

String Quartet No. 14 in G major, K. 387
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

*Before God, and as an honest man,
I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name.
He has taste, and, what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition.*

Joseph Haydn, to Mozart's father Leopold

The "Haydn" Quartets by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart are a set of six string quartets dedicated to Joseph Haydn. It is widely known that Mozart and Haydn were great friends, but it is worth noting the time of these quartets in relation to their first meeting. The autograph score of this quartet indicates that he finished the first draft "li 31 di dicembre 1782 in Vienna," but it is unlikely that they met until December of 1783 at the earliest. With that in mind, his inspiration for this quartet did not come from a patron's commission, but from the pure respect and admiration for Haydn.

This quartet, along with the next five quartets, closely share the four-movement structure of Haydn's quartets. The first movement, *Allegro vivace assai*, is a classic example of a sonata form. The second movement, *Menuetto*, is a delightful minuet with trio in G minor, followed by a slower, calming movement, *Andante cantabile*, in C major. The final movement, like most of his other works, is the ultimate palate cleanser.



Autograph Manuscript of this quartet, MS 37763, British Library

String Quintet in C Major, D. 956 Franz Peter Schubert (1797–1828)

Schubert knew that his time was coming. Just a few weeks after he wrote this quintet in September 1828, he lost his appetite. The weakness and sickness from syphilis took Schubert's life and talent way too early at the age of 31 on November 19, 1828.

Other than the private initial play-through in October, this work was not fully heard in public until 1850 and published in 1853. Schubert made a unique choice in that he chose to have two cellos, whereas many other contemporaries—even Mozart more than 30 years ago—would have chosen to add an extra viola. This decision allowed him to explore new and different combination possibilities. The melodious lines, undoubtedly one of Schubert's specialties, extend from the high first violin to the lowest second cello. The second cello also darkens the overall timbre, perhaps to amplify his last cry to the world.



Schubert's grave, Währing Cemetery



Julius Schmid's 1897 Schubertiade