



Central Library Lawn
Friday, June 7, 2019

BEETHOVEN String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Adagio ma non troppo
- III. Scherzo: Allegro
- IV. *La Malinconia*: Adagio - Allegretto quasi allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) composed 16 string quartets during his lifetime, all of which were highly acclaimed. Beethoven composed his String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6 between 1798 and 1800, a transitional period between the Classical and Romantic eras. During this time, Beethoven struggled with his increasing deafness, but continued to be very productive.

The quartets in Opus 18 are not placed in order by the date that they were composed. After composing all six of the quartets, Beethoven re-ordered them by the character of each quartet. The first three appear quite traditional in form, while the last three are rather unorthodox in style.

The first movement of this quartet, Allegro con brio, is in sonata form, with an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation. The first theme starts in Bb and features a conversation between the first violin and the cello, before the second violin takes over from the cello. Throughout there are spare textures, as well as sudden harmonic movements.

Soon to follow is the slow, ornate second movement, Adagio ma non troppo, switching to the key of E-Flat momentarily. Suddenly, Scherzo: Allegro, one of Beethoven's most famous scherzos, follows, filled with rhythmic interruptions, as well as a virtuosic violin solo. The final movement, Adagio - Allegretto quasi allegro, subtitled "La Malinconia", begins with a slow introduction, and is filled with shifts of both harmony and texture. Beethoven himself asked that this final movement be performed with great delicacy.