

# CHAMBER MUSIC VIENNA

*An Introduction to  
Ignaz Schuppanzigh,  
the Father of the  
Classical Chamber  
Music Series*



# *CMS's Winter Festival celebrates the dawn of chamber music concert life, with four programs performed in Vienna in the 1820s.*

## ► 11th of November, 1827

**HAYDN** Quartet in G minor for Strings, Hob. III:74, Op. 74, No. 3, "The Rider" (1793)

**MOZART** Quartet in D minor for Strings, K. 421 (1783)

**BEETHOVEN** Quintet in E-flat major for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, and Piano, Op. 16 (1796)

Wu Qian, PIANO • Juilliard String Quartet (Joseph Lin, Ronald Copes, VIOLIN • Roger Tapping, VIOLA • Astrid Schween, CELLO) Stephen Taylor, OBOE • Alexander Fiterstein, CLARINET • Peter Kolkay, BASSOON • Radovan Vlatković, HORN

**TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018 • 7:30 PM**

*Pre-concert lecture with music historian Christopher H. Gibbs at 6:15 PM in the Rose Studio.*

## ► 23rd of January, 1825

**HAYDN** Quartet in E-flat major for Strings, Hob. III:71, Op. 71, No. 3 (1793)

**SPOHR** Double Quartet No. 1 in D minor for Strings, Op. 65 (1823)

**BEETHOVEN** Quintet in C major for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello, Op. 29 (1801)

Kristin Lee, Cho-Liang Lin, VIOLIN • Mark Holloway, VIOLA Gary Hoffman, CELLO • Miró Quartet (Daniel Ching, William Fedkenheuer, VIOLIN • John Largess, VIOLA Joshua Gindele, CELLO)

**SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2018 • 5:00 PM**

*Pre-concert lecture with archaeologist John R. Hale at 3:45 PM in the Rose Studio.*

## ► 14th of March, 1824

**SCHUBERT** Quartet in A minor for Strings, D. 804, Op. 29, No. 1, "Rosamunde" (1824)

**BEETHOVEN** Septet in E-flat major for Winds and Strings, Op. 20 (1799)

Escher String Quartet (Adam Barnett-Hart, Danbi Um, VIOLIN Pierre Lapointe, VIOLA • Brook Speltz, CELLO) • Edgar Meyer, DOUBLE BASS • David Shifrin, CLARINET • Bram van Sambeek, BASSOON • Radovan Vlatković, HORN

**FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2018 • 7:30 PM**

## ► 26th of March, 1827

**HAYDN** Quartet in G major for Strings, Hob. III:81, Op. 77, No. 1 (1799)

**MOZART** Quartet in D major for Strings, K. 575, "Prussian" (1789)

**BEETHOVEN** Trio in G major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Op. 1, No. 2 (1791-93, rev. 1794)

Gilbert Kalish, PIANO • Arnaud Sussmann, VIOLIN • Paul Watkins, CELLO • Shanghai Quartet (Weigang Li, Yi-Wen Jiang, VIOLIN • Honggang Li, VIOLA • Nicholas Tzavaras, CELLO)

**TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2018 • 7:30 PM**

**ALL CONCERTS TAKE PLACE  
IN ALICE TULLY HALL.**

# BEETHOVEN'S FIDDLER: IGNAZ SCHUPPANZIGH AND HIS CONCERT SERIES

BY CHRISTOPHER H. GIBBS AND JOHN M. GINGERICH

**VIOLINIST IGNAZ SCHUPPANZIGH**, despite being one of the most important musicians of the 19th century, is barely known to music lovers today. He was Beethoven's "fiddler" and formed the first professional string quartet, which led him to be crucially involved with the genesis and premieres of most of the master's chamber music, as well as of the Ninth Symphony and other compositions. He also gave the first public chamber music concerts anywhere outside of London, and in those concerts mainly performed the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven thus helping to shape the museum culture of classical music in which we still live. He is the focus of CMS's Winter Festival, which recreates the programs of four subscription concerts he gave in Vienna during the 1820s.

Born in Vienna in 1776, Schuppanzigh was already recognized in his teens as a superb violinist. Soon after Beethoven, who was six years older, moved to Vienna in 1792, he met Schuppanzigh, who may have given him lessons in the fundamentals of violin playing. The two occasionally performed together, most notably giving the public premiere of the "Archduke" Trio, Op. 97, in 1814, which proved to be one of the composer's last performances as a pianist before hearing loss ended the concertizing facet of his career. As a conductor Schuppanzigh often performed Beethoven's music and he was a distinguished orchestral musician, which is why Beethoven chose him in 1824 to be concertmaster for the premiere of the Ninth Symphony.

Schuppanzigh left his greatest mark in elevating and professionalizing chamber music, especially the genre of the string quartet. Already as a teenager in the mid-1790s he led a string quartet for Prince Karl Lichnowsky, who was one of Beethoven's most generous patrons. This group introduced Beethoven to Vienna's leading string players and played Haydn quartets under the old master's personal supervision. When Beethoven himself started composing quartets in the late 1790s, Schuppanzigh and his colleagues were at his disposal to test them out.

## THE SCHUPPANZIGH QUARTET

In 1808 another of Beethoven's patrons, Count (later Prince) Andreas Razumovsky (Lichnowsky's brother-in-law), asked Schuppanzigh to form the "finest string quartet in Europe." The count was himself a violinist who sometimes played second stand with the group. Schuppanzigh called upon two members of his former ensemble, violinist Ludwig Sina (1778-1857) and violist Franz Weiss (1778-1830), and added the cellist Joseph Linke (1783-1837). A contemporary observer gave a vivid description of the quartet's relationship with Beethoven during these years:

*Beethoven was, as it were, the cock of the walk in the princely establishment; everything that he composed was rehearsed not from the griddle and performed to the nicety of a hair, according to his ideas, just as he wanted it and not otherwise, with affectionate interest, obedience and devotion such as could spring only from such ardent admirers of his lofty genius, and with a penetration into the most secret intentions of the composer and the most perfect comprehension of his intellectual tendencies.*

The Schuppanzigh Quartet performed regularly for the next eight years, most likely giving the premieres of all of Beethoven's "middle period" quartets. (Few details survive concerning performances from this time.) These quartets were more ambitious than earlier ones, by Beethoven or by any other composer. About the set of three dedicated to Razumovsky, Op. 59, the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, the leading music journal of the day, called them "very long and difficult." In certain respects, these are pieces of symphonic scope and orchestral sound. The genre of the string quartet was exiting the genteel parlor and now needed professionals to play and connoisseurs to listen. The shift from *Hausmusik* to the concert hall required not only a higher level of performance, but also put much greater demands on audiences with lengthy works that needed a high level of concentration. All this encouraged Beethoven compositionally to ever greater exploration, ingenuity, and originality.

Razumovsky's splendid palace burned to the ground following a New Year's Eve party closing out 1814. This misfortune, as well as rampant inflation, eventually led to the dissolution of the quartet, although some of the members were provided with a generous pension. In February 1816, Schuppanzigh gave an all-Beethoven farewell concert consisting of the last of the "Razumovsky" Quartets, the Quintet for Piano and Winds, Op. 16 (with pianist Carl Czerny), and the Septet, Op. 20, a Schuppanzigh specialty that was one of Beethoven's most beloved compositions. Schuppanzigh then left Vienna for some seven years, spending time in Germany and Poland, but mostly in St. Petersburg. During his travels he spread the gospel of Beethoven and surely it was no coincidence that another Russian prince, Nikolai Galitzin, commissioned three of Beethoven's late string quartets and arranged the world premiere of the great *Missa solemnis*, Op. 124, in St. Petersburg.

## SCHUPPANZIGH AND BEETHOVEN

Schuppanzigh was an enormous man, as various portraits attest, and Beethoven's nickname for him was Falstaff, after Shakespeare's plus-size knight Sir John. When the violinist moved back to Vienna in April 1823, Beethoven promptly sent him a canon—a musical joke such as he often wrote for his friends—with the text "Falstaff, Show Yourself." Soon after, in a lengthy visit with Beethoven, Schuppanzigh remarked about the possibility of "composing a new quartet together." The composer seems not to have objected to his old friend's presumption and two years later their renewed collaboration bore fruit with the premiere performance of the first of the "late" quartets, that in E-flat, Op. 127. Just two months after returning to Vienna Schuppanzigh had reconstituted his quartet, now with Karl Holz (1799-1858) as the second violinist. (Sina had moved to Paris, where he proved influential in furthering Beethoven's fame in the French capital.)

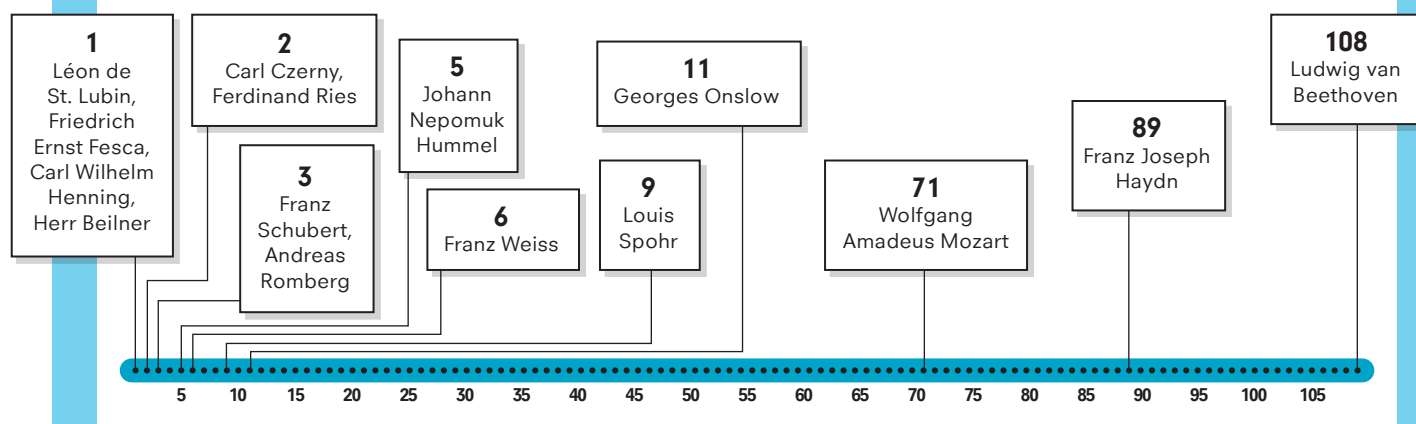


By this point Beethoven was almost totally deaf and people therefore partly communicated with him through “conversation books” that record at least one side of the discussion. (Beethoven would usually speak his responses.) These fascinating documents provide extraordinary information usually lost to history unless contained in a letter. We know what Schuppanzigh and others actually said to Beethoven—quotations given here are not hearsay or from distant memoirs, but comparable to a live recording today. The conversation books give a detailed record of the genesis of the late quartets, including the clarification of phrasing, dynamics, articulation, and other performance indications, the writing out of parts and scores in order to enable the task of proofing, as well as in preparation for the work of professional copyists who penned clean copies for Prince Galitzin and publishers. Schuppanzigh and members of the quartet proved vital to all of these tasks.

The more human side of Beethoven’s relationships with Schuppanzigh and other quartet members comes across in the canons he tossed off for them. Over 20 years before the “Falstaff” one welcoming Schuppanzigh back from Russia, Beethoven wrote *Lob auf den Dicken* (Praise to the Fat One) that begins “Schuppanzigh ist ein Lump.” Another for him is *Esel aller Esel, hi ha* (Ass of All Asses, Hee-haw) that,

## THE COMPOSERS FEATURED IN SCHUPPANZIGH'S SERIES (SUMMER 1823 TO SPRING 1828)

Schuppanzigh presented 106 concerts featuring 313 works by the following composers:



## The most often performed compositions in Schuppanzigh's series

8x

- Beethoven, Septet for Strings and Winds in E-flat major, Op. 20
- Beethoven, String Quintet in C major, Op. 29
- Beethoven, String Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 74

7x

- Beethoven, String Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No. 3
- Mozart, String Quintet in D major, K. 593

6x

- Mozart, String Quartet in A major, K. 464
- Beethoven, String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2

5x

- Beethoven, String Quartet in D major, Op. 18, No. 3
- Beethoven, String Quartet in A major, Op. 18, No. 5
- Beethoven, String Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 18, No. 6
- Mozart, String Quintet in C minor, K. 406
- Mozart, String Quartet in D minor, K. 421
- Mozart, String Quartet in E-flat major, K. 428
- Mozart, String Quintet in G minor, K. 516
- Haydn, String Quartet in C major, Op. 76, No. 3

together with *Da ist das Werk* (There's the Work, See to the Money!), are two of Beethoven's very last "pieces," penned in the fall of 1826, just months before his death.

## **SCHUPPANZIGH'S SUBSCRIPTION CONCERTS IN THE 1820s**

Schuppanzigh programmed 24 concerts (four groups of six) during seasons 1823–24, 1824–25, 1826–27; and 18 (three groups of six) in 1825–26, 1827–28, 1828–29. In addition, there were occasionally "benefit concerts" that raised money for a specific performer, an important way of supplementing his income. Such special non-subscription events proved to be of particular importance because Beethoven's late quartets usually premiered on them. Only the first "collaborative" quartet, Op. 127, premiered as part of Schuppanzigh's subscription series (6 March 1825), with quite disappointing results due largely to insufficient rehearsal as Beethoven had kept delaying delivery of the final score. Op. 132 was unveiled at one of Linke's benefit concerts (6 November 1825), Op. 130 on a non-subscription Schuppanzigh concert (21 March 1826). The final two quartets (Opp. 131 and 135) premiered on similar occasions after Beethoven's death.

Schuppanzigh's concerts were usually given on Sunday afternoons at the Musikverein (Music Society), which was housed at the time at the Roter Igel (Red Hedgehog) in the Tuchlauben. The audience capacity was probably about 150, although more could be accommodated if necessary. At first, Schuppanzigh required that audiences subscribe to an entire series, individual tickets were not available. After a few seasons he relented on this point, but with a hefty price for single concerts.

As with his earlier concerts, Schuppanzigh's core repertory consisted of works by "the greatest masters," as he put it in one of his advertisements, that is of string quartets by Haydn, and quartets and quintets by Mozart and Beethoven. This canon—accounting for more than 87% of the repertory—was occasionally augmented with pieces by Louis Spohr (especially his double quartets), Georges Onslow (especially his cello quintets), and even more occasionally with works by Franz Weiss, the violist of the quartet, and the young Franz Schubert. (See chart on previous page.)

## **SCHUPPANZIGH'S CANON OF MASTERS**

Schuppanzigh's programming was designed to let Beethoven shine against the backdrop of his forebears Haydn and Mozart, while everyone else auditioned for inclusion in the canon of the masters. Although concerts primarily featured string quartets and quintets, this too evolved over the seasons. Schuppanzigh more often programmed piano trios, which allowed him to bring in pianists such as Carl Czerny, a former student of Beethoven. (Schuppanzigh most likely first introduced them.) "Big" pieces, like Spohr's double quartets and Beethoven's audience-favorite septet, offered chances to feature other leading musicians in Vienna.

The four concerts CMS recreates in this Winter Festival provide a sample of how Schuppanzigh's series evolved. Two of them consist exclusively of works by the Classical trinity, as was usually the case. One concert was the occasion for the premiere of Schubert's String Quartet in A minor, Op. 29, and

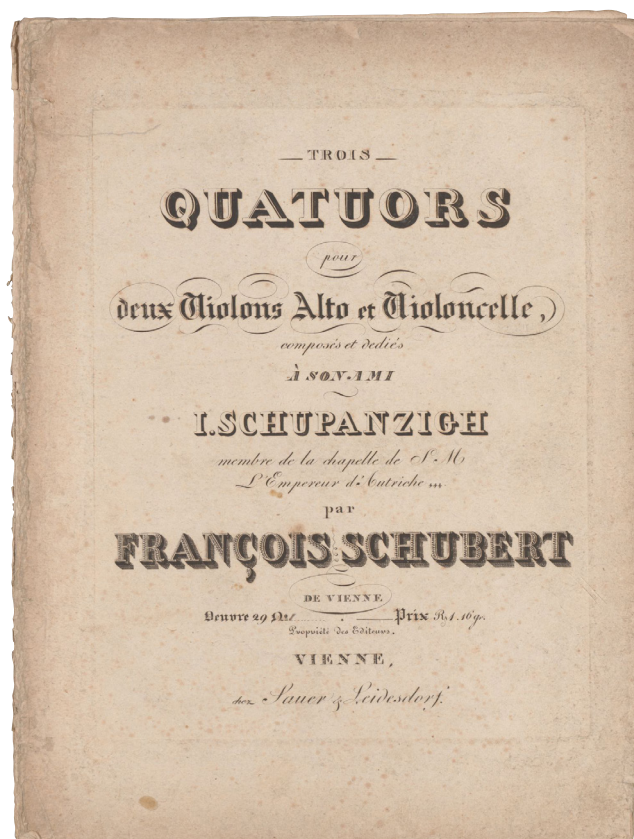


another presented Spohr's Double Quartet No. 1 in D minor, a piece richly deserving of revival today.

The exposure that Schuppanzigh gave to Schubert, known at the time primarily for his songs and other domestic music, proved a boon to the young composer. He programmed three of Schubert's instrumental pieces, all premieres. The first was the A minor Quartet, which we hear on 23 March and which Schubert dedicated to the violinist. It premiered on 14 March 1824, the last concert of the violinist's first season back in Vienna. The other work on that program was Beethoven's Septet, Op. 20, which provided the model for Schubert's Octet, D. 803 that Schuppanzigh performed on 16 April 1827, less than a month after Beethoven's death. The third piece was the Piano Trio in B-flat, Op. 99, which Schuppanzigh premiered on 23 December 1827.

## BEETHOVEN'S DEATH

The last of the concerts CMS recreates during this festival took place on the afternoon of 26 March 1827, the day the 56-year-old Beethoven died. As the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* reported: "At 5:50 Beethoven passed into eternal rest, painless, after an hour of sustained agony. At that moment Schuppanzigh was playing the incomparable *Adagio* from his Piano Trio in G." The program opened with string quartets by Haydn and Mozart before Czerny joined Schuppanzigh and Linke for Beethoven's Piano Trio, Op. 1, No. 2. The funeral was held three days later, a formidable event in Vienna's history. Schuppanzigh was one of the 36 torchbearers, as were Schubert, Linke, and other cultural luminaries.



The cover of Schubert's *A minor Quartet*, showing the dedication to Schuppanzigh.

At the time of his death Beethoven's last two quartets had not yet been performed in public, although it appears that Schuppanzigh's group had at least played them through. There are discussions with Beethoven in the conversation books, for example, about the continuous seven movements of the C-sharp minor Quartet, Op. 131, which prompted Holz to ask: "Does it have to be played through without stopping? But then we won't be able to repeat anything! When are we supposed to tune?" Although the evidence is not conclusive, this piece was most likely first performed at a special Schuppanzigh concert on 9 March 1828 and Op. 135 followed some two weeks later at a benefit for Linke on 23 March.

Three days after that, 26 March, on the exact first anniversary of Beethoven's death, the 31-year-old Schubert gave the one public concert of his career devoted entirely to his own compositions and at which his Piano Trio in E-flat, Op. 100, premiered. The event was a great success and earned Schubert



Lithograph of Beethoven on his deathbed by Josef Danhauser (1827).

a welcome profit, some of which he used to attend a landmark concert three days later: Niccolò Paganini's first appearance in Vienna, initiating an unprecedented series of 14 concerts over the next four months. The conductor for some of them was none other than Ignaz Schuppanzigh.

There is more than a little irony in this. Schuppanzigh's subscription concerts in the 1820s had focused on elevating musical taste. He sought to move away from the typical potpourri programming of the time that mixed instrumental and vocal music, that often presented select movements rather than complete works, and that promoted flashy virtuosity. Yet here he was involved with Paganini's spectacular circus. (One concert ended with a set of Paganini variations on Haydn's "God Save the Emperor," performed on the G string alone.) Audiences loved it. A critic commented: "Never has an artist caused such a terrific sensation within our walls as this god of the violin. Never has a public so gladly paid to attend a concert, and never in my memory has the fame of a virtuoso so spread to the lowest classes of the population." The rise of the virtuoso—Franz Liszt would take Vienna by storm ten years later—represented very different musical values than those Schuppanzigh promoted. It is an old battle between popular and elite culture, one that continues to the present day.

## THE END OF SCHUPPANZIGH'S CONCERT SERIES

Schuppanzigh did not participate in Schubert's concert, although the other members of his group did. His health was declining, as was the appeal of his concerts, and he took on two new orchestral positions. Beethoven was now dead and Schubert's death followed just eight months after his big concert. The final two seasons of Schuppanzigh's series explored different kinds of programs, more accommodating to popular taste. His offerings came to resemble ever more closely other concerts of his time, losing by increments their distinctiveness. The steady rhythm of 18 or 24 concerts a season did not prevail through the last two. In 1828-29 he offered only two six-concert series, and the newspapers generally stopped covering them. During the final season, 1829-30, he moved the events to a new time and place. The first concert offered the ever-popular Beethoven septet, but for the first time split into two parts, so the piece would start and end the concert; sandwiched in between was a Schubert song and a Beethoven piano trio. Adding vocal music was a further capitulation to the prevailing orthodoxy of mixed concerts that Schuppanzigh had heretofore resisted. There were also new marketing gimmicks, such as complimentary "Damenbillets," a second ticket for a woman. On 25 January 1830 violist Franz Weiss died at age 52. Schuppanzigh paused a month to regroup, and then announced another cycle of four concerts for March, but died unexpectedly of a stroke a week before they were to begin. He was 53.

Unlike Schubert, Beethoven never dedicated a quartet to Schuppanzigh, and seems to have regarded their enduring friendship and collaboration as sufficient tribute. But it was not Beethoven alone, but Beethoven in collaboration with Schuppanzigh who transformed the string quartet from music best experienced by adept performers to the most rewarding music for the diligent listener, and thereby made it a cornerstone of the building we know as classical music. Schuppanzigh's legacy was enormous even if his name no longer shines.



# WHY SCHUPPANZIGH MATTERS

BY JOHN M. GINGERICH

**IGNAZ SCHUPPANZIGH INTRODUCED** several innovations that fundamentally changed the genre of the string quartet and more broadly changed how people thought about and experienced classical music. His first innovation was to enable people to listen—really listen—to chamber music. During the first decade of the 19th century, the point of a string quartet, for most people, was not to listen to it but to play it. The family or neighborhood string quartet constituted the standard home entertainment center, and publishers issued all of the musical literature in string quartet arrangements to cater to the ubiquity of domestic ensembles. Since string instruments were not considered suitable for women, men gathered during the evening to read through quartets, or quartet arrangements of the latest opera and orchestral hits, typically playing as much music as possible, trading parts or rotating in to make sure everyone participated equally. Listeners were incidental; what mattered was the experience of the participating players.

Then, during the winter of 1804-05, Schuppanzigh pioneered public string quartet concerts. Some of the first surviving responses record amazement at the transformation of familiar mainstays when performed by a polished, rehearsed ensemble instead of by sight-readers; literature whose charms had been thought exhausted by uncounted read-throughs suddenly revealed unsuspected nuance, depth, and power of a sort that might even repay further hearings. Schuppanzigh continued with public subscription concerts right through his eight-year tenure with Count Razumovsky and again from the time of his return from Russia in 1823 until his death in 1830.

Schuppanzigh's next innovation, for which he shares the credit with Count Razumovsky, was a logical extension of public concerts: the founding of an ensemble with a fixed membership. Razumovsky's munificence made possible a quartet ensemble that rehearsed and performed together day-in, day-out for years on end, keeping always the same personnel. Such an ensemble could best exploit its advantages over any ad hoc group, even of virtuosos, in presenting performances that would reward repeated listening. For his final series of concerts (1823-30) Schuppanzigh kept the ensemble he had led under Razumovsky, replacing only the second violinist, who had left for Paris. Again, as under Razumovsky, the ensemble remained fixed for its entire seven-season run.

Yet a third innovation, Schuppanzigh's programming, was, again, an outgrowth of the first two. All the time and attention lavished on detail and nuance would be best rewarded by performing, as he put it in one of his notices, the works of "the greatest masters." We don't have exact programs of his early public concerts, but visitors and newspapers noted the composers he favored. From the start his core repertory consisted of quartets by Haydn, and quartets and quintets by Mozart and Beethoven, and eventually (after 1825) came to include all of Beethoven's chamber music. This central repertory was augmented occasionally with quartets by Anton Eberl and Andreas Romberg in the early years, and in later years with works by Louis Spohr, Georges Onslow, and Franz Schubert. As Schuppanzigh explained in one of his advertisements, "for the sake of greater variety, the charm of novelty, but especially in response to the wishes of diverse connoisseurs" he wished to feature "not only the famous works of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, but also the most successful works of other composers." Beethoven was always the central focus of his programming, both in the quantity and variety of his works, as well as in his positioning as the successor to Mozart and Haydn, with the presence of other composers of his generation only serving to demonstrate that point more convincingly.

Other quartet ensembles around Europe who followed Schuppanzigh's lead did not understand the implications of performing chamber music in public in the same way. Pierre Baillot in Paris, for example, who began giving public quartet "séances" in 1814, led a much less stable ensemble, and tended to leave programming decisions to his inspiration in the moments before the performance began. Like Schuppanzigh, his core repertory consisted of quartets and quintets by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, but his most common pattern for programs began with a Boccherini quartet or quintet and ended with a light work of his own composition. And instead of following Schuppanzigh's lead in performing, over time, the whole mature repertory of his chief composers, Baillot tended to repeat favorites. Of Beethoven's oeuvre, for example, he restricted himself for a long time to four of the Op. 18 Quartets; the String Quintet Op. 29; and Beethoven's own arrangement for string quintet of his Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 1, No. 3; string arrangements of the first three movements of the Septet, Op. 20; string arrangements of parts of the Sixth Symphony; a quartet arrangement of the Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1; and an arrangement of the Romance for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 50.

By the time Schuppanzigh began his last run of subscription concerts in 1823 his programming represented a much greater departure from Viennese norms than had his concerts 20 years earlier. E. T. A. Hoffmann in 1805 had hailed the instrumental genres as the very embodiment of the *Zeitgeist*, comprising "the most

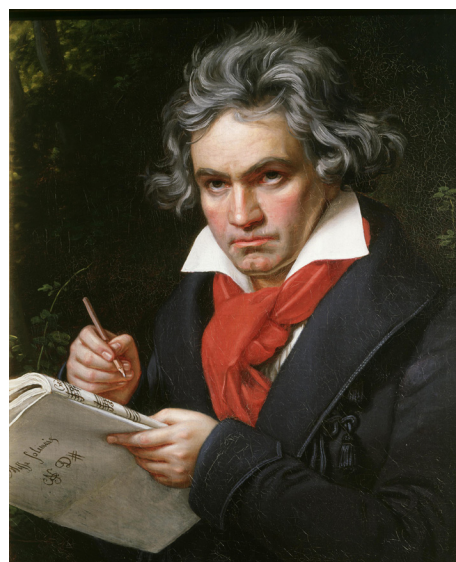


Romantic of all the arts—one might almost say, the only genuinely Romantic one.” By the 1820s the music of Haydn and Mozart had aged and only a few hardy favorites remained alive in performance. The decade of Rossini operas (starting in Vienna in 1816), of the waltz orchestras of Johann Strauss Sr. and Joseph Lanner (starting in 1823), and of the first full flowering of virtuosity, rendered all the old four-movement instrumental genres born of aristocratic patronage deeply unfashionable; the sonata became a rare visitor in the parlor, as did the symphony on the public stage, and even new quartets were predominantly *quatuors brillants* (a quartet in which the first violin takes the role of soloist, accompanied by the remaining three members). In the home, the male string quartet was beginning to be crowded out by music for the pianoforte, the specialty of young women. The symphony, string quartet, and piano sonata were all essentially homeless. The public institutions that came to sustain them from the 1840s right into the present, the professional symphony orchestra, the professional chamber ensemble, and the piano recital, had yet to be founded. Not until mid-century did the foundling genres of instrumental music come to comprise the canonic heart of what was retrospectively termed the “Classical” music of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven.

Public concerts in Vienna in the 1820s tended to offer as much variety as possible so as not to unduly tax their audiences, and included everything from songs, choruses, child prodigies, novel instruments, and virtuoso dazzlement to poetic recitations, and tableaux vivants of famous paintings. The vast majority of the instrumental offerings comprised virtuoso vehicles (*divertissements*, *potpourris*, and variations, often on operatic themes). With rare exceptions, whole symphonies could be heard only in the concerts given each year by the leading dilettante organizations, concerts designed to give the social experience of their participants priority over what listeners might hear.

By default, Schuppanzigh’s subscription concerts became the preeminent public venue for hearing instrumental music in a pedigreed genre, and thus by default his concerts were also the preeminent venue for hearing instrumental music by Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven. At a time when the old instrumental genres Beethoven had inherited and made his own were fading away as old music had always faded away, when Haydn’s symphonies had nearly vanished, when Beethoven himself had become a living legend but had also begun to appear irrelevant to the future course of music, Schuppanzigh did more than anyone else to keep those instrumental genres audible and fresh and in mind and in memory. Only Schuppanzigh provided polished performances in Vienna to make the case that the richness of this music had not been exhausted or even plumbed by decades of exposure, that here was music that transcended fashion.

*The composers of the Classical trinity, from left to right: Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven.*



While the novelty of Schuppanzigh's first concerts had caused comment, an influential portion of Vienna's musical intelligentsia embraced his series in the 1820s as if they had just found a life raft to cling to. Dilettante concert organizations had been founded in the previous decade in large part to assuage the hunger for more substantial fare than that typically on offer in public concerts, but they offered a very limited, poorly executed menu, so when Schuppanzigh's series started in 1823 it met an increasingly urgent need. The first reviews repeatedly praised Schuppanzigh's concerts as a "school of artistic taste," and as an "institution for the conservation of the higher sense for music," that is, music that transcends mere "ear-tickling." The reviewers took pains to convince readers that the public string quartet represented the peak experience and most refined listening challenge available to connoisseurs of music, and as such was drawing Vienna's most select music public.

Critics hailed Schuppanzigh's concerts by describing them with the term "classical"—as one reviewer put it, "[Schuppanzigh is] a mighty dam against the flood of modern tinsel music, dedicating his virtuosity solely to the acknowledgment and rise of truly classical creations." But this "classical" also had class connotations; the venerable "classical" works had aristocratic cachet while the modern tinsel music was bourgeois. Unlike any other public venue in 1823, but perhaps not too dissimilar from the experience high aristocrats like Lichnowsky, Lobkowitz, and Razumovsky had once been able to offer their guests, Schuppanzigh's concerts forced listeners to concentrate on purely musical processes through the uninterrupted course of, typically, three string quartets, without the aid or distraction of text, and without granting the performer a greater claim on their attentions than the music. Over several seasons his subscribers encountered the historic panorama of the string quartet from its beginnings with Haydn right through the first public hearing of a Schubert quartet. Schuppanzigh was training his audience, preparing them as well as possible for the promised encounter with the new quartets Beethoven was working on.

## IN THE PRESS: CRITICAL RESPONSES TO SCHUPPANZIGH'S SERIES

published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Vienna)

**12 JULY 1823** We declare without reservation that the grand style of Schuppanzigh's quartet performances forms a complete contrast with the puny spirit that tends to prevail in productions of this music when they are pursued as mere home entertainment, where they are better suited to keeping the players in practice than to the contemplation of this beautiful but peculiar genre of art.

...With truly poetic enthusiasm the performing masters under Schuppanzigh's sensitive leadership pursue the composers' flights of ideas, and not infrequently in rapid passages their break-neck speed combined with the greatest precision and clarity create an astonishing result.

**27 MARCH 1824** When one leaves one music room, and in the second and third finds always served up the same dish of the day, namely the opera arias, which, just for variety's sake are turned into a stew by the potpourri masters, when stuffed with song and gorged with constantly repeating themes, which are repeated even by pianos without song, one finds oneself enervated, then one might well regard a good violin quartet as a welcome digestive which everyone needs for their health.

**9 OCTOBER 1824** In the quartet in particular, and most especially in that for string instruments, a performance of the utmost perfection is conceivable, since every figure, every harmonic movement is more clearly perceptible than in a symphony, overture, etc.; as is then also truly the case in Mr. Schuppanzigh's productions.

Since his entry into the k.k. Hofcapelle we can consider ourselves lucky to count this deserving artist completely our own, because as a powerful dam against the torrent of modern tinsel music he has dedicated his virtuosity solely to the recognition and elevation of truly classical creations.

After finishing the Op. 95 Quartet in 1810 Beethoven had stopped writing string quartets. Some of his reasons can be surmised from a letter he wrote to his agent in England: “N.B. The Quartett [Op. 95] is written for a small circle of connoisseurs and is never to be performed in public. Should you wish for some Quartetts for public performance I would compose them to this purpose occasionally.” Schuppanzigh’s return to Vienna from Russia hard on the heels of Prince Galitzin’s commission for three new string quartets, along with Schuppanzigh’s new series of public quartet concerts, evidently persuaded Beethoven that he could now successfully market quartets for connoisseurs. Publishers embraced the implications of the new classicizing tendencies. As one put it, “I won’t collect the interest for 20 years; but with Beethoven I have capital in my hands.—But not everyone can play it yet.” Publishers usually first released string quartets only in the four separate parts, but Beethoven’s late quartets appeared in score simultaneously, or nearly so—a first for chamber music. A quartet score assisted study, but had previously been issued primarily in posthumous complete works editions, as “monuments.” Issuing Beethoven’s late quartets as “monuments” right away was consistent with treating their purchase as a long-term capital investment.

Schuppanzigh likely began his public concerts with an agenda no more ambitious than allowing a larger audience to experience what was already happening in the salons of his aristocratic patrons. During his final run of concerts those salons no longer existed, so his enterprise became more desperate, trying to keep alive something whose existence he felt was more necessary and more timely than ever before. But in spite of his conservative motivations, which looked back to a golden age of aristocratic patronage, he was in many ways a harbinger of modernity.

When Schuppanzigh moved the string quartet to the public concert stage in 1804, followed by highlighting piano trios in the fall of 1825, he set in motion a gradual process by which all domestic genres with a claim to lasting value eventually became public: next to emerge was the piano sonata in the 1830s, then came all solo piano music, and by mid-century even song cycles were performed in public concerts. Likewise, Schuppanzigh’s long-term, polished ensemble foreshadowed the state of affairs that came to prevail in the second half of the 19th century and prevails still, in which string quartets are dedicated, professional ensembles, rather than groups of performers who collaborate only as occasion demands.

But it was in his programming of music predominantly by Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven that Schuppanzigh proved most prescient. By 1823 the composers of the Classical trinity represented a tradition going back two full generations, and by keeping their music alive Schuppanzigh was creating a deep memory of musical excellence. Schubert was only the next of a long line of composers stretching across nearly two subsequent centuries to be inspired to make his own contribution by the continued presence in concert of his most illustrious forbears.

Schuppanzigh matters because he first revealed to a broad public why string quartets were worth listening to as well as playing. He matters because his concerts made possible Beethoven’s late quartets and Schubert’s mature chamber music. He matters because his concerts began a tradition that became the mainstay of Western concert life by the mid-19th century and has continued ever since—a tradition in which both the audience and composers are deeply immersed in the best works through the whole history of a genre, and in which the concert hall functions much like a museum for the display of those works. And that is why it is entirely fitting that the word “classical” first became a widely used term for music in descriptions of Schuppanzigh’s concerts.



# THE MUSICIANS

## IGNAZ SCHUPPANZIGH (1776-1830)



The Viennese violinist and conductor Ignaz Schuppanzigh was the central performer championing the chamber music of Beethoven and Schubert during the first decades of the 19th century. Already as a teenager he led the chamber ensemble for Prince Karl Lichnowsky,

which played Haydn's string quartets under the master's supervision and for which Beethoven composed his first quartets. In his early 20s Schuppanzigh organized and conducted the popular orchestral concerts in Vienna's Augarten. For the rest of his life he remained an indefatigable organizer and leader of both chamber and orchestral performances. For more than three decades he collaborated closely with Beethoven, giving the premieres of most of the chamber music, the Ninth Symphony, and other pieces. On several occasions the two performed together. Schuppanzigh is credited with organizing the first public string quartet concerts on the continent in 1804-05. In 1808 Count Razumovsky asked him to form the finest quartet in Europe. After that group was dissolved in 1816 Schuppanzigh left Vienna for seven years, most of which he spent in St. Petersburg. He returned in April 1823 and resumed public chamber music concerts, which he continued until his death. During these years Schuppanzigh premiered Beethoven's late quartets as well as three works by Schubert and two by Louis Spohr. In 1827 he became a member of the Court Chapel and in 1828 concertmaster of the Court Opera.

## KARL HOLZ (1799-1858)

Violinist, conductor, and civil servant Karl Holz was born in Vienna, where he may have studied with Schuppanzigh. He served as second violinist in the quartet during the 1820s, by far its youngest member. Holz was a dilettante, which in its early 19th-century usage cast no aspersions on his abilities. He earned a salary as part of the vast Austrian civil service, with the title of Kassenbeamter (accounts clerk) in the Landschafts-Obereinenehmeramt of Lower Austria, a position that he supplemented by giving violin lessons.

He once told Beethoven: "I have a very light work-load. I basically work for only one hour. The rest of the time is my own. But I have to sit there; my body at least has to be present. I always have something interesting to keep me occupied." Beginning in the summer of 1825 Holz functioned as Beethoven's factotum, winning the composer's gratitude: "A thousand thanks for your devotion to me and for your affection." He proved to be Beethoven's chief support during the crisis the next summer after his nephew Karl attempted suicide.

## JOSEPH LINKE (1783-1837)



Cellist Joseph Linke was born and received his early training in Prussian Silesia. He moved to Vienna in 1808, when Schuppanzigh chose him as cellist for Razumovsky's quartet. When that ensemble disbanded in 1816, Linke received a position as chamber virtuoso with the Countess Anna Marie Erdödy at her country seat in Croatia.

Beethoven dedicated his Op. 102 cello sonatas to her, presumably having Linke in mind for the cello part. In 1818 Linke was appointed as soloist at the Theater an der Wien, the second-most important opera house in Vienna. At special concerts he gave for his own benefit Linke premiered Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 132 (6 November 1825), Op. 130 with a new finale replacing the "Grosse Fuge" (22 April 1827), and Op. 135 (23 March 1828).

## FRANZ WEISS (1778-1830)

The violist and composer Franz Weiss collaborated with Schuppanzigh beginning in his mid-teens and lasting until his death at age 52. He was violist in Schuppanzigh's quartet from Prince Lichnowsky's salon through the years with Count Razumovsky, and again from 1823 to 1830. By 1815 the Leipzig journal *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* had granted him the "rank of the first violist in Vienna," and he repeatedly organized concerts featuring his own compositions and solo playing. Weiss was a serious and dedicated composer; by 1823 he had already published more than a dozen pieces of chamber music, including eight string quartets and a string quintet, as well as a symphony and several ballets, in addition to the usual fashionable pieces. Schuppanzigh gave six performances of four of his string quartets during the first seasons of his 1820s series.



# THE AUTHORS

## CHRISTOPHER H. GIBBS

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College, Co-Artistic Director of the Bard Music Festival, and Executive Editor of *The Musical Quarterly*. He has also taught at Columbia University, Haverford College, and the University at Buffalo. Gibbs edited *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (1997), and is the author of *The Life of Schubert* (2000), which has been translated into five languages. He is co-editor of *Franz Liszt and His World* (2006) and of *Franz Schubert and His World* (2014). He co-authored, with Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, College Edition (Oxford University Press, 2013; revised 2018). Gibbs is a recipient of the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award and was a fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies in 1999-2000.

As a program annotator and lecturer, Gibbs works with many of the country's leading musical institutions. He was the musicological director for the final three years of the acclaimed Schubertiade at the 92nd Street Y in New York City and served as musicological adviser for the bicentennial Schubert Festival at Carnegie Hall. For the past 17 seasons, he has written the program notes for the Philadelphia Orchestra. He gives frequent pre-concert lectures for that orchestra, as well as for the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, New York City Opera, "Great Performers" at Lincoln Center, Music@Menlo, and other organizations.

## JOHN M. GINGERICH

John M. Gingerich has concentrated his research on Beethoven, Schubert, and the beginnings of historicism and canon formation in early 19th-century Vienna. His book, *Schubert's Beethoven Project* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) includes major revisions to the understanding of Schubert's career, his reception of Beethoven, and the status and role of the piano sonata in the early 19th century. He has also published articles on Schubert's Cello Quintet in C major, on Schubert's Latin Masses and what their texts and settings tell us about his religious convictions, on the "Unfinished" Symphony, and on the ideologies and practices of the Schubert circle and their many connections to Friedrich Schlegel, including the Nazarene circle of painters. His work on Beethoven includes an article on the premieres of Beethoven's late quartets. He is currently working on a book on the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh. Gingerich has taught at institutions including Peabody Conservatory, Indiana University, Yale, Wesleyan, and CUNY. Before embarking on his musicology studies he spent several years playing in the cello section of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

# THE DONORS

*Ignaz Schuppanzigh, members of the quartet, and Ludwig van Beethoven owe enormous gratitude to the generous patronage of:*

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