

EXPLANATION 4.4: THE STRING QUARTET AND THE STRING QUINTET

THE STRING QUARTET

The musical idea in a string quartet is based on being music written for four relatively independent and balanced solo parts in which there is a dialogue between them. The instruments of the string quartet are two violins, one viola and one violoncello. It is since Haydn when music for string quartet became important. With Haydn the quartet is perfectly defined as a genre. In it the composer uses the sonata form for the first movement, establishes the form in 4 movements being the minuet the third of them, extends the harmonic boundaries (op 76, 2nd movement) and the most important thing is that the four instruments have the same importance in the development of the themes. Some important quartets of Haydn are the opus (works) 33, 54, 55 and 64 reaching their splendor in the opus. 76 and 77.

Mozart, who greatly admired Haydn's quartets, composed 6 quartets in his honor, and although Mozart was a genius of chamber music his quartets did not overcome his quintets. Nevertheless, Mozart's quartets demonstrate great artistic maturity by assimilating the essence of Haydn without being a mere imitator of it.

THE STRING QUINTET AND OTHER QUINTETS

The string quintet is a quartet with another instrument, which is usually a viola (viola quintet), or a violoncello (cello quintet) or less common, a double bass. Other options are with clarinet or piano. As a curiosity, Haydn never composed a string quintet.

COMPREHENSION TEXTS QUESTIONS

1. **Who dialogues in a string quartet?**
2. **What instruments form a string quartet?**
3. **When does the string quartet take on importance?**
4. **Name 3 aspects that make the quartet important in Haydn.**
5. **What is an opus and which ones in Haydn are important?**
6. **Explain Mozart's quartets in relation to Haydn.**
7. **What is a string quintet?**
8. **Name the instruments of two types of quintet.**