The Seven Last Words of Christ**,** by Franz Joseph Haydn, was commissioned in 1786 by the priest Don José Sáenz de Santa María for the Good Friday service at Oratorio de la Santa Cueva in Cádiz, Spain. Originally composed for string orchestra, Haydn himself arranged it for **string quartet** the following year. He was faced with the challenge of writing a musical meditation on each of the seven words, each about ten-minutes long. These seven movements, framed by a solemn introduction at the beginning and the terrifying earthquake movement at the end, hold a unique place in the string quartet literature.