

Members of the Vienna Octet

Bassoon – Rudolf Hanzl

Cello – Nikolaus Hübner

Clarinet – Alfred Boskovsky

Double Bass [Double-Bass] – Johann Krump

Horn – Josef Veleba

Viola – Günther Breitenbach

Violin – Willi Boskovsky



Beethoven *Septet in E flat Op. 20* *Vienna Octet*



Mastered in DSD256

One of the last works Beethoven wrote before he became aware of his encroaching deafness, the Septet is a lighthearted work in the spirit of the eighteenth century serenade. Beethoven had it premiered in the same concert in which he unveiled his Symphony No. 1. The Septet was an immediate success, and the composer later expressed a certain resentment toward this work, remarking that its popularity eclipsed more deserving compositions. Nevertheless, the Septet is an interesting work, filled with youthful energy and containing engaging and attractive solos for the instrumentalists. The first of the work's six movements is a slow and deliberate introduction prefacing a fresh and energetic *Allegro con brio*. The first subject is carried initially by the violin, then by the clarinet. The second theme brings several other instruments into a dialogue, but is essentially ignored in the development section; after an elaboration of a fragmented version of the first theme, the development section closes in the right key but without a true recapitulation. In the *Adagio cantabile*, Beethoven shifts to the key of A flat, introducing a tranquil, swaying melody, which the clarinet and violin each play. The other instruments are generally limited to colorful support, except when the horn takes a tentative melodic lead. The Minuet borrows its main theme from Beethoven's Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 49/2 (an earlier work despite its higher opus number). It's

a spry tune over a tick-tock accompaniment. As is common in Beethoven's works of this period, the minuet contains two trios, the second pulling its insistent rhythm from the opening material. The fourth movement, an *Andante*, is a set of variations on the Rhenish folk song "Ach Schiffer, lieber Schiffer." It's yet another lighthearted, bouncy tune, though a curiously unmemorable one; it merely provides Beethoven a suitably-shaped frame on which to hang his own busy melodic excursions and showcase the various instruments of the ensemble. The Scherzo, marked *Allegro molto e vivace*, is a vigorous piece with a hint of the hunt about it, thanks to the little figure played by the horn at the beginning. The contrasting trio is essentially a tuneful cello solo accompanied by the other strings and bassoon. In the final movement, a slow introduction (*Andante con moto alla marcia*) sounds almost ominous, with anticipatory material for the horn and violin. Soon this mood is dispelled by an exuberant *Presto*, in which the forward motion is occasionally interrupted by calm interludes. The movement also features fanfares, prominent solo material, and even a full cadenza for the violin.

Beethoven

Septet in E flat Op. 20

Vienna Octet

- 1 Adagio - Allegro Con Brio 10:18**
- 2 Adagio Cantabile 8:53**
- 3 Tempo Di Minuetto 3:24**
- 4 Tema Con Variazioni (Andante) 7:26**
- 5 Scherzo (Allegro Molto E Vivace) 3:25**
- 6 Andante Con Moto Alla Marcia - Presto 6:56**
- Total Time: 40:22**

**Recording Info: Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape
Recorded by Decca 2 - 6 March 1959 in the Sofiensaal, Vienna.**