LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN

String quartet in B flat Major,

opus 133 (Fugue)

Beethoven's quartets opus 127, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135 were written during the last epoch of the Master's Life, from 1823 to 1826. At that time Beethoven was quite deaf and had not heard anything for a number of years. He could perceive sound only in his own brain and imagination. Thus shut off from the outer world and increasingly lonely his genius created probably the greatest quartet music of all times. The depth and originality of these quartets went far beyond the understanding of his contemporaries and even today they are played less frequently than his more facile compositions.

The "Great Fugue" as the quartet op. 133 is commonly called, was originally supposed to be the finale movement of opus 130. It was so completely misunderstood at its first performance March 21, 1826 when a part of opus 130, that Beethoven at the advice of his friends withdrew it and wrote a new finale for op. 130. Later on the, Fugue was published as an independent string quartet. Weingartner wrote a bass part to it thus making it available for string orchestra.

Total time for performance 18 minutes.

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