



THE
CHAMBER MUSIC
JOURNAL

*The Essential Guide
For Players & Listeners
To The Wider World
of Chamber Music*

Vitezslav Novak's Piano Trios

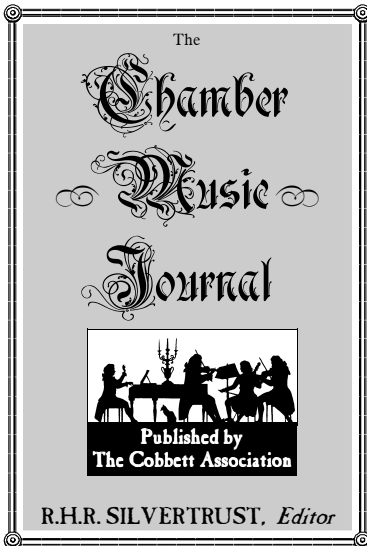
***The String Quartets
Of Friedrich Gernsheim***

***Johann Nepomuk Hummel's
Septet for Piano, Flute, Oboe,
Horn, Viola, Cello & Bass***

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The Sounding Board—Letters to the Editor

**Moritz Kässmayer—Who Was He?**

During a recent quartet evening, my host pulled out a work by Moritz Kässmayer. It was a collection of Viennese folk songs. I had never heard about him and my host could tell me nothing other than he had bought the music years ago in a London music shop. There were no details on the music either. Any information you have would be appreciated.

Harold Raskin
St. Louis, Missouri

There is very little information available about Moritz Kässmayer (1831-1885) He was born and lived his entire life in Vienna, where he was a fairly well-known violinist and conductor. He played in the Imperial Court Opera Orchestra and served as conductor of its ballet. There is no full list of his compositions that I know of, however, he wrote arrangements of folk melodies from various countries (e.g. Norway, Germany, Italy and Austria) for string quartet. These were published by Schlesinger and now by their successors Robert Lienau in 14 volumes—four folk melodies to a volume. I believe some of these are still in print. The publisher Schlesinger advertised the works as being “humorous”. If so, the humor is gentle. They are not parodies. In addition, Kässmayer is said to have written five string quartets and a string quintet for two violins, two violas and cello.

Chamber Music with Piano by Borodin

I love Borodin’s two string quartets and play them often. A pianist friend with whom I sometimes play trios wondered if he also wrote any chamber music with piano as he would like to join in.

Alex McCauley
Sydney Australia

Borodin composed a Piano Trio in D Major. Like all of his works, there is no opus number. It is generally thought to have been composed while he was touring in Italy, but there is no absolute proof of this. It has three movements, and appears to be either unfinished or missing its finale as it ends with a minuet, which would have been rather uncharacteristic for this time period. (1860’s) The trio was published for the first time by the Soviet State Music Publishers in 1950, it was reprinted by Wollenweber (No.56) and is readily available. The music shows the clear influence of Mendelssohn, especially the Op.49 trio in d minor. There are certain thematic elements which to musicologists have seemed Italian which led to the hy-

pothesis that Borodin may have composed the trio during his trip to Italy in 1861-2. It was also during this period that Borodin composed a Piano Quintet in c minor. There is less doubt as to the date and place of this composition. Borodin had met a Russian pianist, Ekaterina Protopopova, with whom he became enamored while he was studying chemistry in Heidelberg. Suffering from tuberculosis, she was advised by doctors to spend time in Italy. She went to Pisa and Borodin soon followed. It was there during 1861-2 that the Quintet was composed. Protopopova (who later became Borodin’s wife) was a first rate pianist, and admirer of Schumann. And it was Schumann’s famous Piano Quintet which almost certainly served as a model for Borodin. Also in three movements, the Quintet, unlike the Trio, appears to be complete. The music is Russian sounding but the Quintet, more than the other works composed during this period, seems to have caused Borodin considerable difficulty. To its credit, the part-writing is rather good and the work is technically undemanding. Belwin Mills reprinted the work several years ago and it has remained in print since that time.

Why Is Arriaga Called the “Spanish Mozart”

I have heard Juon Cristostomo Arriaga referred to as the “Spanish Mozart”. Can you tell me why?

Peter Taylor
Miami, Florida

Juan Cristostomo Jacobo Antonio de Arriaga y Balzola (1806-26) died shortly before his 20th birthday, but during his short life showed tremendous promise. His father was a part-time musician and the fact that Juan was born on the 50th anniversary of Mozart’s birth did not escape his notice. As a result, Arriaga’s father chose to give his son the first two Christian names of the famous Austrian. (Mozart’s were Johann Gottlieb). Like Mozart, Arriaga composed his first opera, Los Esclavos Felices, at the age of 13. At the age of 18, Arriaga was appointed to teach harmony and counterpoint at the Paris Conservatory and issued the only works that were published during his lifetime, three string quartets. These sound more like Schubert (whose music he never heard) than Mozart, but no one has thought to call Arriaga the “Spanish Schubert”

We welcome your letters and articles. Letters to the Editor and manuscripts should be addressed to us at 601 Timber Trail, Riverwoods, IL 60015, USA. Letters published may be edited for reasons of space, clarity and grammar.

The String Quartets of Friedrich Gernsheim

by Dr. Gilbert Carroll



Friedrich Gernsheim (1839-1916) wrote five string quartets; Op. 25, Op.31, Op.51, Op.66, and Op.83. The quartets span most of the course of his long composing career whose published works extended from about 1863 to 1914. His musical development was well-supported by his wealthy family and consisted of good early instruction, travel, and introductions to important musicians. Once his reputation was established he obtained conducting and teaching appointments, but he continued to compose throughout his life. While all his music seems to be of good quality it evolved

more slowly than music of his time. In many respects then, his life resembles a slower, less brilliant version of Mendelssohn's.

The son of a prominent physician in Worms, he was taught piano by his mother and theory by a pupil of Spohr's. The family moved to Mainz in 1848 where he studied piano with Ernst Pauer. In the aftermath of the year of revolutions the family moved to Frankfurt where he was taught violin by Eduard Elia-son, a friend of Paganini. At only 11 years of age, he gave a concert performing on the violin as well as the piano and had a composition of his performed on the same program!

In the company of his mother he then began a 2-year concert tour as a pianist. After that, he spent 4 years with Moscheles (piano), Hauptmann (theory), and Ferdinand David (violin) at the Leipzig Conservatory. He then went to Paris for 5 years to complete his study of the piano with Marmontel. While there, he met Julius Stockhausen, Lalo, Saint-Saens, Rossini, and Stephen Heller.

After his stay in Paris, he returned to Germany and began his conducting career in Saarbrucken. Four years later, he became a

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Johann Nepomuk Hummel's Septet For Piano, Flute, Oboe, Horn, Viola, Cello & Bass

By Franz Weinzierl



Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837) was born in Pressburg, then a part of the Austrian Habsburg Empire (now Bratislava the capital of Slovakia). Hummel, at the age of 8, auditioned to study with Mozart. While Mozart accepted the occasional day student for the odd hour or half hour lesson, he refused to take on full-time students because he was too busy. In Hummel's case, immediately recognizing the extraordinary talent, Mozart not only made an exception, but insisted that Hummel live with him so that he could supervise every aspect of the his musical education. In fact, Hummel was the only full-time student Mozart ever had. Hummel was taught and housed by Mozart for 2 years free of

charge and made his first concert appearance at the age of nine, at one of Mozart's concerts. Hummel's father then led him on a European tour. Arriving in London in 1791, he received instruction from Muzio Clementi and stayed for four years before returning to Vienna, where he took additional lessons with Haydn, Albrechtsberger, and Salieri. In 1804, Hummel succeeded Haydn as Kapellmeister to Prince Esterházy at Eisenstadt. He held this post for seven years before being dismissed for neglecting his duties. Hummel later held the position of Kapellmeister at Stuttgart and Weimar, where he formed a close friendship with Goethe and Schiller, colleagues from the Weimar theater. During Hummel's stay in Weimar, he made the city into a European musical capital, inviting the best musicians of the day to visit and make music there. He started one of the first pension programs for fellow musicians, giving benefit concert tours when the musicians' retirement fund ran low. In addition, Hummel's *A Complete Theoretical and Practical Course of Instruction on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte* (1828), brought about a new style of fingering and of playing ornaments. Later 19th century pianistic technique was influenced by Hummel, through his instruction of Carl Czerny who later taught Franz Liszt. Czerny had first studied with Beethoven, but upon hearing Hummel one evening,

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Vitezslav Novak's Piano Trios

by Kaspar Ruzicka

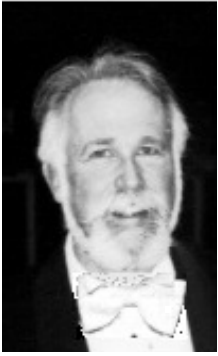
Vitezslav Novak (baptized Viktor) was born in Kamenice nad Lipou, a small town in Southern Bohemia. He was a leading proponent of Czech nationalism in music in the generation after Dvorak and Smetana. However, it seemed unlikely that he would become a musician having begun by hating music as a result of being brutally forced to study the violin and the piano as a young child. But a fascination for composition, which he discovered in his teens, led to his decision to enter the Prague Conservatory. It was at this time that he changed his name to Vítězslav to identify more closely with his Czech identity, as many of his generation did. At the Conservatory, he attended Dvorak's composition class. When Dvorak departed for America in 1892, he had no choice but to study with the ultra-conservative Karel Stecker. Novák, however, was to reject not only Stecker's teaching but also to a certain extent, the influence of Dvorak. By 1900, his compositions began to show the influence of the new modernist movement.

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At The Doublebar



We have just completed our 20th year of publication. For those of you who have not been with us the whole time, a little history. Our founder and first editor, Bob Maas, started the Association back in 1990. Its purpose was for Bob to

share with like minded musicians his “treasures” which he had found and photocopied in various libraries he had visited over the course of a lifetime. As such, he wrote the whole thing himself. *The Chamber Music Journal* as we know it today did not exist back then. Instead, there was a four page communication typed by Bob’s wife Alice on an old battered typewriter and duplicated on a mimeograph machine. I am sure, if Bob’s means had allowed or if he had been more technically savvy, he would have opted for a more sophisticated system. However, I am not sure if the Association could have survived as long as it has without changing. Certainly Bob envisioned some of these changes and had hoped to implement them himself over a period of years but, he was struck down with a terminal illness not long after getting the whole enterprise off the ground. It has been my privilege and pleasure to head the Association and edit *The Journal* for the past 17 years. All things in life are temporal and as we enter our 21st year, I thought it appropriate to spend a moment remembering Bob’s great idea.

I want to thank our contributors for their fine articles. It is fitting and just that Friedrich Gernsheim’s string quartets have at last received their due. Hats off to Dr. Carroll for his painstaking and thorough article. I have played all of these works and can strongly recommend them. Certainly some deserve the sobriquet of masterwork. I can only claim to have played Hummel’s Septet twice in my life. These were separated by more than two decades, but I feel lucky to have had the opportunity. It is a pity the instrumentation is so unusual. But Franz Weinzierl is absolutely correct in recommending it. I also wish to thank Professor Ruzicka for his article on Vitezslav Novak’s Piano Trios. These are engaging and interesting works that are well worth your time.—Ray Silvertrust, Editor

Friedrich Gernsheim’s String Quartets

(Continued from page 3)

teacher at the Cologne Conservatory and was active as a conductor. Humperdinck was one of his students there. He stayed in Cologne from 1865 until 1872. In 1868 he befriended Brahms, and thereafter his music has been said to have shifted its major influence from Schumann to Brahms.

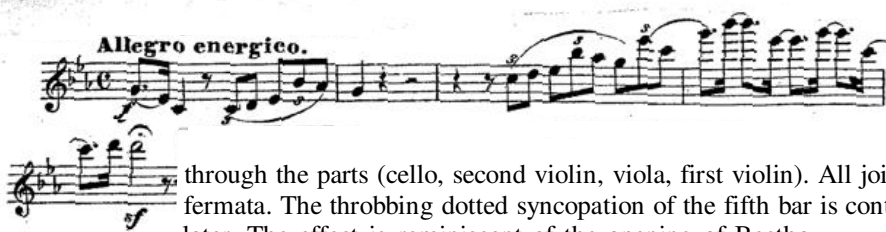
He moved to Rotterdam in 1872 and from 1874 to 1890, Gernsheim directed the Rotterdam Philharmonic Society, taking the position vacated by Bargiel, Clara Schumann’s half-brother. In 1890 he taught at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin and conducted its choir until 1904. He often programmed the works of Brahms, Bruch, and Humperdinck in his concerts, which helped their careers.

Gernsheim published his first string quartet in 1872, one year *before* Brahms’ Op. 51. He published and premiered his First Symphony nearly 2 years before Brahms’ First. It is surprising, therefore, how much Gernsheim’s First Symphony has the same basic symphonic sound as the symphonies of Brahms. Indeed all 4 of the Gernsheim symphonies sound like Brahms’ symphonies, albeit lacking the bold delineation and profound melodic ideas found in Brahms. The quartets, in contrast, do not prefigure Brahms. Indeed, no one would mistake them for Brahms. In contrast to the studious pallor of his symphonies, Gernsheim’s quartets are full of vivid, starkly proclaimed themes and melodies. It is mysterious why all of Gernsheim’s symphonies sound like Brahms while none of his quartets do. Perhaps it is because, as noted elsewhere, Gernsheim was most confident and at his best when writing chamber music. In any case, his string quartets show considerable originality, variety, and unrestrained romantic impulse. Although they occasionally achieve an effect reminiscent of another composer they do it in an original way; and that other composer almost never seems to be Brahms. Yet both composers shared the same compositional methods: classical forms containing themes that were continuously varied even during their exposition; and unity of expression, usually throughout a work. Thus, the music in Gernsheim’s quartets has a narrative, evolving character while simultaneously all the movements of a piece usually sound like they belong together.

Although all his quartets are distinctive, the first three stay firmly within the boundaries of the 19th century forms used by Brahms, and the last two only partially go beyond. They all have intricate, complicated part writing; they all have 4 movements; and they all are of high, nearly uniform quality. The first three quartets feature the sentimental emotional expressiveness so characteristic of late nineteenth century romanticism. Gernsheim’s fourth quartet begins to mature the emotional tone, and the fifth presents development away from declaration of sentiment as the main aesthetic goal.

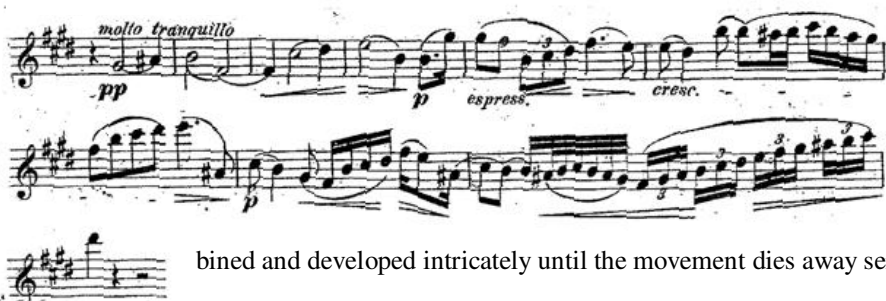
In the descriptions of the quartets which follow, an attempt has been made to provide an admittedly subjective impression of the emotions projected. Despite the danger of displaying only my own idiosyncratic interpretations, I think it is helpful to do so because I believe that the content and method of depicting emotions are central to the different sound of Gernsheim’s and Brahms’ chamber music. Specifically, Brahms’ music sets emotional scenes that are carefully refined and evolve progressively to developments that are well-prepared by what went before. The emotions are often profound, whether subtle or strongly expressed. Each is heard for a relatively long time without change of emotional tone. The music evokes feelings that are consistent, mature, and follow one another naturally even when contrasting within a movement. Gernsheim, however, abruptly changes moods and emotions. Strongly expressed emotion appears less mature if switched suddenly to another emotion. Indeed, the music seems often to express gusts of adolescent emotions.

Even more arbitrarily, and I hope it will not annoy, I will mention some places where a phrase of Gernsheim’s music reminds me, or one of my stand partners, of the music of another composer. The reason is not so much to impugn anyone’s originality or conclude anything significant about influences as to give some idea how the music might sound.



through the parts (cello, second violin, viola, first violin). All join rhythmically in the 4th and 5th bars ending in a fermata. The throbbing dotted syncopation of the fifth bar is continued to an even more tempestuous climax 9 bars later. The effect is reminiscent of the opening of Beethoven's 5th symphony. The music settles into a *tranquillo dolce ed espressivo* section from which emerges a lyrical chromatic viola solo (see right) richly decorated with cello and second violin counterpoint. After one more heroic outburst the first section ends tranquilly. The second section begins with an elaborate development of the opening motifs. It proceeds through two modified recapitulations each ending in the opening fermata motif shown in measure 5 of example 1. The movement ends with a soaring *appassionato* melody played one half measure apart by the cello and first violin. There follows a descending version of the dotted syncopation motif against *sforzando* cello notes on-the-beat, vaguely like the end of Brahms' piano quintet, and two unison c-minor chords.

String Quartet No.1. Op 25 is in c minor. The first movement, marked *Allegro energico* begins with a dramatic opening statement in unison (see example on left). Then a fragment of the statement, the 5-note triplet figure, is echoed



The second movement, *Andante con moto*, is in A-flat major. It begins *sotto voce* with a wistful 8-bar melody stated as a violin duet and repeated by the viola and cello. Following a lyrical de nouement it modulates to E-major and launches off on a new melody somewhat related to the opening theme but more florid (example on left). After returning to A-flat both melodies are combined and developed intricately until the movement dies away serenely.

The third movement in 3/4 time appears to be a scherzo with a coda but is marked simply *Allegro*. The opening is in eighth notes with stuttering dotted figures on the first beats and it is embellished by frequent grace notes in the upper 3 strings. After driving forcefully upward in pitch they pause for the cello to begin the theme. The section ends dramatically with 4 measures of pizzicato. Until the "trio" section, the movement is in c minor but the trio opens with sixteenth note passages suddenly modulating to C major. All 4 parts join in the bravura passage work. After the de capo, a short coda, which almost reprises the transition to the trio, ends abruptly with a nod to the opening motif.

The fourth movement takes off from the third so naturally it could be played attacca. Yet it is in 2/4 and marked *Rondo all'Ongarese Allegro molto vivace*. It is indeed in the form of an Hungarian dance replete with Schumannesque sixteenth-note sections. Although the themes are rather simple (example on right) and repetitive.



Gernsheim 's innovative treatment of the repetitions is interesting. For example, the first recapitulation of the opening theme is played primarily by the viola with violin 2 and cello counterpoint while the first violin plays *pizzicato* chords. As occurred in the 3rd movement, there is a more legato C major section in the middle but here it is slow and *pesante*. Not surprisingly, the movement ends with a frantic *presto/prestissimo*. Although I thought the movement went on a bit too long for the material, the other members of my quartet thought it was a lot of fun to play and would be a crowd pleaser if played quickly enough.

Overall, the quartet is thickly scored and complicated. It is very serious, full of beautiful melodies, and has intricate part writing--all of very high quality. The first violin part, as befits a violinist-composer, requires considerable technical ability and command of the entire fingerboard (true for all of these quartets). A score is available online at no cost from the IMSLP library as a pdf file. Performance parts with rehearsal letters and a score are available from Edition Silvertrust. Photocopies are also available from Merton Music but they do not have measure numbers or rehearsal markings and have a few minor mistakes from the original.

String Quartet No.2 in a minor, Op 31 is also in a minor key. As of this writing, this is the only Gernsheim quartet to have been recorded (Mandelring Quartet, Audite 97.503, 2004). As such, and because excerpts can be heard on the Cobbett Association website (www.cobbettassociation.org), I will omit giving examples from the parts. However, I would urge anyone reading this to go now to the Cobbett Association website and listen to the excerpts as you read my descriptions. That way you can hear for yourself if my impressions fit with yours.

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Although Gernsheim published his second string quartet in 1875, two years after Brahms' Op.51 quartets, it is hard to hear any influence. The first movement, *Allegro*, is in 3/4 time. It begins quietly with the first violin playing a sustained melody containing many notes tied over the bar line accompanied only by murmuring legato eighth notes in the viola. The effect is portentous but also sad. The legato opening is punctuated by crescendos containing accented off-beat notes that die away and then recur at intervals with more insistence until the opening theme is restated forte and takes on a defiant, if not hopeful character. The exposition gives way to a second violin/viola duet in a major key accompanied by the first violin playing slurred eighth-note arpeggios and the cello playing *pizzicato* quarter notes. It sounds like a fond reminiscence after a reflection on an irretrievable loss. The first section ends with the cello playing a tied figure out of phase with the first violin and viola. Overall, the sound is cleaner, the message more focused, and the delivery comes with less commotion than the beginning of the first quartet. The second section of the first movement repeatedly modulates and develops that figure and then re-introduces and varies the opening theme in a new context. That process is repeated with variation until a *misterioso* section leads back seamlessly to the recapitulation. The movement ends with an impassioned, sobbing rejection of a final statement of the opening theme, a pause, a suspenseful climax to another pause and then, the music dies away with three chords.

The second movement, *Adagio*, is in D-flat major. It begins piano with a long-lined stately melody that is harmonized chromatically with many passing tones until resolving at the end of a crescendo. The melody becomes more pressured, emotional, and louder until finally resolving harmonically and quieting. Following a 4-bar unison chant the second theme, tender and more plaintive is heard. Next, Gernsheim introduces variations of that theme which become progressively more strident. The emotion is intensified by an innovative device which may be unique: an ascending 7-note thirty-second-note scale played on the second half of the first and third beats by the lower two strings and repeated later by the violins but in sequence on the second half of each beat. When repeated, the lower strings always play the figure ascending while the upper strings answer in descending scales. It seems to produce multiple shudders of horror going up and down one's spine under girding the plaintive theme now cried out fortissimo. After exhausting itself there is a tender violin duet graced by lovely suspensions. The recapitulation that follows is led by the cello in tenor clef while the first violin plays a pianissimo descant in a high register. The movement ends in a tranquil benediction.

The third movement, *Molto vivace ed energico*, is a scherzo in 3/4 time. It is marked *pesante* and is full of rollicking cross rhythms that are great fun to play. In the second section the first violin wobbles oddly through a five-eighth-note phrase that cycles 3 times solo before breaking free. Somehow the one beat per measure pulse is maintained throughout. Double and triple stops are used effectively and energetic staccato eighth-note passages complete the fun. The trio section is marked "*meno mosso*" and modulates to A-major. It is a contrasting legato sweet-sounding waltz backed by slurred string-crossings in the inside parts. Although the inside parts play slurred eighths in the romance of Brahms' first quartet they are mostly *bariolage* and sound completely different.

The last movement seems so closely related to the third that our quartet has performed it *attacca* to good effect. The first 3 notes are similar in concept to the last movement of Schumann's first quartet but there the resemblance ends. The rhythm is mostly dotted eighths interrupted by chords, trills and triplet figures cleverly passed between the violins. The beginning, marked "*con forza*" settles down to the second theme, *piano espressivo*, which is declared by the second violin. The mood change is accompanied by a meter change in the form of triplet quarters in the melody and later triplet eighths. The key modulates to E major. Under the influence of a crescendo the restatement of the pleasant melody becomes positively joyful. But then the triplets are fragmented ominously, the key turns back to A minor and a variation of the opening theme begins in the form of a fugue. The cello and first violin trade a two-bar syncopated mordant figure which sounds very much like a similar figure featured in the last movement of Bruch's first violin concerto (1868). Next comes a somewhat labored series of quarter-note chord progressions pitting the cello against the other 3 instruments; but which justifies itself admirably by setting up the recapitulation. (The Mandelring quartet improves the quarter-note section by increasing the tempo.)

A final change of key prepares for the ending with a pianissimo rendition of the dotted figure that transforms into unison eighth notes followed by an astonishing measure of triplets in which the violins in unison descend to their lowest range while the viola (originally in unison with the violins) and cello simultaneously ascend to the point where the viola is almost 2 octaves above both violins! After one final statement of the opening theme there is an *accelerando* mad dash to the finish.

Parts are available from the IMSLP library for download "free" (your time, your printer ink, your paper, your binding, and need to modify the print size). Photocopies are also available from Merton Music without rehearsal letters or bar numbers. A performance edition is available from Edition Silvertrust with bar numbers in movements 1,2, and 4, and rehearsal letters in the scherzo.

String Quartet No.3 in F Major, Op. 51 was published in 1886, 11 years after the second quartet. Nothing like the second string quartet, the third quartet evokes lofty, mountainous environments and sunny, rustic scenes. It begins with an *Allegro* in 3/4 time. The opening theme (example below) is declaimed by



the first violin and answered by the cello. A mysterious tranquillo section follows interrupted by a short but passionate outburst. Calm is restored for a short while followed by frantic meandering that breaks into a rapid C major arpeggio played for 4 bars *pianissimo* by the first violin, answered by 4 bars *fortissimo* of A major arpeggios played by all the instruments. Thundering chords pitting the cello against the upper strings rhythmically are more interesting than the analogous section in the last movement of the second quartet. They give the impression of lightning strikes that give way to an extended version of the calm, ethereal *tranquillo*

which is begun by the cello (example on right) and echoed in high register by the first violin while the inner instruments ripple along with slurred triplet eighth-note arpeggios. The entire sequence just described is modulated, developed, and varied. Our violist noticed that one of the *tranquillo* versions which is lead by the second violin sounds very much like material from Amahl and the Night Visitors. Finally, the original version of the opening tune then calls dolce from the distance and the movement ends peacefully pianissimo.



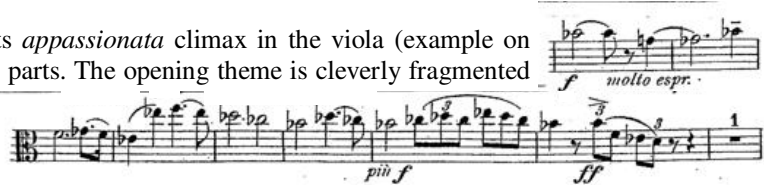
and sounds like central European music. The *vivace* is a charming dance tune (see example above left). Following the *vivace* trio section a variation of the opening is written out and ended with a peasant joke in the form of two loud chords after a pianissimo.

The second movement is a charming rustic *Allegretto scherzando* in 2/4 with a 3/4 trio section marked *Molto vivace e giocoso*. The first section prefigures the effect of the second movement of Suk's Op. 11 (also in F major published 1896)



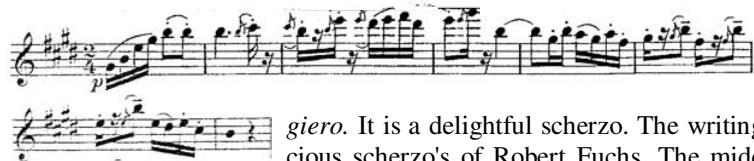
The slow movement, *Andante molto cantabile*, is in A major with an A minor middle section. It begins with a two-line melody in the first violin (example on left) which is joined by the second and viola in counterpoint melodies which feature repetitions of the fifth bar of the opening theme and exchanges of the last bar

A sad second theme works its way through the parts until its *appassionata* climax in the viola (example on right) accompanied by detached triplets in the violin and cello parts. The opening theme is cleverly fragmented and developed in the recapitulation after which the cello plays one final rendition of the opening theme in tenor clef and the movement ends peacefully, the pledges of love finally secured.



The last movement, *Moderato*, is a relatively short theme and variations which begins piano, *grazioso*. It is in the form of short (8 or 16 bar) variations of a droll peasant theme which are all in F major except the eighth, *Lento e Sostenuto*, which is in F minor. There are many interesting stylistic contrasts and tricks to the variations such as *pizzicato* variation where only the viola is *arco*. The movement ends with an extended coda replete with a couple of Gernsheim's familiar wails, which are a bit out of place here, but which are quickly stifled and the quartet ends on a quiet cheerful note. The IMSLP library has a pdf file of the score but no parts for the third string quartet. A performance edition of parts and score with rehearsal letters is available from Edition Silvertrust and Merton Music has photocopies of the parts without bar numbers or rehearsal letters and also a score

In **String Quartet No.4 in e minor, Op.66** Gernsheim returns to a minor key. (The key is actually ambiguous, however.) It was originally published in 1900, 14 years after the third quartet, when Gernsheim was 61 years old. It shows a new level of sophistication and moderation of the cyclothymic emotionality of his earlier works. The first movement, in E minor, is in 6/8 time and marked *Allegro, ma molto moderato ed espressivo*. The introduction and treatment of the themes are measured and subtle. The quartet opens with two mysterious chords which then give way to a diffident yet intriguing theme (example above) accompanied by off-beat *pizzicato* in the three lower parts. Similar to the first movement of the third quartet, the first movement of the fourth quartet has no repeated section and proceeds by introducing new ideas that are developed by mixing them with parts of the earlier themes. Thematically, the new melodic material is introduced *piano* like the opening but contrast is provided by outbursts of *bravura con fuoco* passage work in *staccato* sixteenths or triplet sixteenths in which all the parts participate. Two key changes are made and the material is intricately developed before the final section. Despite the contrast between sections the movement seems to build on itself rather than interrupt itself as each section seems to motivate what follows. The ending consists of two increases in tempo culminating in the whole quartet racing along a *fortissimo* triplet passage to an abrupt *grande pause*. Like the end of a shy girl's fantasy of an elegant ball, the movement ends with a simple restatement of the opening theme.



The second movement opens with a happy-go-lucky theme (example on left) in E major. Gernsheim notates it: *Allegretto scherzando, ma non troppo vivo e sempre molto leggero*. It is a delightful scherzo. The writing is impeccable and achieves an effect similar to the most gracious scherzo's of Robert Fuchs. The middle section, *un poco pesante*, modulates to A-flat major. The

(Continued from page 7)

mood remains buoyant but the new melody is in triplets and *legato*. The lower three strings have interesting short chromatic runs of sixteenth notes at various cadences and the violins collaborate near the end on a longer one that is particularly clever.



The third movement of the fourth quartet is an *Andante Tema con Variazioni* that begins in A minor, modulates to A major for the fourth through sixth variation, goes back to A minor for the seventh, and unexpectedly ends in a peaceful A major. The opening theme and its treatment initially are reminiscent of Schumann (example on left).

However, it becomes idiotypical of Gernsheim by the A major sections. In the last of these A Major variations the melody is given to the cello (example on right) and is accompanied, perhaps "contested" is a better word, by the upper three strings playing *come sopra* sixteenth note figures.



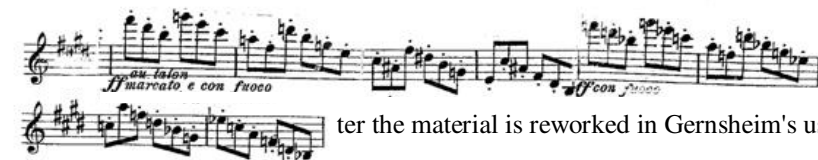
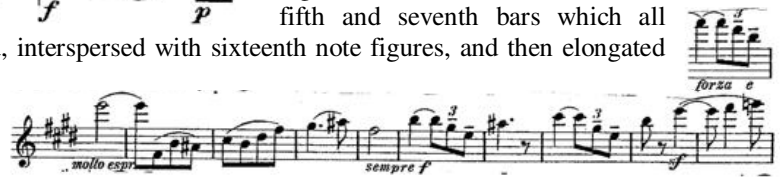
The last movement is difficult to understand. Gernsheim seems deliberately to transgress conventional 19th century writing here. First, it is inexplicably in E major!

(The original publication states "E-moll." in the title.)



four instruments play together. That later motif is developed, interspersed with sixteenth note figures, and then elongated into a triplet for the second subject (example on right) Although prefigured melodically in the material that came before the second subject seems incongruously sentimental. Moreover, he goes on to present 11 of the 12 tones of the 12 tone scale. immediately after in a startlingly modern

It begins with a lively second violin/viola figure (example on left) punctuated by the unison eighth and two sixteenths at the end of the fifth and seventh bars which all



sequence of notes! (example on left) It's as if Gernsheim is describing a conversation with the man of La Mancha and Schoenberg. The movement ends conventionally after the material is reworked in Gernsheim's usual fashion.

In his fourth quartet, Gernsheim seems to be straining to break out of the 19th century. Much of the writing is at the highest level and many of the musical ideas are excellent but parts of the third and especially the fourth movements seem to be experiments groping for but not realizing a new means of expression. Parts are available for free as a downloadable pdf file from the IMSLP library. A performance edition of the parts with rehearsal letters is available from Edition Silvertrust and Merton Music has photocopies of the parts with rehearsal letters.

By the time Gernsheim wrote **String Quartet No.5, Op. 83**, he was 72 years old and quartet writing had already undergone a period of extraordinary change. In just the German language-centered music world Kodaly and Sibelius' had published 1 quartet; Dohnanyi, Reger, Schoenberg, and Wolf, 2 quartets; and Stenhammer 3. Nevertheless, in the fifth quartet, Gernsheim found a way to update and re-integrate his music: refined eclecticism. Using bits of elements from new and old sources, even Brahms, he modifies them to fit with each other and transforms them with his own lyrical style thereby achieving a new synthesis. While still melodic and containing emotional elements, those features are now moderated. Gernsheim's new refinement makes the music sound less complicated and each new section flows more naturally than in the previous quartets. However, the unity between movements is largely lost.



The first movement, in A major, is *Allegro non troppo*. It begins with the first violin stating an unusually modest tune (example on left). The tune expresses a tenderness new to

Gernsheim and marked *sehr zart und ruhig*. It is repeated in the cello with violin descant. The music rapidly moves into a powerful *risoluto* section, a short, ethereal *tranquillo* and another, even more emphatic version of the *risoluto* (example on right). After a short development the sweet opening section is repeated followed by a modulated version of the *risoluto* in A minor which returns to A major to reprise the *tranquillo*. A final, more robust, version of the opening theme follows. A short joyous tumult in the style of Robert Fuchs ends the movement.



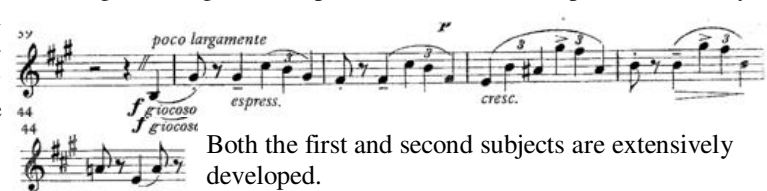
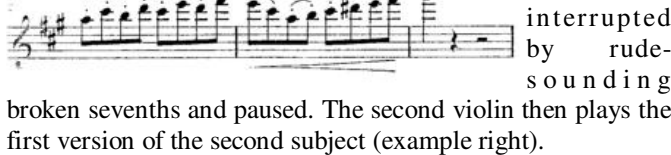
The second movement, *Molto vivace*, is in D minor. The beginning is in hushed tones and sounds like a Nordic fairy dance. The violins are periodically muted while playing two-measure swatches of sixteenth notes. Fast passages are progressively oddly modulated and cunningly played against chromatic scales in the cello and viola. The effect is quite original. The second subject is a joyful loud dance made rambunctious by varying the meter from two to three per measure in 6/8 time. A short *risoluto pesante* section ends with an interesting chromatic transition sounding like a similar passage in the first movement of Barber's Op. 11 quartet.

The third movement superficially is typical of Gernsheim's slow movements. The melodic lines are long and varied as they work through the parts (example on right cello). The opening exposition is in F major. A louder, more passionate, middle section in E major follows with elaborate figuration providing an operatic effect. But then odd 6 to 10 bar bridges proceed, one after the other, to modulate from F to D-flat to A to C and finally into the grand recapitulation (lead by the viola) in F major. Surprisingly, the whole thing sounds natural. The movement ends in a peaceful diminuendo.



The last movement, *Allegro Vivace e con brio* returns to A major. It begins with a cheerful little tune that seems prepossessing for a fugue (example on left). It is developed immediately, interrupted by rude-sounding broken sevenths and paused. The second violin then plays the first version of the second subject (example right).

The last movement, *Allegro Vivace e con brio* returns to A major. It begins with a cheerful little tune that seems prepossessing for a fugue (example on left). It is developed immediately,



Both the first and second subjects are extensively developed.

Next follows the anticipated fugue introduced by the second violin. But, unexpectedly, it is based on the rude broken sevenths rather than the opening figure! A climax is reached based on dramatic offset chords that ends in a Brahmsian cadence. The themes are then varied and repeated in abrupt succession *piu mosso*. The complete and full-throated version of second subject is heard *Meno mosso*, followed by one last hearing of the opening subject played *presto* and the quartet ends with five short chords.

Parts are available for free as a pdf file download from the IMSLP library. In 1999 Amadeus Verlag produced a new printing which is available both at their website and from music shops such as Broekmans en Van Poppel. The work is also available from Edition Silvertrust.

Before closing, I would like to convey my overall impression of the rank of these quartets in the string quartet literature. Of course, the basic appeal of a composer's musical ideas are a matter of taste; however, given two works whose germ musical phrases or themes are equally attractive, how those ideas are presented, tied together, and formally handled can determine relative quality between the works. I prefer melodious music. But good use of harmony, counterpoint, and scoring are crucial in making a good melodic idea work. If I am thrilled with the basic themes, I happily put up with structural faults in putting them together or awkwardness of playing them (Dvorak). If the ideas themselves do not inspire me (Beach) no other virtue will save the work for me (Beethoven excepted). That said, it is a nice bonus if the parts are fun to play as well as aesthetically engaging. Instrumentally I enjoy playing the first violin part of all the Gernsheim quartets. Each of my stand partners feel the same about the other parts. We all find most of Gernsheim's themes and formal compositional elements to be of the highest quality. Overall we believe his quartets compare favorably with some of "brand name" composers and, at the very least, all are in the very front rank of "Cobbett composers". Indeed, the library of any string quartet enthusiast should contain at least one of them.

In closing, Gernsheim has produced five substantial quartets within the German late-romantic idiom. They are all melodious, with intricate development and part writing. Amateurs will find them well worth exploring, and professionals interested in being the first to record excellent but neglected quartets would do well to consider them.

(Continued from page 3)



Novák was not particularly interested in building on the aesthetic of Wagner or of Brahms. Rather, he chose to explore Moravian and Slovakian folk melody, both of which were then regarded as culturally backward by the cosmopolitans of Prague. He also developed an interest in what would come to be called musical impressionism. It was thought that he had borrowed from Debussy and his fellows but Novak categorically denied these claims, stating in no uncertain terms that he had arrived at similar techniques on his own. These included forays into bitonality and non-functional, parallel harmony. Rather surprisingly, Novák was to become influenced by the music of Richard Strauss. Despite his move to modernity, however, his music retained at least a partial allegiance to the late-Romantic style until his death. His earliest work to receive an opus number was his **Piano Trio No.1 in g minor, Op.1** which dates from 1892. Although Novak was still a student at the conservatory, it is clearly not a student work, nor is it his real opus 1. Novak had been composing for many years. It does pre-date his interest in Slavonic folk melody and the writing is in the traditional Central European romantic style.

Allegro moderato.

p espress. *a tempo* *cresc.* *f*

dim. e poco rit.

4 A 2

The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, begins in a dark and brooding mood. There is a sense of yearning as well as impending storm clouds. But the second theme, given out by the cello, expresses hope.

The sunny second movement, *Allegro giusto*, is a relaxed scherzo. The Trio's center of gravity is clearly its slow movement, *Andante sostenuto e mesto*, which begins in a quiet and reflective mood. Although it is marked *mesto*, it is not particularly sad. The highly romantic middle section, *doppio movimento*, with its beautiful melodic writing rises to a brief dramatic climax before the music once again becomes more reflective. (example above) The finale, *Allegro non troppo*, begins with powerful and triumphant introduction brought forth by the piano. The second theme, is softer and more lyrical.

Doppio movimento ♩ = ♩

pp *p* *cresc.* *f*

espress. *p* *p dolce* *p*

B 2

Andante tragico ♩ = 60

ff *ff* *p* *cresc. molto* *molto espr.*

poco f *p* *cresc. molto* *molto espr.*

fp *cresc. poco a poco* *ff*

VÍTEZSLAV NOVÁK, op. 27 (1870–1949)

The **Piano Trio No.2, Quasi una Ballata Op.27**, was written at a time (1902) when his allegiance was torn between two different musical camps. He was still attracted to the use of folk melody as was advocated by the older and more conservative generation

of Czech composers such as Dvorak, but he was also attracted to the tonal modernism which was emerging from fin du siecle Europe. This conflict caused him considerable anguish and he was later to write that in many ways, the trio was autobiographical. Although the trio is written in one movement, hence a ballad, it nonetheless follows traditional classical structure in that it has four succinct episodes or sections. It begins with an introductory *Andante tragico*, (example above) full of pessimism and though tonally advanced for the time, there are still traces, mostly rhythmical, of Moravian folk songs. The *Andante* is followed by an *Allegro* which has a heroic theme for its main subject but it too is tinged with a sense of the tragic. (example on right) Next comes a sarcastic scherzo, *Allegro burlesco*. In the fourth section, the *Andante tragico* is reprised, this time followed by a very dramatic *Allegro* which leads to a somber and funereal coda. Both of these trios deserve to be heard in concert and can should be investigated by amateurs as they present no real technical problems.

decided instead to study with him. Surprisingly, in light of the small amount of touring Hummel did (some years none at all, and never more than a month or 6 weeks), he was widely regarded as Europe's leading pianist for more than two decades and most of the next generation's leading pianists at one point or another studied with him. Czerny, Friedrich Silcher, Ferdinand Hiller, Sigismund Thalberg, Felix Mendelssohn and Adolf von Henselt were among Hummel's most prominent students. Liszt would have liked to study with Hummel, but Liszt's father refused to pay the high tuition fee Hummel was used to charging (thus Liszt ended up studying with Czerny).

Hummel's music took a different direction from that of Beethoven. Looking forward, Hummel stepped into modernity through challenging the classical harmonic structures and stretching the sonata form. However, Hummel's vision of music was not iconoclastic. The philosophy on which Hummel based his actions was to "enjoy the world by giving joy to the world" His compositions were widely played during his lifetime and throughout the 19th century. Even in the 20th century, the general opinion has been that Hummel's works reached the highest possible level accessible to someone who was not an ultimate genius. Hence of his generation, only Beethoven's works could be ranked higher.

Hummel's **Septet in d minor, Op.74 for Piano, Flute, Oboe, Horn, Viola, Cello and Bass**, which dates from 1816, is a work of his prime. It is an interesting work, mixing serious style with virtuosic episodes, while at the same time combining the forms of chamber music and concerto. Certainly, the choice of instruments, by itself with the omission of a violin and a clarinet, makes it an interesting work. Its style comes closest to early Beethoven, but there are certain idiomatic differences such as his use of the diminished seventh chord, then prevalent in Italian opera, for dramatic effect. The freedom with which he uses modulations anticipates Brahms and is more modern-sounding than Beethoven. The Septet is written in four movements. The opening *Allegro con spirito* is brilliantly written for all of the instruments, although the piano does dominate by virtue of the virtuosic passage work it is given. The main theme is quite dramatic. (Example on right)

Although the second movement, entitled *Minuetto o Scherzo* implies it could be regarded as either one, it is undoubtedly a scherzo with its main subject being a spirited, rather dramatic theme in the minor. The trio section, a Viennese Ländler is not only more lyrical but also gentler.

Allegro con spirito. ♩ = 152.

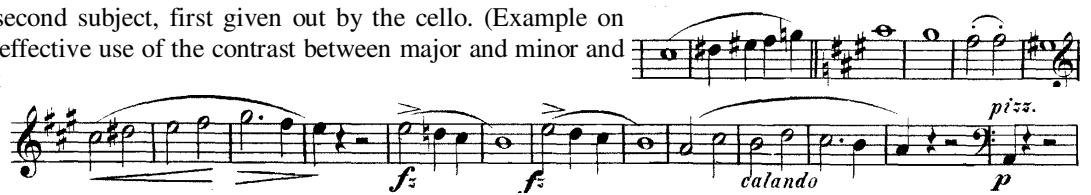
Flauto.
Oboe.
Corno in F.
in F e D.
Viola.
Violoncello.
Contrabasso.
Pianoforte.

The third movement, *Andante con variazione*, is a set of variations based on a pleasant melody which is probably taken from a folk tune. (Example on left) In the variations, the melody is repeated virtually unchanged, while the

piano does most of the work of variation by changing the accompaniment patterns and harmonies. While you might not think such a treatment effective, Hummel's imaginative writing proves this to be quite the opposite. In a few of the variations, Hummel's use of the tremolo comes very close to the manner in which Beethoven used them.

The finale, *Vivace*, begins with a rustic dance in the minor. (Example on right) A fugue follows but trails off into passage
(continued on page 11)

work that leads to the lyrical second subject, first given out by the cello. (Example on right) The development makes effective use of the contrast between major and minor and the Septet ends with a brilliant coda in the minor



The original publishers provided a second cello part in lieu of the bass part, no doubt to increase sales. And while the substitution of a second cello for the bass often takes away from depth of a work, this is not really the case here.

Obviously, with this instrumentation, this is not a work which is going to appear in concert very often. And it is fair to say that unless a special effort is made to assemble the requisite players, it is not going to find its way onto the music stands of amateurs either. However, I believe that effort should be made because this is a fine work which is enjoyable to play, keeping in mind a first rate pianist is necessary. Fortunately, the parts are in print from a number of publishers, including Edition Peters.

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New Recordings



A listing of recently recorded non standard chamber music on CD by category.

String Quartets

Constantino GAITO (1878-1945) No.2, XXI 1589 / Peter GARLAND (1952-) Nos. 1-2, Cold Blue Music 0031 / Alberto GINASTERA (1916-1983) No.1, XXI 1589 also Nos.1-3, Naxos 8.570780 / Heinrich v HERZOGENBERG (1843-1900) Op.63, CPO 777 082 / Leos JANAČEK (1854-1928) No.1, VMS 202 / Viktor KOHN (1901-44) Praeludium, KZ Musik 232526 / Hans KRASA (1899-1944) Qt, VMS 202 / Franz KROMMER (1759-1831) Op.19 No.2, Op.74 No.3 & Op.103 No.3, Cavi Music 8553142 / Jiri KUMMELMANN (1927-44) Qt, KZ Musik 232526 / Szymon LAKS (1901-83) No.3, Cavi 8553158 / David LAMPEL (1959-) Str. Qt, Naxos 8.572106 / Benjamin LEES (1924-) Nos.1, 5-6, Naxos 8.559628 / Bernhard MOLIQUE (1802-69) Op.18 No.3, Op.38, CPO777 276 / Mark O'CONNOR (1961-) Nos. 2-3, OMAC 14 / Victor ULLMANN (1898-1944) No.3, VMS 202 / Heitor VILLA LOBOS (1887-1959) Nos.1-17, Dorian 90904 / Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001) Complete Works, Mode 209 / Richard WERNICK (1934-) No.6, Bridge 9303

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Carl Heinrich GRAUN (1703-59) 3 Trios for 2 Vlns & Kb, CPO 777423 / Gideon KLEIN (1919-45) String Trio, KZ Musik 232527 / David LAMPEL (1959-) Sextet,

Naxos 8.572106 / Louis SPOHR (1784-1859) Double Qt Nos. 1 & 2, Naxos 8.570963 / Boris TCHAIKOVSKY (1925-96) String Trio, Toccata 0046

Piano Trios

Edward COLLINS (1886-1951) Geronimo, Albany-Troy 1086 / Eduard FRANCK (1817-93) Nos. 1 & 4, Audite 92.567 / Friedrich GERNSSHEIM (1939-1916) Nos. 1 & 2, Antes 31.9229 / Edward GRASSE (1884-1954) No.2, Albany-Troy 1125 / Louis Ferd HOHENZOLLERN (1772-1806) Complete Piano Trios (3) Op.2, Op. 3 & Op.10, MD&G 3031549 / John IRELAND (1879-1962) Nos.1-3, Naxos 8.570507 / Carl REISSIGER (1798-1859) Nos. 7 & 15, Hungaroton 32488

Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

Georgy CATOIRE (1861-1926) Piano Qt, Op.28, Altrud HN 033 Heinrich von HERZOGENBERG (1843-1900) Pno Qt, Op.17, CPO 777 082 / Louis Ferd HOHENZOLLERN (1772-1806) Pno Qt Op.5, MD&G 303 1549 / Ludwig THUILLE (1861-1907) Pno Qt, Op.20, Naxos 8.570790

Winds & Strings

Hans GAL (1890-1987) Huyton Suite for Fl & 2 Vlns, KZ Musik 232524 Charles KOEHLIN (1867-1942) Le Confidence d'un joueur for Cln, 4 Hns, Fl, 3 Vlns, Vc & Kb, Supraphon 3998 / Jean Xavier LEFEVRE (1763-1829) 4 Quartets for Cln & Str Trio, Tudor 7136 / Bohuslav MAR-

TINU (1891-1959) Serenade for Cln, Hn, 3 Vln & Vla, Supraphon 3998 / Carl NIELSEN (1865-1931) Serenata in vano for Cln, Bsn, Hn, Vc & Kb, Supraphon 3998 / Max RAGER (1873-1916) 2 Trios for Fl, Vln, & Vla, Op.77a & 141a & Qt for Cln & Str Qt, Op.146, Fuga Libera 553 / Carl STAMITZ (1745-1801) 5 Qts for Cln & Str Trio, Op.19 Nos.1-3, Op.14 No.3 & 6, Hungaroton 32561 / Adam VOLCKMAR (1770-1851) 2 Quartets for Cln & Str Trio, CPO 777 460 / Richard WERNICK (1934-) Qt for Hn & Str Qt, Bridge 9303

Winds, Strings & Piano

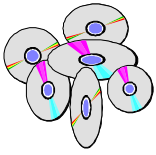
Adam VOLCKMAR (1770-1851) Trio for Cln, Vc & Pno, CPO 777 460

Piano & Winds

MADELEINE DRING (1923-1977): Trio for Ob, Bsn & Pno, Centaur 2961 / PAUL ANGERER (1927-): Chanson Gaillarde for Ob, Bsn & Pno, Centaur 2961 / / GEOFFREY BUSH (1920-1998): Trio for Ob, Bsn & Pno, Centaur 2961 / DAVID SARGENT (b.1941): Kaleidoscope for Ob, Bsn & Pno, Centaur 2961 / MARGARET GRIEBLING-HAIGH (b.1960): Trocadillos for Ob, Bsn & Pno, Centaur 2961 / Ludwig THUILLE (1861-1907) Sextet for Pno & Wind Qt, Op.6, Naxos 8.570790

Winds Only

None this issue



Two String Quartets by Felix Weingartner Eduard Franck's First and Fourth Piano Trios



Felix Weingartner (1863-1942) was born in Zara, Dalmatia, today's Zadar, Croatia, to Austrian parents. In 1883, he went to the Leipzig Conservatory where he studied composition with Carl Reinecke. He also studied privately with Franz Liszt in Weimar. Weingartner was one of the most famous and successful conductors of his time, holding positions in Hamburg, Mannheim, Danzig, Munich, Berlin and Vienna, where he succeeded Gustav Mahler as Director of the Imperial Opera. Despite his demanding career as a conductor, Weingartner, like Mahler, thought of himself equally as a composer and devoted considerable time to composition. He wrote several symphonies, numerous operas, some instrumental concertos, and a considerable amount of chamber music, including four string quartets, a piano sextet and a string quintet. Additionally he wrote a great number of vocal works and instrumental sonatas. Though many of his works originally achieved a fair amount acclaim, they quickly disappeared from the concert stage. It is only in the past few years that their excellence has been rediscovered. Weingartner's style shows the influence of Wagner and combines late Romanticism with early Modernism. It can be said to share a great deal in common with the music of such contemporaries as Richard Strauss and Mahler.

String Quartet No.1 in d minor, Op.24 was composed in 1898. The opening bars to the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, quote Schubert's famous Death & the Maiden string quartet. This was no accident as the work was occasioned by two deaths, the first of the child of a close friend, the second of Otto von Bismarck, whom Weingartner greatly respected as the man who had unified Germany. This serious movement is highly effective because of the excellent contrast between the themes. In the second movement, *Adagio assai*, one hears echoes from the Adagio of Beethoven's Op.18 No.2. A powerful scherzo, *Allegro molto*, follows. It has a particularly striking trio section with exotic tonal coloring. The finale, *Introduzione Tema con variazione*, begins with an introduction recalling the thematic material of the first movement before a very appealing theme makes its appearance. It is followed by several clever and well-executed variations, including an exceptional fugue, marked *Allegro inflammato e deciso*. This is clearly a first rate work, well worth hearing and playing.

CPO CD777 251 couples the First Quartet with his **String Quartet No.3 in F Major, Op.34**. It dates from 1903 and was a present to his second wife, Feodora. This is important because one can clearly identify a "Feodora" theme. The first two tones of the quartet begin with an F and an E followed by C (the "do" of the scale) then there is D (Re of the scale) followed by an A. The theme can be heard in various guises throughout the work. The opening measures to the first movement, *Allegro commodo*, clearly evoke the spirit of Beethoven. One hears vague echoes of themes from Op.18 No.2 (The Compliment), Op.74 (The Harp) and from introductions of several of the Late Quartets. Then there

is the violence which recalls the powerful second movement of Schubert's last quartet. But all of this is presented in a most original and captivating fashion that is in no way imitative. The middle movement, *Allegro molto*, is an exciting scherzo. We are taking a wild horse ride across an open, varied countryside, as the rhythmic power of the music impels us ever forward. Along the way we are treated to some very adventurous, and for the time, daring, post romantic era tonalities. Against this, Weingartner juxtaposes a very languid and melancholy trio section. The finale, *Poco adagio, Allegro giocoso*, begins with a lengthy slow and sad introduction. An allegro slowly comes forth, gradually gaining momentum as it heads to its first triumphant and joyful climax. Again adventurous tonalities are wonderfully mixed with the traditional. Another very appealing work. The parts to both quartets are available from Edition Silvertrust. This is a highly recommended CD.



Eduard Franck (1817-1893) was born in Breslau, the capital of the Prussian province of Silesia. He was the fourth child of a wealthy and cultivated banker whose financial position allowed Franck to study with Mendelssohn as a private student. As a talented pianist, he embarked upon a dual career as a concert artist and teacher for more than four decades during the course of which he held many positions. Although he was highly regarded as both a teacher and performer, he

never achieved the public recognition of his better known contemporaries such as Mendelssohn, Schumann or Liszt. As fine a pianist as the first two and perhaps even a better teacher, the fact that he failed to publish very many of his compositions until toward the end of his life, in part, explains why he was not better known. Said to be a perfectionist, he continually delayed releasing his works until they were polished to his demanding standards. Schumann, among others, thought quite highly of the few works he did publish during the first part of his life and Wilhelm Altmann thought that Franck had a mastery of form and a lively imagination which were clearly reflected in the fine and attractive ideas in his works. His first and last piano trios are presented on **Audite CD 92.567. Piano Trio No.1 in e minor** was composed in 1848. While many of his works show the unmistakable influence of his teacher Mendelssohn, others, such as this piano trio, are entirely original sounding. In the short slow introduction to the first movement, *Allegro moderato con espressione*, the strings first play a series of chords to which the piano responds with a wistful motif. The first theme then explodes forth with energy. Only later do we hear the motif again as the second theme. A third theme is highly lyrical. In the *Adagio con espressione* which follows, the violin is given the chance to bring forth the lovely first theme in its entirety before the other two join in. The melody is highly effective and beautifully presented. The thrusting and powerful scale passages of the third movement, *Scherzo, prestissimo*, bring to mind Schumann. The very original opening of the

Four Quartets for Clarinet & String Trio by Jean Xavier Lefèvre

Mel Bonis: Chamber Music with Flute

finale, *Alla breve*, has the solo violin beginning with passage that sounds as if Bach had penned it. Soon, however, the others join in to create an up-to-date and rousing conclusion to this fine work. **Piano Trio No.4 in D Major, Op.58** was not published until five years after Franck's death but is thought to have been composed around 1870. The opening, *Allegro*, begins in a rather formal fashion. The scale passages bring to mind Schumann. The appealing second theme has a lilting dance-like quality. The second movement, *Presto*, begins with a short hunt call redolent of Schubert but Franck's use of chromaticism gives the music an unusual and playful twist. The slow movement, *Andante con moto*, begins quietly, in a rather straight forward way. A chaste and simple theme is given out by the violin to a somber accompaniment in the cello and piano. It is the slinky second section which truly stands out. The cello, brings forth a skulking melody which the piano embellishes with some rather far out tonal sequences. The jovial finale, *Allegro molto vivace*, has a rustic, festive mood to it. It bustles along energetically taking all before it. Highly recommended.

On **Tudor CD#7136** we are presented with four quartets for clarinet and string trio by the Swiss-born clarinetist, **Jean Xavier Lefèvre** (1763-1829). He moved to Paris at an early age where he studied. By 1791 he was serving as first clarinetist at the Paris opera. His clarinet method published in 1802 became a best seller and he became a professor at the Paris Conservatory. He had many famous pupils, including Bernard Crusell. His clarinet concerti were often performed, at least during his lifetime. A fairly prolific composer, he appears to have written some 9 clarinet quartets not all of which have survived. Space does not allow a detailed discussion of what the CD entitles **Clarinet Quartet Nos.1-4** in E flat, B flat, C Major, and c minor respectively. However, the first thing which must be said is that these are a cut well above the standard of such works being composed at this time—1800. These are not mere vehicles for the clarinet, they are not quatuors brillant. Yes, the clarinet assumes the role normally taken by the first violin, but the others, *a la* Haydn and Mozart, are given worthwhile and not unimportant parts. From these quartets, there is every reason to believe that Lefèvre was conversant with the developments made by the two Viennese composers. He, himself, was clear a master of form and harmony with a fine gift for melody. Here are four classical clarinet quartets which string players will also derive pleasure from playing—and all others from listening. Highly recommended.



Mélanie Bonis (1858–1937) was born into a modest Parisian family opposed to her taking piano lessons, so she taught herself how to play the instrument until the age of twelve, when a close friend of the family finally convinced her parents to send her to music school. An exceptionally gifted student, she soon was introduced to Cesar Franck, who opened the doors of the Conser-

vatoire to her in 1876. For the next five years she studied harmony, piano accompaniment and composition. Although she won a first prize in harmony and was near the top of her class, her parents forced her to leave the Conservatory when she had an affair with a fellow student, A. M. Hettich. An unhappy, arranged marriage to a widower with five sons, took place in 1883. For the next 10 years, she devoted herself to her husband's five children plus the three she had with him. About this time, she met Hettich again, who by this time was an important music critic. He encouraged her to once more take up composing. This she did and was a fairly prolific composer writing more than 100 works, including twenty pieces of chamber music. Essentially a romantic, her music became influenced by a highly refined impressionism over the years. Although she won prizes at composer competitions and her works could be heard in Parisian concert halls during the early years of the 20th century, she never received the recognition she deserved. She shortened her name to Mel in the justified belief that women composers were not taken as seriously as men.

The first work on **Hänssler CD 93.204** is her **Suite for Flute, Violin and Piano, Op.59**. Sadly, the jacket notes provide virtually no information about the works recorded. The Suite for Flute, Violin and Piano dates from 1903. It is in three movements. The first, Serenade, is languid and sad. Its lovely melody moves effortlessly like lotus pods floating lazily on a river. The title of the second movement, Pastorale, best describes the mood which the music evokes. It almost seems a continuation of the first movement. More upbeat, it, too, has a languid quality about it. The finale, Scherzo, is a very different affair—energetic, playful and mischievous, its mood is contagious. Next is her **Sep-tour Fantasie ou Concerto, Op.72** for piano, two flutes, two violins, viola and cello, which was composed in 1906. It is one large movement with three sections—Scherzando, Très lent and Très vif. I found this an extraordinarily attractive work.. The writing is beautiful and perfectly executed. The piano is integrated so well, one is unaware of it as anything other than one of the seven voices. The music creates an aura of magic and the world of the fantastic. I can imagine Walt Disney using it in one of his films. Unfortunately, the instrumentation, specifically the use of two flutes, no doubt prevents it from appearing in concert as well as the music stands of amateurs. After all, how often does one get two flute players together. **Scenes de la forêt, Op.123** for flute, horn and piano is in four short movements. It dates from 1927. The opening *Nocturne* does a fine job of conjuring up the forest at night. *A l'aube* provides an unusual contrast between the sparkling piano part and the darker tones of the horn. A slow, languid interlude, entitled *Invocation*, comes next. In the finale, *Pour Artemis*, the horn creates a vague sense of the hunt but there is no chase and further on a dream-like mood is established. This, too, is a fine work for an unusual combination. The **Suite dan le style ancien, Op.127 No.1** for violin, flute and piano, dates from 1928. It is in four movements *Prelude, Fugette, Choral* and *Divertissement*. The first three movements do a good job of creating the mood of a 17th century suite as filtered through the pen of a 20th century composer. The last is quite modern sounding. All in all a very worthwhile CD, recommended.

A Wind Quintet and a String Quartet by Pavel Haas Two Piano Quartets by Paul Juon



Pavel Haas (1899-1944) was born in Brno, into a Jewish family. He studied composition at the Brno Conservatory and in the master class of Leoš Janáček, whose music influenced him greatly. He wrote approximately 50 works of which only 18 were given opus numbers by the self-critical composer himself. While still working in his father's business, he wrote musical works of all kinds, including symphonic and choral works, lieder, chamber music, scores for cinema and

theatre and an opera. In 1941, Haas was deported to the concentration camp of Theresienstadt (Terezín). He was one of several Czech-Jewish composers there, including Viktor Ullmann, Gideon Klein and Hans Krása.

Dr William Horn, writing in Vol. IX No.3 of *The Journal*, has this to say about Haas' **Wind Quintet, Op. 10**, which was composed in 1929, shortly after Janacek's death. "*In the first movement poignant chromatic motifs repeat, announced by the oboe, then the clarinet. They are based on a song, "The Blackbird," Haas had written in Janacek's class. The second movement is lyrical, starting with a flute solo, then ever-increasing momentum. The third movement, Ballo Eccentrico, is a dance with, at times, all five instruments having concomitant, contrapuntal, independent melodies. Epilogue, the final movement, is in 5/4 time.*"

The second work on this MDG CD#304 1527 is the **String Quartet No.3, Op.15**, composed in 1938. It is largely tonal but not in the traditional sense—perhaps it is simply more accurate to say it is not atonal. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, uses two Czech folk themes for its subject. The music is edgy. In the following *Lento, ma non troppo e poco rubato* the St. Wenceslas chorale is combined with decorative touches borrowed from synagogue music—hard to hear it though. Overall, the *Lento* is lugubrious and plodding, though toward the end it seems to come to life with the insertion of Janacek's spirit. The theme of the finale, *Thema con variazioni e fuga*, sounds somewhat Hebraic. Each of the variations are quite interesting, varying tempo, emotion and tonality. The coda is a fugue which morphs into a chorale to conclude what is a fine modern work. Highly recommended.

Paul Juon (1872-1940) was the son of Swiss parents who emigrated to Moscow where he was born. Educated at the Moscow German High School, he entered the Moscow Conservatory where he studied violin with Jan Hrimaly and composition with Anton Arensky and Sergei Taneyev. After graduating, he went to Berlin for further composition instruction from Woldemar Bargiel. In 1906, after holding various posts in Russia, Juon was invited by Joseph Joachim, head of the prestigious Berlin

Hochschule für Musik, to become a of Professor of Composition, a post which he held until 1934 when he moved to Switzerland, where lived for the rest of his life. Chamber music plays a large part of his output which numbers more than 100 works.



The **Rhapsody for Piano Quartet Op.37**, sometimes referred to as his **Piano Quartet No.1**, dates from 1907-8, just after he had taken up his professorship in Berlin. Many commentators believe Juon attempted to express the feelings he had experienced reading the novel *Gosta Berling's Saga*, by the Swedish Nobel Literature Prize winner Selma Lagerlöf. However, the Rhapsody is not really programmatic music and it not Nordic-sounding. If anything, it is tinged with Slavic, and in particu-

lar Russian, folkdance melodies, no doubt the result of his having lived the greater portion of his life there. The opening *Moderato* begins with a emotionally charged and dramatic statement in the cello which the others soon take up. Surprisingly, as the piano enters with a jazz-like interlude, we hear what sounds like Gershwin (who was only 10 at the time!). The second theme is a kind of tense and nervous music of forward motion with a sense of impending disaster. The main theme to the second movement, *Allegretto*, introduced by the piano is clearly a Russian folk dance melody. It sounds vaguely Hebraic. Yet when the strings enter, we briefly hear a traditional, even Schubertian, German romanticism. The second theme is a very romantic song of love. Next comes a scherzo-like interlude which features a dance from the Caucasus. (Juon taught there in Baku for a year). The huge finale, *Sostenuto-Allegretto*, as the movement marking suggests, alternates between slow and fast sections. The mood is constantly changing from the reflective sostenuto, to a gay, Viennese-sounding dance. Later, a more dramatic and serious element is welded onto the preceding dance.

The second work on disk is the **Piano Quartet No.2, Op.50**. It was composed in 1912 and dedicated to his first wife who had recently died. By comparison to the Op.37 Rhapsodie, this is a more personal work. It was clearly meant to be autobiographical. The opening movement, *Moderato*, is tender and dreamy, a statement of his initial infatuation. The second movement, *Scherzo*, bears the subtitle "Trembling Hearts" and expertly encapsulates that feeling which expectant lovers experience. The following *Adagio lamentoso* begins in a melancholy mood and slowly rises to the fever pitch of a lament. The riveting finale, *Allegro non troppo*, with its chromaticism recalls the mysticism of his Russian homeland. A highly romantic dance of doom, dark and forboding comes next. Then a second theme, more tender, but by no means happy, makes an appearance. It, in turn, is followed by an inexorable march of destiny and an incredible, hair-raising ride. Both works are recorded on **Migros Gesellschafts Bund CD# 6244**. Highly recommended.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Johann Nep. Hummel



Friedrich Gernsheim



Vitezslav Novak



Felix Weingartner



Eduard Franck



Mel Bonis



Pavel Haas



Paul Juon

ONSLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL



HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANAYEV, REINECKE

WRANITZKY, RIES, GOVY, REICHA, TURINA, TOCH, PFITZNER, ROTA

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV