



## ***The Cobbett Association for Chamber Music Research***

6827 Roxbury Dr. Sarasota, Fl. 34231 Tel. 813-922-6986

### **Manhattan String Quartet . . . Achievement Plus**



**Pictured at Interlochen with appropriate sculpture: Left to right are Roy Lewis, 2nd violin; John Dexter, Viola; Judith Glyde, cello; and Eric Lewis, 1st violin.**

In its 22 years of existence, the Manhattan String Quartet has chalked up a remarkable record of achievement, making it one of the finest and best known quartets in America. Described as "a national treasure" by Michael Steinberg of The Boston Globe, this ensemble has appeared throughout the U.S., Europe, Mexico, and the Soviet Union.

The MSQ was born in the late 60's at the Manhattan School of Music in New York where first violinist Eric Lewis and cellist Judith Glyde played chamber music under the coaching of Lillian Fuchs and Rachmael Weinstock.

It was Weinstock, the leader of the

old Manhattan Quartet of the 30's, who suggested that Lewis form a "reincarnation" of that group with Glyde as his cellist. The group played its first concert in 1970, went on to study with the Lenox Quartet in Binghamton, and then became quartet in residence at Grinnell College, Iowa. They returned to New York in 1975 where Eric's brother Roy Lewis joined the group as second violinist. In 1980, John Dexter came in as violist.

The Quartet is currently in residence at Colgate University and also at New York's Town Hall where it made its debut in 1989 with a five-concert series presenting Shostakovich's 15 string quartets and his piano quintet. In 1990, they performed the complete string quartets of Bartok and Schonberg in four concerts. Typical MSQ concerts, however, present a balance of both standard and contemporary works.

Since 1985, the Quartet has made several trips to the Soviet Union, performing and giving master classes. As the first American ensemble to play Russian quartets in the Soviet Union, the players were pleased to find that the Soviets not only accepted their interpretations of Russian music, but also appreciated American music. The Soviets were especially fond of Jerome Kern, and when the Quartet played an arrangement of "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" as an encore, everyone recognized the tune and simply loved it.

The MSQ has performed and taught at many chamber music conferences including their own -- The Kent Chamber Music Conference which they established at Kent, Conn. three years ago. This summer they will also serve on the faculty of the Adult Chamber Music Conference at Interlochen, Michigan, for the 12th consecutive year, and at The Prairie School Summer Chamber Music Institute at Racine, Wisconsin.

Individually, the players have taught

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## Important Notice To Membership

To meet expenses, the Cobbett Association is now requiring a minimum annual contribution of \$15 for membership. Larger contributions will also be gratefully received, and will aid in the continuation of our research projects.

Members who have not contributed for 1992 will receive a notice with this newsletter.

### Valuable List of Quartets for Flute & Strings Offered

We are indebted to Bob and Dorothy Martin, enthusiastic flute-playing members in Tucson, Arizona, for sharing their extensive experience collecting and playing quartets for flute and strings. Bob has compiled a list of almost 100 standard and rare quartets for flute, violin, viola, and cello. It includes his own evaluations and the names of publishers. Among Bob's favorites are the following: Quartet Op. 8 in D by Bernard Crusell; Quartet in D, Op 2 No 5 by Tomasso Giordani; Quartet in D, Op 75 by Franz Krommer; Quartet, Op 20 Nos. 1,2,3 by Ignace Pleyel; and Quartet Op 7 Nos. 1 to 6 by J. B. Wanhal.

If you would like the complete list at no charge, just send us a self-addressed stamped envelope.

### S.Q. Evaluations Completed-- Other Combinations to Follow

Part 6 of the string quartet evaluations, including composers from S to Z, is included with this newsletter. This completes the basic list which totals 388 string quartets evaluated since the association began in September, 1990. In future months we will be evaluating string trios, quintets, sextets, and combinations with piano.

The completed quartet list (26 pages) is available to non-members, music libraries, or other interested persons for \$10.



The purpose of this organization is to study, evaluate, and preserve rare and neglected chamber music of special merit, and to share information and encourage the performance of such music.

## Coming Soon. . .

Listings and evaluations of string quintets and sextets, to be followed by works for piano and strings.

The story of another great American chamber group -- **The Muir Quartet.**

Villa-Lobos and his wealth of chamber music.

### William Schuman Dies at 81

William Schuman, 81, a composer whose distinctly American style won two Pulitzer Prizes and guided him as the founding president of Lincoln Center and the president of the Juilliard School, died February 15, 1992 at Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan.

Critically acclaimed for his craftsmanship, he incorporated American Jazz and folk traditions into his works during a musical career that spanned more than 60 years. As an educator and administrator, he championed American music, composers, and performers.

Among his compositions were 10 symphonies; five ballets; piano, violin, viola and cello concertos; four string quartets and numerous works for chorus, band, and opera.

Music is one of the most forcible instruments for training, for arousing, for governing the mind and spirit of man.

-- Gladstone

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Phone: (813) 922-6986

Coordinator & Research specialist  
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Secretary & Editor  
Alice L. Maas

Advisory Council Members  
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## A Potpourri of "Lost Gems" for Piano and Strings

Pianists who enjoy straying from the beaten path and exploring neglected chamber works should seek the "lost" works listed here. These works will be gratefully received by the string players involved, judging from the comments of those who have already tried them.

The estimated level of difficulty and musical value rating, as well as the original publisher, is listed after each work.

**FAIRCHILD**, Blair (1877-1933) American, pupil of Widor. He composed eight finely crafted chamber works which should not be forgotten. His style is late romantic with impressionistic tendencies and a French accent. Typical is the Trio, Op. 24 (pf, v,vc), a good introduction to his chamber music. Moderate - V.G. (Pub. Augener 1919)

**GOLDMARK**, Carl (1830-1915) Austrian. Trio in E Minor, Op. 33 (pf,v,vc). One of his best chamber works, written at the height of his artistic maturity. Very melodious and a joy to play. Has much contrast and romantic charm. Difficult - Excellent (pub. Haake)

**HINTON**, Arthur (1869-1941) English. Trio in D Minor, Op. 21 (pf,v,vc). A large, original, and passionate work with strong rhythms and pleasant melodies. Contrapuntal with brilliant work for all three players. Late romantic style expressed. Moderate - Excellent (pub. Rahter, 1905)

**HOWELLS**, Herbert (1892-1983) English. Quartet in A Minor, Op. 21 (pf,v,va,vc). Very melodious quartet which won a Carnegie Award. It is true chamber music in three movements with English folk tunes used. There are striking modulations and much use of the 5th interval. Difficult - Excellent (Pub. Stainer & Bell)

**LALO**, Edouard (1823-1892) French. Best known for his Symphony Espagnole, this prominent French composer wrote three trios that were once popular. The Trio No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 26 (pf,v,vc) is his best chamber work. It has originality, much varied rhythm, and excellent instrumental color. The composer, Florent Schmitt, gave it a high recommendation. Difficult - Excellent (Pub. Durand)

**NOVAK**, V. (1870-1949) Czech. With Brahms as his model, he supplemented Dvorak using Slovakian elements. Quintet in A Minor,

Op. 12 (pf,2 v,va,vc). This once popular work is one of his best and should be revived for that reason. Moderate - Excellent (Pub. Simrock;U.E.)

**REINECKE**, Carl (1824-1910) Famous German composer and teacher. Quintet in A, Op. 83 (pf, 2 v,va,vc) One of the best chamber works by this prolific composer. Romantic style, melodious, and worthy of public performance. (Pub. Cranz)

If a clarinet is available, his Trio in A, Op. 264 (pf,cl,vc), completed in his 80th year, is an excellent work for this unusual combination, and shouldn't be missed. Both are moderate and excellent. (Pub. Simrock)

**RHEINBERGER**, Joseph (1839-1901) German Trio in A, Op. 112 (pf,v,vc) A simple romantic work which was once very popular, and a welcome change from the difficult and complex works. Features excellent canonic writing in a romantic vein. Moderate - Very Good - (Pub. Forberg 1879)

**RUSSINSTEIN**, Anton (1830-1894) Great Russian pianist whose chamber music is sadly neglected. Quintet in G Minor, Op. 99 (pf,2 v,va,vc) This one should be rescued from oblivion since it has great merit and was once very popular. It is his best effort in his mature period. Style follows the German romantics. Mod - Ex (Pub.Simrock)

**SCHMANN**, George (1886-1952) German. Unrelated to Robert, he carried on in the Brahms tradition with remarkable skill and imagination. Two important works should be given attention. Trio in F, Op. 62 (pf,v,vc) and Quintet Op 49 (pf,2 v,va,vc) Both are melodious and offer pleasing harmony and contrast that captures the imagination. Mod - Very Good (Trio Pub. Leukart; Quintet Pub. Simrock)

**JONGEN**, Joseph (1873-1953) Belgian. Quartet in Eb Op. 23 (pf,v,va,vc) This quartet, in cyclic form, is distinguished by the sustained beauty of its themes. Franck influence is evident. Diff.- V.G. (Pub. Durand)

**LEKEU**, G. (1870-1894) Belgian. Quartet in B Minor (pf,v,va,vc). In two movements, the 2nd finished by d'Indy. This was Lekeu's last will & testament. It expresses love and sorrow with flowing melodies in his romantic Belgian style. Moderate - V.G. (Pub. Rouart-Lerolle 1908)

# Taneiev -- Neglected Master of Russian Chamber Music

Sergei I. Taneiev (Taneyev) (1856-1918). It's a tough name to pronounce, but that shouldn't discourage one from exploring Taneiev's great chamber music which is unfairly neglected.

Sometimes called the "Russian Brahms", Taneiev continued the traditions of the classics and developed his own late romantic style which is more eclectic and not typically Russian, although some themes suggest his country's folk songs. He was a pupil of Tchaikowsky, but his contributions to Russian chamber music were much greater than his teacher's, which were too orchestral in nature. Taneiev was a great master of counterpoint as well as form, and composed in true chamber music style in a wide variety of combinations.

His chamber music is well suited to professionals and is also accessible to advanced amateurs who are willing to study the parts in advance.

## String Quartets

Taneiev's string quartets are characterized by subtle and abstract melodies, bold rhythms, and highly expressive slow movements with ethereal and mysterious sounds, all with originality and invention. Out of his eleven quartets, the following stand out as the best ones and should not be neglected. All of them have merit and offer new experiences to adventurous quartet players.

- No. 1 in Bb minor, Op. 4, Five mvmts.
- No. 2 in C, Op. 5, Truly profound work.
- No. 4 in A min, Op. 11. Folk songs used.
- No. 5 in A, Op. 13. Simple "quartettino".
- No. 6 in Bb, Op. 19 Also a profound work.

All are rated difficult except No. 5 which is moderate. Musical value for all is excellent except No. 5 which is very good.

## String Quintets

Taneiev's two quintets for 2 v, 2 va, & vc, Op. 14 in G and Op. 16 in C, belong to his middle period. In them he develops a more mature style than in the quartets, being influenced by "New Russian" school. They are ambitious works and valuable additions to the quintet literature and should be studied thoroughly. They are



difficult and rated as excellent.

## Chamber Works with Piano

His greatest work in this category is the Quintet in G minor, Op. 30, for pf, 2 v, va, & vc, a profound and romantic work with deep expression and ingenuity. Cobbett calls it Taneieve's "Crowning Glory".

The Quartet in E, Op. 20 for pf, v, va, & vc is also a brilliant and romantic work that shouldn't be missed.

The trio in D, Op. 21 for pf, v, & vc, displays excellent use of counterpoint and unusual construction features with a theme and variations and a violin cadenza connecting with the finale. All three works are rated difficult and excellent in musical value.

## Manhattan String Quartet (cont. from p. 1)

and are still teaching at Colgate and several other colleges and universities.

Among their many recordings on numerous labels, is a complete cycle of the string Quartets of Shostakovich on six compact disks, made for ESS.A.Y in 1990.

The Cobbett Association is proud to have this fine ensemble among its member quartets. We wish them continued success.