

## Boccherini - La Musica Notturna di Madrid & Guitar Quintet No. 9, IV. La Ritirata di Madrid

Written by bluesever

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Quintet in C major, Op. 30 no 6/G 324 ""Musica notturna di Madrid" 1. *Introduzione* 0:42 2. *Minuetto* 1:50 3. *Largo assai, senza rigor di Battuta* 2:35 4. *Passacalle* 2:50 5. *Ritirata* 2:20  
Berlin Philharmonic

Orchestra Herbert von Karajan (Conductor) Guitar Quintet No. 9, IV "La Ritirata di Madrid"  
6. *Allegro maestoso assai* 10:55 7. *Andantino* 4:14 8. *Allegretto* 7:01 9. *Variazioni* 6:31  
Tatrai Quartet Laszlo Szandrey-Karper (Guitar)

La Musica Notturna della Strade di Madrid is one of only two programmatic works Boccherini composed. It was not published until several years after his death in part because Boccherini told his publisher that, "The piece is absolutely useless, even ridiculous, outside Spain because the audience cannot hope to understand its significance nor the performers to play it as it should be played." Within Spain itself, during his lifetime, the work became quite famous in arrangements of it Boccherini made for piano quintet and also for string quartet and guitar, in which version it has perhaps become best known.

Boccherini actually provided the publisher with program notes. La Musica Notturna delle Strade di Madrid, literally, the night music of the streets of Madrid, was an attempt to recreate what residents of the Spanish capital could expect to hear each night. First there was the Ave Maria of the main church, in which the instruments imitate the tolling of the church bell. Then comes the Minuet of the Blind Beggars to be roughly played peasants. The cellists are directed by Boccherini to take their cellos upon their knees and strum them, imitating a guitar. This is followed by another slow section, The Rosary, not to be played strictly in time. Then there is what Boccherini sarcastically termed the Passacaglia of the Street Singers, Los Manolos. These were lower class loudmouths vulgarly dressed. The movement is not a passacaglia but imitates the way Los Manolos sang, which the Spanish called passacalle and meaning to pass along the street, singing to amuse oneself. Last comes La Ritirata di Madrid (the retreat of the Military Night Watch of Madrid), which by itself, achieved a certain degree of notoriety. It imitates the coming and going of the Military Night Watch, bringing the curfew and closing down the streets.

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Boccherini wrote, "One must imagine sitting next to the window on a summer's night in a Madrid flat and that the band can only be heard in the far-off distance in some other part of the city, so at first it must be played quite softly. Slowly the music grows louder and louder until it is very loud, indicating the Night Watch are passing directly under the listener's window. Then gradually the volume decreases and again becomes faint as the band moves off down the street into the distance." --- editionsilvertrust.com

Boccherini's quintets for guitar and strings originally existed in two separate sets of six pieces. The first set exists in its entirety today, but unfortunately, only two of the second set have survived. Of the two remaining pieces, the Quintet No. 9 in C major, titled "La Ritirata di Madrid," was written late in the composer's career, probably around 1798. This piece stands out for its imaginative and pictorial fourth movement, which is based on Madrid, Boccherini's home during much of his life.

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