

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Quartet in D major, Op. 64, No. 5 "The Lark" (15:50)

- 1 Allegro moderato (4:24)
- 2 Adagio cantabile (6:14)
- 3 Minuet: Allegretto (3:00)
- 4 Finale: Vivace (2:04)

The Budapest String Quartet

Joseph Roisman, Alexander Schneider, violins
Boris Kroyt, viola Mischa Schneider, violoncello

Performed and recorded on August 3, 1940

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 16 (26:06)

- 5 Grave--Allegro, ma non troppo (13:05)
- 6 Andante cantabile (7:20)
- 7 Rondo: Allegro, ma non troppo (5:38)

Mieczyslaw Horszowski, piano

Members of the Budapest String Quartet

Joseph Roisman, violin Boris Kroyt, viola Mischa Schneider, violoncello

Performed and recorded on April 7, 1955

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Quartet in D major, Op. 76, No. 5 (18:31)

- 8 Allegretto-Allegro (4:22)
- 9 Largo: Cantabile e mesto (8:09)
- 10 Menuetto: Allegro
- 11 Finale: Presto (3:22)

The Budapest String Quartet

Joseph Roisman, Alexander Schneider, violins
Boris Kroyt, viola Mischa Schneider, violoncello

Performed and recorded on March 29, 1941

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

12 Rondo all'Ongarese from Trio No. 1 in G major, Hob. XV:25' (3:11)

Mieczyslaw Horszowski, piano

Members of the Budapest String Quartet

Joseph Roisman, violin Mischa Schneider, violoncello

Performed and recorded on April 7, 1955

The performance of Haydn's popular "Lark" Quartet which opens this memorable compendium offers a glimpse of the Budapest String Quartet at its best—a bit of inspiration caught on the wing, one might say. Dating from August 3, 1940, it was part of the program that inaugurated the legendary foursome's official debut as ensemble-in-residence at the Library of Congress. "Official," because the group had already been heard at the Library; indeed, its initial three concerts there on December 8, 10 and 30, 1938 had been rapturously received (Alice Eversman, a former opera diva and subsequently a music critic for the Washington Evening Star, noted that "such exquisite sound as this combination of instruments has never been heard in this auditorium dedicated to chamber music.")

The Budapest's initial appearance sparked the creation of a then-novel plan in which the Library of Congress would engage the Budapest for extended periods each year. The residency was based on the condition that the quartet rehearse and perform its concerts on the priceless set of Stradivari instruments donated to the Library by Gertrude Clarke Whittall, which were not to leave the confines of that institution. The Budapest held its position with honor until the end of the 1961-1962 season, at which time the group was succeeded by the Juilliard String Quartet.

The two Haydn quartets brought together on this recording (the companion Op. 76, No. 5 dates from March 29, 1941) constitute an especially significant addition to the Budapest Quartet discography due to the presence of Alexander Schneider. Over the course of the ensemble's long career, the Budapest made studio recordings of a great many of Haydn's quartets-- including a complete set of the six Op. 76 works, and individual performances of the "Joke" (Op. 33, No. 2), the "Horseman" (Op. 74, No.3), the "Sunrise" (Op. 76, No. 4)

and the "Lark"--but only one of the group's commercial Haydn recordings, an account of the G major, Op. 54, No.1 (made for H.M.V. in the 1930s) includes that redoubtable Haydn specialist, Alexander ("Sasha") Schneider, as second violinist. While absent from the Budapest from 1944-1954, Sasha recorded almost half of Haydn's 68 quartets with his own groups for the Haydn Society. During this period the Budapest made studio recordings of the "Lark," "Horseman," and "Sunrise" quartets with Edgar Ortenberg, and the "Joke" and Op. 76 quartets with Jac Gorodetzky. Thus, the pair of live performances released here provides valuable firsthand evidence for evaluating music critic B.H. Haggin's observation that...

[there] "can be no doubt of the loss to the quartet through Alexander Schneider's departure. One hears it in the altered sound of the entire group, in which the robust and dark-toned viola and cello are less well balanced by the two delicate and light-toned violins than they used to be...And one hears it in Ortenberg's own playing, which lacks the vitality and style Schneider's had."

The comparison of these "in concert" Budapest versions with their later studio counterparts yields altogether fascinating results. In the instance of the two versions of the "Lark," the 1940 performance heard here anticipates some of the relaxed freedom most Budapest-watchers associate with the Quartet in the period after Sasha rejoined it in 1955. The interpretation has an intimate, almost rhapsodic quality, with supple metrical interplay and delicate, highly detailed nuance. The *moto perpetuo* Finale is a miracle of fleetness and delicacy. But the studio version with Ortenberg is also quintessential "Budapest," with a substan-

tially faster, more businesslike first movement, made even more formal by the observation of the exposition repeat.

The two recordings of Op. 76, No. 5 also present the listener with vividly contrasting readings. The 1941 account heard on this disc gives us the more austere view of the Budapest's musical persona, while the later one with Jac Gorodetzky lets us hear the foursome's more genteel, lyrical side. With the release of this performance, (with its sublime *Largo* movement), record collectors will now also be able to have a three-way comparison--this quartet being one of those that the Schneider Quartet also recorded (its other members on that occasion being Isidore Cohen, second violin; Karen Tuttle, viola; and Hermann Busch, cello).

Beethoven's Op. 16--whether in its original version for piano, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon, or in the composer's own elegant arrangement for piano, violin, viola and cello, is a virtuosic "concerto manqué" that has much in common with the contemporaneous Concerto for Piano in B-flat major, Op. 19. Mieczyslaw Horszowski evidently admired the urbane arrangement for strings, with its added embellishments in the slow movement's two episodes, for he made two studio recordings of this version--with Alexander Schneider, Milton Katims, and Frank Miller in 1953, and subsequently, with Joseph Roisman, Boris Kroyt, and Mischa Schneider of the Budapest circa 1962. This 1955 concert performance of the Op. 16 arrangement is stylistically midway between those two excellent studio versions, offering some of the mellow refinement of the later Budapest account along with the robust, ongoing vigor of the earlier New York edition. Like that 1953 taping, this performance includes an exposition repeat in the first movement. Horszowski, who plays beautifully on all three occasions, is

in particularly splendid pianistic form here, as well as in the brilliantly played Haydn "Gypsy" Rondo, which makes a memorable encore to this collection.

-Harris Goldsmith

Producers: Becky and David Starobin (Bridge Records, Inc.)

Anne McLean (Music Division, The Library of Congress)

Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse

Transfer Engineer: Michael Donaldson (The Magnetic Recording Laboratory,
The Library of Congress)

Annotator: Harris Goldsmith

Design: Rick Neilson and Digital Chameleon

Production Research: Norman Middleton and Wayne Shirley (Music Division, The Library
of Congress)

Production Associate: Robert J. Starobin

Cover Photograph: Music Division, The Library of Congress (August, 1940)

Photograph of Mieczyslaw Horszowski, ca. 1952, courtesy of Dr. John Zawadzinski

For The Library of Congress: James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress;
Jon Newsom, Chief, Music Division

Special thanks to Charles Fenly, Allan McConnell, Dina Fleming, Carol Lynn Flanigan

These Library of Congress / Bridge titles are also available:

BRAHMS: Quintet in F minor, Op. 34; **SCHUBERT:** "Trout" Quintet, Op. 114;
George Szell in conversation; George Szell, piano; The Budapest String Quartet
BRIDGE 9062

RACHMANINOFF: String Quartets No. 1 & No. 2; Trio élégiaque, Op. 9
Artur Balsam, piano; The Budapest String Quartet
BRIDGE 9063

NATHAN MILSTEIN: *The 1946 Library of Congress Recital*, Vitali: Chaconne;
J.S. Bach: Sonata in G minor, BWV 1001; Milstein: Paganiniana (Variations);
Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto; Chopin: Nocturne in C-sharp minor,
Wieniawski: Scherzo-Tarantelle
BRIDGE 9064

NATHAN MILSTEIN: *The 1953 Library of Congress Recital*, Artur Balsam, piano;
Beethoven: Sonata, Op. 24 "Spring"; J.S. Bach: Partita in D minor, BWV 1004;
Brahms: Sonata in D minor
BRIDGE 9066

AARON COPLAND: 81st Birthday Concert at The Library of Congress
Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Leo Smit, piano; Aaron Copland in conversation
BRIDGE 9046

Bridge Records, Inc. Box 1864 New York, NY 10116