Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949) String Sextet from Capriccio (1941)

Strauss's last opera Capriccio opens with this sextet being performed on stage. We are in the Countess Madeleine's château and her suitor Flamand has just composed the piece for her. A heated argument follows between Flamand and his rival suitor, the poet Olivier. They cannot agree on which is the greater – poetry or music? The Countess is as undecided between the two arts as she is between her two suitors, and after the two-and-a-half hours of the opera, she is still undecided. Of course, she wants both.

If any piece could persuade you that the correct answer is "Music", then this 13-minute sextet is quite possibly it. So please just enjoy it and be glad that, unlike the Countess, you don't have to choose between poetry and music.