



# The String Quartets of Joseph Haydn

*Floyd Grave, Margaret Grave*

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A monumental accomplishment from the age of Enlightenment, the string quartets of Joseph Haydn hold a central place not only in the composer's oeuvre, but also in our modern conception of form, style, and expression in the instrumental music of his day. Here, renowned music historians Floyd and Margaret Grave present a fresh perspective on a comprehensive survey of the works. This thorough and unique analysis offers new insights into the creation of the quartets, the wealth of musical customs and conventions on which they draw, the scope of their innovations, and their significance as reflections of Haydn's artistic personality. Each set of quartets is characterized in terms of its particular mix of structural conventions and novelties, stylistic allusions, and its special points of connection with other opus groups in the series. Throughout the book, the authors draw attention to the boundless supply of compositional strategies by which Haydn appears to be continually rethinking, reevaluating, and refining the quartet's potentials. They also lucidly describe Haydn's famous penchant for wit, humor, and compositional artifice, illuminating the unexpected connections he draws between seemingly unrelated ideas, his irony, and his lightning bolts of surprise and thwarted expectation. Approaching the quartets from a variety of vantage points, the authors correct many prevailing assumptions about convention, innovation, and developing compositional technique in the music of Haydn and his contemporaries.

Going beyond traditional modes of study, *The String Quartets of Joseph Haydn* blends historical analysis and factual information with critical appraisal in a way that will engage all Haydn enthusiasts.

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