



Central Library Lawn
Friday, June 21, 2019

DEBUSSY String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10

- I. Animé et très décidé
- II. Assez vif et bien rythmé
- III. Andantino, doucement espressif
- IV. Très modéré - Très mouvementé

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) was a Romantic era composer. He composed just one string quartet during his lifetime, String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10, in 1893. This piece is known for its sensual beauty and the variety of textures created between the four stringed instruments. The sounds created during this piece seem to mimic the Impressionistic sea and sky paintings by the British painter J.M.W. Turner, one of Debussy's favorite artists.

This piece suggests an epic journey in that a 'motto theme' is seen throughout the piece in a variety of ways. The theme is proclaimed boldly and confidently at the beginning, only to go through several modulations and variations. At times, the theme can appear uncertain, going through different keys, but returning to the original theme once again as the piece comes to a close.

The first movement concludes with a brilliant version of the 'motto theme' in double notes, fully mobilized, in comparison to the stable version at the beginning. The scherzo movement features many variations of the 'motto theme'. One playful version becomes the ostinato, or repeated, background, while another is more seductive and drawn-out. This movement contains rhythms and guitar-strums that almost suggest a flamenco-like character. The slow movement is the only movement of the entire work that does not have its own version of the 'motto theme'. The final movement brings back the 'motto theme', containing two climaxes that feature the theme. The piece concludes in a happy, hopeful G major, rather than the g minor in which the piece began.