. Adagio	15:32
3	III. Scherzo. Presto	12:07
4	IV. Allegretto	10:26

Aeolian String Quartet

Sydney Humphreys and Raymond Keenlyside, *violins*
Margaret Major, *viola* • Derek Simpson, *cello*
with Bruno Schrecker, *second cello*

Recorded in 1965. Original producer and engineer uncredited.

Originally issued in 1966 as Saga STXID 5266

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Franz Schubert's (1797–1828) *String Quintet in C Major* is one of the final works of that composer's even shorter life. Once again, the exact date of composition in 1828 is unknown, although it could have been composed possibly as early as April of that year, but it is thought that it was more likely to have been during the late summer months. There is mention of the work in a letter dated 2 October to the publisher Heinrich Albert Probst (with whom Schubert had been negotiating publication of his *Piano Trio in E-flat*). The letter opens with Schubert expressing anxiety over the delay in the Trio's publication and goes on to mention 'three sonatas for piano solo to be dedicated to Hummel. Also I have set several songs by the Hamburg poet Heine which were very well appreciated here, and lastly composed a Quintet for two violins, viola and two cellos. I have played the sonatas with great success, but the quintet is still to be tried out. Let me know if any of these pieces would interest you'.

Posterity has claimed the *Piano Sonatas* in C minor, in A, and in B-flat (D958-960) and the *String Quintet D956* as amongst the finest of their kind, yet Probst, reflecting public taste of the time, only showed an interest in the Heine Lieder and requested some music for piano duet. The three sonatas were therefore published many years later by Diabelli and were dedicated to Schumann. The *Quintet* received its first performance in November 1850 and was published in 1853.

Mozart had scored his String Quintets for two violins, two violas and cello; Schubert's choice of two cellos and one viola follows the example set by Boccherini and at once gives a richer depth. If the work were composed, as has been suggested, after the sonatas, then it would have occupied Schubert barely more than a week. There is much in the String Quintet which points to awareness in Schubert that his life was drawing to an end: there is violence in the inner movements, but also a great calm.

Since 1823 he had lived in the shadow of the then untreatable syphilis but despite this, he strove to lead a relatively normal life. During the winter of 1827~28 he experienced excruciating headaches, which eased somewhat during the following spring and

summer. In September the headaches and giddiness returned and he moved in with his brother Ferdinand who lived in the healthier suburbs of Vienna. Around the time of his letter to Probst, Schubert went on a short walking tour, visiting among other things, the grave of Haydn. However, despite these pursuits, it was clear that upon his return to Vienna, Schubert's health had taken a turn for the worse. According to his brother, by the end of October Schubert had lost his appetite. During the first part of November he remained quite active, even walking a two mile round journey to attend a music theory lesson given by a local organist. But on 11 November he became housebound, and three days later some friends called and played Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 131, the last music Schubert heard. On 19 November 1828, Schubert died, most probably of typhoid fever.

NOTES ON THE ARTIST

The **Aeolian String Quartet** was founded by Sydney Humphreys (lead violin), Raymond Keenlyside (father of baritone Simon Keenlyside, 2nd violin,), Watson Forbes (viola) and Derek Simpson (cello). Each player had already had a distinguished career as soloist; for instance Humphreys and Simpson were participants in the famous Bath Festival Orchestra recordings with Menuhin. The treasured recordings here were made in the 60's for Saga, a few years prior to their groundbreaking complete Haydn string quartets cycle for Decca, completed in the mid 70's. By 1970, Margaret Major had replaced Forbes and Sydney Humphreys left suddenly to become Head of the String Department at the Victoria Music Conservatory and was replaced by the renowned Emanuel Hurwitz (1919-2006). Hurwitz, also a distinguished soloist, had previously led the English Chamber orchestra and the Melos Ensemble. Both Margaret Major and Derek Simpson have been highly influential teachers at Royal College of Music and Royal Academy of Music respectively. The Aeolian String Quartet disbanded in 1981. Bruno Schrecker succeeded William Pleeth as cellist with the Allegri String Quartet, remaining with them for almost 20 years until retirement in 1998.

— James Murray

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