



David MATTHEWS

COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS, VOLUME FOUR

STRING QUARTET NO. 11, OP. 108

DIABELLI VARIATION

COMPLETE BEETHOVEN TRANSCRIPTIONS

ELEVEN BAGATELLES, OP. 119

PIANO SONATA NO. 28 IN A MAJOR, OP. 101

PIANO SONATA NO. 11 IN B FLAT MAJOR, OP. 22:

ADAGIO CON MOLTA ESPRESSIONE

Kreutzer Quartet

DAVID MATTHEWS Complete String Quartets, Vol. 4

BEETHOVEN transcribed MATTHEWS

	<i>11 New Bagatelles, Op. 119</i> (completed 1822; transcr. 2013)	16:53
1	No. 1 <i>Allegretto</i>	2:26
2	No. 2 <i>Andante con moto</i>	1:04
3	No. 3 <i>À l'allemande</i>	1:55
4	No. 4 <i>Andante cantabile</i>	2:16
5	No. 5 <i>Risoluto</i>	1:18
6	No. 6 <i>Andante/Allegretto</i>	2:03
7	No. 7 <i>Allegro, ma non troppo</i>	1:29
8	No. 8 <i>Moderato cantabile</i>	1:22
9	No. 9 <i>Vivace moderato</i>	0:55
10	No. 10 <i>Allegramente</i>	0:17
11	No. 11 <i>Andante, ma non troppo</i>	1:46

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12	<i>Diabelli Variation</i> (1975, transcr. 2011)	2:10
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BEETHOVEN transcribed MATTHEWS

	<i>Piano Sonata No. 28 in A major, Op. 101</i> (1816, transcr. 1997)	20:49
13	I <i>Etwas lebhaft und mit der innigsten Empfindung</i>	3:23
14	II <i>Lebhaft. Marschmässig</i>	6:34
15	III <i>Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll</i>	2:46
16	IV <i>Geschwind, doch nicht zu sehr und mit Entschlossenheit</i>	8:06

BEETHOVEN transcribed MATTHEWS

	<i>Piano Sonata No. 11 in B flat major, Op. 22</i> (1800, transcr. 1980)	
17	II <i>Adagio con molta espressione</i>	9:39

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String Quartet No. 11, Op. 108 (2007–8)

18	Theme	<i>Allegretto cantabile</i>	24:50
19	Var. 1	<i>L'istesso tempo</i>	1:18
20	Var. 2	<i>Poco più moderato</i>	1:03
21	Var. 3	<i>Presto</i>	0:41
22	Var. 4	<i>Allegro strepitoso</i>	0:28
23	Var. 5	<i>Tempo di tango feroce</i>	0:28
24	Var. 6	<i>Con moto languido</i>	0:32
25	Var. 7	<i>Misterioso</i>	1:19
26	Var. 8	<i>Tempo di mazurka</i>	1:24
27	Var. 9	<i>Scorrevole</i>	0:48
28	Var. 10	<i>Sostenuto</i>	1:05
29	Var. 11	<i>Quieto</i>	1:13
30	Var. 12	<i>Cavatina: Adagio</i>	2:40
31	Var. 13:	<i>Fuga: Molto Vivace</i>	6:40
32		<i>Andante tranquillo</i>	1:56
33		<i>Tempo primo</i>	1:15
			2:00

TT 74:23

Kreutzer Quartet

Peter Sheppard Skærvæd and Mihailo Trandafilovski, violins;

Morgan Goff, viola; Neil Heyde, cello

BEETHOVEN AND ME

by David Matthews

Beethoven has always been the most important composer in my life. When I was learning the piano as a boy, I played the easy sonatas, and tried to learn the ‘Moonlight’ and the ‘Pathétique’; but it was hearing his Ninth Symphony for the first time, when I was sixteen, that made me want to compose, and I began with a large-scale symphony (though not a choral one). Soon I had discovered the string quartets and began to write quartets myself – six of them before my ‘official’ No. 1. In my twenties I listened over and over again to the Busch Quartet recordings of the late Beethoven quartets and they have had a life-long influence on me, as I think they offer more possibilities for the further development of the string quartet than any others written since.

In 1975 I wrote a *Diabelli Variation* for piano in a kind of late-Beethoven style, and in 2011 I arranged it for string quartet for the Kreutzer Quartet [12]. I made the first of my three arrangements of Beethoven’s piano music for string quartet in 1978, the slow movement of his **Sonata No. 11 in B flat major, Op. 22**, which is close in style to the Op. 18 Quartets [17]. I did this purely for my own pleasure, and it was not performed until I showed it to Peter Sheppard Skærved in 2013 and the Kreutzer Quartet premiered it at Wilton’s Music Hall in London that year.

In 1997 I arranged the **Sonata No. 28 in A major, Op. 101**, for the Kreutzer Quartet. In fact, I had made an arrangement some years before but had lost the score and so had to begin again. Of all Beethoven’s sonatas I think this one is the most readily adaptable for quartet (though, of course, Beethoven himself made an arrangement of his Sonata, Op. 14, No. 1). Written in 1816, Op. 101 is the first of the sonatas in Beethoven’s late style. The first movement’s Romantic melodic lines look forward to Schumann, and sound well on strings [13]; the second movement, a march with trio, is often in four parts and almost suited better to strings than to piano [14]. The *Adagio* introduction [15] to the finale is a small gem of late Beethoven, while in the four-part fugue in the finale [16] the lines again sound clearer on strings than on piano.

When in 2007 I came to write to write my Eleventh Quartet, I decided to base it on the eighth [8] of Beethoven’s **Eleven Bagatelles, Op. 119**. A few years later I arranged the ninth [9] and eleventh [11] Bagatelles, and in 2014 I completed the whole set. All of them seemed to adapt well. Though Op. 119 was published in 1823 as ‘Elf neuen Bagatellen’, a number of the Bagatelles were written before 1800,

and they vary widely in style and mood. The tenth Bagatelle [10] is one the shortest pieces ever written: it lasts just thirteen seconds.

Both my Eleventh and Twelfth Quartets are much indebted to late Beethoven, in particular the B flat Quartet, Op. 130 (the original version with the *Grosse Fuge* as finale) and the C sharp minor Quartet, Op. 131. My Twelfth Quartet is on a similar scale to these two Beethoven quartets and has seven movements, including a large-scale fugue and several intermezzos.¹ **The Eleventh Quartet** is a set of thirteen variations on the bagatelle Op. 119, No. 8, in C major [8], which is written in four parts like a short score for string quartet. The parts fit the ranges of the four string instruments, so I was able to transcribe it for quartet without any adjustments. I made the tempo rather faster than Beethoven suggests, giving it more the character of a dance. The variations begin with one that is intentionally in the style of late Beethoven [19], then move gradually into my own language. The first eleven variations, most of them short, are mostly based on dance forms, including a tango [23], a habanera [24], a mazurka [26], and several miniature scherzos [21] [22] [27]. There is also a quasi-serial variation, mostly in harmonics [25], and Variation 11 [29] is a rather minimalistic process piece. The twelfth variation is a Cavatina [30] that refers thematically to Beethoven's Cavatina in the Op. 130 Quartet, and is almost as long as all the preceding variations put together. It is followed by a final fugue [31], also on a large scale, in three parts with a slow central section [32], and culminating with the Beethoven bagatelle in counterpoint with it in a jubilant C major conclusion [33].

The Eleventh Quartet was commissioned by the Proms at St Jude's in Hampstead Garden Suburb, where I live, and premiered by the Carducci Quartet in June 2008. It is dedicated to my friend and fellow quartet-composer Matthew Taylor, who suggested the idea of a quartet in variation form.

¹ String Quartet No. 12 is recorded on Toccata Classics TOCC 0060.

DAVID MATTHEWS: COMPOSITION, TRANSCRIPTION, TRANSGRESSION!

by Peter Sheppard Skærved

Any musician lucky enough to collaborate with composers over an extended period of time will know that the recurring topic in discussion and ‘musicking’ is the work of other composers. This is not, on the surface, surprising. In conversation, particularly that which we desire to continue, all of us tend to seek out confluences of ideas, shared interests, points of agreement and, of course, flashpoints, the ‘third rail’, if you like, where all the danger, and all the power, is.

The common element, in my experience, of the colloquy with many composers, and particularly with David Matthews, is Beethoven. The tenor of our mutual relationship(s) with Beethoven often defines much of the expressive field under exploration. Each composer’s love of Beethoven reveals different fascinations, even obsession. When I talked with the late George Rochberg, it was clear that the Beethoven most important to him was the late work, offering a ‘gold standard’ of expression, towards which he reached, as a composer, and which he expected that his performers should also yearn for. Not all of the composers with whom one enjoys this discussion are alive, but the Beethoven question is still very much in the air. Whether we are working on Brahms’ first two quartets, or Tippett’s last three, or Bartók No. 3, it is to a variety of aspects of Beethoven that the discussion defaults. I find that discussions with the living composers, such as David Matthews, offer insight into how we might view the earlier creators as they explored their respective dialogues with their great forebear.

In working with David for an extended period of time, and talking about Beethoven (amongst other composers) with him, over and over again, I have found an additional enlightenment, simpler perhaps, but extraordinarily exciting. Put simply, collaboration with a living great composer offers windows into the creative worlds of composers of the past, and personally, when dealing with Beethoven, this is a window I need.

Around about the time that we first began to work with David in the mid-1990s, I became aware of the work of a quartet founded in 1852 by the Parisian *virtuose* Jean-Pierre Maurin (1822–94). This was at the moment that the institution of the string quartet was established as the chamber ensemble *par excellence*, a *ne plus ultra* of musical expression. Maurin was aware that, since he was ‘just’ a violinist, there might be aspects of composition, of interpretation, in which he and his colleagues

might be wanting. Accordingly, from 1853, they sought out the help of Richard Wagner when studying the late quartets of Beethoven (it was clear that they felt they needed assistance at such a level). Wagner wrote excitedly to Liszt about the experience of coaching the Opp. 127 and 131 quartets. Since I discovered this dialogue, the wisdom of composers has been proved to me; in the study of Beethoven quartets, I, a 'poor player', need help, and David Matthews has been an invaluable guide. Of course, much of this help has been in discussion, over coffee, after performances, on walks, in correspondence.

From 1997 onwards, it took another turn. I had fallen in love with the Op. 101 Piano Sonata and, being a lamentable pianist, was frustrated by my inability to play it, on any instrument, and also the sense that this was, maybe, more than *just* keyboard writing; I felt that it *should* be a quartet. After a performing Matthews' Fourth and Beethoven's Op. 131 Quartets at the Wigmore Hall, I mentioned this to David, in passing, in the Green Room. To my surprise he said that he had already made a version, years before, and that he thought that it was in his mother's house. Well, he could not find the transcription, and so, ever practical, he simply made a new one, which proved to be a delight. This has been a growing facet of the Kreutzer Quartet's repertoire ever since, and initiated a new strand in our collaboration. Since then, as well as all of David's quartets, it has been a joy to perform his transcriptions of Bach, Schumann, Scriabin, Schubert, and more Beethoven. This work has been a vital part in my passionate interest in Beethoven's output; indeed, it was developing while I was diving into Beethoven's piano chamber music and piano-and-violin sonatas a decade-and-a-half ago, resulting in the 'Beethoven Explored' recording and concert series at St John's, Smith Square. David was a constant at those concerts, and his reactions to the works and their interpretations continue to shape my approach.

I have learnt that the perceived boundaries between composition, arrangement and recomposition fascinate Matthews far too much to respect them by steering clear of them. A careful listen to his spectacular traversal of Beethoven's Op. 119 Bagatelles reveals a playful reworking; bass lines re-emerge three octaves higher than they were written, and, as so often the case in superior arranging, he takes the opportunity with four players, not one, to thin out harmony, to allow overtones and harmonics to fill in the gaps. There is something of the nineteenth-century virtuoso/improviser in this way of hearing, writing, reminding me that it was virtuoso improvisers, transcribers like Franz Liszt, who were responsible for anchoring the great Beethoven piano works in the popular ear and imagination.

This creative freedom is taken a step further, in David's *Diabelli Variation*. This sliver of a piece is a small miracle. It is so much more than his imagining of what he would write, had he been invited to write a variation for the eponymous publisher's set in 1819. David has written something which is almost a 'back to the future' variation (I find myself writing this on 21 October 2015 – the date to which Marty

Macfly travels in Doc's DeLorean!). The simplest way that I can describe this is that he has imagined what he might write if he found himself, as Beethoven, writing at the beginning of the 21st century, with a knowledge of everything that had transpired between 1827 and now, but still Beethoven. How, the music asks, can we be Beethoven, but Beethoven now?

A sense of dangerous liberty lurks in every moment of David's Eleventh Quartet. It was, as David has noted, suggested to him by the fine composer Matthew Taylor, also a Beethoven enthusiast. David and Matthew share a fascination with the music of Robert Simpson (1921–97). When Matthew suggested that David might write a quartet which would be a set of variations, they both most probably had Simpson's Haydn-inspired Ninth Quartet in mind; it is a giant set of variations, each one a palindrome. David's work charts a rather different path, finding its way from the deceptively simple minuet taken, *in toto*, from Op. 119 [18] to a 'rumpus-pastorale' fugue ending [31]– [33], by way, at its heart, of a slow movement [30] which enfolds the theme of the Cavatina from Beethoven's Op. 130 quartet – the movement which reduced Beethoven himself to tears. Along the way, the variations, as might be expected, use techniques which are themselves 'Beethovenian'. Variation I [19], for instance, makes explicit reference, flying across the whole Quartet, to the 'spinning' violin part of the 'alla Tedesca' movement, also from Op. 130. But, perhaps inevitably, there's a sense of time-travel, from Beethoven's time to David Matthews' own, and into the future. Each listener and each player will experience that sense of journeying differently, as all of our memories and associations are different. So I hear Bartók, and Haydn, even a Wieniawski 'mazurka'; but that's just me. David has achieved something amazing; it is as if, in this quartet, he offered his response to Beethoven's theme as a 'memory of the future'. And in this case, this is a future which offers triumphant, joyful homecoming [33], as the second violin and viola keep the fugue material going while cello and violin one play a blazing chorale around them.

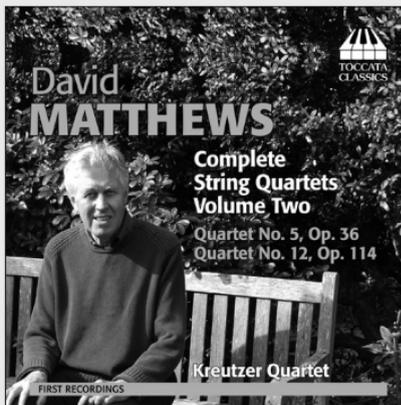
And it's with this sense, of the future in the past, where I must end. David Matthews' transcription of the slow movement of Beethoven's B flat major Sonata, Op. 22, is a wonder, not only for its beauty (the music itself is sublime); much more is revealed. To me, it is as if what has been revealed is that in this piano music is found not only the germ but the very essence of what has come to be seen as Beethoven's 'late style', the intimate grandeur of humanity, just waiting to take flight on string instruments. It was there all the time, and Matthews has opened the door, simply letting it free.



The Kreutzer Quartet – Peter Sheppard Skærved and Mihailo Trandafilovski (violins), Morgan Goff (viola) and Neil Heyde (cello) – has forged an enviable reputation as one of Europe’s most dynamic and innovative string quartets. They are the dedicatees of numerous works, and over many years have forged creative partnerships with composers, including Sir Michael Tippett, David Matthews, Michael Finnissy and John McCabe. In recent months, they have given premieres of major works by Gloria Coates, Edward Cowie, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Robin Holloway, Roger Redgate, Robert Saxton and Mihailo Trandafilovski. They are artists-in-residence at Goldsmiths College and at Wilton’s Music Hall in London. They are extremely proud of their friendship and collaboration with David Matthews, which has resulted in three major quartets, numerous smaller works, transcriptions, and this cycle for Toccata Classics, which is at the centre of their creative work. For Toccata Classics they are also engaged on recording the string quartets of Antoine Reicha.

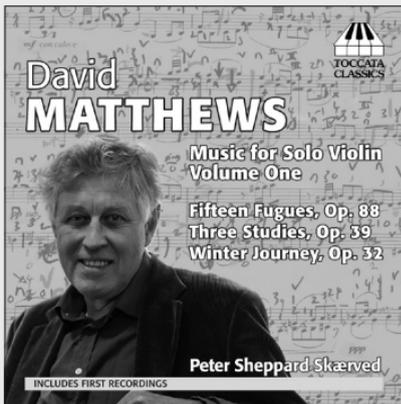
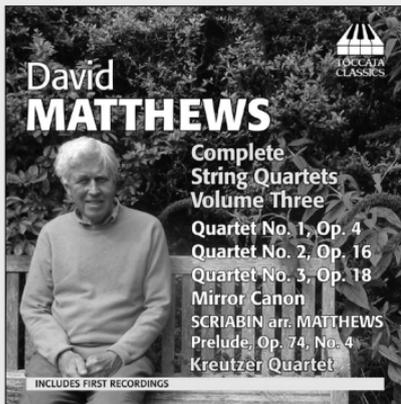
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Recorded in St John the Baptist, Aldbury, on 29–30 July 2014 (Beethoven/Matthews) and 2 February 2015 (Matthews String Quartet No. 11)

Engineering and editing by Jonathan Haskell, Astounding Sounds

Produced by Peter Sheppard Skærved

Music supervision by David Matthews

The artists would like to acknowledge the support given to this recording by the Royal Academy of Music, London.

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TOCC 0318

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