

MAGGINI QUARTET RECOMMENDED EDITIONS FOR STRING QUARTETS

The quartet are frequently asked which editions they work from and why, so we have produced this list of new and recommended editions by us, to help chamber music enthusiasts in the purchase of quartet music. These 'new' editions (actually most date from 1950 - 2019), are recommended because they faithfully, or as accurately as is scholastically possible, follow the composer's text or original manuscript, unlike many if not most of the 19th century editions and their present day reprints. The new editions also intelligently and **visually obviously** suggest corrections and additions to the text, as indeed many are needed. For composers not on this list the editions are usually satisfactory or modern replacements as yet unavailable. The most glaring omission is Tchaikowski. The current editions are arrangements!

In the older editions, the parts and the scores often do not match in phrasing or dynamics. Occasionally bars of music are added to quartets e.g. slow movement of KV 465 Peters edition, or removed - Tchaikowski. The fingerings, particularly in the old Peters editions, are rudimentary, and dissuade players from trying their own invariably better fingerings. Then there are ridiculously infrequent rehearsal letters, which also do not match between the scores and parts, all leading, as we have seen so many times, to much confusion when reading and working on a quartet. All new editions use bar numbers at the very least, and this addition alone represents the single most important rehearsal aid! Even if a poor edition is laboriously corrected to a new score, as we have so often done in our quartet in the past, the part soon becomes a mess, and one is still put off by the underlying fingerings, phrasing and dynamics unless a lot of Tippex is used (e.g. Haydn and Mozart Peters Edition).

Recommended critical editions.

- Beethoven:** Bärenreiter parts and scores brilliantly edited by Jonathan Del Mar. Henle parts and scores are only recommended for the late quartets if no Bärenreiter parts are available.
- Brahms:** Henle parts and score are much the best. Breitkopf parts are the next best for the quartets. Bärenreiter now for the sextets! Peters parts generally much less good because they have occasionally some very poor editing and changing of Brahms's text. (E.G. 51/1 slow mvmnt) Dover score excellent. (Hans Gal).
- Debussy:** Bärenreiter and Peters Critical Edition. The original French edition has numerous major mistakes and is to be avoided. The Peters 1970's and Bärenreiter editions are totally superior. Dover is very poor.
- Dvorák:** Henle new editions are now here and are critical editions from the last few years. Bärenreiter is usually a reprint of Supraphon/Artia from the 50's and 60's. Simrock and reprints e.g. International, moderate to poor. Dover is Simrock reprint.
- Faure:** Henle and Bärenreiter critical editions.
- Frank:** Bärenreiter for the quartet.
- Haydn:** New Peters Critical Edition is the best and is brilliantly edited by Simon Rowland Jones and comes complete with critical notes. Henle edition parts and scores are also good. *See note at end concerning Doblinger scores and parts.* Litolf old edition good, but check and correct with new Peters or Henle. Old Peters very poor. Dover scores very poor. 7 last words now available from Henle.
- Janáček:** 1st and 2nd quartet, new critical edition Baerenreiter. Beware, with Janáček it is really difficult to say what he wanted and editions are either a guess at what he wanted, or a print of what one can't play and has to be changed.
- Mendelssohn:** Henle critical edition for quartet parts and scores. Old Peters moderate with some big mistakes. Octet - new edition inc. score from Breitkopf.
- Mozart:** Bärenreiter critical edition including scores. Henle available now for some works also very good indeed. Peters very poor. Dover very poor. Numerous others poor.
- Prokofiev:** Peters critical edition including scores.
- Schumann** Henle critical edition.
- Schubert :** Henle critical edition including scores for all the late quartets. Bärenreiter is also good provided you know the controversy surrounding reading his > sign. We prefer the editorial conclusions of Henle. Peters very poor and very confused in all the quartets. Dover very poor. Old Litolf edition looks good, but needs correction with a Henle score.
- Ravel:** Bärenreiter parts and score - new critical edition. Durand original edition poor, full of mistakes. Original French edition to be avoided.
- Smetana:** Bärenreiter critical edition.
- Tchaikowski:** **All the current editions are very poor. The only critical source is Dover Scores, which is a reprint of the Complete Russian Critical Edition from 1955. Take a tippex correction pen, a black pen and get correcting each part!**

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Here is one of the best shops in the UK for chamber music, with most of the repertoire on the shelf including these recommended editions.

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Notes

Doblinger Scores and parts for Haydn quartets. In Doblinger the editorial suggestions put into the score as hatched lines in brackets are put into the Doblinger parts in bold with no brackets. This very poor editorial practice results in no visible difference in the parts between original Joseph Haydn and suggestions from the editor Robins Landon.

For us in the Maggini Quartet, Robins Landon's editorial taste seems to verge frequently towards visible symmetry of dynamics and articulation, unlike Haydn's delight in the irregular and we feel that most chamber music players that we coach are well able to 'edit' their own performances, much to their musical development and satisfaction. Also, compared with Peters Urtext and Henle, Doblinger seem to have made very strange editorial choices over which sources to use as the main text.

Correcting the Doblinger parts is no problem if you have a Doblinger score to hand and can go through your parts putting the suggestions in brackets, but it does mean that we recommend the new Peters and if not available Henle as there is no confusion on this important point.

Wish list in order of most desirable editions to rebuild a library of string quartet music with good editions: Schubert, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven then the rest.

In Haydn, if a quartet is well known or named, one can be assured that most of the 1880's Peters editions will have heavily edited it. If on the other hand the quartet is not so well known, e.g. Haydn op42 or 50/1, than the editing in Peters will be light and a new well edited score will suffice (e.g. Peters, Henle and lastly Doblinger etc.)

Most editions of Haydn, Schubert and Beethoven (Eulenberg, Lee Pocket, Dover, Peters, International etc.) can be traced back to the 1880's editions and are hopelessly superseded by modern critical editions. Nearly all music shops seem to know very little about the editions of the music they sell and are very happy to sell you a Dover Mozart score which is a reprint of 1881/2 Breitkopf and Hartel edition and tell you that it is what everyone buys! They seem disinterested in and incapable of distinguishing between that and the critical edition - even though the Bärenreiter critical edition has been available since 1963! (One member of the Maggini Quartet had not even been born by then!)

Maggini Quartet. August 2019