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# SCHUBERT

## STRING QUINTET IN C MAJOR, D956

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo (14:24)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio (12:24)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Scherzo (Presto) (7:52)
- 4 4th mvt. - Allegretto (8:50)

London String Quartet:

**John Pennington**, violin  
**Thomas W. Petre**, violin  
**Harry Waldo Warner**, viola  
**Charles Warwick Evans**, cello

with  
**Horace Britt**, cello

Recorded 18-19 April, 1928

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Cover artwork based on a photograph of London String Quartet, c.1931

(NB. At this stage Warner had been replaced in the quartet by William Primrose)

Total duration: 43:30 ©2010 Pristine Audio.

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# SCHUBERT

QUINTET FOR STRINGS  
IN C MAJOR, D.956

## LONDON STRING QUARTET

JOHN PENNINGTON  
THOMAS W. PETRE  
HARRY WALDO WARNER  
CHARLES WARWICK EVANS

WITH  
HORACE BRITT, CELLO

RECORDED IN 1928

# SCHUBERT STRING QUINTET IN C

## LONDON STRING QUARTET/BRITT

The **London String Quartet** was a String quartet founded in London in 1908 which remained one of the leading English chamber groups into the 1930s, and made several well-known recordings.

The viola player and composer Harry Waldo Warner (1874 – 1945) had trained at the London Guildhall School of Music under Alfred Gibson and Orlando Morgan. After giving some violin recitals he concentrated on viola. Charles Warwick Evans (b. 1885) had studied for 6 years at the Royal College of Music and became principal cello in the Beecham Opera Company, then leading cello in the Queen's Hall Orchestra. He resigned that post to devote himself to the String Quartet.

In 1908 Warwick-Evans was leader of the Queen's Hall violoncellos and Waldo Warner was first viola in the New Symphony Orchestra. Warwick-Evans formed the idea of a string quartet worked up to the standard of a solo virtuoso, and approached Waldo Warner. He was enthusiastic, and then Petre was found and finally Albert Sammons, the new Concertmaster of Thomas Beecham's orchestra, to lead the quartet.

They rehearsed four times a week for nearly two years before giving their first concert. There was to be no 'boss': if anyone disagreed with tempo or phrasing he spoke out, the point was discussed, and the decision made if necessary by voting. The first concert was on January 26, 1910, at Bechstein (Wigmore) Hall, as the 'New' Quartet, playing Dohnanyi in D flat, Tchaikovsky in D, and a Fantasy Quartet (No. 1) of Waldo Warner's. Reviews were excellent: the second concert was in June 1910, of Debussy in G minor, Beethoven Op. 59 no. 1, and a Fantasy of Balfour Gardiner's. Warwick-Evans suggested the name 'London String Quartet' and in 1911 it was adopted.

At the outbreak of war, 1914, Warwick-Evans and Waldo Warner could not serve for health reasons. Petre served in France and his place was taken successively by Wynn Reeves, Herbert Kinsey, and Edwin Virgo. Albert Sammons, meanwhile, was building a solo career and had less time for essential rehearsals. In May 1915 the quartet began to give chamber music 'Pops', much liked in wartime London. By May 1917 they had given 50, and at about that time Sammons left and was replaced (July 1917) by James Levey, a pupil of Ferdinand Hill's. The last of these concerts, the 117th, was on July 14, 1919.

In 1920 the suggestion was made that they should perform a one-week cycle of the complete Beethoven quartets, and this was done first in Edinburgh, then in London, then Stockholm, Christiania, and variously in America, in all ten cycles including three in London. In September 1920 they were introduced to America by Mrs Elizabeth Coolidge at Pittsburgh, playing Frank Bridge's E minor (Bologna) Quartet, Beethoven in E minor, and Waldo Warner's Folk-song Fantasy.

In addition to a great number of concerts in London and England they undertook many international tours, notably to America, France, Portugal, Spain (twice), Scandinavia (thrice), Germany and Canada. From November 1922 to April 1924 they conducted a world-tour.

Irving Kolodin wrote:

'In the Flonzaley's later years... they seemed to have become a committee of experts matching exquisite swatches of tonal texture rather than performers of music. For young ears, the rise of the London String Quartet (with the incomparable James Levey as leader, and the enduring partnership of Thomas Petre, H. Waldo Warner and C. Warwick Evans participating) dimmed the Flonzaley star even as it was waning. A more vibrant enthusiasm, a stronger sense of tonal colours, a refinement that was not raffiné, gave them pre-eminence as long as this personnel endured. This, in truth, was not long, and though Levey's successor was John Pennington of the honeyed tone, and William Primrose first showed his prowess as a violist in Waldo Warner's place, it was not the same thing.'

Harry Waldo Warner won distinction as a composer of chamber music, including six published string quartets and a trio. The first two quartets were one-movement works described as Phantasies for the purposes of the Cobbett Prize, which was won by both. The third in C minor is in four movements, though the slow movement and scherzo are linked: the fourth is a Phantasy based on an English folk-song, with many variations. The fifth is a Suite called 'The Pixy Ring', each movement being concerned with fairy lore, and the sixth is a Suite of four movements described as being in the 'Olden Style'.

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