

Opus 20 No. 5 in F Minor

This quartet, in a minor key and ending with a fugue on two subjects, was to have been the first in the collection according to Haydn's catalog. It is one of only two Haydn quartets (the other being Op. 55 No. 2, known, possibly incorrectly, as "The Razor") in the key of F minor. The tone is outwardly quite serious, learned, and a little old fashioned. It is one of two quartets in the set in a minor key and one of the four that maintain the same tonality for all the movements, as both the slow movement and the trio of the minuet are in F major. Except for the final fugue, the texture is dominated by the first violin.

First Movement: Moderato. The first movement is monothematic, being dominated by the opening motive with its repeated-note accompaniment. The transition begins with a suspension over repeated notes in the cello, followed by a return of the opening motive. The second group starts with a dotted note motive, but this is soon combined with the opening motive. The development is based almost entirely on the opening motive; the dotted note motive only appears combined with the opening motive. Development continues even into the recapitulation. Finally, after the repeat of the development and recapitulation, there is a coda that begins by combining the dotted note motive with the repeated note accompaniment of the first theme, followed by a very harmonically adventurous version of the transition and leading to a very dramatic ending.

Second Movement: Menuet. The dance movement is second, as it had been in all the quartets of Opp. 9 and 17. The minuet section has a second-time bar at the end of the second refrain which is actually the start of the trio so that on the repeat, the F minor final chord of the minuet is replaced by the F major of the trio.

The trio, like the minuet, is in rounded binary form. That is, the first refrain is repeated and modified to stay in the tonic key at the end of the second refrain, giving the effect of a miniature sonata form. In the minuet, the return of the first refrain is considerably recomposed; in the trio, it is transposed with some alterations and has a short coda added.

Third Movement: Adagio. The third movement, in F major, is considered to be one of the finest violin solos in the entire chamber music literature. The first violin essentially plays written-out elaborations of an eight bar siciliana melody, much like a Baroque-era violinist might have improvised on the written-out melody in the slow movement of a concerto or sonata. The siciliana was a dance in a lilting, dotted six-eight rhythm often associated with shepherds and the countryside. As a dance, it probably originated in Sicily in the 17th century and was popular at the aristocratic courts in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Sicilianas were often used in the slow movements of sonatas and concertos but the most famous example was the aria "And he shall feed his flock" from *Messiah*. Haydn had written similar movements in both Op. 9 No. 1 and Op. 17 No. 1; comparing them shows how he advanced from opus to opus and especially how much more inspired

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Op. 20 was compared to the earlier quartets. He wrote one more siciliana quartet movement: the last movement of Op. 33 No. 5 is a full-fledged set of variations on a 16 bar binary-form siciliana. This later movement so impressed Mozart that he wrote a similar finale for the second of his set of quartets dedicated to Haydn, K421.

The present movement falls into two halves, each with three repetitions of the melody. The first half ends with a coda in the dominant key of C major. This is repeated, transposed to the tonic, to end the movement. This makes the form similar to the special type of sonata form with only an exposition and recapitulation and no development that was sometimes used for slow movements.

Haydn underlines the Baroque qualities of the movement by adding figured bass numbers below the cello part in the fourth repetition of the melody and writing "per figuram retardationis" over the first violin part to indicate that the required harmonies were delayed by the elaborate figuration of the part. None of this would mean much to the players, and there certainly was no question of a keyboard or plucked string instrument accompanying the quartet. The most likely explanation for this whimsy is that it is a show of mock learning aimed at certain German critics.

Fourth Movement: Finale. Fuga a 2 Soggetti. Haydn wasn't the first to write a fugue for a quartet movement. In fact, Austrian Emperor Joseph II reportedly favored quartets in a very serious, learned style (and didn't care much for Haydn's quartets). Some of the quartets written for him were just a prelude and old-fashioned fugue.

The first of the three fugal finales of Op. 20 is very well-suited to the rest of the quartet. The main subject, with its long notes and wide intervals gives the exposition a very Baroque feel. It is markedly similar to fugue subject used by J. S. Bach, Handel (e. g. *And with His stripes*), and other Baroque composers. It also uses more fugal techniques such as inversion, canon, stretto, and pedal points than the other fugues.

The main subject enters first in the second violin, accompanied by the viola with the second subject, with its three repeated notes and descending scale. The first violin answers with the first subject in the dominant. The cello enters the first subject in the tonic. The viola answers with the first subject in the dominant. The exposition comes to an end with a final (truncated) tonic entry in the second violin.

Modulation is a key feature of the second section, which makes much of the second subject and a motive taken from one of the continuations of the main subject. One passage, labeled "al rovescio", has the second violin accompanying the first subject in the first violin with its inversion. The second section returns to F

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minor before ending with a dominant seventh chord following a cello pedal-point on C.

The third section begins with a series of stretto entries of the main subject accompanied by the second which is then presented itself in a series of stretto entries. After a pedal point on a low C, the cello makes a fortissimo statement of the first subject (ending the sotto voce that was in effect until this point), followed a half-note later and two octaves higher by the same subject in the first violin; this is labeled "in canone". The movement ends with a general pause followed by a final statement of the first subject in the first violin.

"Laus Deo"
"Praise God."