

## Ries – Complete Flute Quartets (2011)

Written by bluesever

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CD1 1 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in D minor, WoO 35/1: Allegro 2 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in D minor, WoO 35/1: Adagio con moto 3 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in D minor, WoO 35/1: Scherzo, Vivace 4 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in D minor, WoO 35/1: Finale, Allegro molto 5 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in G major, WoO 35/2: Andante 6 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in G major, WoO 35/2: Adagio con moto, cantabile 7 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in G major, WoO 35/2: Allegro vivace 8 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in A minor, WoO 35/3: Allegro non troppo 9 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in A minor, WoO 35/3: Largo 10 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in A minor, WoO 35/3: Menuetto, Moderato 11 Quartet for flute, violin, viola & cello in A minor, WoO 35/3: Rondo grazioso, Allegretto CD2 1 Flute Quartet No. 1 in C major, Op. 145/1: Allegro con brio 2 Flute Quartet No. 1 in C major, Op. 145/1: Larghetto cantabile 3 Flute Quartet No. 1 in C major, Op. 145/1: Scherzo, Allegro vivace 4 Flute Quartet No. 1 in C major, Op. 145/1: Allegro all'espagnola 5 Flute Quartet No. 2 in E minor, Op. 145/2: Allegro moderato 6 Flute Quartet No. 2 in E minor, Op. 145/2: Andante 7 Flute Quartet No. 2 in E minor, Op. 145/2: Menuetto molto moderato 8 Flute Quartet No. 2 in E minor, Op. 145/2: Rondo, Allegro moderato 9 Flute Quartet No. 3 in A major, Op. 145/3: Allegro 10 Flute Quartet No. 3 in A major, Op. 145/3: Scherzo, Vivace 11 Flute Quartet No. 3 in A major, Op. 145/3: Adagio 12 Flute Quartet No. 3 in A major, Op. 145/3: Allegro  
Oxalys: Toon Fret – flute Shirly Laub – violin Elisabeth Smalt – viola Martijn Vink - cello

Despite Beethoven's own comment that Ries "imitated me much too much," the music of Beethoven's secretary Ferdinand Ries has been revived as part of the general rediscovery of the music of the early 19th century. Ries wrote a lot of music, and he made a living mostly as a traveling piano virtuoso. A two-disc set of flute quartets might not seem the best way into his music, but this release by the Belgian chamber group Oxalys actually makes an unusually strong case for Ries. The noteworthy pieces are the Three Flute Quartets, WoO 35, on Disc 1. It's not clear when or why these pieces were composed (they probably date from the 1820s), or why they would have gone unpublished, but the likely reason on the latter count is that they're serious works, genuinely symphonic in scope, and a buyer in search of pleasant chamber music for the flute wouldn't have known what to make of them. Consider the weighty Scherzo of the

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Flute Quartet in D minor, WoO 35/1 (CD 1, track 3), and the spacious finale with its very Beethovenian move from D minor to D major. More than most of the other Ries works that have surfaced thus far, these quartets evince understanding rather than imitation of Beethoven, and there's a level of tension that ought to favor groups who program this music for themselves. The Op. 145 quartets on Disc 2 are less daring but never less than well crafted; the slow movement (Ries had a real knack for long melodic lines that hold together) and plaintive minuet of the second quartet are especially notable. Oxalys, using modern instruments with a lovely wooden flute, delivers sensitive and enthusiastic performances throughout. Nothing is added by graphics featuring a horse strolling through an art museum, but for those interested in Beethoven's world this is a choice release. ---James Manheim, Rovi

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