# String Quartet No. 1 

in G-Major, op. 12

by Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885)

## String Quartet No. 1 by Ferdinand Hiller

Hiller's op. 12 and op. 13 appeared two years after Mendelssohn's two quartets with the same opus numbers. If one compares these works one finds that Hiller's pieces are less ambitious. They do not attempt to respond to Beethoven's late quartets in the way Mendelssohn's quartets do--in the case of op. 13 in a-minor with impressive success. Hiller's quartets are cast in standard four movement designs and seem to take Haydn as a model rather than any later composer. They do show considerable originality however: In the minuet of op. 12 the harmony constantly wavers between b minor (the key signature) and B Major, producing music of subdued emotion. The trio is dance-like and very simple and its two section are therefore not repeated. The da capo section is varied by incorporating rhythms from the trio into the accompanying voices. The andante--also subdued and even anxiuous in mood--is cast in a similar ABA form with an even more complexly varied da capo section. Great care is taken everywhere to individualize the four voices and to find original textures for the quartet sound. There is a striking absence of virtuoso passages (at least "virtuoso" in the sense of "show off") and the technical difficulties are relatively modest.

This typeset of Ferdinand Hiller's first string quartet op. 12 is based on the edition by F. Hofmeister, Leipzig (1834), which is available on IMSLP. No modern edition of this work (and its "sister", op. 13) is available to date. This score and the parts that accompany it are intended for study, rehearsal and performance.

A look at the source reveals the composer's almost fussy concern for precise dynamic markings. The text is full of hairpin markings--in a way we typically encounter in music written one or two generations later. Somewhat by contrast we also observe inconsistencies in dynamic and articulation markings, presumably engraver errors.

For the typeset these inconsistencies were straightened out without comment and courtesy accidentals were added where required. A short list of "true" corrections follows below:

## Allegro con anima

M. 42: inserted an extra measure and first/second ending to correct a counting error in the original (the repeat sign in the source is between the second and third beat of this measure which leads to a two beat measure leading into the repeat).
M. 96 cello: Last note corrected to b flat from c sharp.

Except for $\boldsymbol{p}$ at the beginning the Menuetto has no dynamic markings other than hairpins in the first violin and almost none at all in the other voices. The overall dynamic is apparently intended to be piano throughout. M. 44 vln2: Third beat corrected to crotchet from rest plus quaver.

## Andante poco agitato

M. $28 \mathrm{v} \ln 1$ : 3rd beat: E sharp corrected to e natural.

Approximate performance times: Allegro con anima $(\rho=160): 6.5 \mathrm{~min}$; Menuetto $\left(J^{\prime}=120\right): 4.5 \mathrm{~min}$; Andate poco agitato $(\omega=60)$ : 5.5 min ; Vivace $\left({ }_{\mathrm{L}}=113\right): 7 \mathrm{~min}$. Total approximately 24 min .























MENUETTO Moderato. Espressivo

















ANDANTE poco agitato. Espressivo
















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