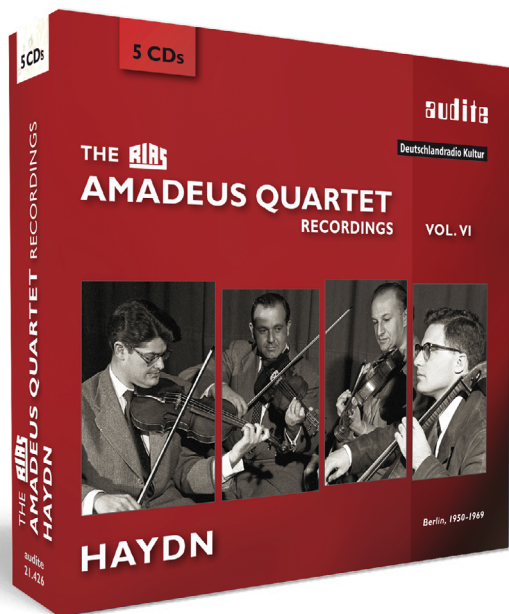


Classical masterpieces in the hands of experts: Previously unreleased Haydn recordings from the Amadeus Quartet



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The RIAS Amadeus Quartet Recordings • Vol. VI

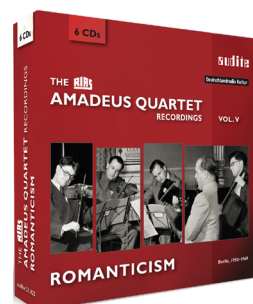
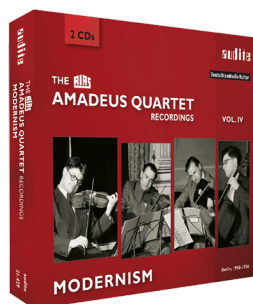
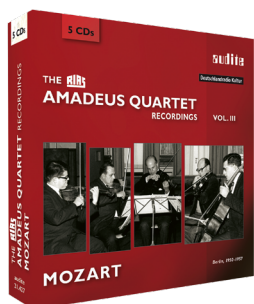
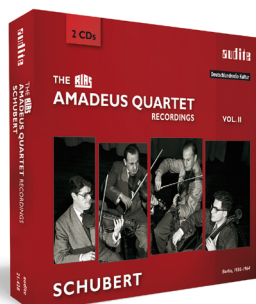
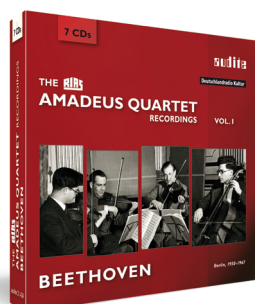
Joseph Haydn: String Quartets

Op. 9/3, 20/5, 33/2, 54/2, 64/3, 64/4, 74/1, 74/3, 76/1, 76/3, 76/4, 77/1, 77/2, 103

The Seven Last Words, Op. 51

(Extended version – music with German texts, RIAS 1952 – available as free downloads on audite.de/21426)

Released for the first time, these Berlin radio recordings showcase the Amadeus Quartet performing fourteen string quartets by Joseph Haydn alongside the string quartet version of the “Seven Last Words”. Three string quartets from Haydn’s early period – Op. 9/3, Op. 20/5 and Op. 33/2 – which the Amadeus Quartet never recorded on disc, are presented here for the very first time in the ensemble’s interpretation.



This sixth volume of the *RIAS Amadeus Quartet Recordings* completes the 27-CD edition. To honour the occasion, we are offering, at www.audite.de/21426, a comprehensive free download of the “Seven Last Words” (RIAS 1952) in a radiophonic version which combines the music recordings with bible readings and literary interpretations of these biblical texts, following the liturgical sequence of the first performance. This extended version complements the 6-CD box set, providing once again a detailed survey of broadcasting history in the 1950s – to which end the entire series of the audite Amadeus Quartet recordings is ultimately directed.



Joseph Haydn’s string quartets, often rated as the basis for playing quartets, represented far more than an obligation to the Amadeus Quartet. During their entire career, spanning four decades, they thoroughly and continually dedicated themselves to these works, especially those of Haydn’s middle and late periods. Most of their concert programmes featured a quartet by Haydn and in their sonic legacy – recordings on disc and for the radio – Haydn’s string quartets make up more than a fifth of the total (only Beethoven’s quartets were recorded with a similar frequency). The musicians held these works in such high esteem due, on the one hand, to their relative technical ease and, on the other, their high musical demands, as Norbert Brainin explained: “Everything that one plays in public is difficult. And the easier it is, the more difficult it becomes, as one then hears the fleas cough. Haydn and Mozart are a tightrope act.” When preparing and rehearsing these works, the players had to examine the music closely, for many sections which appeared implausible in the old editions later on indeed proved erroneous when they were able to study Haydn’s manuscripts and once the Urtext editions had been published.

On disc, the Amadeus Quartet issued the quartets from the Op. 54 set onwards: these first releases of the radio recordings, all made for RIAS Berlin, now also present, for the first time, early Haydn quartets played by the Amadeus Quartet: Op. 9, No 3; Op. 20, No 5; and Op. 33, No 2.

In addition to the authentic quartet works, this edition includes a recording of the “Seven Last Words” in the arrangement for string quartet. Originally conceived for orchestra, later re-worked into an oratorio by the composer, the adaptation for quartet (which Haydn created at the same time as the piano reduction of the original orchestral version) is the most popular and most played version of the work today.

A further bonus track is included on CD I: the fragment of the second movement from the Amadeus Quartet’s first ever Haydn recording session for RIAS made in 1950. The same string quartet, Op. 54 No 2, was also on the music stands for their last RIAS recording session in 1969. Norbert Brainin’s violin solo, inspired by Eastern European folk music, sounds almost more idiomatic in the early recording; in any case, the two versions permit an appealing comparison.

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- bonus track on CD I provides direct comparison between recordings made in 1950 and 1969
- free additional download of the radiophonic version of the “Seven Last Words” including additional bible readings and literary bible interpretations, reconstructing the liturgical sequence of the first performance
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