

Sir Clifford Michael Curzon, CBE (18 May 1907 – 1 September 1982)

Clifford Michael Siegenberg was born in London to Michael and Constance Mary Siegenberg (née Young). The family soon afterwards changed their name to Curzon.

Curzon studied at the Royal Academy of Music where he won the prestigious Macfarren Gold medal in 1924, at the age of 17, Curzon was the youngest-ever pupil to have been accepted into the senior school. In the same year he was made one of seven sub-professors, and completed his studies in 1926.

His public debut was at a Prom in 1923, when he played a Bach triple concerto under Henry Wood. Between 1928 and 1930 he took further instruction from Artur Schnabel in Berlin. He then studied under Wanda Landowska and Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He toured throughout Europe and the United States.

In 1931 Curzon married the American harpsichordist and pianist, Lucille Wallace. The Curzons had no children of their own, but when the great soprano Maria Cebotari died (aged 39) in Vienna in 1949, they adopted her two orphaned sons. In 1953, Curzon received a CBE and in 1977 he was knighted. In 1980 he received the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal.

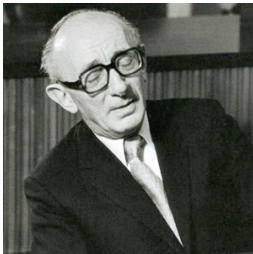
Curzon was particularly well known for his interpretations of Mozart and Schubert. Even though he left a considerable recording legacy, his distaste for recordings was well known, and he very often prohibited the release to the public of records which he felt were not up to his best standard. In his earlier years he had been noted for his championing of modern music; Lennox Berkeley's Piano Sonata is dedicated to him. Later, he tended to stay with the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Austro-German repertoire.

His uncle was Albert Ketelbey, and he described his childhood to an interviewer on the BBC programme Desert Island Discs:

"Little Clifford was supposed to be in bed but he never was, he was out sitting on the landing, listening to my uncle playing through the well of the stairway of my father's old house, and so the first [pieces of] music I really heard were these immortal melodies of Ketelbey."

A pacifist and member of the Peace Pledge Union, Curzon was a conscientious objector in the Second World War. During his premiership, Edward Heath invited musician friends, such as Clifford Curzon and the Amadeus Quartet, to perform at either Chequers or 10 Downing Street.

Curzon is buried next to his wife in the churchyard of St Patrick's, Patterdale, near their house in the Lake District. On his gravestone are inscribed the opening words of Schubert's "An die Musik:" "Du holde Kunst" (O fairest art).



## Facts about this Recording

**Piano Quintet Recorded in 1957**

**Recorded by Decca**

**at the Sofiensaal, Vienna**

**Engineer: Gordon Parry**

**Producer: Erik Smith**

**String Trio Recorded in 1964**

**Recorded by Decca**

**at the Sofiensaal, Vienna**

**Engineer: Gordon Parry**

**Producer: Erik Smith**

# Schubert

## Piano Quintet in A Major "The Trout"

Clifford Curzon and Members of the Vienna Octet

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## String Trio in B Flat

W. Boskovsky-Violin, R. Stræng-Viola, R. Schwiizlein-Cello



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*The Trout Quintet is the popular name for the Piano Quintet in A major by Franz Schubert. In Otto Erich Deutsch's catalogue of Schubert's works, it is D. 667. The work was composed in 1819, when Schubert was only 22 years old; it was not published, however, until 1829, a year after his death.*

*Rather than the usual piano quintet lineup of piano and string quartet, Schubert's piece is written for piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass. The composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel had rearranged his own Septet for the same instrumentation, and the Trout was actually written for a group of musicians coming together to play Hummel's work.*

*The piece is known as the Trout because the fourth movement is a set of variations on Schubert's earlier Lied "Die Forelle" (The Trout). Apparently, the quintet was written for Sylvester Paumgartner, of Steyr in Upper Austria, a wealthy music patron and amateur cellist, who also suggested that Schubert include a set of variations on the Lied. Sets of variations on melodies from his Lieder are found in four other works by Schubert: the Death and the Maiden Quartet, the "Trockne Blumen" Variations for Flute and Piano (D. 802), the Wanderer Fantasy, and the Fantasia in C major for Violin and Piano (D. 934, on "Sei mir gegrüßt").*

*The rising sextuplet figure from the song's accompaniment is used as a unifying motive throughout the quintet, and related figures appear in four out of the five movements - all but the Scherzo. As in the song, the figure is usually introduced by the piano, ascending.*

*1. Allegro vivace in sonata form. As commonplace in works of the Classical genre, the exposition shifts from tonic to dominant; however, Schubert's harmonic language is innovative, incorporating many mediant and submediants. This is evident from almost the beginning of the piece: after stating the tonic for ten bars, the harmony shifts abruptly into F major (the flattened submediant) in the eleventh bar. The development section starts with a similar abrupt shift, from E major (at the end of the exposition) to C major. Harmonic movement is slow at first, but becomes quicker; towards the return of the first theme, the harmony modulates in ascending half tones. The recapitulation begins in the subdominant, making any modulatory changes in the transition to the second theme unnecessary - a frequent phenomenon in early sonata form movements written by Schubert. It differs from the exposition only in omitting the opening bars and another short section, before the closing theme.*

*2. Andante in F major (the flattened submediant of the work's main key, A major). This movement is composed of two symmetrical sections, the second being a transposed version of the first, except for some differences of modulation which allow the movement to end in the same key in which it began. Each section contains three themes, the second of which is notable for its poignancy. The striking feature of this movement is its tonal layout: the tonality changes chromatically, in ascending half tones, according to the following*

*scheme (some intermediate keys of lower structural significance have been omitted): F major - F sharp minor - G major - A flat major - A minor - F major. Such a tonal structure is revolutionary to the harmonic concept of Classical composers such as Mozart and Beethoven[citation needed].*

*3. Scherzo: Presto. This movement also contains mediant tonalities, such as the ending of the first section of the Scherzo proper, which is in C major - the flattened mediant.*

*4. Andantino - Allegretto in D major (the subdominant of the work's main key), a theme and variations on Schubert's Lied Die Forelle. As typical of some other variation movements by Schubert (in contrast to Beethoven's style),[4] the variations do not transform the original theme into new thematic material; rather, they concentrate on melodic decoration and changes of mood. In the first variations, each variation features the main theme played by a different instrument or group. Schubert's innovation and originality lies in the fifth variation, coming after the traditional variation in the minor key[citation needed]. Rather than returning immediately to the tonic major, Schubert begins this variation in the flat submediant (B flat major), and creates a series of modulations within the variation, eventually leading back to the movement's main key, at the beginning of the final sixth variation. Schubert repeated this unique harmonic structure within a variation movement, in three of his later compositions: the octet in F major, D. 803 (fourth movement); the piano sonata in A minor, D. 845 (second movement); and the Impromptu in B-flat major, D. 935 No. 3. The concluding variation is highly similar to the original Lied, and shares the same characteristic accompaniment in the piano, based on a musical motif picturing the trout appearing and disappearing in the water (depicted by rising and falling notes, respectively)[citation needed].*

*5. Allegro giusto. The Finale is in two symmetrical sections, like the second movement. However, the movement differs from the second movement in the absence of unusual chromaticism, and in the second section being an exact transposition of the first (except for some changes of octave register). Since a repeat sign is written for the first section, if one adheres meticulously to the score, the movement consists solely of three lengthy, almost identical repeats of the same musical material - a feature that some performers and listeners may find tedious[citation needed]. Therefore, many performers choose to omit the repeat of the first section when playing. Although this movement lacks the sheer chromaticism of the second movement, its own harmonic design is also innovative: the first section ends in D major, the subdominant. This is contradictory to the aesthetics of the Classical musical style, in which the first major harmonic event in a musical piece or movement, is the shift from tonic to dominant (or, more rarely, to mediant or submediant - but never to the subdominant).*

# Schubert

## Piano Quintet in A Major "The Trout"

Clifford Curzon and Members of the Vienna Octet

- 1-Allegro vivace
- 2-Andante
- 3-Scherzo (Presto)
- 4-Theme and Variations (andantino)
- 5-Allegro giusto

## 6-String Trio in B Flat

W. Boskovsky-Violin, R. Strang-Viola, R. Schizwiz-Cello

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