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Franz  
**SCHUBERT**

*String Quintet in C Major Opus 163*

Pieter  
**Wispelwey**  
violoncello



Orpheus Quartet



DIGITAL

# Franz SCHUBERT

(1797-1828)

## Orpheus Quartet

Charles-André Linale, *violin*

Emilian Piedicuta, *violin*

Emile Cantor, *viola*

Laurentiu Sbarcea, *violoncello*



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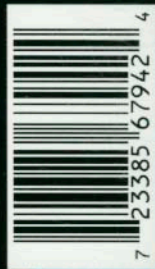
## Pieter Wispelwey

*violoncello*

### String Quintet in C Major, D 956 opus 163

1. Allegro ma non troppo	19.22
2. Adagio	13.39
3. Scherzo (Presto)	9.29
4. Allegretto	9.10
<b>Total time</b>	<b>52.00</b>

*Recording dates, 23-26 June 1994*





ORPHEUS QUARTET

PIETER WISELWEY  
photo: Marco Borggreve



“One of the most interesting and most promising new string quartets”, wrote Jean Roy, the critic of *Le Monde de la Musique*, in July 1988, a year after the inauguration of the **Orpheus Quartet**. And since then the quartet - with Charles André Linale (first violin), Emilian Piedicuta (second violin), Emile Cantor (viola) and Laurentiu Sbarcea (cello) - has indeed built up a career of some prominence.

In 1988, a unanimous jury awarded first prize to the Orpheus Quartet at the Valentino Bucchi Competition in Rome; in the same year, they also won first prize in the Karl Klingler Competition in Munich. In April 1993 they were presented with first prize at the prestigious International Chamber Music Competition in Osaka, and simultaneously received the prize for the best performance of the compulsory work by the Japanese composer, Akiro Miyoshi.

In January 1993 the quartet was awarded the *Grand Prix du Disque* of the Academie Charles Gros for their recording of the complete quartets of Malpiero. In 1992, great international acclaim greeted their CD recording of the quartets of Debussy, Ravel and Dutilleux (Channel Classics CCS 3892).

Since their establishment in 1987, the Orpheus Quartet have gained a worldwide reputation. Their success is founded on their many successful concerts and on a repertoire which extends through Haydn, Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, Smetana and Dvorák to Hartmann, Shostakovich, Malpiero, Berg and Halffter.

**Pieter Wispelwey** is one of the first of a generation of generalist specialists, performing equally outstandingly on historical instruments as on modern instruments, based on and inspired by expert stylistical knowledge, highly original and deep musical understanding and superior technique. His repertoire ranges from works by J. S. Bach to Elliott Carter, Kagel, Schnittke and young contemporary composers.

Pieter Wispelwey was awarded the Elisabeth Everts Prize, an award given biennially to the Netherlands' most promising musician in 1985 and in 1992 Pieter Wispelwey as first and only cellist received the highly prestigious Netherlands Music Prize. For many years he has given complete, widely acclaimed performances of the suites for cello solo by J. S. Bach and Britten and the sonatas by Beethoven and Brahms, on period as well as on modern instruments.

Pieter Wispelwey is a regularly returning guest in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, performing the baroque, classical, romantic and modern repertoire.

He received his early training from Dicky Boeke and Anner Bijlsma in Amsterdam and continued his studies with Paul Katz (Rochester, USA) and with William Pleeth in England. The vast sonata repertoire for cello and piano he performs with several outstanding pianists, like Lois Shapiro and Paul Komen.

**The String Quintet in C Major**, together with the String Quartet in G Major (D887), the 'Great' Symphony in C Major (D944), and the Piano Sonatas in A Major (D959) and B flat Major (D960), represents the climax of Schubert's instrumental oeuvre. At the same time, the quintet is one of the most remarkable compositions in the entire repertoire of Romantic chamber music.

The C Major String Quintet is one of those musical enigmas whose mystery is only deepened by repeated hearings. What inspired Schubert to compose such remarkably beautiful music, and why did no one notice it until the quintet was published in 1853, 25 years after the composer's death? Our first impulse is to put a dramatic or tragic interpretation on this sequence of events, all the more because Schubert composed the quintet only a few months before his death.

From the point of view of Schubert the human being, such an interpretation would be incorrect. After all, in contrast to Mozart, who for some years maintained that he sensed his approaching death, Schubert only became aware of the inevitability of death during the last weeks of his life. Before that time he was probably no more death-obsessed than most of his contemporaries. Every child had an 'Erkönig' in ambush; 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' is a symbol of the same thing.

The String Quintet is one of Schubert's most perfect examples of musical architecture, a domestic altar of unprecedented beauty for the newly cultured middle class, and one of the most successful examples of chamber music in the truest sense of the word: intimate, intense, singing, fascinating, coherent to its narrative, almost symphonic in dimension, but in spite of this an introverted piece of 'pure' music. Schubert's String Quintet is a link of paramount

importance between his spiritual ancestors, Mozart and Beethoven, and his spiritual children, including Brahms and Bruckner.

Franz Schubert started composition of the String Quintet in August 1828. At this time his health was already in decline. In September, the court physician, Dr. Ernst Rinna, advised him to leave the ancient and ill-ventilated inner city of Vienna and move to one of the airier outer suburbs. Schubert immediately moved to the new, but nevertheless damp house of his brother Ferdinand, which was located at what was then the edge of the city.

At this time, Schubert was becoming more and more interested in a thoroughgoing study of counterpoint. He got in touch with the well known teacher, Simon Sechter, who nearly thirty years later would also teach Bruckner some of the fine points of contrapuntal writing. Schubert came for his first lesson with Sechter in November 1828; this might suggest that the composer had little or no knowledge of counterpoint, but that impression is erroneous. Not only the string quartets in a minor (Rosamunde-D 804) and G Major (D 887) of 1826, but also two works of 1828, the *Fantasia in f minor for piano four hands* (D 940), and the String Quintet under discussion here, provide sufficient convincing evidence to the contrary.

Schubert died a few weeks after his first lesson with Sechter. Shortly before his death, a domestic concert was organised at his request, and the program included Beethoven's *String Quartet in C sharp minor* (opus 131). In contrast, Schubert was never to hear his own String Quintet, although he had hoped for a few rehearsals of the piece at home. Its scoring, for two violins, viola, and two cellos, was probably derived from the similarly scored double cello quintets of Boccherini and Onslow; both composers were well known to

the middle class audiences of the early 19th century.

Schubert's Quintet has an undeniably greater emotional range. Not only the impressive *Allegro ma non troppo*, with its heartbreaking minor/major contrasts and daring modulations, and the deeply moving, introverted and sometimes almost unearthly *Adagio*, but also the stormy C Major *Scherzo* and its strangely contrasting *Andante sostenuto* D flat Major trio and the four-square, rough-cast *Allegretto*, with a touch of Haydenesque 'al'ungharese', have placed this unique composition far outside the reach of time and Schubert's earthly existence, alone in its eminence as a symbol of perfect chamber music.

Leo Samama

*Translation: David Shapero*



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**Colophon**

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