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Deutschlandradio Kultur

THE **RIAS**

# AMADEUS QUARTET

## RECORDINGS

VOL. V



# ROMANTICISM

*Berlin, 1950-1959*





## **AMADEUS QUARTET**

<i>violin I</i>	<i>Norbert Brainin</i>
<i>violin II</i>	<i>Siegmond Nissel</i>
<i>viola</i>	<i>Peter Schidlof</i>
<i>cello</i>	<i>Martin Lovett</i>

<i>viola II</i>	<i>Cecil Aronowitz</i>
<i>clarinet</i>	<i>Heinrich Geuser</i>
<i>piano</i>	<i>Conrad Hansen</i>





**JOHANNES BRAHMS**  
**String Quartet in C minor, Op. 51/I**

I. Allegro	8:20
II. Romanze. Poco Adagio	6:41
III. Allegretto molto moderato e comodo	10:13
IV. Allegro	5:38

*recording date: 30.10.1950*

**String Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 67**

I. Vivace	7:40
II. Andante	7:21
III. Agitato. Allegretto non troppo	7:44
IV. Poco Allegretto con Variazioni	9:27

*recording date: 29.11.1957*

**Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34**

I. Allegro non troppo	10:42
II. Andante, un poco Adagio	7:47
III. Scherzo. Allegro	7:23
IV. Finale. Poco sostenuto – Allegro non troppo	10:19

*recording date: 1.11.1950*



**JOHANNES BRAHMS**

**Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| ⑤ I. Allegro   | 9:26  |
| ⑥ II. Adagio   | 11:19 |
| ⑦ III. Andantino – Presto non assai, ma con sentimento | 4:34  |
| ⑧ IV. Con moto – Un poco meno mosso                    | 8:29  |

*recording date: 24.4.1951*

**String Quintet in G major, Op. 111**

- |                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| I. Allegro non troppo, ma con brio | 9:30 |
| II. Adagio                         | 5:53 |
| III. Un poco Allegretto            | 5:01 |
| IV. Vivace ma non troppo presto    | 4:24 |

*recording date: 19.9.1953*

**ANTON BRUCKNER**

**String Quintet in F major, WAB 112**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| I. Gemäßigt. Moderato                  | 11:42 |
| II. Scherzo. Schnell – Trio. Langsamer | 7:27  |
| III. Adagio                            | 13:02 |
| IV. Finale. Lebhaft bewegt             | 9:22  |

*recording date: 29.11.1957*





**ROBERT SCHUMANN**

**Piano Quintet in E-flat major, Op. 44**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| ① I. Allegro brillante                                   | 8:45 |
| ② II. In modo d'una Marcia. Un poco largamente – Agitato | 8:56 |
| ③ III. Scherzo. Molto vivace                             | 4:42 |
| ④ IV. Allegro, ma non troppo                             | 7:07 |

*recording date: 31.10.1950*

**String Quartet in A major, Op. 41/3**

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| ⑤ I. Andante espressivo – Allegro molto moderato      | 5:43 |
| ⑥ II. Assai agitato – Un poco Adagio – Tempo assoluto | 6:56 |
| ⑦ III. Adagio molto                                   | 8:43 |
| ⑧ IV. Finale. Allegro molto vivace                    | 6:45 |

*recording date: 11.2.1962*

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY**

**String Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 12**

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| I. Adagio non troppo – Allegro non tardante | 7:13 |
| II. Canzonetta. Allegretto                  | 3:51 |
| III. Andante espressivo                     | 4:10 |
| IV. Molto allegro e vivace                  | 7:46 |

*recording date: 18.11.1969*

**String Quartet, Op. 81**

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| III. Capriccio. Andante con moto – Allegro fugato, assai vivace | 5:37 |
|---|------|

*recording date: 25.5.1952*



**GIUSEPPE VERDI**  
**String Quartet in E minor**

I. Allegro	7:17
II. Andantino	7:44
III. Prestissimo	3:09
IV. Scherzo. Fuga. Allegro assai mosso	4:43

*recording date: 26.11.1962*

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK**  
**Piano Quintet in A major, Op. 81**

I. Allegro ma non tanto	9:30
II. Dumka. Andante con moto – Un pocchettissimo più mosso	13:58
III. Scherzo (Furiant). Molto vivace – Trio. Poco tranquillo	3:49
IV. Finale. Allegro	7:02

*recording date: 1.11.1950*

**EDVARD GRIEG**  
**String Quartet in G minor, Op. 27** **32:31**

⑤ I. Un poco andante – Allegro molto ed agitato	11:32
⑥ II. Romanze. Andantino – Allegro agitato	6:34
⑦ III. Intermezzo. Allegro molto marcato – Più vivo e scherzando	5:38
⑧ IV. Finale. Lento – Presto al saltarello	8:47

*recording date: 4.12.1953*







## Excursions into Romanticism

Though categorizing musical epochs can be problematic, doing so can be useful in revealing connections between heterogeneous and seemingly contradictory elements. Defining the age of musical Romanticism and establishing it chronologically have resulted in different versions of music history, depending on the criteria that were used. Along with stylistic criteria, historical, sociopolitical, and historico-cultural aspects have been given more or less emphasis.

Spanning sixty-two years, the works brought together in this edition represent a large cross-section of musical Romanticism, from Mendelssohn's E-flat Major String Quartet, written during the twenty-year-old composer's stay in England, to Johannes Brahms's Clarinet Quintet dating from 1891.

The two works have their origins in very different worlds: Mendelssohn's quartet, which still exhibits classical features, was composed three years after the last string quartets of Beethoven and Schubert; Brahms's quartet is one of his late works, which served as inspiration for the young Arnold Schoenberg as he set out into new musical territory soon afterward. Yet both fall into the category of musical Romanticism. Naturally the notion of Romantic style extends far beyond the confines of the musical epoch per se, and is applicable to many of Beethoven's works written around 1805, as well as to Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs* from 1948.

The pieces featured in this CD edition also lead us on a journey through significant geographical regions of the musical world at the time, while presenting the listener with different chamber music instrumentations. Only six of the works recorded here (including a single quartet movement) are string quartets; all of the remaining pieces are scored for five voices – two string quintets, three piano quintets, and a clarinet quintet.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's path to a musical language of his own is unthinkable without the influence of literary Romanticism. In works paired with texts or based on literary subjects, he was already venturing far into the realm of musical Romanticism as a young man; the overture to Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and his concert overture *The Fair Melusina*, after the old legend of the water nymph by the same name, are notable examples. For the piano, Mendelssohn created the *Song without Words*, a genre whose artistry retreats – at least on the audible surface – behind a folk idiom, giving the impression that the music has been “found.” The early string quartets Op. 12 and Op. 13, however, embark on a different path. Mendelssohn continues in the line of Beethoven's middle and late quartets, emulating not so much their rugged and epic formal structure as their compositional techniques and character. The second movement of the E-flat Quartet Op. 12, in contrast, shows parallels with the *Songs without Words*, and countless arrangements of the *Canzonetta* were made in the 1830s, thanks to which it gained considerable popularity.

In 1850, three years after the composer's death, Mendelssohn's publisher Breitkopf brought together four individual string quartet movements and published them as opus 81. The Amadeus Quartet often played the *Capriccio*, the third movement, as an encore in the 1950s; in 1955 the four musicians recorded the *Capriccio*, the only work by Mendelssohn, on LP (as a filler after Schubert's E-flat Major Quartet, D. 87).

In complete contrast to Mendelssohn, who was born just one year before him, Robert Schumann composed systematically and in successive batches, working through different musical genres one after the other. Only in 1841, after a ten-year focus on solo piano music and after



the song year of 1840, did he venture into the larger instrumental genres, starting with the symphony. In 1842 he dedicated the entire year to chamber music, but did not resume until five years later. Schumann wrote the three string quartets over the space of six weeks in Leipzig in summer 1842. In terms of performance statistics, the Third Quartet in A Major, Op. 41, No. 3, by far outstrips the other two quartets, and is considered his most accessible work in the genre. The three quartets are dedicated to Mendelssohn, a fact that already reveals that Schumann was drawing inspiration not only from Beethoven's overwhelming legacy – their character is probably influenced by the middle quartets – but also from the chamber music of his contemporary. Moreover, the melody of the third movement is an unmistakeable homage to Mendelssohn.

Just two months after the A Major Quartet, Schumann composed his Piano Quintet in E-flat Major. It is not only his most popular chamber music work, but also regarded as the pinnacle of Schumann's output in this area. The combination of exuberant melodies and brilliant rhythmic verve contrasts with the halting funeral march in the second movement (*In modo d'una marcia*), which is enhanced with an uplifting note in the form of luminous cantilenas.

Though their “favorite pianist” was widely regarded to be Clifford Curzon, the Amadeus Quartet collaborated here with German pianist Conrad Hansen. Born in Lippstadt, Westphalia in 1906, Hansen was acclaimed as a child prodigy and was already performing concerts in northern Germany as a nine-year-old. He became a pupil of Edwin Fischer in 1922, and only five years later made his solo debut with the Berlin Philharmonic under Wilhelm Furtwängler. When Artur Schnabel emigrated to Britain and Edwin Fischer was appointed as his successor at Berlin's University of Music in 1933, Fischer engaged Hansen as his assistant. Concerts brought the young pianist to Moscow and Kiev. He led a piano class at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, where he continued until the end of the war. In 1946 Hansen was one of the founding members of the Northwest German Musical Academy in Detmold; in the 1950s he regularly performed with his piano trio, whose other two members were violinist Erich Röhn and cellist Arthur Troester. He led a piano class in Detmold until 1960, then took over the post of Eduard Erdmann (who passed away in 1958) in Hamburg, where he was appointed professor. In 1974 he accepted a position at the Lübeck Academy of Music.

Hansen championed the music of his time, premiering works by Philipp Jarnach and Giseler Klebe. His great love, however, was for the music of Brahms, along with Beethoven's piano works. His role as a pioneer of historical performance practice is not widely known: in the late 1950s he recorded an LP, only recently re-released, of Mozart piano sonatas performed on the piano forte. Today his most well-known recordings are his LPs of Brahms's and Tchaikovsky's first piano concertos and Beethoven's first, fourth, and fifth piano concertos. In addition, he made a number of chamber music recordings with his trio colleagues and other artists.

The Amadeus Quartet occasionally included works by Schumann on their concert programs, but never played them in the recording studio. With the two radio productions presented here, the Amadeus Quartet can be heard performing Schumann for the first time on CD.

The chamber music of Johannes Brahms, in contrast, was an important pillar of the ensemble's repertoire. They recorded all of Brahms's important chamber music works for strings, some of them several times. Nevertheless, the RIAS productions heard here are of special interest, as they represent recordings from the Amadeus Quartet's early history, and are also significant due to the soloists involved in the production.

Time and again, Brahms wrestled with the “great” genres of the string quartet and symphony, doing so for lengthy periods. It wasn’t until summer 1873, when the composer was forty years old, that he completed his first String Quartet in C Minor, Op. 51, No. 1 (and he only put the finishing touches on his First Symphony after completing his third quartet, following a gestation period of many years). The tightly-knit work contrasts with its rather classicist counterpart, Brahms’s third and final String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 67. The man who commissioned the work was a violist, and the instrument is accordingly given a leading role in the third and fourth movements. The sound thus takes on a darker hue, approaching that of a string quintet.

In a conversation with Ursula Hübner, Norbert Brainin tells the story of how one of the decisive influences on his Brahms playing came about. *We began playing for the BBC in the early 50s. At the time I received a letter from a gentleman from Krefeld by the name of Doctor Heinz von Beckerath. He was the grandson of a certain Mr. Alfons von Beckerath, whose home Brahms often visited. And in the letter from this Heinz von Beckerath, he told me what he knew about Brahms. He was a young boy at the time, maybe between ten and fifteen years old, and remembered that Brahms had said the following: “When the marking is piano dolce or piano espressivo or pf – that is, poco forte – this is more or less the same thing. It means: a good tone, full of substance, in the manner of a piano.” When I learned this, all the doors of Brahms interpretation opened up before me. One should never play thinly. When it is written piano, one must play quietly, but never thinly or in a whisper. Playing in a whisper is a special effect, and pianissimo is not meant to be this way either. Pianissimo also needs to have substance, but even quieter.*

Many years earlier, in the mid-1860s, another of Brahms’s problem children came into being: the Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34. Originally conceived as a string quintet, then arranged for two pianos, Brahms finally scored the work in its definitive version for piano quintet in 1864–65. With its symphonic dimensions, the quintet recalls both the flowing energy and contemplative moments of Robert Schumann’s Piano Quintet, composed twenty years earlier. The pianist is once again Conrad Hansen, and even more than in the Schumann recording made the previous day, the Amadeus Quartet and Hansen form an impressively unified ensemble. Together they do full justice to the work, which is considered the crowning achievement of Brahms’s early chamber music.

Around the same time, when Brahms was completing his first string quartet, Giuseppe Verdi was living in Naples several hundred miles to the south. He had travelled there in late 1872 to rehearse his opera *Aida*, which had received its premiere the previous year. After the planned performance fell through, he composed his only string quartet in January 1873 – one of his very rare forays into the realm of instrumental music. Conceived as an occasional work, the quartet is brimming with energy; in the cello melody of the third-movement Trio, we can’t fail to recognize the opera composer. This string quartet was written just before a long period of inactivity, which was interrupted by the completion of the *Requiem* the following year, but continued for another fourteen years until the composition of *Otello*.

In his book *The Amadeus Quartet. The Men and the Music*, Daniel Snowman, biographer of the Amadeus Quartet, relates his impressions of the Verdi recording session, which took place in October 1979 in Munich and is preserved on LP. Though the piece had been part of their repertoire since 1948, when they gave their debut at Wigmore Hall – one of five works at the time – and though they played it often and with



enthusiasm, it still presented a conundrum: *The Verdi Quartet is not an easy work to play. There are technical problems that might easily be absorbed within the relative fuzziness of orchestral texture (for which Verdi was accustomed to compose) but which require the utmost accuracy if performed by a quartet. Awkward questions arise, too, about interpretation: what does Verdi mean by his dynamic markings? Unruly nineteenth-century opera singers no doubt needed to be told to go ppp if they were not to bawl their heads off in supposedly subdued passages; but does Verdi really want sensitive string players to alternate between the extremes of loudness and softness he specifies?*

From southern Europe we now head north on our musical journey: to the Norwegian villages of Børve and Nordhus, located along the Hardangerfjord, where in winter 1877–78 Edvard Grieg wrote his one and only string quartet. Seeking to emancipate himself from central European standards and criteria, his efforts to find his own musical language are evident. Grieg's music had already been judged by his contemporaries to be too lightweight, but with this string quartet, he made an impressive plea for an art that drew its inspiration from local sources – as is clear, for example, in the inclusion of Norwegian songs and Halling melodies. With an expanded harmonic language and a sound that is more horizontally than spatially conceived, Grieg is clearly departing from the norm passed down from the Austro-German musical tradition (particularly the principle of thematic development).

Shortly after the premiere of Grieg's quartet in December 1878, Bruckner began composing his String Quintet – as for Grieg and Verdi, this was his only “official” chamber music work. Bruckner, too, embarks on a unique path. Like Grieg, Bruckner places “discursive” moments (as in the development of the first movement) in the background. Rich orchestral textures, which we might expect from Bruckner the symphonist, make only rare appearances. The heart of the work is the Adagio, which anticipates the final three symphonies.

In our recording, Cecil Aronowitz plays the second viola part. Born in King Williams's Town, South Africa, in 1916, Aronowitz was born into a Russian Jewish family and first learned the violin. In 1935 he went to London, where he continued his studies at the Royal College of Music. Soon afterward he began additional viola lessons with Ernest Tomlinson, who often performed with the Busch Quartet at the time. After the end of the war, he switched completely to the viola. He served as principal violist in many London orchestras and was involved in the founding of several London chamber orchestras. From the very beginning, the Amadeus Quartet only performed string quintets with Cecil Aronowitz. They continued their collaboration for thirty years, up until Aronowitz's death in 1978. In his later years, Aronowitz also held a number of teaching positions.

Johannes Brahms's String Quintet in G Major, Op. III, composed eleven years after Bruckner's String Quintet, could not be more different in structure and character. Though originally intended as a farewell to composing, as Brahms revealed in a letter to his publisher, it is not a melancholy work, nor does it look backward toward the past. With its expanded tonal space, numerous chordal passages, and on the whole riveting character, the work is not so much a summation of what had gone before as a herald of new possibilities to come.

With its wealth of melodies, rhythmic verve, and tonal brilliance, Antonín Dvořák's Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81, still speaks to us today as a work full to overflowing with life. In this regard it has much in common with Schumann's Piano Quintet, and echoes of Schumann's second movement make an appearance in Dvořák's *Dumka* (also the second movement). Along with the F Major String Quartet (*American*), the Piano

Quintet is regarded as Dvořák's most important and most popular chamber music work. The musicians of the Amadeus Quartet once again harmonize wonderfully with Conrad Hansen in this energetic interpretation. Of Dvořák's works, the Amadeus Quartet recorded only the *American Quartet* on LP. This radio recording of the Piano Quintet is another CD premiere included in this edition.

On our journey through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we have encountered remarkably varied stylistic expressions of musical Romanticism. In addition, with three of the works, the geographical area centered in Germany and Austria was widened in three different directions: Verdi's quartet brought us to southern, Grieg's quartet to northern, and Dvořák's quintet to eastern Europe. In an interview at the Cologne University of Music in 1987, the musicians of the Amadeus Quartet touched on the subject of their repertoire; at the time – this was right after the end of their career – they expressed regret at the many works they had not played. As Siegmund Nissel commented, "Unfortunately there are works we never got around to studying. We didn't play all of Mendelssohn's [quartets]. We didn't play all of Schumann's [quartets] either." Norbert Brainin clarifies: "One of the Schumanns." And Martin Lovett adds, "We played Fauré and César Franck, their piano works." Brainin mentions the Verdi quartet. The cellist points out to his colleague: "We never [played] Janáček, Dvořák very rarely." The first violinist rounds out the list: "And we played Smetana."

Chronologically speaking, the final work on this excursion through musical Romanticism is Johannes Brahms's Clarinet Quintet. The soloist in our recording is Heinrich Geuser, who was born in Nördlingen, Germany in 1910. After studies in Munich, he was engaged by a number of city theaters. Starting in 1937 he played in the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, and in 1949 was named principal clarinetist of the newly-formed RIAS Symphony Orchestra. From 1949 onwards he accepted a number of teaching positions, and was appointed professor in 1961. Geuser was regarded as one of the most influential clarinetists of the post-war years; with his expressive tone, he had a great influence on an entire generation of pupils, including Karl Leister and Jorg Fadle.

In summer 1891 Brahms met clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, whose playing served as the impetus to compose four more works with clarinet after his purportedly "final" chamber music work, the String Quintet Op. III, written exactly one year earlier. Thanks to its expressiveness, the Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. II5, occupies a special place among Brahms's last works. The piece's structural density is outshone by its melancholy atmosphere, the culmination of which is clearly reached in the Adagio. When the opening motif reappears at the end of the fourth movement, the effect is not of rounding out the piece formally; instead it seems to be a moment of nostalgia, a melancholy, retrospective look back at an era that was rapidly coming to an end. In this light, the halting, fragmentary character of these measures can be interpreted as a farewell motif. If the first works on our excursion through musical Romanticism, enriched by the legacy of Beethoven, boldly set out into new musical territory, Brahms's Clarinet Quintet is the final expression of a world that was (still) intact, before Arnold Schoenberg carried over Brahms's achievements into a new musical language.



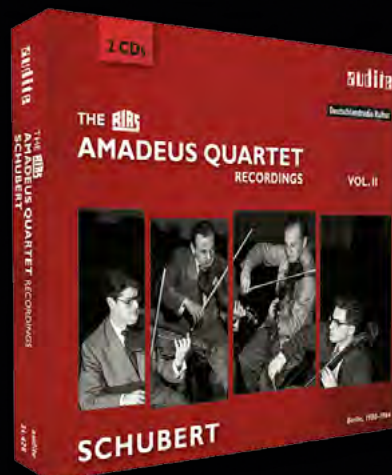
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Heinrich Geuser, clarinet  
Cecil Aronowitz, viola  
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**VOL. IV**  
**MODERNISM**  
**AMADEUS QUARTET**  
2 CD box



*recording location:*

Siemensvilla, Berlin-Lankwitz  
Studio 7, RIAS Funkhaus, Berlin (Brahms, Op. 51/I)

*recording producer:*

Klaus Bischke (Mendelssohn, Op. 12) | Burk (Schumann, Op. 44)  
Hermann Reuschel (Brahms, Op. 67 / Bruckner / Schumann / Verdi)  
Salomon (Brahms, Op. 51/I, Op. 34, Op. 111, Op. 115 /  
Mendelssohn Capriccio / Dvořák / Grieg)

*recording engineer:*

Bazin (Mendelssohn, Op. 12) |  
Siegbert Bienert (Brahms, Op. 67 / Bruckner / Verdi)  
Peter Burkowitz (Brahms Op. 34, Op. 111 / Dvořák)  
Michna (Grieg) | Preuss (Brahms, Op. 115 / Mendelssohn Capriccio)  
Ribbentrop (Brahms, Op. 51/I) | Steinke (Schumann op. 41/3)

**Deutschlandradio Kultur**

Eine Aufnahme von RIAS Berlin (lizenziert durch Deutschlandradio)

*recording:*

© 1950 - 1969 Deutschlandradio

studio recordings, mono (stereo: Mendelssohn, Op. 12)

*research:*

Rüdiger Albrecht

*remastering:*

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*further reading:*

Daniel Snowman: *The Amadeus Quartet. The Men and the Music*,  
Robson Books (London, 1981) pp. 74-75

Muriel Nissel: *Married to the Amadeus. Life with a String Quartet*.

Giles de la Mare (London, 1998)

*photos:*

Deutschlandradio-Archiv

art direction and design:

AB•Design







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# DOCUMENTATION SHEET

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Veranstaltende Abteilung		Datum		Auftrag Nr.	
Musik/Rittel		30.10.50		41 - 533	
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>				Schallaufnahme	
Titel: Archiv - Aufnahme Amadeus-quartett und Hansen - Klavier -				Vermerke	
Mikro-Ort: Lankwitz				Dauer der Aufnahme 60 Minu.	
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>					
Aufnahme					
Datum	Zeit	in Schallaufnahme	auf Band bzw. Platte	Ton. Ing. Name	
31.10.50	18.15 - 22.15	Lankwitz	Band	BURKOWITZ	



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31.10.50	18.15 - 22.15	Lankwitz	Band	BURKOWITZ
Wiedergabe				
Zeit	in Schall- aufnahme	Zweck	von Band bzw. Platte Nr.	Erledigt Technik Name
Nicht sendefertig		Sendefertig		
Ton. Techn.: <u>SC 4 MIC 155</u> !		Ton. Techn.: <u>Gymn</u>		
Datum: <u>31. 10. 50</u>		Datum: <u>1. 11. 50</u>		
Bandzahl: <u>2</u>		Aufnahmeleiter: <u>Stemann</u>		
		Dauer der fertigen Sendung		
		28 Min. 52 Sek.		

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Lfd. Nr.	Inhaltsangabe	Dauer	Aufgen. bei Hz. Masch. l. r.
I	KLAVIER-QUINTETT ES-DUR OP. 44 VON ROBERT SCHUMANN		50
I	1) ALLEGRO BRILLANTE	8'21	
I	2) IN MODO DI UNA MARCIA. - UN POLO LARGAMENTE	8'46	
I	3) SCHERZO MOLTO VIVACE	4'42	
I	4) ALLEGRO, MA NON TROPPO	7'0	
	CONRAD HANSEN - KLAVIER + ROBERT BRAININ - VIOLINE SIGMUND NISSEL - " } AMATEUR PETER SCHIDLOFF - VIOLA } QUARTETT MARTIN LOVET - CELLO }	2' =	



CONRAD HANSEN - KLAVIER	} AWAGED QUARTET	2
NORBERT BRAININ - VIOLINE		1
SIGMUND NISSEL - "		
PETER SCHIDLOFF - VIOLA		
MARTIN LOVET - CELLO		

Bemerkungen: Achtung Sammlung!  
(jede Änderung eintragen)

9-10 Sekunden Pause zwischen  
Band I und II!

Band plattiert - richtige Anzahl  
Sammlung

Ungelesenes anläufig Band  
nicht zusammengefasst. Buch 13.5.68

Ton. Techn.: Datum: Rosen Aufnahmeleiter:

## Hohe Kunst zu viert / Amadeus-Quartett im Hochschulsaal

Das Amadeus-Quartett ist seit Jahren ein in Berlin mit freudiger Erwartung empfangener Gast. Immer wieder nimmt es wunder, wie groß bei uns die Gemeinde für eine so unaufdringliche, zeitfremd erscheinende Kunst ist, die vom Hörer die stille Konzentration auf das Spiel der vier Linien fordert. Die Londoner Künstler sind durch gleichwertiges instrumentales Können für die ideale Ausgewogenheit des Streicherklangs prädisponiert. Die maßvolle Herrschaft des Primarius trägt der dynamischen Proportion niemals Eintrag, ja

ten des Mozartschen d-moll Quartetts, dem zweiten für Haydn gewidmeten, auf. Hier hätten wir dem Vortrag oft mehr Expansion und weitere Spannungsbögen gewünscht, aber wie bei vielen berühmten Quartettvereinigungen zu beobachten, begegnen auch die Amadeus-Leute den Mozartschen Tiefendimensionen mit vorsichtiger, fast ein wenig akademischer Glätte. Beglückend wiederum die serenadenhafte Lyrik des dritten Brahms-Quartetts in B-dur mit dem mendelssohnnahen „Lied ohne Worte“ und dem wienerisch heiteren Variationsfinale. Die Dankbarkeit der Hörer sprach sich in langem Beifall aus. K—r

### VERMOUTH DI TORINO

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man hat ihm gelegentlich eine zu große Zurückhaltung, ein englisches Understatement nachgesagt. Verlangt doch leider ein großer Raum wie der Hochschulsaal, soll die akustische Perspektive stimmen, eine schärfere, profilierte Einstellung der Akzente und konzertanten Kontraste, als sie kammermusikalischer Intimität von Haus aus zukommt.

Dieses Mal schien man temperamentvoll aufgelegt. Haydns Quartett in G aus Opus 76 hatte alle Farben dieses geistvoll imitierenden choralartig sich versenkenden, sprühend tänzerischen, schließlich derb bäuerisch-übermütigen Musizierstils. Welch eine veränderte Welt tut sich in den ersten leidenschaftlichen Tak-

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## Glanz und Feuer / Amadeus-Quartett Kirchenkonzert

Mozarts spätes, 1782 komponiertes G-Dur-Streichquartett KV 387 stand am Beginn eines Quartettabends in der Philharmonie. Und wenn die vier Spieler, Norbert Brainin (Violine 1), Siegmund Nissel (Violine 2), Peter Schidlöf (Viola) und Martin Lovett (Violoncello), auch nicht verhindern konnten, daß die Musik wie hinter einem Gaze-Vorhang tönte, die exzellente, brillante Handschrift des Amadeus-Quartetts blieb dennoch unüberhörbar. Zu fragen wäre freilich, warum denn, aus welchen zwingenden Gründen, keinesfalls musikalischen jedenfalls, in der Philharmonie musiziert wird und nicht, wie schon seit Jahren, im akustisch für Kammermusik außerordentlich günstigen Hochschulsaal. Es kann nicht darum gehen, den Musikern finanziellen Mehrgewinn streitig machen zu wollen. Andererseits ist aber auch nicht einzusehen, warum akustisch getrübt, gelegentlich sogar miserabel verschwommen klingende musikalische Augenblicke in Kauf genommen werden sollen, wenn zwei Abende im Hochschulsaal denkbar und unter musikalischen Gesichtspunkten einzig vertretbar sind.

Unter solchen Vorbehalten ist von einem Abend zu berichten, der angefüllt war mit hinreißenden, interpretatorischen Erlebnissen. Während Mozarts Quartett noch bis auf den gänzlich gesättigt interpretierten Andantecantabile-Satz unter der übergroßen Spannung der Interpreten litt, wurde Haydns Streichquartett in C-Dur Opus 33,3 exemplarisch vorgeführt. So viel Glanz und Feuer in den Ecksätzen, so viel schlank sich gebende, fast anmutige Versenkung in den Adagio-Charakter des Quartetts sind selten zu erleben. Haydns entwickelndes Verfahren, das immer

wieder neue — unter neuen Gesichtspunkten — Aufgreifen thematischen Materials, wird von diesen Musikern mit einer Konzentration, einer nicht abreißen Innenspannung — trotz aller gliedernden Zäsuren — vorgeführt, die der Form, die dem Klangstrom wirklich Volumen gibt.

Mit besonderem Interesse war danach die Auseinandersetzung mit dem B-Dur-Quartett Opus 67 von Johannes Brahms zu beobachten. Es gibt in diesem Ensemble eine Ästhetik des instrumentalen Belcanto, eine Disziplin des virtuosen Schöngesangs, die Brahms' Ton, die seiner großräumig-zögernden Sprechweise vielleicht nicht ganz angemessen ist. Man muß Schidlöfs Viola-Passagen im Agitato-Satz erlebt haben, die hinreißende Beweglichkeit des Vortrags, die noch den emotionalen Sog in instrumentale Virtuosität ausmünzt, die Aura von Eleganz, die um diese Musiker insgesamt ist, um die kritische Ebene recht zu bedenken. Brahms' Ausdruck, darin gänzlich romantisch, möchte Schicht um Schicht in die Tiefe der Emotionalität als musikalischer Charakter gehen. Es gibt in dieser Musik Augenblicke gleichsam schwindelnder Erregung. Die aber blieben im Namen interpretatorischen Understatements und freilich herrlich inszenierten, quasi groß-orchestrierten Quartett-Spiels zu wenig berücksichtigt. Es fehlt diesem Quartett zuletzt doch an Gelassenheit, der Musik, da wo sie hin will, gänzlich zu folgen und sich ihr zu überlassen. Mit staunenswertem Kunstverstand und einer unüberhörbaren Tendenz zu interpretatorischen Manierismen führen diese Musiker Musik mehr vor, stellen sie mit unübertrefflicher Disziplin mehr dar, als daß sie sie entfalteten. Bei Brahms wurden so Grenzen spürbar. Auf einem Niveau freilich, das das philharmonische Publikum hinriß und zuletzt noch eine

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Zugabe, Adagio aus Haydns Opus 20 Nr. 6, erzwang.

Wolfgang Burde

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Nachdem die große Zeit der Kirchenkonzerte wieder begonnen hat, kann man erfreulicherweise feststellen, daß ein relativ weitgestreutes Programm angeboten und vor allem immer wieder selten gespielte Werke „ausgegraben“ werden. Das Requiem solenne von Michael Haydn, dem jüngeren Bruder Joseph Haydns, gehört zweifellos dazu. Jörg-Peter Schulz versuchte mit der Friedenauer Kantorei in der Kirche Zum guten Hirten, das Stück wieder zum Leben zu erwecken. Mit vier hervorragenden Solisten (Roswith von Monkiewitsch, Sopran, Dörthe Küsters, Alt, Ken Bannon, Tenor, Johannes Richter, Baß), einem klanghomogenen, leider etwas stimschwachen Chor und einem Kammerorchester gelang hier eine sorgfältige Aufführung des Requiems, die im Rahmen des Möglichen — wegen der „Überakustik“ des Kirchenraums wirkte alles etwas verschwommen — einen Eindruck von Haydns Musik vermittelte. Wer nur einigermaßen das Requiem von Mozart kennt, konnte sich dem Vergleich nicht entziehen, da in einigen Punkten die Ähnlichkeit zu stark hervortritt. Sie bezieht sich besonders auf die Art der kompositorischen Bearbeitung bestimmter Textstellen: so wird jeweils das Kyrie wie auch die Worte „Quam olim Abrahæ“ als Fuge beziehungsweise Fugato ausgearbeitet, das Benedictus bleibt hauptsächlich den Solisten vorbehalten und so weiter. Diese Verwandtschaft beruht auf keinem Zufall. Hier wird vielmehr deutlich, daß (weit in der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts) sich in der Meß- und Requiemkomposition Konventionen durchgesetzt hatten, die für einen Michael Haydn gleichermaßen wie für Mozart als mehr oder minder verbindlich galten.

Irmgard Tschakert