

JOSEPH IGNATZ SCHNABEL (1767–1831) AND HIS GUITAR QUINTET

By Han Jonkers



J. I. SCHNABEL,
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Joseph Ignatz Schnabel, born May 24, 1767, in Naumburg am Quais, Lower Silesia (today Nowogrodziec, Poland), and died June 16, 1831, in Breslau (today Wrocław, Poland), was a cathedral Kapellmeister and composer. Primarily a composer of church music with instrumental accompaniment, he is considered the founder of a distinct Silesian tradition that is also

known as the Breslau school. Until 1804 Schnabel was concertmaster at the Breslau Theater, also filling in as conductor on occasion. In 1805 he became Kapellmeister of the cathedral, later music teacher at the Royal Institute for Church Music and at the Catholic Teachers Seminar. Schnabel presumably had twenty-five children, most of whom didn't survive until adulthood, some of whom became musicians. Mention should be made of his brother, Johannes Michael Aloysius Schnabel (1775–1842), who was a clarinetist, guitarist, and piano maker. Johannes Michael received his musical training from his father; he introduced the guitar to Breslau and attained virtuoso skills on the instrument, which is reflected in many concerts and by his reputation as a sought-after guitar player.

Quintet in C major for guitar and string quartet

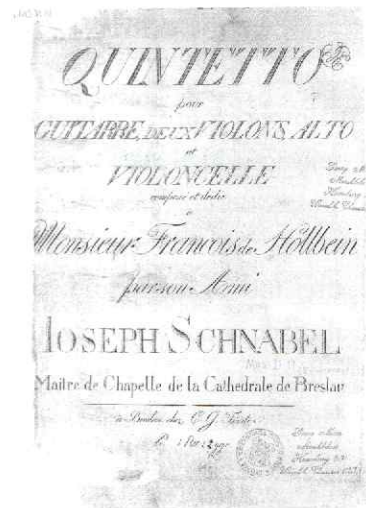
Only one piece for guitar by Joseph Ignatz Schnabel has come down to us: *Quintetto pour Guitarre, Deux Violons, Alto et Violoncelle*, which was probably published in 1825 by C.G. Förster and mentioned in a printed source in 1831. A copy of the original edition, formerly in the private possession of the Hamburg guitarist Georg Meier (1865–1942), is held by Wrocław University Library. It was published only in parts, not in score format. In 1958 the Quintet appeared in *Die Gitarre in der Haus- und Kammermusik*, a series edited by Heinrich Albert and issued by the Wilhelm Zimmermann publishing house, Frankfurt/Main. Albert reproduced the guitar part precisely, but the string parts exhibit many typographical errors, which made it necessary to consult the first edition in Wrocław.

The Quintet was dedicated to Schnabel's friend Monsieur François de Holbein, who was an actor, author, and director at various theaters in Germany and Austria. Holbein lived in Breslau from 1804 to 1806. The occasion for which

Schnabel composed this piece is not known. The work, which to the present day is very rarely played, is undoubtedly one of the very few pieces by German composers of the turn of the nineteenth century for this scoring.

This twenty-minute work is in four movements:

1. Larghetto/Allegro, 2. Larghetto (Cantabile), 3. Minuetto & Trio (Allegro Moderato), and 4. Rondo (Allegro). The Casal Quartet and I recorded Schnabel's Quintet on our CD *Flexible Sky* (Bayer Records, BR 100 386, 2015). With the assistance of the Casals Quartet, who carefully edited the composer's original string parts to correct all typos, I have prepared a score of the Larghetto (Cantabile) of the piece for presentation here, engraved by Brad DeRoche.



References

- Friedrich Mehwald, *Biographie Herrn Joseph Ignatz Schnabels* (Breslau: Leuckart, 1831).
F. J. Fétis, *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*, 8 vols. (Bruxelles: Melin, Cans et Compagnie, 1835–44), VIII, 115–17; see *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/bub_gb_LM09AAAACAAJ/page/115/mode/2up?view=theater.



Dutch guitarist Han Jonkers studied at the conservatory in Maastricht and afterward with Oscar Ghiglia and Konrad Ragossnig. He won third prize in Viña del Mar (1983) and second Prize at the Casals competition in Barcelona (1985). Concert tours took him through South America (Brazil, Peru, and Bolivia), South Africa, Asia, New Zealand, and Belarus. He published a series of guitar editions and seven CDs. He has published articles in *Gitarre & Laute*, *Classical Guitar*, and others. Visit www.hanjonkers.com.

Quintet

Larghetto

Joseph Ignatz Schnabel

Cantabile

Violin I
con sordino *p*

Violin II
con sordino *p*

Viola
con sordino *p*

Cello
con sordino *p*

Guitar

5
Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

5
Gtr.

9

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

6

Minore

11

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

pp dolce

p

13

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

p

15

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

pp

17

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

18

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

dolce

dolce

dolce

p

20

ln. I

ln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

22

ln. I

ln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

23

System 1: Violin I (Vl I) with a long melodic line starting on a whole note and moving through half notes. Violin II (Vl II) and Viola (Vla) play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Cello (C) and Double Bass (Cb) play a simple bass line.

System 2: Continuation of the instrumental parts from the first system.

System 3: Continuation of the instrumental parts from the first system.

23

System 4: Continuation of the instrumental parts from the first system, featuring a dense texture of sixteenth-note patterns in the upper staves.

24

System 1: Violin I (Vl I) with a melodic line featuring slurs and ties. Violin II (Vl II) and Viola (Vla) play a rhythmic accompaniment. Cello (C) and Double Bass (Cb) play a simple bass line.

System 2: Continuation of the instrumental parts from the first system.

System 3: Continuation of the instrumental parts from the first system.

24

System 4: Continuation of the instrumental parts from the first system, featuring a dense texture of sixteenth-note patterns in the upper staves.

26

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Gtr. *p*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 26 through 31. The first violin (Vln. I) and guitar (Gtr.) parts feature triplet patterns. The second violin (Vln. II), viola (Vla.), and cello (Vc.) parts consist of sustained notes, with the cello part showing a sharp sign (#) above a note in measure 31. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) for the strings and *p* (piano) for the guitar.

Maggiore

29

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *dolce*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p*

Gtr. *p*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 29 through 31. The first violin (Vln. I) and guitar (Gtr.) parts feature triplet patterns. The second violin (Vln. II), viola (Vla.), and cello (Vc.) parts consist of sustained notes. The second violin part is marked *dolce* (dolce). Dynamics include *p* (piano) for all instruments.

32

Measures 32-34, systems 1-4. This system contains the first four staves of music. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes with various articulations and phrasing. The first staff has a melodic line with slurs and a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff has a similar melodic line with a fermata. The third and fourth staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and slurs.

32

Measure 32, system 5. This system contains a single staff of music featuring a continuous eighth-note triplet pattern throughout the measure.

35

Measures 35-37, systems 1-4. This system contains the first four staves of music for measures 35-37. The key signature remains three sharps. The music includes slurs, fermatas, and a triplet of eighth notes in the first staff. The second staff has a melodic line with a fermata. The third and fourth staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and slurs.

35

Measure 35, system 5. This system contains a single staff of music featuring a continuous eighth-note triplet pattern throughout the measure.

38

ln. I

ln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.

41

ln. I

ln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Gtr.