

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847) String Quintet in Bb opus 87 (1845)

Although Mendelssohn was only 36 when he wrote this his second string quintet, it was one of his last chamber works, he died two years later. He had been recklessly busy: conducting and being musical director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus, together with being the King's *Kapellmeister*. He also travelled to London to conduct his work and incidentally to entertain Queen Victoria and Prince Albert improvising on '*Rule, Britannia!*'. But in September 1844, shortly after finishing the long-gestated Violin Concerto, he asked the king to be released from his service, a request that the king partly acceded to, retaining Mendelssohn only to compose special commissions. In the summer of 1845, after turning down an invitation to conduct in New York, and also having taken sabbatical leave from his Leipzig conducting, he had time to enjoy family life and compose.