



The Cobbett Association's Chamber Music Journal

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Joseph Eybler: Mozart's Last Friend

by Renz Opolis

"I the undersigned hereby testify that I have found the bearer, Mr. Joseph Eybler, a worthy pupil of his famous master Albrechtsberger, a thorough composer, equally skilled in chamber and church styles, very experienced in compositional technique, as well as an excellent organ and piano player—in short a young musician such as regrettably has few peers." So wrote Mozart in a letter of recommendation for his good friend and student, Joseph Eybler.

Eybler (1765-1846) had the opportunity to repay Mozart for his kindness toward the end of the latter's life. Eybler wrote, *"I had the good fortune to keep his friendship without reservation until he died, and carried him, put him to bed and helped to nurse him during his last painful illness."*

Though he might be now, during his lifetime, *Eybler was not a 'nobody.'* A good friend of both the Haydns, Joseph Haydn saw to it that Artaria published several of Eybler's piano compositions. Mozart entrusted Eybler with the rehearsal of his opera *Così fan tutti*. And Eybler's reputation and prominence in Vienna were such that the Empress made him Music Master to the Imperial Family in 1801 and in 1804 he was promoted to Vice-Kapellmeister, a position he held until 1824, at which time he succeeded Salieri as Imperial Kapellmeister. He held this post until his death in 1846 despite the fact he suffered a stroke while conducting Mozart's Requiem in 1833, which left him only able to work to a very limited extent. In recognition of his accomplishments and service, he was ennobled in 1834.

Eybler, born just outside of Vienna in 1765, a distant cousin to the Haydn brothers, received his first music lessons from his father. By age 6 his
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Music for Clarinet, Strings & Piano-A Survey Part I

By Michael Bryant

This field is large, diverse and so scattered with minor pieces that it is not within the capacity of this survey to annotate more than a few selected works. Discussions about this music appear to take three paths. Firstly there is the repertory that is reasonably well known, then the works that are not so well known, that seem not to have withstood the test of time or have disappeared for want of an active publisher. Finally there follows a brief review of the contemporary field.

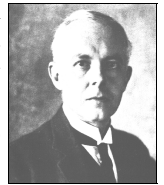
Trios for Clarinet, Violin & Piano

Trios for clarinet, violin and piano appear to be a twentieth century idea. The best known include those by Milhaud, Bartok and Khachaturian. The *Suite* by **Darius Milhaud** (1892-1974) is based on music that he wrote for Jean Anouilh's play



Voyageur sans Baggage in 1936 and has, in parts, a South American flavor. Milhaud worked as a secretary in the French diplomatic corps in Brazil 1916-18. Benny Goodman

commissioned **Bela Bartok** (1881-1945) to write *Contrasts* in 1938 originally entitled *Phantasy*. It was envisaged as a two movement work, *Verbunkos* and *Sebes*, to fit the two sides of a 12 inch 78 rpm record, but Bartok added the slow movement in 1940 called 'Piheno', relaxation or rest. For the first thirty bars of the *Sebes*, the violinist



**Our Offices will be closed between
December 30th and January 13th.**

The String Quartets of Willem Pijper

by Dr. David DeBoor Canfield, D.M.

When this author first visited the Netherlands in 1972, he attended a concert given at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. Decorating the perimeter of this beautiful concert hall is a series of composer's portraits in relief. These include most of those one would expect—Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, etc.—but then



the eye lights upon one name unknown to most music lovers outside Holland: Willem Pijper (1894-1947). His place among this august pantheon is well-deserved, however, not only for the quality of his music, but for the fact that he is widely regarded in his homeland to have been the man who revitalized creativity in Dutch classical music. Prior to his arrival on the musical scene in the Netherlands, the most recent significant composer was Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, who lived more than three centuries before Pijper! This is not to say that Holland produced no worthwhile composers during those intervening years. Willem de Fesch, Johannes Verhulst, Pieter Hellendaal, n a m e Julius Rontgen (who wrote an especially attractive String Quartet in a minor, which Cobbett members ought to investigate) and others were writing worthwhile music, but none of them achieved much of a reputation outside of the borders of Holland.

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At The Doublebar

The Board of Advisors of The Cobbett Association held its first meeting on the weekend of November 7-9. Goals for the Association's future were 'prioritized.' Expanding our membership is our number one concern for on this rests our ability to accomplish all of our other plans. Additional important goals are expanding our library and undertaking the publishing and recording of deserving but neglected chamber music. The Board was less certain about the holding of annual chamber music workshops and it was decided to send a survey to the membership to see if interest would support this.

The on-going problem of accepting payment from non-US members was discussed and solutions are being explored. At present, payment must be in US dollars.

The problem of copying works from our library was also discussed. At present, I am the only person doing the copying. This has and continues to lead to incredible backlogs in order-delivery time. Private copying services, such as Kinko's, would increase the current cost of 25¢ a photocopy by at least 100% per page if not more. We are working hard to find a viable solution to this problem. A temporary solution will be implemented early next year but members should feel free to write with any ideas. (I must apologize to all of you who have placed orders since September. A lengthy break-down to the copier to which we have access coupled with the need to print Vol.VII No.3 of the *Journal* made it impossible to accept or fill any copying orders since that time. We will begin accepting new copying orders on February 1, 1998.)

The Board also discussed our cost of operations and determined that it is necessary to increase the amount of our annual suggested donation, i.e. dues to \$20 for US members to \$25 for non-US members. We are honoring all prepaid renewals which were made at the old rate.

Your 1998 Membership Renewal Payment Is Now Due. Enclosed with this issue is your renewal form. Please fill it out and return it to us with your dues as soon as you can. If you are able to make an additional contribution, it will be greatly appreciated. Remember, your contributions are tax-deductible. Also consider giving a gift subscription of the *Journal* to a friend.

Joseph Eybler—His Life & Chamber Music

musical talent had 'outed' and he was, on the strength of it, allowed to enter the Vienna Choir School where his cousins received their musical educations.

From 1776-79 he studied with Georg Albrechtsberger. Despite his appreciable and widely-acknowledged talent, Eybler planned a career in the law, but a fire in 1782, which destroyed all of his family's holdings, made it impossible for him to begin his law studies at the University and forced him to pursue a career in music, at first by giving lessons and later by composing. It was in this way that he came to the attention of both Joseph Haydn and Mozart.

Mozart's widow, it is believed based on her husband's instructions, chose Eybler to complete his Requiem. Eybler completed the instrumentation but as he began the soprano part, his great respect and awe for his friend convinced him that he ought not to 'deface' the Master's music. (F.X. Sußmayer finished it off—so to speak)

Eybler experienced the usual opera theater intrigues and fights, while serving as underdirector for *Così fan tutti*, which left him with a distaste for such affairs and persuaded him not to devote himself to the opera. Thus it was that the bulk of his works were either church or chamber music compositions, although he did write a fair amount of piano music, a couple of concerti, and a few things for orchestra.

There are 7 string quartets, 6 string quintets, a piano trio and a string trio. (and also some instrumental sonatas) amongst the chamber compositions. Of these, three are currently in print: String Trio for Violin, Viola & Cello, Op.2 in C, String Quintet for Violin, 2 Violas, Cello & Bass, Op.6 No.1 in B Flat, and String Quintet in D for 2 Violins, Viola, Cello & Bass. These will be the subject of the rest of this article. Sadly, there are no recordings of Eybler's chamber music.

Brought out in 1798 by the Viennese publisher, Johann Traeg, as 'Grand Trio,' the **String Trio Op.2 in C Major** in five movements is no slight work. Franz Beyer, who was responsible for editing the modern reprint in 1973 (it is still available and in Amadeus' catalog as No.GM-115) argues that Eybler took as his ideal Mozart's King of Prussia Quartets. But I

find it hard to understand, having performed—and not merely played—this work on many occasions, how it escaped Beyer's notice that it must have been K.563, Mozart's own great string trio, which served as Eybler's model.

An introductory *Adagio* begins with a theme played by both viola and cello. This adagio, some 15 measures in length is more than a mere prelude, it lasts over a minute and is complete in and of itself. Further it is used to close the movement after a lengthy, rollicking *Allegro* written in concertante style, much like K.563. Each voice is given a rather substantial chance to shine and the writing is more 'violinistic' for the two lower voices who are not asked to try and duplicate what the violin has just played before them. The *Andante* which follows reminded Beyer of the slow movement to Mozart's last string quartet, K.590. The opening rhythm to each is vaguely similar, but there any similarity ends:

Eybler: String Trio, Op.2



Mozart: String Quartet No.23, K.590



It is a well-crafted movement, not in concertante style, with a clever unison pizzicato ending. Next comes a typical Austrian ländler, based on a tied 16th note / 8th note rhythm, that serves as the main theme to the *Menuetto allegro* which features three charming and contrasting trios. The first trio is rhythmically similar to the main theme of the minuet and its lovely melody is entirely given over to the cello in its tenor and treble registers. The second trio reverses the rhythm of the minuet with the melody this time being entrusted to the viola who is asked to negotiate some rather large jumps:



The third trio is given over to the violin who is taken on a tour of the fingerboard

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while playing brisk triplets to the pizzicato accompaniment in the lower voices. This is a very fine movement in the noble tradition of the 18th Century serenade. A short *Adagio*, in which the violin is *tacet*, comes next. This somber interlude in the lower two voices is an ingenious ‘palette cleanser’ which provides just enough contrast from the preceding minuet so that the taste of the melodically delicious finale, *Rondo*, is not lost. It is a bouncing, joyful affair which brings this satisfying work to a close. It deserves performance in the concert hall where it will undoubtedly bring pleasure to its audience and it should certainly not be missed by any amateur trio party. From an ensemble standpoint, it is far easier to put together than either Mozart’s K.563 or Beethoven’s Op.9 trios. Despite the concertante writing in some of the movements, the technique required of the players is well within the reach of competent amateurs.

String Quintet Op.6 No.1 in B Flat for Violin, two *Violas*, Cello and Bass is the first of a set of two. It was also originally published by Johann Traeg of Vienna in 1801. A modern edition, edited by Wolfgang Sawodny, was brought out by Wollenweber #WW59 in 1982. It is still available and can be ordered from such shops as Performer’s Music in Chicago or Broekmans en Van Poppel in Amsterdam. Professor Sawodny writes that Eybler tended to view his quintets in the typical 18th Century Austrian tradition as serenades. Unlike his quartets, which strictly follow the classical Viennese prescription set down by Haydn of 4 movements, the quintets all feature at least five and sometimes more movements. The peculiar instrumentation which substitutes a bass for the second violin reveals Eybler’s fondness for the overall deeper sound produced by an ensemble of one soprano voice, two altos, a tenor and a bass. His concertante treatment of the parts allowed him to give both violas as well as the cello, and not just the violin, long soloistic passages. The considerable and noteworthy prominence given to the lower voices endows the music with an extraordinary depth of sound which has drawn the attention of critics in recent years and has led to the reprint of this and another quintet.

Although it is in six movements, the Quintet is not the massive work one might expect. Eybler does not burst the borders of chamber music and writes to scale. The charming opening theme to the *Allegro moderato*, based on a turn is very Mozartean in flavor:



A *Menuetto* with two trios comes next. The difficult melodic material of first trio is given over to Viola I. The second trio, a *polacca*, presents a challenge for the Cello to the accompaniment of the violas and bass whilst the violin is *tacet*:

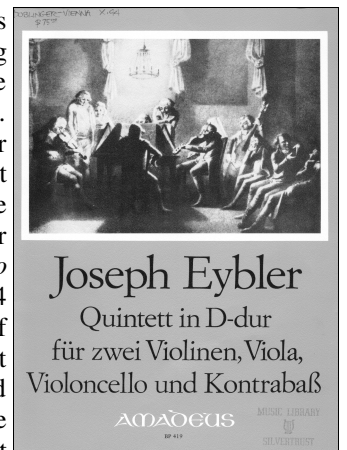


In the lovely *Andantino* which follows, Eybler dispenses with his concertante style to create a finely crafted piece of integrated

harmonic writing. The listener knows he is in the realm of the serenade as the opening notes to a second *Menuetto (allegretto)* are sounded. It is a canon. Again, there are two trios. The entire first trio features the second viola with a beautiful singing solo which is not at all hard to play. At last, in the second trio, the violin is given a chance to shine, but not without the help of the first viola. It is in the following *Adagio* that the violin is treated as the leading actor, the lover beneath the window sill of his beloved. Long *sostenuto* melodies are woven seamlessly together leading *attacca* to the superb concluding *Allegretto* which is a set of variations on this typical Austrian folk dance:



The final chamber work in print is Eybler’s **Quintet in D** for string quartet and bass never before published until Amadeus (No. BP419) and Bernhard Päuler brought it out in 1993. The Quintet is also in 6 movements, 7 if one counts the dramatic opening 21 bar *Adagio*. The *Allegro di molto* which comes next is a massive 574 measures not counting a repeat of the first 273 bars in which I doubt many modern players would indulge. Everyone, including the bass, is given a chance to ‘strut their stuff’ in this lengthy, but outstanding movement. The first of two *Menuettos* is placed next. The minuet itself is pure Viennese classicism. The lovely first trio is given over to the cello:



The second trio, a *viola solo*, is a real test of unrelenting 16ths. The third trio pits the quartet against an attractive running 8th note passage in the bass. A *Andante* based on a charming *ländler* follows in which all of the voices, including the bass are given extensive and well-written treatment. The theme to the second *Menuetto (allegretto)* has two trios, the second reminiscent of a trio from K.563. The penultimate *Adagio* entrusts the first violin with presentation of the dramatic material which is played *attacca* into the finale, *Allegro vivace*. This is a racing 584 measure breathless gallop with a brilliant but difficult violin part.

Eybler’s music is melodious and well-written. Mozart though highly of him and those who rediscover his music will too. I, for one, would welcome the reprint of his other chamber music.

The String Quartets of Willem Pijper *(continued from page 1)*

Willem Pijper (pronounced halfway between “piper” and “paper”) was born in Zeist in 1894, receiving his first musical training from his father, an amateur violinist. Further studies in composition (with Johan Wagenaar) and piano followed. He eventually became a critic and teacher of some repute, his students including such talents as Kees van Baaren, Rudolf Escher and Hans Henkemans. One of Pijper's most interesting developments was his concept of the germ cell. In this system, an entire composition was “spun out” from the melodic and harmonic content of a few notes or a single chord. Most of Pijper's later works utilized this germ cell concept with the result that his works invariably show much organic unity. He also made considerable use of the scale alternating whole steps and half steps, considering it his own invention, unaware that Rimsky-Korsakov had been using it for some time. Pijper composed two operas, three symphonies, incidental music, concerti and a considerable amount of chamber music.

The five string quartets, written respectively in 1914, 1920, 1923, 1928 and 1946 span Pijper's creative career--indeed the last quartet was left unfinished at his death. About the first quartet, the author can say very little as it has yet to receive a recording, as far as he is aware. It can be noted that the work was written during Pijper's student days at the Toonkunst School of Music in Utrecht, and undoubtedly displays the same post-Mahler esthetic which is so evident in his first symphony. Perhaps this would be a good quartet to resurrect by anyone who regrets Mahler did not leave a string quartet.

Of the last four quartets that this author has heard, some general observations can be made: There is relatively little stylistic progression from one to the next. Pijper had clearly found his voice by 1920, the date of the second of the series. Indeed, if one were to listen to these 4 quartets without knowing their sequence, it is probable that the fifth quartet would get the nod as the first of the four to be composed. Pijper in these quartets did not have much use for flashy virtuosity. These are introspective works, which will not reveal all of their musical secrets on a single hearing. They are subdued in spirit, and make much use of wending, melodic lines of a contemplative nature. Effects are almost non-existent, even pizzicato being used sparingly. They all exhibit consummate mastery of craftsmanship and musical ideas. If they are an acquired taste, they will nonetheless be savored by connoisseurs as might a vintage wine. All of the quartets are short: the longest of them (the fourth quartet) lasts less than 15 minutes. They tend to end abruptly, with sometimes only a few notes to signal the end of the work. Pijper had a rich palette of harmony, utilizing bitonality, polytonality and altered chords, as well as more traditional harmony. Much of his music has a kind of French atmosphere, and subtle pastel colors fleetingly come and go.

The **String Quartet No. 2** of 1920 is one of the earliest works in which Pijper utilized his germ cell technique. In this work he demonstrates a contrapuntal handling of this technique. In the first of the two movements, the three themes are introduced in the cello, viola and second violin nearly simultaneously. One of the prominent and typical chords comprises the notes C-E-G-Bb-Db-Eb. Pijper also uses polyrhythms: at one point the violins are playing in 4/4 meter, the viola in 3/4 and the cello in 5/4! This

was advanced writing for 1920, when *Le Sacre du Printemps* was only 7 years old. The effect throughout, however, is not one of harshness, but of a yearning, reflective spirit. The second movement, for all of its brevity, contains an adagio, a scherzo and an andante molto moderato quasi adagio, giving further evidence of Pijper's ability to pack a lot of musical meaning into a short span. In a passage marked ‘tranquillo, dolcissimo,’ Pijper makes use of harmonics in the upper three instruments set against a walking pizzicato bass line in the cello. The work closes with a serene epilog.

The **String Quartet No. 3** of 1923 with its upward swooping figure of parallel thirds in the two violins somehow reminds the listener of Ravel's *Introduction et Allegro*. The work is cast in three short movements. All of the basic material used is derived from the three-measure germ cell which functions as an introduction. This is followed by a brief andantino, which leads without interruption into the second movement, a scherzando. This movement is much more contrapuntal than the rest of the quartet, and utilizes Spanish-influenced rhythms, of which Pijper was so fond throughout his oeuvre. Another statement of the germ cell ends the movement. The third movement opens with a variant of the germ cell, followed by reference to the Spanish rhythm of the second movement, concluding with a strongly rhythmic flourish in C Major.

String Quartet No.4 of 1928 is cast in four movements. The opening Andante molto moderato is characterized by metrical shifts (4/4, 7/8, 5/8, etc) and is based on a melodic motive based on the notes D-E-D-Bb. There are two tempi used in this movement. In the second movement, the second violin presents this germ cell, which has been re-ordered to Bb-D-D-E, which shows something of Pijper's techniques (which bear scant similarity to the rigorous 12-tone system of Schoenberg and others). Throughout this quartet, there are many changes of tempo, voicing and articulation, and the effect is relatively dramatic by Pijper's standards. In the third movement, it is the viola's turn to present the germ cell, and in the fourth movement, an Allegro, the cello presents a truncated (E-D-Bb) version of the germ cell. The use of the whole-tone scale is prominent in this quartet.

Pijper's last quartet is probably his most immediately appealing work in the genre. It is perhaps the work of one who saw his death approaching and was resigned to it, as it seems the most optimistic of the four later quartets. Occasionally, one hears very lush sonorities, which are not found to any extent in the three earlier works. Each of the two completed movements (a third was planned but Pijper died before he could compose it) is built on two separately-developed themes. The germ cell of the second movement is a transposition (up a fifth) of that of the first. Both movements radiate a subdued, but sunny atmosphere in stark contrast to the somber gloom one meets in the final quartet of Shostakovich, also written in the composer's last days. This Quartet would probably be the best introduction to the subtle yet rewarding world of Willem Pijper. Technically undemanding, these quartets can be read by amateurs who are able to cope with constantly changing meters and harmonies outside of the functional harmony of the 19th century. For those who can, the music of this Dutch master will pay handsome dividends.

Music for Clarinet, Strings & Piano

(Continued from page 1)



needs a second instrument with the G string tuned up a semitone and the E string down a semitone. The *Trio* by **Aram Khachaturian** (1903-78) was written in 1932 while he was a student, albeit a mature one at 30 years of age. The trio attracted immediate international attention. The Sikorski edition appeared in 1957.

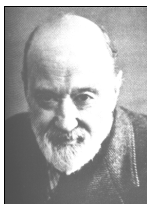


Alban Berg (1885-1935) wrote his *Kammerkonzert* (1924) in honor of Schoenberg's fiftieth birthday. The trio arrangement of the Adagio movement dates from the year of his death. The violin part remains virtually the same, with some additional material, the clarinet is assigned the woodwind, horn and trumpet parts, and the piano part incorporates all that remains.

These were not the first, however. There is a duo with piano accompaniment by **Amilcare Ponchielli** (1834-86), with the title *Paolo e Virginia*. It is based a melodramatic and highly popular romance (1787) by the French author and part-time civil engineer Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814). The Edwardian composer **Richard Walthew** (1872-



1951) wrote a *Trio*, published by Boosey in 1897. Walthew's son was a professional clarinetist. **Charles Ives'** *Largo* was originally written as a movement for an early sonata for violin and piano (1899) but was then replaced with a movement based on a popular song of the time; "The Old Wooden Bucket". The Sonata was catalogued by Henry Cowell as the "Pre-First Sonata". In 1902 Ives extracted the clarinet part from the piano score. Ives paid no attention to the physical limits of the instruments.



Among the papers of the South Place Sunday Concerts, London, is a reference to a *Trio* by **M. McDonald** being awarded a Clements prize. A. J. Clements (1887-1938) was the organizer of the concerts, but at present no further information is available. **Daniel Gregory Mason's** Brahmsian *Pastorale* was published by Mathot/Salabert in 1913.

Waldemar von Baussnern, born in Berlin (1866-1931), wrote a *Serenade*, with a dedication to Brahms' clarinetist Richard Muehlfeld (1856-1907). It was published by Simrock in 1905. This is a good work. Richard Muehlfeld's diary, shown to me by Muehlfeld's grandson in London in 1984, contains a list of chamber works that he played. Some of these were written for him or dedicated to him, including, in the present context, trios by **Johann Amberg**, (Op 11 published 1912 cl vc pf and *Fantasiestucke* Op 12 published by Hansen 1911 cl va/vc pf); Berger; Brahms of course; the blind composer **Robert Braun**, (*Trio* cl vc pf 1899 Universal Edition); Bruch; d'Indy; Kahn; Reinecke; **Leo Schrattenholz**, born in London 1872 (*Trio Op 40/1* cl vc pf in three movements, Simrock); Zemlinsky; Rabl's *Quartet* and Labor's *Quintet*.

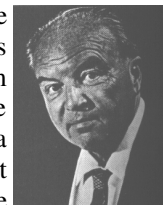


Arnold Bax (1883-1953) wrote a *Trio* Op 4 for violin, viola and piano in 1906. Bax's biographer, Lewis Foreman, draws attention to the fact that it was originally conceived for violin, clarinet and piano. In recent times the somewhat complex viola part has been transcribed for clarinet by the pianist Michael Jones in Birmingham, England and performed there.

When **Stravinsky** wrote *The Soldier's Tale* (1918) he was impoverished and living in Switzerland. He and his friends hit upon producing a minimal theater piece. To make the music go a little further he arranged it for clarinet, violin and piano. Werner Reinhardt, a wealthy philanthropist, connoisseur and an excellent clarinetist who lived at Winterthur near Zurich, paid for everything, everyone and bought the manuscript. In gratitude Stravinsky dedicated the *Three Pieces* for solo clarinet to him. The trio version of *The Soldier's Tale* was first heard in a concert series organized by Reinhardt in Lausanne, Zurich and Geneva in late 1919. It was played by Jose Porta, violin, Edmond Allegra, clarinet, and Jose Iturbi, piano. Five movements remain out of the original ten, The Soldier's March, The Soldier's Violin, The Little Concert, Tango-Waltz-Ragtime and The Devil's Dance.



The list of composers who have such trios includes clarinetist **W. O. Smith's** *Four Pieces*, (Rome 1958), published by MJQ and recorded by the composer on LP; **Helmut Riethmuller's** *Trio Op 46*, Sikorski 1960; and the *Trio Op 97* by **Hans Gal** (1890-1987, written 1935, published 1971 by Simrock). The Czech composer **Vaclav Lidl** (1922-) wrote his *Cantus Variabilis* (a dye line print) in 1967, available from the composer. **Stanley Weiner** (Baltimore 1925-) studied violin with his Russian émigré father. He composed the *Trio Op 39*, 1972 at the request of Jacques Lancelot. **Ernst Krenek** (1900-1991) came from a Czech family but was born in Vienna. He moved to the United States in 1937 and became a US citizen in 1945. He married Anna Mahler, but the marriage was dissolved in 1925. After that he became associated with the Second Viennese School. He composed his *Trio* in 1946.



The members of the Verdehr Trio at Michigan State University are Walter Verdehr, Elsa Ludwig-Verdehr and Gary Kirkpatrick. They have gathered together a large number of works and commissioned over 75 of them. Their commissions are typically advanced works. Here is a selected list of their recordings: **Thomas David**, *Trio* 1978; **Jere Hutcheson**, *Nocturnes* 1976; **Karel Husa**, *Sonata a tre* 1982; **Don Freund**, *Triomusic* 1980; **Leslie Bassett**, *Trio* 1980; **Charles Hoag**, *Invention on the Summer Solstice* 1979; **Katherine Hoover**, *Images* 1981; **Gunther Schuller**, *A Trio Setting* 1990; **William Averitt**, *Tripartita* 1989; **Nathan Currier**, *Adagio and Variations* 1989; **Peter Dickinson**, *Hymns, Rags and Blues* 1985 and **James Niblock**, *Trio* 1980.

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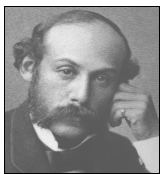
The trio by **Donald Erb** (1927-) *Sunlit Peaks and Dark Valleys* (1995) is a study in contrasts with vivid and brilliant outer movements of optimistic mood in the face of adversity. The slow movement laments the children killed and injured in the Oklahoma Federal Building bomb tragedy and is based on the children's Sunday School song *Jesus Loves Me*. It has been recorded by the Verdehr Trio on a compact disc made by New World (80537).

Tristan Keuris (1946-1996) composed the trio *Musiek* in 1973. It has sections that are written conventionally alternating with others that are improvised. There is an almost complete absence of pulse. The piece is characterized by the use of specific intervals and motifs. **Poul Rovsing Olsen** (1922-) wrote the trio *Prolana* Op 33 in 1955. As a pianist he had tried out some of the repertoire for clarinet, violin and piano. The other two players challenged him to write a piece to extend the trio's repertoire. The name of the piece is derived from the initials of all three players. It is a serial piece according to Schoenbergian guidelines.

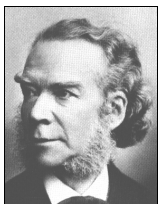
Trios for Clarinet, Viola & Piano

Mozart's beautiful *Kegelstatt Trio, K.498* (1786) is too well known to require comment. It was one of the works he wrote for his piano pupil Franciska von Jacquin, including on this occasion the clarinetist Anton Stadler and himself as viola player. The manuscript is in Paris and the only one of the three major works for clarinet by Mozart to have survived. A score based on the autograph was published by Robert Lienau (1954).

It appears that no other trios for this instrumentation were written until the nineteenth century and then rather few. **Schumann** wrote his *Marchenerzahlungen* (Fairy Tales) Op 132 in 1853.



This is attractive music, but not the best Schumann as exemplified in his energetic and passionate *Piano Trio* Op 63 (1847). The *Tre Stycken* (Three Pieces) Op 45 by the Swedish composer **John Jacobsson** (1835-1909) are rather light-hearted salon pieces, published by Wollenweber.



The amiable *Trio* Op 264 by **Carl Reinecke** (1824-1910), the composer and touring concert pianist, was first published in 1903. IMC and Amadeus have given it modern editions. *Acht Stucke* (Eight Pieces) Op 83 were written by **Max Bruch** in 1910 for his son, Max Felix, a good clarinetist. Three of them were originally conceived for harp in place of the piano (Nos. 3, 5 and 6). In

Cobbett, Burnett Tuthill refers to nine pieces, but this appears to be a mistake. There have been several recordings of the Schumann, Reinecke and Bruch. **Alexis Hollander** wrote *Six Characteristic Pieces in Canon Form* Op 53, published by Schlesinger in Berlin (1898). They are excellent and withstand comparison with Bruch.



Joseph Holbrooke wrote a *Nocturne* Op 57/1 subtitled 'Fairytale' after a poem by Edgar Allen Poe. In his book on Holbrooke (1920), George Lowe described it as one of Holbrooke's strangest chamber works; weird and intensely sad. Thematically it is somewhat disorganized. The flow is frequently

interrupted by odd shadowy, rhythmic flickerings which disappear in a moment. The harmony is effective, resulting in a delicate, elusive but richly imaginative miniature. Holbrooke originally scored this trio for oboe but offered alternative parts for flute or clarinet.



Alfred Uhl (1909-1992) wrote his extrovert and dynamic *Kleines Konzert*, published by Doblinger in 1938, like all his clarinet works, as a result of his friendship with the clarinetist Leopold Wlach. It distantly recalls the wit of Kurt Weill and was recorded twice during the LP days and thoroughly deserves a new recording on CD. The delightful *Trio* Op 18 by the Swiss composer **Joseph Lauber** (1864-1952), a pupil of Rheinberger and Massenet, remains in manuscript. The Swiss clarinetist Elizabeth Ganter recorded it on an long playing record in 1970s.

The Dutch composer **Rudolf Escher** (1912-80) wrote his *Trio* in 1979. Twenty years before he turned his attention to electronic music. Nowhere else in his output has he attempted to reproduce so faithfully the sound of the animal kingdom, the buzz of a Mediterranean evening, a croaking toad, a cicada, a goatsucker, and the Javanese gamelan too, is not far away.

The English composer **Mary Anderson Lucas** (1882-1952), finished her *Trio* in 1939. It was published in manuscript by Hinrichsen. **Jean Francaix** (1912-1997) wrote a *Trio* in 1990 (Schott). It has been recorded by the dedicatees on REM Edition 311225 XCD. Contemporary British composers to have written trios with viola include **Buxton Orr**, **Anthony Payne** and **Richard Stoker**.

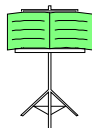
Trios for Clarinet, Cello & Piano Composed Before 1919

Trios, with cello, form by far the largest category. **Beethoven's** *Trio Op 11* was first published by Artaria in 1798. The finale of this trio is based on the aria *Pria ch'io l'impegno* from the opera *L'Amor Marinaro*, by Joseph Weigl that was popular at the time. The aria has the refrain, "Before undertaking important work, I must have something to eat". Beethoven arranged his famous *Septet, Op.20* as a *Trio Op 38*. **Archduke Rudolf** (1788-1831) wrote a clarinet sonata for Count Troyer, for whom Schubert wrote his *Octet*. The autograph score of his *Trio* in Brno consists of three completed movements; a sonata-allegro moderato, a theme and variations and a scherzo. The rondo finale was left unfinished after only a few bars. The *Trio* was published by Musica Rara in 1969 and edited by Dieter Klocker. In the circumstances the Scherzo is best placed second and the variations last.

Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838) was, like Archduke Rudolf, a pupil of Beethoven. Musica Rara produced a new edition of his excellent *Trio, Op 28* in 1969 based on an edition found in Munich. A trio by the Belgian aristocrat **Heinrich von Lannoy** appeared in 1820. It owes something to both classical and romantic tastes. Musica Rara has produced a modern edition.

The Czech nationalist **Franticek Skraup** (1801-62) wrote a colorful *Trio, Op 27*. It was published by Hoffmann in Prague in 1846 and recorded by Supraphon in 1982. Such an attractive work should not have fallen into neglect. Other trios from the

(Continued on page 8)



New Recordings



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

String Quartets

Carl Abel (1723-1787) No.5, Proprius 9081 / Bruce ADOLPHE (1955-) Nos.1-2, CRI 761 / Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743-1805) No.2, Proprius 9081 / Alexander BORODIN (1833-1887) No.1, Vox Classics 7543 / Oscar BYSTROM (1821-1909) Quartetto Svedese, Artemis Arte 7122 / Philip CANNON (1929-) Str. Qt., Olympia 632 / Ernst von DOHNANYI (1877-1963) Nos. 2 & 3, ASV DCA 985 / Richard FLURY (1896-1967) No.5, Gallo 866 / Paul HINDEMITH (1895-1963) Nos. 2 & 6, Wergo 6607 / Alfred HILL (1870-1960) Qt. Nos. 5,6 & 11, Marco Polo 8.223746 / Karel HUSA No.4, Troy 259 / Antonin KAMMEL (1730-1787) No.2, Proprius 9081 / Hans KRASA (1899-1944) String Quartet, Theme & Variations for Quartet Praga 250 106 / Ezra LADERMAN (1924 No.7, Troy 259 / Gian Francesco MALIPIERO (1882-1973) No.8, BMG Ricordi 1024 / Ignatz PLEYEL (1757-1831) No.9, Proprius 9081 / Mel POWELL Str. Qt. (1982), Troy 259 / Thomas RAJNA (1928-) Str. Qt., Claremont GSE 1550 / Ottorino RESPIGHI (1879-1936) Quartetto Dorico, Vox Classics 7201 / Camille SAINT SAENS (1835-1921) Nos.1-2, Dynamic 179 / Arnold SCHONBERG (1874-1950) Qt. in D (1897), Stradivarius 33438 / Johan WIKMANSON (1753-1800) Nos.1-3,

Proprius PRCD 9114 / Alexander von ZEMPLINSKY (1871-1942) Two Movements for Qt, Stradivarius 33438

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Alexander BORODIN (1833-87) Quintet in F, Vox Classics 7543 / Philip CANNON (1929-) Str. Sextet, Olympia 632 / Gaetano DONIZETTI (1797-1848) Introduzione for Str. Qt. & Kb, Arts 47219 / Zoltan KODALY (1882-1967) Intermezzo for Str. Trio, ASV DCA 985 / Hans KRASA (1899-1944) Dance for String Trio; Passacaglia and Fugue for String Trio, Praga 250 106 / Johan LINDEGREN (1842-1908) Str. Quintet. in F, Artemis Arte 7122 / Arnold SCHONBERG (1874-1950) String Trio, Op.45, Stradivarius 33438 / Alexander von ZEMPLINSKY (1871-1944) 2 Movements for Quintet, Stradivarius 33438

Piano Trios

Gaetano DONIZETTI (1797-1848) Trios in Eb & D, Arts 47218 / John IRELAND (1879-1962) Phantasie Trio in a & Trio Nos. 2-3, ASV DCA 1016 / Alberic MAGNARD (1865-1914) Trio in F, Op.18 Auvidis Valois V4807 / Gian Francesco MALIPIERO (1882-1973) Sonate a tre, BMG Ricordi 1024 /

Piano Quartets & Quintets

Bruce ADOLPHE (1955-) In Memories for Piano Quintet, CRI 761 / Richard FLURY (1896-1967) Piano Quintet in a / Gallo 866

Winds & Strings

Philip CANNON (1929-) Clarinet Quintet, Olympia 632 / Gaetano DONIZETTI (1797-1848) 4 Notturmi, Arts 47219 / John IRELAND (1879-1962) Sextet for Cln, Hn & Str. Qt, ASV DCA 1016 / Wenzel (Vaclav) PICHL (1741-1805) 3 Clarinet Quartets, Op.16, Arta 0079 / Ferdinand THIÉRIOT (1838-1919) Octet in Bb Op.62 Arte Nova 49689;

Winds, Strings & Piano

Donald ERB (1927-) *Sunlit Peaks & Dark Valleys* (Cln, Vln & Pno) D'Note 1025 / Jean Francois TAPRAY (1737-1819) Quartet in Bb for Pno, Cln, Vla & Pno; Quartet for Pno, Vla, Vc & Fl; Quartet for Pno, Cln Vla & Bsn all on K617 7073

Piano & Winds

Gaetano DONIZETTI (1797-1848) Trio for Fl, Bsn & Pno, Arts 47218 / Ferdinand THIÉRIOT (1838-1919) Quintet in a, Op.80, Arte Nova 49689

Winds Only

Gian Francesco MALIPIERO (1882-1973) Dialog No.4 for Wind Qnt, BMG Ricordi 1024 / Antonio SALIERI (1750-1825) Quintet in Bb, Cassation in C, Serenades in C, F & G, Trios in G Eb & C, Parade March in C, Tactus 751902 / Frank ZAPPA Quintet, Songs for Wind Quintet L'Empreinte ED 13071

A Survey of Music for Clarinet, Strings & Piano

(Continued from page 7)

period include the *Grand Trio Concertante* by **Vojtech Jirovec** (1763-1850), which remains unpublished in the National Library in Prague, and the *Grand Trio, Op 36* (1806-7) by **Anton Eberl** (1765-1807) published by Musica Rara. Eberl also wrote a *Popourri Op 44*. **Karl Vollweiler** wrote two *Fantaisies, Op 15* and *Op 35* (1845, 1870) on Italian and Russian themes (published in St Petersburg). **Franz Huerten's** little *Terzetto, Op 175* was published by Schott in 1851.

In France, **Adolphe Blanc** (Op. 23), **Louise Farrenc** (1865) and **d'Indy** (1877) produced trios of rather individual character, though there is some Beethovenian influence in the Farrenc's music. In Denmark, **Emil Hartmann** (1836-98) wrote a fine *Serenade Op 24* (1878) which is out of print.

In May 1891 **Brahms** met the 35 year old clarinetist Richard Muehlfeld, but had not then heard him play. Muehlfeld was

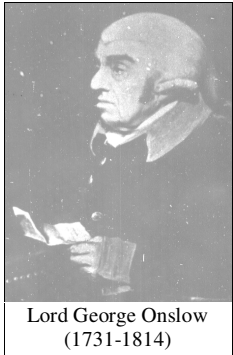
appointed to the Meiningen court as a violinist at the age of 17 and six years later rose to the post of first clarinet of the ducal orchestra. Late when Brahms did heard him play the Weber Clarinet Concertos and the Mozart Clarinet Quintet he was captivated and requested permission to attend some of Muehlfeld's rehearsals, taking notes on the possibilities and difficulties of the instrument. He composed the somber *Trio* while on holiday at Bad Ischl and took part in the first performance in Berlin with Muehlfeld and the cellist Hausmann. A cluster of trios appeared after Brahms. These include the *Trio Op 3* (1897) by **Zemlinsky**, the overlong late *Trio Op.94* (1905) by **Wilhelm Berger**. The Simrock edition of the Zemlinsky *Trio* contains some pitch errors in the clarinet and cello parts which may lead to blows unless the pianist is charitable. The piano part appears to correct. Cobbett remarks of the effectiveness of the *Clarinet Trio, Op 45* (1906) by **Robert Kahn**, a pupil of Rheinberger and Brahms.

The String Quartets of George Onslow-Part IV

by R.H.R. Silvertrust

(The first three parts of this article covered the composer's life from his birth in 1784 through 1814. The first nine quartets, Op.4 Nos.1-3, Op.8 Nos.1-3 and Op.9 Nos.1-3 were presented and analyzed)

The subject of Part Four to this article is a set of three string quartets by George Onslow generally known as Op.10 and numbered as String Quartets 10, 11 & 12. I write 'generally' because some Onslow authorities believe that these quartets were actually composed before those known to us as Op.8. As discussed in Part Two, this is by no means certain. The main thing is that the nine quartets written between 1813 and 1816, i.e. Op.8 (Quartet Nos.4-6) Op.9 (Quartet Nos.7-9) and Op.10 (Quartet Nos.10-12) were composed within a short time of each other and one cannot, from the writing itself, glean any significant advance in one set over another. This being the case there seems little to gain by renumbering the quartets with numbers by which they were never known.



Even the date of publication of the Op.10 Quartets has never been precisely established. Pleyel and Steiner, Onslow's chief publishers during his lifetime, brought them out sometime during 1815-16. It is known that the Op.9 Quartets, (Quartet Nos.7-9), were begun in 1814 immediately after the death of the composer's grandfather, Lord George Onslow. Therefore it seems likely that the Op.10 quartets were composed in 1815.

There is not a great deal of information about Onslow's life at the time these quartets were composed. What little there is has already been discussed, however, it should be noted that by the time Onslow began the Op.8 quartets (sometime in 1813), he had achieved some small degree of recognition in that his name had merited an entry in the *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens* which was published at the end of 1811. It is worth reprinting part of that entry not only because it gives us some idea of the first description the public had of Onslow but also because it is at odds with with some suspect information which probably damaged Onslow's reputation after his death.

"George Onslow born of English parents (*sic—only George's father was English*) at Clermont, Département de Puy-du-Dôme, has come to enjoy a good success with only the most basic study of music and has ended up giving himself almost entirely over to it. The piano is the instrument which he has cultivated the most...After studying composition in London under Monsieur Cramer, he realized music should be his main occupation..."

Unknown today, although he still rates over a page in the *New Grove's*, John Cramer (1771-1858) was during his life-time a highly respected pianist and composer. His music was both known and appreciated by Haydn and Beethoven with whom he was on friendly terms. That Cramer's influence had been decisive in Onslow's opting for a career as a composer would have struck no one as unusual. Surprisingly, this information never appeared again in any other biographical sketch of Onslow. Instead, subsequently it was repeated and repeated that upon hearing the

opera *Stratonice*, by the French composer Etienne Méhul, Onslow was moved to take up music as a career. The fact that *Stratonice* was, by the time of Onslow's death (1853), regarded as a second or even third rate opera, did little to enhance his reputation in the eyes of posterity.

The Op.10 Quartets were dedicated to a prominent lawyer and amateur musician, J.M. Claudius Lurin. He was a close family friend who had first met Edward Onslow, George's father, during the French Revolution. One interesting feature of each of the three quartets in this set is that they all have, in the minuet or trio to the minuet section, a dance from Onslow's native province of Auvergne. Onslow makes sure the player will not miss this fact and clearly labels each of these peasant tunes "*Air de danse des Montagnes d'Auvergne.*" Onslow's biographer, Dr. Richard Franks sees this as evidence of Reicha's influence, the latter being quite keen about reviving national songs and local folk idioms.

The *Allegro spirituoso* to **Op.10 No.1, String Quartet No.10 in G** begins with a syncopated 'herky-jerky' dialog between the first violin and cello which sounds almost as if it were begun in mid-phase. The writing clearly shows the influence of Beethoven's Op.18 Quartets. In particular, there is a certain similiarity in feeling about this movement and the first movement of Op.18 No.5. The type of operatic drama and chromaticism which propels the Op.8 and Op.9 Quartets is entirely missing here. The themes seem to rely less on melody than on rhythm for their force. The writing is very different from his earlier quartets, but nonetheless quite powerful and full of forward motion. The very fine *Adagio* which comes next is based on a simple three note motif. The naturalness and ease with which Onslow develops this simplest of themes into a set of elaborate variations is astonishing. This movement certainly is an illustration of the high degree of competence that Onslow had achieved in such a short period of time. Those who have played or heard the earlier minuets and scherzi to the first nine quartets will be struck, once again, with how different sounding this *Minuetto Allegro Risoluto* is. *Risoluto* is the key word here; this is not so much a dance as a military parade march. The violins pound out an unrelenting three-step against a heavy running eights in the lower voices:

In the finale, *Allegretto con moto*, snippets of the theme are tossed about from voice in a kind moto-perpetuo atmosphere. This is a

(Continued from page 9)

very ingenious composition. The part-writing throughout is excellent and the quartet is first rate. Another masterwork which belongs in the concert hall. The Quartet was originally recorded in 1979 by the Trio a Cordes Francais with Yvon Caracilly on CCV LP #1002 and re-released on CD Koch #3-1623-2. (It is listed as Op.8 No.1 and not Op.10 No.1)

In **String Quartet No.11, Op.10 No.2 in G**, we are back on familiar territory with the Onslow we know and have heard before. The opening movement, *Allegro Maestoso e espressivo*, begins with a very dramatic violin solo over the pulsing 8ths of the three other voices:

As the movement proceeds the other voices join in but the thematic material, for the most part remains with the first violin. In Op.10 No.1 and Op.10 No.3 Onslow places the minuet in its traditional position as the third movement and the *Air de Danse des Montagnes d'Auvergne* appears within the trio section to minuet. But here, the minuet is placed second and the Auvergne air is placed not in the trio but the minuet itself. These Airs from the mountains of Auvergne clearly are robust and quick dances. Here Onslow gives each of the voices a hand in presenting the theme which is embellished with a several trills:

The dance, in a minor, is followed by a contrasting trio in D Major which is considerably more gentle in nature. The following *Andante con variazione* is based on a sweet theme followed by a set of four very substantial variations. The first variation is a dialog between the all four voices. The language of the dialog is long upward and downward 32nd note chromatic passages. The

second variation is uncomplicated and short and restates the theme, this time in the relative minor. The third variation, now back in major, consists of a virtuosic challenge for the first violin who is given 32nd note triplets to the mild accompaniment of the others. The fourth and final variation makes considerable use of elaborate syncopated cross rhythms. Clearly the center of gravity of the Quartet, this is a marvelous movement. The finale, *Allegretto*, in 6/8, is a genial and carefree romp with neither great speed nor urgency. The middle section features a brief but interesting exchange of the second theme between the first violin and the cello. This is a nice quartet, but suffers by comparison when following on the heels of the extraordinary Op.10 No.1. If there is a weakness, it might be that a little too much of the thematic material is given over to the first violin.

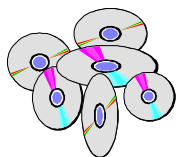
The last quartet of this set, **Op.10 No.3 in Eb Major, String Quartet No.12**, opens with a subdued, but not tragic-sounding, 14 measure introductory *Largo*. The theme to the *Largo* is immediately restated in the following *Allegro con brio*, first by the cello, then the viola followed by the second violin and lastly by the first violin in what might be called a 'mock fugal style.' But despite the staggered restatement of theme, a full-blown fugue does not actually develop. Unfortunately, the part-writing here is not all that could be desired as the first violin clearly dominates proceedings in an otherwise exciting movement. The cello and 1st violin take the lead in the *Andantino sostenuto* which is only andantino (and not adagio) because of the sheer amount of 32nd and 64th note passages. The movement features tremendously dramatic chromatic runs in both the soprano and bass lines:

This type of passage work, which almost always achieves a very good effect, can be found again and again in the slow movements to Onslow's quartets. In the trio to the succeeding *Minuetto allegro*, Onslow achieves a striking result by allowing the cello to sing the Auvergne air in its tenor (notated in treble) register:

In the finale, *Allegro vivace*, with its brilliant first violin part, Onslow comes up with an exciting denouement to top off this very good string quartet.

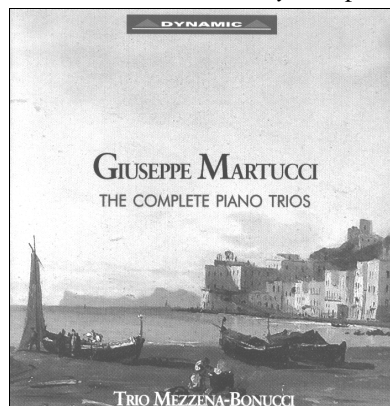
Of the set, amateurs, especially if their first violinist is strong, will enjoy all three; and certainly the 1st and probably the 3rd deserve to be heard on stage and should be tried by professionals.

This series will continue in the next issue with a discussion of String Quartet Nos. 13-15



Diskology: The Piano Trios of Giuseppe Martucci, Flemish & Czech String Quartets & the Chamber Music of Anton Arensky

Judging from the size of the entry in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey* on **Giuseppe Martucci** (1856-1909), it seems relatively clear, that at the time the *Survey* was published (1929), he was regarded



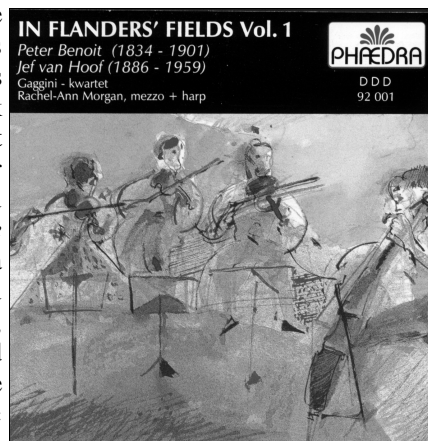
as a fairly important composer of chamber music. Be that as it may, in 35 years of concert-going, I have never heard any work of his performed. Perhaps, if I had lived in Italy, this might have been remedied, although I would be surprised if this were the case. Martucci spent much of his time trying to bring late German Romanticism to Italy's sunny shores. But for the most part, the Italians were not interested in Wagner, Brahms and the like. Although Martucci's name seems not to be entirely unknown, he has joined the ranks of those poor devils whose name rings a bell but whose music does not.

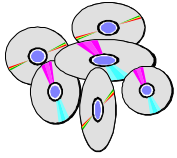
A gifted pianist (his playing was said to be admired by Liszt and Anton Rubenstein), conductor and teacher, Martucci composed a fair amount of chamber music at a time when most Italians had little interest in it. Among these works are the two piano trios on this Dynamic CD #CDS 132. Written between 1882-83, both of the trios are massive works each taking about ¾ of an hour to perform. **Piano Trio No.1, Op.59 in C** opens with a spacious and not terribly *Allegro Giusto* in which the strings play a lovely theme above the piano. The melodies are gorgeous and the part writing very good indeed in that the strings are not forced to duel with piano, but there is nothing very Italian-sounding about the music. A furious *Scherzo* follows in which the piano takes the lead. In the short contrasting trio, the melodic material is given to the muted strings. A melancholy cello solo opens the almost painfully lovely *Andante con moto*, clearly the Trio's center of gravity. The finale, *Allegro risoluto*, by use of similar tempi and themes gives the feel of the first three movements without directly quoting but overall, there seems to be sufficient lack of forward motion and drama one would expect in a finale. All in all though, this is a very fine work well worth hearing.

Piano Trio No.2, Op.62 in E Flat was written almost immediately after the First. An *Allegro*, sounding more *moderato*, introduces a very lyrical and lazy melody. One hears the influence of Brahms. This is a big movement, but there are no small movements in this trio. Even the *Scherzo-Allegro* is a lengthy affair. Rather more subdued, again *a la* Brahms, than the average scherzo this *Scherzo* plods along almost interminably finally ending without warning on one chord. The contrasting trio is a marvelous other-worldly theme given to the strings over the piano. Next is an *Adagio*, huge, again one hears the guiding hand of Brahms in the very long but lovely themes. In the *Finale*, *Allegro vivace*, again we hear Johannes, but also some very original musical thought especially in the splendid conclusion to this work.

The two composers featured on this Phaedra CD #92001 were, for me, a real find. The author of the jacket notes, in discussing the first of the two composers, rather drolly remarks that **Peter Benoit** (1834-1901) "*will forever remain famous ... as founder of a Flemish national school in music ...*" Fame, of course, is relative, but I doubt many would claim, even in Flanders, that Benoit is famous. Born in the small Flemish town of Harelbeke, he studied with the well-known musical biographer, Fetis. Sometimes called the Flemish Schubert because he devoted so much of his time to lieder or song, Benoit did, however, compose four string quartets. The **String Quartet in D, Op.10** dates from 1858 and was written in Munich where Benoit was visiting as a result of his having won a stipendium from the Prix de Rome. The work remained unpublished until 1951 when it was brought out by the Royal Academy of Belgium commemorating the 50th anniversary of his death. It has not, as far as I know, been reprinted. It opens *Allegro anima e fuoco* although the writing does not allow the not particularly convincing music to be played either *anima* or *fuoco*. Clearly derivative, the composer seems to be searching around for himself using the language of the middle period of German Romanticism. Fortunately, Benoit finds himself in the clever Schumannesque *Scherzo presto* which follows. A beautiful but tragic-sounding *Larghetto* of considerable power comes next. It is in this movement that one hears how this composer was able to win the Prix de Rome. For its time, it is very good. A rather light-hearted *Allegro*, complete with a 6/8 chase theme reminiscent of Schubert, closes this slight but charming quartet.

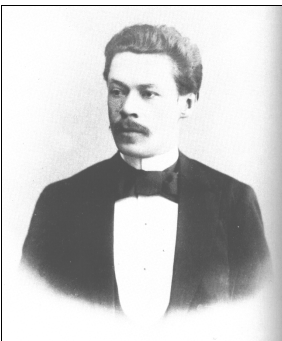
Jef van Hoof (1886-1959), the second composer featured, considered himself to the musical heir of Benoit and also dedicated much of his efforts in the area of vocal music. A life-long resident of Antwerp, van Hoof can be said to have written in the idiom of the late romantic movement. He wrote two string quartets, both recorded here. The first, **Small Quartet in C**, was composed in 1919. The opening *Moderato* is quite lyrical and reminds me a great deal of Frank Bridge's *Cherry Ripe*. It is the longest of the four movements. The second movement, *Tempo de Valse ma poco lento*, is a charming but subdued waltz; the trio section, mysterious and pianissimo, is in the nature of chromatic scherzo. A *Dolcemente Scherzando*, barely two minutes in length and played entirely pizzicato, achieves an effect similar to that found in Ravel's quartet. The finale, *Giocosio*, is the only movement which really has modern, post-romantic (though tonal) 20th Century tonalities. A bit wayward and restless, it is an excellent conclusion to this very clever little work.





Anton Arensky: 2 String Quartets & a Piano Quintet; String Quartets by Mysliveček, F.X. Richter, Krommer and Ryba

A second quartet by van Hoof, composed in 1922 also appears on disk. Originally entitled *Miniatures* even this diminutive title was too big for his taste and van Hoof later renamed it **Trifles**. It is a five movement suite of small scenes, perhaps in conception similar to Schumann's *Kinderscenen*. The first, entitled *Gratitude*, is a fugue on a theme introduced by the cello. *Children Playing* has a rather Italian, Respighi-like sound. *Sad Lullaby*, the longest of the scenes, is romantically lyrical. *Waltz* is tastefully updated and quite effective. The finale, *Twaddlings World-Wide*, is a bouncing, rhythmic and humorous trip, perhaps the most modern sounding of the scenes. Another very effective work. I would like to see the music to both quartets published. They would not be of great difficulty to amateurs.



Anton Arensky (1861-1906) was the son of keen amateur musicians. His early training was as a pianist. At 18, he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he developed into yet another of Rimsky Korsakov's more than competent students. He ultimately became a professor at the Moscow Conservatory where Rachmaninov, Gliere, Skryabin and Conyus were students of his. Tchaikovsky and Taneiev were among

his colleagues and friends. With the exception of his piano trios, the works on this Marco Polo CD #8.223811, performed by the Lajtha Quartet & Ilona Prunyi, are his most important.

String Quartet No.1 in G, Op.11 dates from 1888. The *Allegro* opens with a very dramatic, almost virtuosic, first theme. A slight *Andante* is full of contrapuntal writing. The canonic *Minuetto allegretto* which follows sounds like something out of *Les Vendredis*. The finale, *Variations sur un thème russe* is clearly the most striking and exciting of the movements with many extraordinary effects in the succeeding variations.

Composed some seven years later (1895), the repeated opening chords to **String Quartet No.2 in a minor, Op.35** sound suspiciously like a Russian Orthodox funeral service. This *Moderato* is at once quite striking and reminiscent of a similar movement in Tchaikovsky's third string quartet. A dramatic second theme, while not exactly 'happy,' relieves the earlier somber mood which ultimately returns and closes this long but very finely-wrought movement. The theme to *Thème moderato et variations* is again somber; this time like a hymn from the Volga boatmen. Roughly half the length of this three movement work, the variations are quite elaborate with each instrument given the lead while the composer explores all of the tonal and textural possibilities of which four string instruments are capable. The mood lightens and at times wanders considerably from the original theme: here a scherzo, there a lyrical song, and at last a somber plaint. Certainly this is as fine a movement of chamber music as Arensky wrote. The relatively short finale *Andante sostenuto-Allegro moderato* begins in the same somber mood

where previous movement left off. But this dirge-like heaviness is soon relieved by a robust church anthem tune which brings the quartet to rousing finish.

The dramatic opening (*Allegro moderato*) to the **Piano Quintet in D, Op.51**, which was composed in 1900, is in feeling and mood more than a little like the opening to Robert Schumann's piano quintet. Full of flourishes, from the opening bars one immediately hears music of joy and triumph. Arensky gives the piano, as he did in the his first piano trio (Op.32), a virtuoso part. In the *Variations* which follow, the piano takes a lead rôle as the mood lightens. The lyrical piano part almost sounds like Chopin. A very well-written and brilliant, French-sounding *Scherzo* with contrasting trio comes next. The finale, *Allegro moderato*, begins as a fugue of almost Baroque rigidity, but the second theme and coda, full of romanticism, totally dismantle the fugue. This is a very nice work which deserves to be heard occasionally on stage in place of the inevitable Schumann or Dvorak.

Of the four string quartets on this Panton CD#81-1011-2, I have played three and performed two. The **Quartet in C** by **Josef Mysliveček** (1737-1781) is the one with which I was unfamiliar. Mysliveček spent most of his life in Italy where he was known by the title, 'The divine Bohemian.' For the life of me, I cannot understand how he garnered this accolade for I have never heard music of his that was anything other than very pedestrian and forgettable. This quartet is no exception. I have performed **String Quartet in C, Op.5 No.1** (erroneously labeled Op.51 in the jacket notes) by **Franz (Frantisek) Xaver Richter** (1709-1789). It has long been in Breitkop & Härtel's catalogue and is still available. Richter spent much of his life in Mannheim and his three

movement quartet (*I. Allegro con brio, II. Andante poco, III. Rincontro presto*) is a good representative of the Mannheim style. The part-writing to this little gem is excellent and those who are unfamiliar with it would do well to make its acquaintance. **Franz Krommer's** (1759-1831) brilliant **Quartet in E Flat, Op.5 No.1** should be familiar to readers as it was

reviewed in detail in Vol. VII No.2 (June 1996). It is in print. The final quartet on disk, **Jakub Jan Ryba's** (1765-1815) **Quartet in d minor** is also in print (Heinrichshofen N2092) It opens with a somber and powerful *Adagio*, half way between Bach and late-Beethoven. It is 3/5's the length of this slight, but effective, three movement work. An undistinguished *Menuetto* with a very clever pizzicato trio follows. There is no *da capo*. The quartet concludes with an engaging and well-conceived *Scherzo allegro*. Amateurs will enjoy this little classical string quartet.

