

String Quartets in Beethoven's Europe

Nancy November, *General Editor*

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Introduction

Franz Weiss (1778–1830) was one of the most celebrated violists in early nineteenth-century Europe. A longtime member of the Schuppanzigh Quartet, the ensemble that premiered and popularized many of Beethoven's string quartets, he was also highly regarded as a composer during his lifetime. In 1828 a Viennese critic remarked that Weiss's "ingenious compositions, related to Beethoven's spirit, have long received the loudest and most deserved approval both at home and abroad."¹ Despite this, his music is almost entirely unknown today, in part because it is only preserved in archival manuscripts or rare, unreliable early nineteenth-century editions. Furthermore, there is no authoritative biography of Weiss in any language. Those that do exist, such as the brief entry on his life and works in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, contain factual errors and are far from comprehensive. The digitization of early nineteenth-century journals and first editions, together with the study of archival documents, has made it possible to construct a more accurate and complete picture of Weiss's life and oeuvre.

This volume represents the first modern edition of a major opus by Weiss.² It features his most ambitious chamber work, a pair of string quartets published in 1814 with a dedication to Count Andrey Razumovsky, the Russian ambassador in Vienna. Weiss served as Razumovsky's chamber virtuoso from 1807 to 1816 and resided on the Razumovsky Palace grounds until at least 1822.³ During this period, he also worked extensively with Beethoven, who famously published a set of his own quartets dedicated to Razumovsky in 1808. Weiss's substantial but neglected "Razumovsky" quartets are significant not only in the ways in which they respond to Beethoven's quartets, but also in the ways in which they explore the possibilities of the "public connoisseur quartet" subgenre that arose in early nineteenth-century Vienna.

1. Unsigned review, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Unterhaltungsblatt für Freunde der Kunst, Literatur und des geselligen Lebens*, 4 December 1828, 582.

2. The only other modern edition of a piece by Weiss is Bernhard Päuler's edition of the Caprices and Variations, op. 3, for flute (Winterthur: Amadeus-Verlag, 1976).

3. Franz Heinrich Böckh, *Wiens lebende Schriftsteller, Künstler, und Dilettanten im Kunstfache* (Vienna: B. Ph. Bauer, 1822), 383.

Franz Weiss: Composer and Virtuoso Violist of the Schuppanzigh Quartet

Franz Weiss was born on 18 January 1778 in Glatz, Silesia (now Kłodzko, Poland), some two hundred miles north of Vienna.⁴ Weiss must have been something of a child phenomenon: by age sixteen, he had moved to Vienna and entered the service of Prince Karl Lichnowsky (1761–1814) as a violist. Lichnowsky had a country estate roughly eighty-five miles southeast of Weiss's birthplace in Grätz, Silesia (now Hradec nad Moravicí, Czech Republic), suggesting that his patronage of Weiss may have begun before the boy arrived in Vienna.

In Vienna, Weiss, along with the teenage violinists Ignaz Schuppanzigh (1776–1830) and Louis Sina (1778–1857) and cellist Nikolaus Kraft (1778–1853), soon found himself the center of attention at one of the most elite aristocratic musical establishments in the city. Schuppanzigh, Sina, and Weiss formed the core of Lichnowsky's *Knabenquartett* (quartet of young virtuosos), with the cello role alternating among Nikolaus Kraft, his more experienced father Antonín, and the amateur Nikolaus Zmeskall.⁵ This salaried ensemble performed regularly on Friday mornings at Lichnowsky's house before a distinguished audience of noblemen, musicians, artists, and intellectuals. It was here that Weiss and his colleagues met Beethoven—himself a newcomer to Vienna—who resided in Lichnowsky's rooms from

4. Some sources report that young Weiss studied with the Cistercian monk and trombone virtuoso Gottfried Anton Stolle (1739–1814), but this is erroneous; see, for example, *MGG Online*, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart Online* (<https://www.mgg-online.com>), s.v. "Weiß, Franz," by Barbara Boisis and Othmar Wessely. The error stems from the fact that three well-known musicians named Franz Weiss were active in the German-speaking lands during this period. Stolle's pupil was, in fact, the Bohemian brass player Franz Weiss (1777–1860), who later taught trumpet and trombone at the Prague Conservatory between 1811 and 1825. Another musician, Franz Xaver Weiss (1778–1836), served as a chamber singer at the princely court of Fürstenberg in Donaueschingen, Bavaria. The latter was also active as a composer, leading to several misattributions in the literature (see appendix 1).

5. See Oldřich Pulkert, "Das Knabenquartett des Fürsten Lichnowsky," in *Ludwig van Beethoven im Herzen Europas: Leben und Nachleben in den Bömischen Ländern*, ed. Oldřich Pulkert and Hans-Werner Kūthen (Prague: Česke lupkové závody, 2000), 452–58.

String Quartet No. 1 in G Major

I

Allegro ma non troppo

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

8

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

16

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

p espress.
smorz.
p espress.
[smorz.]
p [espress.]
[smorz.]
p espress.
cresc.

decresc.
p
smorz.
smorz.
[cresc.]

decresc.
p
smorz.
[smorz.]
cresc.

[decresc.]
p
[smorz.]
[smorz.]
[cresc.]

decresc.
p
[cresc.]

f
ff

f
ff

f
ff

f
ff
[simile]

113

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

cresc. *ff* *ff* *fp* *fz* *dolce* *fp* *fp*

1 2 3

3 3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 113 through 116. It features four staves: Violin 1 (Vn. 1), Violin 2 (Vn. 2), Viola (Va.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 113 shows a crescendo in the Vc. part and a forte (ff) dynamic in the Vn. 2 part. Measure 114 has a forte (ff) dynamic in the Vn. 2 part. Measure 115 features a dolce dynamic in the Vn. 2 part. Measure 116 has a forte-piano (fp) dynamic in the Vn. 2 part. The Vc. part includes triplets in measures 113 and 114.

117

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

fz *fz*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 117 through 120. It features four staves: Violin 1 (Vn. 1), Violin 2 (Vn. 2), Viola (Va.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 117 has a forte-zitig (fz) dynamic in the Vn. 1 part. Measure 118 has a forte-zitig (fz) dynamic in the Vn. 2 part. The Viola part plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Violoncello part plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

121

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

3 3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 121 through 124. It features four staves: Violin 1 (Vn. 1), Violin 2 (Vn. 2), Viola (Va.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 121 has a triplet in the Vn. 1 part. Measure 122 has a triplet in the Vn. 1 part. The Viola part plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Violoncello part plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

String Quartet No. 2 in C Minor

I

Allegro agitato

Violin 1
p
fz

Violin 2
p

Viola
p
pizz.

Violoncello
p

5

Vn. 1
fz

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

11

Vn. 1
5

Vn. 2
5

Va.
5

Vc.
arco 5

Detailed description: This image shows the first system of a musical score for a string quartet. The score is for measures 1 through 11. It is in C minor, 3/4 time, and marked 'Allegro agitato'. The first system includes staves for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin 1 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a first ending bracket. The second system includes staves for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin 1 has a forte (*fz*) dynamic. The third system includes staves for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin 1 has a first ending bracket and a dynamic of 5. The Viola and Violoncello parts also have a dynamic of 5. The Viola part is marked 'arco' and '5'.

16

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

p *pp* *p* *pp*

sul G 1 sul D [1] sul G 2

23

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

[sul D] [sul G] **calando**

29

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

ff **ff** **ff** **ff**

a tempo

33

Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Va.
Vc.

fz

fz

fz

Detailed description: This system contains measures 33 and 34. Measure 33 features a first violin line with a melodic line and a second violin line with a rhythmic accompaniment. The viola and cello lines provide harmonic support. Measure 34 continues the first violin's melodic line, while the other instruments play sustained chords. Dynamic markings include *fz* (forzando) in measures 34 and 35.

35

Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Va.
Vc.

fz *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

fz

fz

pizz.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 35 and 36. Measure 35 shows the first violin playing a series of accented notes, with *fz* markings under each. The second violin and viola also play accented notes. The cello line has a *pizz.* marking. Measure 36 continues the first violin's melodic line with *fz* markings, while the other instruments play sustained chords.

37

Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Va.
Vc.

dolce

pizz.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 37 and 38. Measure 37 features a first violin line with a melodic line and a second violin line with a rhythmic accompaniment. The viola and cello lines provide harmonic support. Measure 38 continues the first violin's melodic line, while the other instruments play sustained chords. Dynamic markings include *dolce* (dolce) in measure 38 and *pizz.* (pizzicato) in measure 37.

Critical Report

Source

This edition is based on the original printed parts set by S. A. Steiner, which is the sole surviving source for Weiss's op. 8 quartets.

Op. 8. Set of four printed parts (Vienna: S. A. Steiner, 1814). Duke University, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, shelfmark M452.W45 op.8 1814 c.1.

Deux Quatuors | pour deux Violons, | Alto, | et | Violoncello | Composés | par | François Weiss | № 2170. Oeuvre 8. Prix [illegible] | Vienne chez S. A. Steiner.

Editorial Methods

The titles of the quartets have been anglicized and expanded to include tonalities. Movement numbers have been added. The descriptors "scherzo," "finale," and "menuetto" have been converted to movement titles. Instrument names have been translated into English. Original clefs and key signatures have been retained. Tempo indications are retained in bold-roman type above the top staff only, regardless of their original placement. Literal directives have been modernized and standardized among parts throughout.

Editorial slurs, ties, and hairpins are indicated with dashed lines. Editorial articulations and cautionary accidentals are enclosed in parentheses. Editorial letter dynamics are set in bold-roman type rather than bold-italic. All other editorial additions are given in square brackets. Accidentals have been tacitly added when needed to interpret the intentions of the source, such as on notes of the same pitch class in different octaves. Other editorially added inflections are given in brackets. Redundant accidentals have been omitted without comment except where they serve a useful cautionary function.

Rest patterns and the beaming of note groups has been modernized. Tied notes have been combined when possible. Shorthand notation for repeated eighth notes has been tacitly realized, while shorthand repeats for smaller values have been preserved and standardized. Tuplet numerals and brackets have been added as needed, although they are omitted once their pattern has been established.

Redundant dynamic markings have been deleted without comment. Slight shifts in the placement of dynamics for the sake of uniformity have been made tacitly. Hairpins have been retained and aligned according

to musical logic. Dashed lines following dynamic indications are regularized between parts and are tacitly extended to the end of the passage to which they apply.

Where the placement of slurs is ambiguous, they have been tacitly adjusted according to musical logic. Slurs have been drawn to enclose ties when the two converge. Converging slurs have been tacitly combined. Additional ties have been provided where only one note of a sustained double-stop is tied in the source. Staccato markings have been standardized to strokes throughout except where two or more occur under a slur, where they are given as dots.

Fingering numerals, string indications, and *8va* indications are preserved. Additional *8va* brackets have been supplied when necessary for ease of readability. The appearance of natural harmonics has been updated to conform to modern practice, with the addition of small, stemless noteheads in the score to show the sounding pitch. The directive "loco," used in the source to indicate both the end of *8va* passages and the return to non-harmonics, has been omitted. The notation of triple- and quadruple-stops has been adjusted to indicate that only the topmost pitch is to be sustained for the full note value.

Critical Notes

The critical notes below describe altered readings to the principal source that are not otherwise addressed by the editorial methods above. Readings are identified by measure number, part name, and item within the measure, counting tied noteheads separately and including all ornamental notes, and counting rests separately from notes. Consecutive notes are denoted with an en-dash (-); simultaneous pitches are denoted with a plus (+). Specific beats are sometimes referenced instead of notes, as quarter-note beats in simple meters and dotted quarter-note beats in compound meters. The following abbreviations are used in the notes: Vn. 1 = violin 1; Vn. 2 = violin 2; Va. = viola; Vc. = violoncello. Pitch names are identified according to the system in which *c'* refers to middle C.

Op. 8, No. 1

I. ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO

M. 6, Vc., notes 1–2 have slur. M. 10, Vn. 2, note 1 is dotted quarter note; 8th rest lacks dot. M. 11, Vc., note 1 has slur to m. 14, note 1. M. 16, Vn. 1, note 2 has *ff*.