



Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Complete Chamber Music for Strings Vol. III

- String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 44, No. 3
- Two movements from Op. 81
- Octet in E flat major, Op. 20
for four violins, two violas and two cellos

MANDELRING QUARTETT
Quartetto di Cremona

Felix Mendelssohn did not write his six mature string quartets continually, but instead at particular pivotal points in his life and compositional career. In his youth, studying Bach and Beethoven proved to be fruitful, and later in life he was inspired by the exceptional violinist Ferdinand David to write his three Quartets Op. 44 between 1837 and 1839 (represented on this SACD by the final work in E flat major). They document the mature, formally assured Mendelssohn who sums up his instrumental writing: brilliantly composed (particularly for David's violin), full of colour and formal attractions, romantic in their conduct.



After completing his Quartet Op. 80 (contained in the second volume of the complete recording), Mendelssohn had not much time left to revisit and renew the string quartet. Two single surviving movements – a tenderly transfigured, but also irascible, *Andante* with five variations and a whispering *Scherzo* – were integrated into Op. 81 after Mendelssohn's death. To Mendelssohn admirers, this *Scherzo* is faintly reminiscent of the *Scherzo* in the Octet Op. 20 with which the sixteen-year-old Felix, in a *coup de main*, created a new genre: “symphonic” chamber music where all “pianos and fortes need to be very precise and clearly separated and more distinctly emphasised than it is normally the case with pieces of this genre.” The jubilant opening of the octet, the romance-like *Andante*, the elastic, elf-like *Scherzo* and the rapid fugal finale – every movement is proof of the resourcefulness and the youthful genius of this “lovely episode in German music”, as Friedrich Nietzsche once referred to the composer Mendelssohn.

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FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY COMPLETE CHAMBER MUSIC FOR STRINGS VOL. I

String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 12
 String Quartet in A minor, Op. 13
 String Quartet in E flat major (1823)

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FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY COMPLETE CHAMBER MUSIC FOR STRINGS VOL. II

String Quartet in D major, Op. 44 No. 1
 String Quartet in E minor, Op. 44 No. 2
 String Quartet in F minor, Op. 80

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