

THE CHAMBER MUSIC JOURNAL

Franz Berwald's String Quartets

By Larius J. Ussi

Sometime during the 1850's, a German music critic is reputed to have asked **Franz Berwald (1796-1868)** if he was still a composer. Berwald stared at him coldly and replied, "No, I am a glass blower." When I first came across this remark, I thought that it was a joke, a sarcastic put-down of the critic by a bitter man whose music had been spurned in his own country and whose career in music had met with failure after failure. But no, upon doing the research for this article, I learned that Berwald had in fact, at that time, actually been a glass blower! He had become involved with this successful business, and not his first, in order to make a living, something he could not do as a musician.

Liszt, whom Berwald befriended in the 1850's, told him, "You have true originality, but you will not be a success in your own lifetime." Sadly, this prediction proved true. Berwald's music remained unplayed and for the most part—especially in his native Sweden—unappreciated. Now, nearly a century and half after his death, record reviewers hail him as a 'great Swedish composer,' while one of Sweden's best known conductor's, Herbert Blomstedt, has been quoted as saying, "In Sweden now, everybody knows Berwald's Symphonies." Meanwhile Robert Layton, in his article on Berwald in the *New Grove*, calls him, "...the most individual and commanding musical personality Sweden has yet produced." Whether one agrees with this judgment or not, it must be admitted that few composers have risen from such obscurity to the point where everyone (in their own country) now knows their symphonies.

Sweden aside, Berwald's music remains, for the most part, unknown, although for the past 20 years or so, there usually seems to have been at least one or two recordings of his music available, most often the symphonies. But at present,

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The Chamber Music of Joseph Rheinberger Part I

by R.H.R. Silvertrust



Joseph Rheinberger aged 14. Munich

In Joseph Rheinberger (1839-1901) we have another Cobbett composer *par excellence*. In beginning my article on the string quartets of George Onslow (Vol.VIII No.1,

(I would be remiss if I did not gratefully acknowledge and thank Lura Altschuler, the late Morton Altschuler, Mark Talent, Kathleen Tumminello, Henry Coretz, Jeffrey Wagner and Loren Silvertrust without whose help and patience I would not have been able to write this article.)

March 1997), I wrote that I could think of no unknown or little-known composer who was more deserving of great recognition. I qualified this by adding that "certainly, there may be others who are as deserving..." Without doubt, Joseph Rheinberger is among them. Perhaps it is not fair to say that Rheinberger is entirely unknown as organists and choirmasters still use his music, but most other musicians, while they may have come across the name, have neither heard nor played his instrumental music.

In his article on Rheinberger in *Cobbett's Cyclopedia*, Wilhelm Altmann, perhaps the greatest-ever chamber music critic, remarks, "... it is only very occasionally that his chamber works are heard in a concert room. That is not as it should be, for (to

(Continued on page 4)

TGIF—Thank God It's Friday—Les Vendredis The Wonderful Music From Those Magical Nights Part 3

by Renz Opolis

In the first part of this article, (Vol.XI. No.2, Summer 2000), I described the Friday night chamber music sessions—informal performances or concerts followed by a banquet—which Belaiev hosted for more than 20 years and which came to be known as *Les Vendredis*. In the second part, which appeared in the last issue, I discussed the first seven works that appeared in Volume I of the two volume set of occasional pieces which have come to be known collectively as *Les Vendredis*.

A few years before Belaiev's death in 1903, Rimsky Korsakov, along with Glazunov and Liadov, selected some 16 works which Belaiev's firm published in 1899 in two volumes. All but one of these works were written expressly for performance at Belaiev's Friday night sessions, some were actually penned on the spot so to speak, at Belaiev's, and only moments before they received their maiden performance. The works selected were adjudged

the best or at least the most representative from what may well have been dozens. They range in length from the very short, no more than 20 or 30 measures, to full-blown movements, taking several minutes to perform. Most of the works are truly occasional or salon pieces in the best sense



Mitrofan Petrovich Belaiev

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Chamber Music Journal

R.H.R. Silvertrust, *Editor*

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The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



Music by Chadwick Van Bree & Kreuzer is Available

We received with thanks the latest issue of the *Journal* (Vol.XI. No.3 Autumn 2000). In the section, *Sounding Board*, there was a question about the availability of Chadwick's string quartets. The Fourth is available from Masters Music, No.M2021. Further, in the review of a CD about Quartet No.3 by van Bree, the question of availability came up. His quartet Nos.1 & 3 are available from us and can be found in our catalogue on the internet at www.broekmans.com. With regard to the availability of Conradin Kreuter's Quintet for Piano, Flute, Clarinet, Viola & Cello, this work is published by Musica Rara.

Piet Ganzinotti
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Thank you. (Mr. Ganzanotti, a Cobbett Member, is a proprietor of Broekmans en Van Poppel, one of the best stocked music stores in the world). You may shop for music at Broekmans en Van Poppel on the internet at the above webcite, or ☎: 020-6796575 or by mail at Van Baerlestraat 92-94 / Postbus 75228 / 1070 AE Amsterdam / The Netherlands. Van Bree Quartet Nos.2 & 3 are available from Merton Copying Services / 8 Wilton Grove / London SW 19 3QX. Tel: 20-8540-2708. E-Mail: mertonmusic@argonet.co.uk

Some of Juon's Music Available

Your readers may wish to know that Juon's Viola Sonata, Op.15, mentioned in the Autumn issue of the *Journal*, is available from Kalmus Music for \$7.95. The *Trio Miniaturen* cited as the only work in print by Juon, hasn't surfaced in my usual sources. If you know the publisher, I'm interested.

Lee Newcomer
Chicago, Illinois

Thanks for this information. (Mr. Newcomer, a Cobbett member, runs Performers Music in Chicago, one of the top places to obtain chamber music in the U.S.: Performers Music is at 410 S. Michigan Ave Ste.904 / Chicago IL 60605 / ☎: 312-987-1196) Juon's *Miniaturen* were originally published by Robert Lienau of Berlin and were available as late as the early 1980's. I do not think they are any longer in print. However, earlier this year, I obtained a copy from a music shop in Zurich of the Op.89 Suite for Piano Trio in c, which is published by C.A. Challier (Richard Birnbach Verlag) of Berlin. In addition to the Op.89, they list Op.83, *Legende* for Piano Trio, Op.84

Quintet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon, and Op.86 another violin sonata (not cited by Dr. Horne) as all being available.

When Was Les Vendredis Published?

Mr. Opolis writes in his article on *Les Vendredis* that these volumes were published sometime after Belaiev died, which was 1903. Can this be correct in view of the fact that I have a first edition which is dated 1899?

Larius J. Ussi
Vienna, Austria

Mr Opolis replies: "You are indeed correct. Certain sources I consulted led me to believe *Les Vendredis* did not appear until after Belaiev died. But it did in fact come out in 1899, four years before Belaiev died as I myself later discovered. Thank you for pointing this out."

Other Les Vendredis Pieces

A fellow quarteter, after I showed him your article on *Les Vendredis*, informed me that he thought there were other published works which came out of Belaiev's Fridays beyond those in the two volumes. If so, what are they and are they available

Ingrid Haberson
Toronto, Ontario

There are at least three other published works which came out of those sessions. The first, known as the "B-La-F Quartet", was based on a theme which constituted the musical letters of Belaiev's name. It was given to him as a present and published shortly afterwards in 1886. It is a collaborative effort with Borodin, Glazunov, Liadov and Rimsky Korsakov each writing a movement. In 1895, Belaiev published "Jour de Fete" which includes a movement by Glazunov, Liadov and Rimsky Korsakov. The third work is known as "Variations on a Russian Theme." Artcibushev, Scriabin, Glazunov, Glazunov, Rimsky Korsakov, Liadov, Wihtol, Blumenfeld, Ewald, Winkler and Sokolov each contributed a variation. This appeared in print in 1899, at the same time as *Les Vendredis*. All of these works are available. *Jour de Fete* and the *Variations* from *International* and the *B-La-F Quartet* from *Belaiev*. Mr. Opolis will be writing about these works in the next part of his article.

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.

At The Doublebar

I have further good news with regard to the Cobbett Association Library. (Readers will recall that in early September, Dr. Whitby and I met with Lorraine Busby, head of the University of Western Ontario's Music Library. [UWO] We discussed the terms of the transfer of the Library and I reported in the last issue of the *Journal* that UWO seemed quite interested but that certain questions of their potential liability concerned UWO's lawyers.) Shortly before we went to press with this issue, I received a call from Ms. Busby who informed me that she believes the new terms we made to the lawyers have removed their concerns. To summarize, we agreed we would not initially hold UWO liable for any music which is found to be missing by them. UWO will inform us of any such lacunae and we will supply whatever is found to be missing. Upon our doing this, however, UWO will then become liable for all such pieces. While there are certainly problems for us with this, nonetheless from UWO's standpoint, it is really the only satisfactory terms upon which they could accept our library, absent an inventory by UWO of the entire collection made at our expense. The cost of such an inventory would be substantial. By removing the initial liability clause, it appears that we will overcome the final hurdles to finding a new home for our library and to making it available once again for our members. Should we at a later time decide we wish to bear the cost of an independent inventory, we can, of course, pay for one and then require UWO to be responsible from that point on.

A word of thanks is certainly in order to Mr. Ussi for his fine article on the string quartets of Franz Berwald, and once again thanks to Renz Opolis for his continuing series on *Les Vendredis*.

Congratulations to **The Miami String Quartet** (Cobbett Members) winners of Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award, given every 2 years to a young quartet of artistic excellence.

We have placed a reminder notice (eyes right) in the *Journal*. It is time to renew. To this end, enclosed with this issue is a renewal form. With the holidays upon us, why not consider giving a gift subscription to one of your chamber music friends and turn them on to the exciting music awaiting to be discovered.



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The Chamber Music of Joseph Rheinberger (continued from page 1)

give [but] an instance), the *Theme with Variations for String Quartet, Op.93*, is one of the grandest passacaglias ever written. No quartet society which prides itself on artistic programs should neglect it." Altmann wrote this 75 years ago. Today, Rheinberger's music is never heard in concert, stateside anyway. At least the recording industry has not neglected him and currently there are CD's of his four piano trios, his piano quartet and piano quintet, his 3 works for string quartet, his viola quintet, his nonet for strings and winds, and his sextet for winds and piano.

Although the number of his chamber works is not particularly large vis-à-vis his total output, the 12 works to be considered are, in my opinion, all generally quite good and several are as good as anything else ever written for the particular genre in which they were composed. In the same article referred to above, Altmann praises the originality of invention in both melody and harmony to be found in all of the composer's chamber works. He goes on to note that Rheinberger's skill in development was beyond praise and illustrated a master's grasp of form which allowed him to endow his music with great strength. So, how then did these and his other instrumental works fall into oblivion? How likely is it that the man whom many reference sources call the greatest 19th Century writer for organ, the finest writer of fugues ever save for Bach, and a composer in the first rank of church music—how likely is it that such a man's other compositions would all be second rate? The answer is: Not very. And, in Rheinberger's case, those who take the trouble to listen or play his chamber music, will need no convincing that these are mostly first rate works.

As early as the mid 1860's, no less an authority than Hans von Bülow called Rheinberger the finest teacher of composition to be found anywhere. (Among his many composition students were, Wolf-Ferrari, Chadwick, Humperdinck, Thuille, Buonamici and Furtwangler) During his lifetime, Rheinberger was widely regarded as one of the leading composers in Germany. In view of this fact, I have been unable to come up with any satisfactory reason why Rheinberger's instrumental music gained a reputation for being "academic" within two decades of his death. By academic, critics usually mean dry, or only of interest to academicians or to teachers of music, although music which interests the later is usually called pedagogic. The only explanation I have actually seen put forth in print is that despite his being romantic in outlook, Rheinberger was strongly influenced by Beethoven, Schubert and Mozart. Well, pardon me, but the last time I checked, the same thing could be said of Brahms, Schumann and a host of others. No, if we are talking about merit alone, this cannot be the answer, for Rheinberger's chamber works are the equal of both Brahms and Schumann. I feel, in this instance, it was simply a matter of taste, accident and, of course, that great watershed, the First World War, in whose aftermath nearly all of the works of composers from the Romantic period quickly went out of fashion. However, the fact that Rheinberger's chamber music has been and is being recorded gives me cause to believe that this will eventually change and as more people hear these wonderful pieces, Rheinberger will resume the position he once held in the front rank of composers from the last half of the 19th Century.

Before we begin, it should be mentioned 12 works will be the subject of this article. *The New Grove* lists 11. They do not list

Op.191b, his Sextet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon and Piano. *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* lists 12 chamber works, however, this is only because his Op.61 is listed as a Theme and Variations for String Quartet. This is an error, Op.61 is a set of variations for piano. The *Cyclopedia* also fails to mention Op.191b. This confusion is understandable in light of the fact that there are over 170 works of Rheinberger's which were never published (by his choice). Most, but by no means all of these, date from his youth. Those who have seen the manuscripts in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library) have reported there are some fine works waiting to be discovered. Altmann, for example, tells us that Rheinberger wrote 8 string quartets before he published his "first", Op.89.

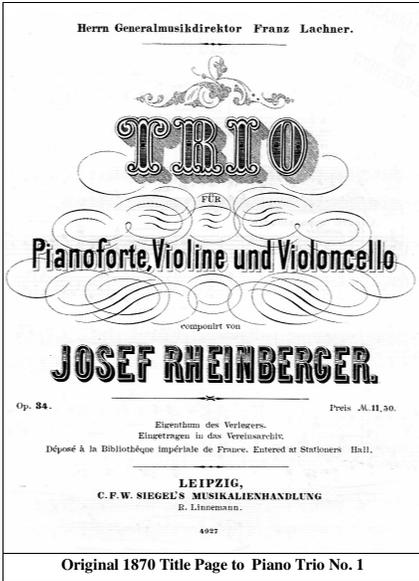
From Swiss-German stock, Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger was born in Vaduz, the capital of Liechtenstein, that small principality beloved by philatelists, surrounded by Switzerland and Austria in 1839. Despite the fact that his father was state treasurer, his musical education, once his talent was discovered, was no easy matter, for in those days, Liechtenstein was remote and poor and its princes lived in Vienna. At the age of 5, young Joseph was given piano and organ lessons from a local teacher. His talent was immediately discovered and was of such a substantial nature that by 7, he was appointed organist for Vaduz. At 9, he was taken to nearby Feldkirch in Austria to study with a local choirmaster who taught him harmony, organ and piano. By this time, he was already making local public appearances as a piano soloist and it became obvious that if his talents were to be realized, he would have to leave Liechtenstein to study with better teachers. It took three years for the local dignitaries to convince Rheinberger's father to send him to the Royal Conservatory in Munich where he could receive instruction commensurate with his abilities. Among his various teachers was Franz Lachner (1803-90), one of Schubert's close friends and an important composer in his own right. Lachner remained a mentor to Rheinberger until his death.

After graduating in 1854, Rheinberger, who remained in Munich for the rest of his life, was in great demand as an organist and served in this position at all of the important churches in Munich. Also in demand as a voice coach and choral master, he eventually became conductor of the important Munich Choral Society and ultimately the Royal Music Director at All Saints' Church, a position he held for 17 years. Further, he served as voice coach at the Royal Opera where he got to know Wagner. As early as 1859, he was teaching at the Royal Conservatory. In 1867, when due to Wagner's influence, the Conservatory was reorganized and became the Royal Academy of Music, Rheinberger, upon the recommendation of von Bülow, was made a professor of counterpoint and composition, a position he held until a few weeks before his death in 1901.

In the decade after his graduation, as busy as Rheinberger was, it was composing to which he devoted himself the most, writing some 100 works, none of which he allowed to be published. Hence his Op.1 was really his Op.100+. A catalog of his works, (H.-J. Irmen: *Jos. Rheinberger thematisches Verzeichnis seiner Kompositionen*, G. Bosse Verlag, 1974) lists his unpublished chamber works as follows: 1 string quintet, 9 string quartets, 1

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piano quartet, and 2 piano trios. His first published chamber work, **Piano Trio No.1, Op.34 in d** dates from 1862 and was composed in only 3 days time. Dedicated to his friend, Franz Lachner, it was premiered in 1866 with Rheinberger playing the piano part himself. (An accomplishment of note, since the part requires a soloist absolutely of the first rank.) That one of Munich's major papers could write of the premiere, "*The pianist out-classed both his fellow musicians in playing and interpretation,*" attests to Rheinberger's prodigious technique and indicates he could have enjoyed a career as a piano virtuoso had he so chosen. After the premier, Rheinberger revised it and allowed it to be published in 1870.

The first movement, *Allegro appassionato*, received most of the rewriting and was shortened. Even in its revised form, it is not without problems. The syncopated and muscular opening theme is harder to put together than it looks at $\text{♩} = 120$.



The development section, in particular, requires the pianist to play several series of cascading triplets, which for the most part provide only background noise to the theme in the strings. However, the depth and inspiration of the second theme testify to the creative power of this 23 year old, who within two decades was widely regarded as one of Germany's best composers.



There are two sections to the second movement, *Adagio espressivo*. The main theme, introduced by the piano with the strings tacit, is sweet and tender and perhaps the words "romance or romanza" might be justified. Of note are the very unorthodox figures which appear in the piano accompaniment when the strings take over the melody. As fine as the main theme is, it is the brief appearance of the second theme, *Piu mosso e feroce*, before the recapitulation which creates a lasting impression and gives striking evidence of Rheinberger's genius. The opening measures to this theme appear at the top of the next column.



The third movement, *Scherzo vivace*, does not have the wicked edginess that so many of Rheinberger's scherzi sport. Instead, there is an undeniably genial and relaxed quality to the music which even the vivace tempo cannot change. The main section is in the form of an elegant waltz in which the piano has a dominant role complete with little virtuoso flourishes that are not, however, as superfluous as some of the long runs given it in the first movement. The middle section, a kind of musette, does not, in my opinion, provide enough contrast to the main section.

The conclusion, *Finale all'ongarese: Allegro vivo*, is an extraordinary movement from its opening measures which instantly seize the listener by the throat:



Following this very unusual beginning, Rheinberger continues in a highly unorthodox vein veering off into a *capriccioso*, one that is full of gypsy fire, and at first for the piano alone.



This highly original movement, full of wonderful musical ideas, could not but make a strong impression upon audiences although it must be admitted that the piano part again rises, in the manner as those of Mendelssohn, to the level of the virtuoso. Though not without blemish (primarily in the first movement), this trio certainly deserves to be heard in concert. (*This series will be continued in the next issue of the Journal*)

The String Quartets of Franz Berwald (continued from page 1)

there are more works of his on disk than ever before. For example, all three of his string quartets are available on two different CD sets. Four of his piano trios are recorded; there are also CDs of a piano quintet, a septet, a quartet for piano and winds, all of the symphonies, a concerto for piano and several other works. Despite this, I cannot say that I have ever heard a work of his performed live.



Born in Stockholm in 1796, Berwald was taught the violin by his father, a German who had settled in Sweden and was a member of the court orchestra. Following in his father's footsteps, Berwald joined the orchestra in 1812 and remained in it until 1828. It is thought he took composition lessons from the court conductor, (J. B.) Edouard Dupuy. During these 16 years, he left the orchestra on two separate occasions. The first time was between 1818-20 and was occasioned by his desire to compose full-time. The previous year he had written a septet which had received public performance. It is thought that this was the forerunner of what was eventually published in 1828.

In any event, 1818 marks the date of composition of his **String Quartet No.1 in g**. A substantial work, especially for this period, it is the longest of his three quartets. The first two measures of the opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, have a tonality which is already advanced for the time, although the rest of the phrase quickly falls back into conventional tonality:



The second theme is found in a long series of leisurely triplets, ranging over two octaves in first violin:



The part writing is generally quite good and Berwald makes telling use of the cello in its lower register to provide contrast. The music sounds original rather than derivative. Critics both at the time and since have commented on the unusual and abrupt modulations: G minor to E flat minor to D minor all within a few measures. The ending does not really seem to go with the rest and is somewhat trite sounding. I had heard it before and racked my brain before I remembered that this bit of melody comes from a Swedish folksong. I cannot however remember which one, but perhaps one of our readers will recognize it:



The opening theme to the second movement, *Poco adagio*, is based on a folk melody which though pleasant is not particularly striking. While the movement is otherwise unremarkable, it is interesting that one can hear what might be described as a Schubertian influence. (Bit, of course, Schubert's quartets (in 1818) weren't even known in Vienna, let alone Stockholm.) The third

movement, *Scherzo, Allegro*, is in my opinion the most unusual and original sounding of the Quartet. The robust main theme is advanced both rhythmically and tonally.



While the trio section does provide adequate contrast, it must be admitted that the thematic material is somewhat lame, especially following, as it does, on the heels of the wonderful music of the scherzo, the ending to which is extremely effective. The finale, *Allegretto*, begins with a fairly conservative type of theme, harking back to the Viennese classics although Berwald's use of *fz* adds rhythmic interest. Twice, in a Berlioz-like explosion of energy, the writing loses its chamber music quality (in bars 84-96 & 214-227) when the 1st violin breaks loose with a virtuoso triplet passage played at rocket speed. It sounds like some sort of lapse and does not particularly go with the rest. A third theme is noteworthy for its advanced tonality, sounding as if Schumann or a young Brahms might have written it and is ahead of its time:



Of additional interest is the last page or so where Berwald does not repeat what has come before but grafts on another part which shows the strong influence of Beethoven's Op.18. Remarkable, in that it would have been unlikely Berwald had either heard or seen these works in Stockholm. The concluding bars are a bit of a surprise, after measures and measures of *ff*, suddenly the movements ends in an anticlimax. *pp*. In sum, while there are certain episodes of quirkiness, this quartet has a great deal to recommend it. It might be considered by those professional groups looking for a change. With a good 1st violinist, amateurs can manage it.

While it is thought that Berwald composed another quartet at the same time as the g minor, the manuscript has been lost. None of his quartets were published during his lifetime. It was another 31 years before Berwald returned to the genre. The intervening years saw the composition of most of his works. He remained with the court orchestra until 1828 when he won a royal scholarship to study abroad. In 1829 he traveled to Berlin where he lived for several years and continued composing but enjoyed no success. By 1835, he could no longer support himself and opened an orthopedic institute which during the next six years made him a rich man. This enabled him to marry and to travel to Vienna where he lived during 1841-2. For the first time, he enjoyed a real musical success. Many of his orchestral works were performed to critical acclaim. Thinking his Viennese success would finally allow him to accomplish the same in Stockholm, he returned. But despite the efforts of his cousin, who was now conductor of the court orchestra, performances of his music were poorly received. In 1846, he left again, traveling for three years and meeting with failure everywhere but Vienna and Salzburg where he was made an honorary member of the Mozarteum.

In 1849, he returned to Stockholm hoping he would either be made director of music at Uppsala University or conductor of the

The String Quartets of Franz Berwald

court orchestra. But, he was passed over for both appointments. No longer rich, thanks to an unscrupulous relative, Berwald had no means of support and accepted the position of manager at a glass works in the north of Sweden. His last two string quartets date from this period and are thought to be composed just prior to his departure from Stockholm.

String Quartet No.2 in a does not, despite the three decades of experience Berwald gained, show any real advance over the earlier work. If anything from a tonal standpoint, it is more conservative, however from a structural standpoint, it is quite unusual. A much shorter work than the First Quartet, all four movements to the Second are connected to each other and played without pause. In addition the succeeding movements begin with a definite thematic relationship to the music which has preceded it. The first movement begins with a melancholy, somewhat Schubertian, *Introduzione, Adagio*. This leads to an *Allegro*, the thematic material to which is rather pedestrian. Berwald almost seems aware of it and attempts to dress it up by the use of quirky rhythmic figures which have the same sort of artificiality that Berlioz's music sometimes has. This is not an accident, as Berwald was much attracted to the music of Berlioz. There is something about the part writing—hard to put into words but nonetheless something—which experienced quartet players will recognize as not traditional quartet-style writing. The second movement, *Adagio*, is separated from the first by only a brief pause (a fermata over a quarter note rest). The first subject is taken from the opening *Introduzione* but expanded upon and developed. Again the thematic material, though pleasant, is unremarkable and again Berwald tries to add some sort of originality by the use of odd rhythms which have a artificial quality to them.



It is hard to believe that only one week separates the composition of **String Quartet No.3 in Eb** from No.2. Full of creative, original and unusual ideas, the Third Quartet does share one characteristic with the Second: There are no distinct pauses between the movements. The opening *Allegro con brio* immediately captures the listener's attention with a Berlioz-like burst of fury. Though not so marked, it is a short introduction and features three brief cadenzas, one for the 1st violin, one for the cello and a bridge passage to the main movement, *Allegro di molto*, played by the 2nd violin. The charming opening melody, sung by the 1st violin is both romantic and memorable:

A stormy second subject is full of passion. Each voice is given an important part which does blend so much as stand alone, creating the impression that the writing is too dense. A calmer but quite romantic third theme follows:

The fecundity of musical thought is almost too much for one movement. And here, unlike in the Second Quartet, the unusual and original rhythmic effects (such as snare-drum like 16th & 8th notes bar 173 et.seq.) only add to the excellence of the music. The following *Adagio quasi Andante* begins without any pause and opens with another extraordinarily romantic melody:

The *Adagio* leads, without any pause directly to a *Scherzo, Allegro assai*. The main theme is based on a triplet figure, and unfortunately cannot be said to be anything other than very ordinary. The most unusual thing is that there is no trio section. While the last note of the *Scherzo* is briefly held with a fermata, it leads seamlessly to the finale, *Allegro molto*, which begins drably because it lacks any contrast to the preceding movement. Happily, the music gets much better as it goes along because the thematic material is more inspired as this example from the second theme illustrates:

In contrast, the second subject has some advanced tonalities. The part writing is good and the recapitulation has fine pizzicato accompaniment. A tumultuous *Scherzo, Allegro assai* begins after 2 beats of rest. Sans trio section, it is the mere alternation of its two subjects. Nearly as long as the first movement, the *Scherzo* just dies away. What comes next is the preceding *Adagio*, fully restated. It, in turn, after a fermata note, leads to a shortened restatement of the *Allegro di molto* from the 1st movement. Perhaps an *ff* coda might have been more effective but the *pp* conclusion also works as the music retreats from whence it came. Structurally, Berwald anticipated Bartok by 75 years! The music forms an arch, with the *Scherzo* as its point. This is an unusual and effective work suitable for both amateurs and public performance. Not technically difficult, it does pose a few ensemble problems.

The coda is well executed and satisfying, but on the whole, this is not as strong or appealing a work as No.1 because, with the exception of the 4th movement, the thematic material is not convincing, and the unusual rhythms seem more contrived than unique. It is as if the composer were attempting to direct the listener's attention away from the threadbare melodic writing. While technically less demanding than No.1, the first movement, in particular, presents some pretty substantial ensemble problems.

All three of Berwald's string quartets are in print. Originally published as an urtext set in 1966 by Barenreiter (BA 8513) for the centennial of his death, they were reprinted in 1996 for the bicentennial of his birth. Readers should certainly consider familiarizing themselves with the music of this "Swedish Berlioz."

Les Vendredis—The Wonderful Music of Those Magical Nights (con't. from page 1)

of the word and the talented men who wrote them clearly knew what they were about. Of the sixteen works selected, thirteen represented historical forms: There are two fugues, two sarabandes, a serenade, two polkas, a canon, a berceuse, two mazurkas, a courante and a menuet. In addition, there was one instance of collaboration, that being the *Les Vendredis Polka*, which is the work of Glazunov, Sokolov and Liadov.



Volume I contains 9 works, as previously noted, the first 7 were discussed in the last issue. The eighth is a *Sarabande* by **Felix Blumenfeld (1863-1931)**. Today, like so many others of his time, Blumenfeld and his music have sunk into oblivion, but certainly in Pre-Revolutionary times, he was well-enough known both as a composer and a pianist. Born in the Ukraine, and of Polish descent, Blumenfeld's pianistic talents

resulted in his being sent to the Conservatory in St. Petersburg where he studied piano with Steinberg and composition with Rimsky Korsakov. He became a piano virtuoso who enjoyed a concert career but also served for most of his life as a professor of piano. (Vladimir Horowitz was but one of his many successful students.) He had more than 50 published works, most character pieces for piano, several of which remained popular for some time. Today, except for his symphony, *To the Beloved Dead* and a few short piano pieces, this *Sarabande*, marked *Andante semplice*, is the only work of his that is available on disk. It begins as a loving recollection of an historical form:



The choice of melody is a Russian folk tune and its setting as a sarabande has a lovely, hybrid affect. In the second section, Blumenfeld sacrifices form for beauty. Dropping any further pretence of mimicking an old-fashioned sarabande, the cello is given a sparkling pizzicato accompaniment:



It is true that the music exhibits a kind of hermaphroditic quality, morphing from an historic form to something more modern. But those critics, who have harped on the fact that the Belaiev composers "improperly" used the historic forms in which they were interested, have missed the point altogether. It is not as if these men were unable, because of a lack of compositional skill, to follow through or remain true to the older dance forms they modified. To the contrary, it was universally recognized that Rimsky Korsakov brought virtually all of his students to a very high level of technical skill. No, what we have here are the very first buds of what later was to become the Neo-Classical Movement as championed by Stravinsky, also a Rimsky Korsakov student. This small work by Blumenfeld is a perfect example of bringing back

and reusing a historic form in a modern context. These type of efforts were quite deliberate on the part of the Belaiev composers.

The final (ninth) work in Volume I is a *Scherzo* by **Nicolai Sokolov (1859-1922)**. There are four contributions by him, three in the first volume. The *Scherzo*, marked *Allegro*, is, according to the composer, based on a theme from 30 Popular Melodies of Lower Brittany. In the first section, two melodies are used. The first is given out in a long solo by the cello:



The first violin then responds with what is really a second melody rather than the second part of the first theme:



In Sokolov's setting, while the melodies may have come from Brittany, the music sounds quite Russian. But this does not take away from what is a very effective and, within the context of the *Les Vendredis*, substantial work. (The longest in Volume I) Although it is in 3/8, at first it sounds too slow for a scherzo. After a while, the tempo appears to quicken, but actually it is simply a matter of the notes becoming smaller in value. However the mood does change from wistful to passionate, in an almost violent frenzy. A beautiful, slow middle section, full of Russian Orthodox flavor, follows before the first section is repeated. This work, assuming Belaiev's quartet could manage it, must have created quite a sensation. None of the parts are particularly easy when played up to tempo and, by comparison to the other works in this volume, which make little or no technical demand whatsoever, the music here is technically more challenging.

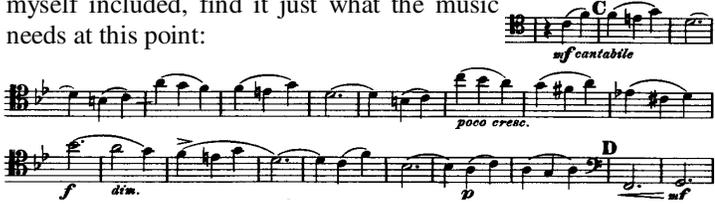
In Volume II, there are 2 lengthy works, one by Rimsky Korsakov and one by Borodin. Both are easily as long as any opening movement to a string quartet of the time. One work, a Polka by Kopylov, is of medium length, and the rest are rather short. The first work is an *Allegro* by **Rimsky Korsakov (1844-1908)**. I have very mixed feelings about this piece. On the one hand, it has two wonderful melodies, effective bridge passages and some very telling and charming writing. On the other hand, it is twice as long as need be and Korsakov sadly runs out of creative steam, not only repeating himself but repeating himself in very trivial ways. Four pages in length, the *Allegro* would make a suitable finale movement for a string quartet. The beautiful opening melody, stated by the first violin, is clearly Russian in inspiration:



(Continued on page 9)

Les Vendredis—The Music from those Friday Nights at Belaiev’s

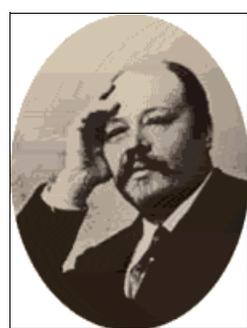
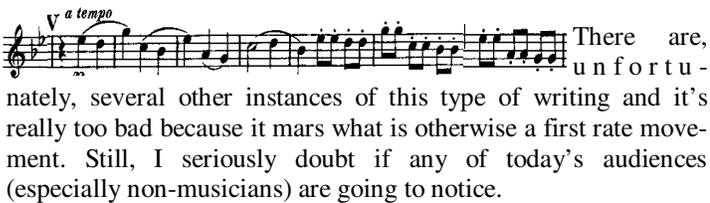
This promising theme has plenty of potential for development which Korsakov at first undertakes in a workmanlike way but later gives up. A bridge passage to the lovely second theme holds the listener’s interest while it builds tension. The cello introduces this melody which a few critics, obviously with no taste for the romantic, have found to be too “banal” for their likes. Others, myself included, find it just what the music needs at this point:



What the nay sayers fail to recognize is that this music was, after all, written for Belaiev’s Fridays, not the concert hall. In the recapitulation, this yearning love song is pointedly entrusted to the violist (Belaiev) rather than the first violin. Yet in the end, the music just goes on too long without either new ideas or meaningful development. And, on the last page in particular, it must be admitted that Korsakov, apparently out of ideas, resorts to what can only be called a banal kind of writing, of the sort Mozart



And, a few measures later, he does it again:



The next work in Volume II is a *Sarabande*, marked *Adagio*, from **Anatoly Liadov (1855-1914)**. Liadov made four contributions to *Les Vendredis* and each of them is quite short. It was not for nothing he was called a miniaturist! This brief work, lasting not even 3 minutes, is perfect in every way. The voicing, the stately and dignified pace, the sense of harmony, the emphasis on the second beat, the use of grace notes and canonic imitation all

help to faithfully recreate the distinguishing traits of the old sarabandes. Short enough to reproduce in its entirety here, one can only imagine what pleasure this tiny gem must have given Belaiev and his guests.



Next we have a massive five page *Scherzo* by **Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)**. At the time Korsakov, Glazunov and Liadov were selecting the works to appear in the *Les Vendredis*, Borodin had been dead for nearly 12 years. What’s more, Borodin did not compose this work for Belaiev’s Fridays. According to Rimsky Korsakov, Borodin had intended to use it as a scherzo movement for his Third Symphony, a work he never completed and had more or less given up on. The Scherzo was to have a trio, originally

composed for but not actually used in *Prince Igor*. Later, Borodin decided to use the scherzo in a string quartet but without any trio. This too, he never did. However after his death, Glazunov orchestrated the last two movements of the Third Symphony based on Borodin’s sketches. In his orchestration, Glazunov uses the trio originally composed for *Prince Igor*. Glazunov, struck by the originality of the this music and knowing that Borodin had adapted it for string quartet, must have opted to include it in *Les Vendredis* as a tribute. Interestingly, Glazunov includes the trio meant for *Prince Igor* and must have adapted it himself for quartet since Borodin had never done so. The Scherzo is strikingly original and clearly shows an “otherness” from all of the other works with which it is included. There is nothing of the occasional piece about it. In 5/8, the *Scherzo*, marked *Allegro*, has two short themes which are played off each other. The first is introduced by the first violin and passed about in quick hand offs to each voice.



The second theme receives much the same treatment:



The slower and contrasting trio is based on a Russian folksong and features a harmonization often called heterophony, a simultaneous variation, or embellishment of the main melody often found in vocal folksongs of Asiatic Russia. The main theme is quite attractive and introduced by the viola:



Both ensemble and technical demands, while not particularly great, are greater than in most of the other *Les Vendredis* pieces.

Anatoly Liadov’s final contribution to *Les Vendredis* is a *Fuga, moderato*. The distinguishing characteristic of this short fugue is its modality. Its brevity precludes proper working out of the fugal theme, which is not particularly memorable in any event. The whole thing, what there is of it, strikes me as rather dull. Perhaps a musical setting for Emily Dickenson’s poem, *I heard a fly buzz when I died*.

The fifth piece in this set is a *Mazurka* by **Nicolai Sokolov**. The music very successfully captures the wistful melancholy of this dance form. The tempo indication is *moderato* and playing the

(Continued on page 10)



New Recordings



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

String Quartets

Joseph-Ermend BONNAL (1880-1944) Nos.1-2, Arion 68504 / Emile JAQUES-DALCROZE (1865-1950) Qt, Gallo 1040 / Pascal DUSAPIN (1955-) Nos.2-3, Montagne 782125 / Henri DUTILLEUX (1916) *Ainsi la nuit*, Montaigne 7820125 / Niels GADE (1817-90) Qt. in e, Classico 337 / J.P. E. HARTMANN (1805-1900) 2 Fragments, Classico 337 / Dulcie HOLLAND (1913-) Qt, Jade 1068 / Mauricio KAGEL (1931-) Nos.1-3, Montaigne 782129 / Joseph KRAUS (1756-1792) Op.1 Nos.2-4, Cavalli 224 / Helmut LACHENMANN (1935-) *Reigen Seliger Geister*, Montaigne 782130 / Wolfgang RIHM (1952-) Nos. 3 & 5, Montaigne 782134 / Peter SCHICKELE (1935-) Nos.1 & 5, Centaur 2505 / Vissarion SHEBALIN (1902-63) Nos.4,5 & 9, Olympia 664 / Heitor VILLA LOBOS (1887-1959)

Nos.5, 10 & 13, Dorian 93211 / George WALKER (1922-) No.2, Summit 274

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Heinrich von HERZOGENBERG (1843-1900) String Trio, Op.27 No.2, CPO 999-710

Piano Trios

Emile JAQUES-DALCROZE (1865-1950) 8 Novelletes, Gallo 104 / Zdenek FIBICH (1850-1900) *Song without Words* for 2 Vln & Pno, Supraphon 3473 / Dulcie HOLLAND (1913-) Pno Trio, Jade 1066 / Julius RONTGEN (1855-1932) No.4 in c, NM Classics 92089

Piano Quartets & Quintets

Heinrich von HERZOGENBERG (1843-1900) Pno Qt in Bb, Op.95, CPO 999-710 / Peter SCHICKELE (1935-) Pno Qnt No.1, Centaur 2505

Winds & Strings

Bernard REICHEL (1901-92) *Sonata en trio* for fl, vln & vc, Gallo 1028

Winds, Strings & Piano

Rudolf of HABSBURG (1784-1838) Trio in Eb for Cln, Vc & Pno, Bayer 100-307/8 / Philippe LEROUX (1959-) *Continuo* for Fl, Cln, Vln, Vc & Pno, MFA 216006 / Paul MÜLLER-ZÜRICH (1898-1993) Qt. for Cln, Vln, Vc & Pno, Guild 7194 / Leo SMIT (1900-1943) Trio for Cln, Vla & Pno, MD&G 304-0995 /

Piano & Winds

Gustav JENNER (1850-1920) Trio for Cln, Hn & Pno, CBC 1133 / Alberic MAGNARD (1865-1914) Quintet Op.8, Altaris 9028 / Florent SCHMITT (1870-1958) *A tour d'anches* for Ob, Cln, Bsn & Pno, Altaris 9028 / Leo SMIT (1900-43) Sextet for Fl, Ob, Cln, Bsn, Hn & Pno, MD&G 304-0995 /

Winds Only

Jacques IBERT (1890-1962) Quatour, Altaris, 9028 /

(Continued from page 9)

work any faster than a leisurely pace totally destroys the mood and color of this fine miniature. There are basically only two parts to it, a plaint-like call given out by viola:



And the equally sad resposion from the others:



The penultimate work, a *Courante* by Alexander Glazunov, was dedicated to Belaiev's long-time second violinist, Nicolai Heshus. I find it his most attractive contribution. While it must certainly be classed as an occasional piece, and was no doubt intended for performance at Belaiev's, the music very successfully captures the rhythmic spirit of this French dance form often characterized by phrases with an unequal grouping of beats and by a certain ambiguity of accent. The main theme presents a stately urbanity:



The final work, by Alexander Kopylov (1854-1911), is another polka. Kopylov (or Kopilov as the *New Grove* alone insists on styling him) received his formal musical education at the Russian Imperial Court Cappella, a highly regarded organization much like the Boys Choir of Vienna. Besides voice lessons, he received instruction on the violin and piano and reached a considerable level of proficiency on both. After his voice broke, he was unable to gain admittance to the St. Petersburg Conservatory and was

forced to take lessons privately from Korsakov while supporting himself as a theater violinist. Attracted to chamber music, he wrote four string quartets all which were published and one of which won the Belaiev Prize. His playful polka is one of most attractive of all of the pieces in either volume and must have been a great hit at Belaiev's. It features a pizzicato introduction that leads to a short violin cadenza to be played *ad libitum*. Then follows the gay and lively polka:

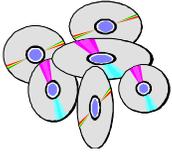


The trio section, perhaps only a touch slower achieves its contrast by use of considerable chromaticism:



There are so many fine little touches which because of space considerations cannot be discussed, and yet they all contribute to this masterful occasional piece. Kopylov makes it sound as if writing it were effortless.

In the next (and last) part of this article, I will discuss three other published works (*Jour de Fete*, *Quatour B-La-F* and *Variations on a Russian Theme*) which, though strictly speaking are not part of the *Les Vendredis*, nevertheless can be said to have come out of Belaiev's Friday evenings.



Diskology: Turina's Piano Quartet, Granados' Piano Quintet, Schickele's Str. Qt., Str. Sextet & Piano Qnt. / Czerny, Onslow & More



This CPO CD#999 609-2 brings together two important chamber works for piano and strings by Spanish composers. The first work on disk is the **Piano Quartet in a, Op.67 by Joaquín Turina (1882-1949)**. Born in Seville, Turina who studied not only in Spain but also in Paris, imbued much of his chamber music with folk melodies of Andalusia and of southern Spain. Although he could and did write music in a classical or traditional format, in the Piano Quartet, composed in 1931,

Turina structurally departs from this. The three movements (*Lento-Vivo-Andante*) not only share a relationship to each other but also each have characteristic tempo changes within the movements. Rather than describe the music, suffice it to say that it is a masterpiece. Beautiful, romantic and perfumed folkloric Spanish melodies and dances are to be found throughout. By itself, it justifies the purchase of the CD. The performance by Ensemble Variable is first rate. Also on disk is Turina's **Caliope No.9, Op.93 for Piano & String Quartet**. It is from *Musas de Andalucía*, a cycle of nine works each bearing the name of a different mythological goddess, all of whom were patrons of the arts. Each individual piece is for a different combination. A brief piece (4 minutes), it is pure music (without folkloric influences), bearing no resemblance to the Piano Quartet. Dating from 1942, it is reflective and ethereal. Violin Sonata No.2, entitled *Española*, is also on disk. **Enrique Granados (1867-1916)**, almost a generation older than Turina, also studied in Spain and then Paris. During his lifetime, he was primarily known both in Spain and abroad for his operas. But since his death, it has been his piano works (and arrangements of these), which have kept his name alive. The **Piano Quintet in g** dates from 1898 and is his only chamber work. In three movements, the opening *Allegro* begins darkly, but the second theme is sunny. There is a period French feel to it. (i.e. not impressionist, but closer to Franck or D'Indy). The main theme to the second movement, *Allegretto quasi andantino*, begins very softly and sounds like a mediaeval French song. The finale, *Molto presto, poco meno con passione*, has a more Germanic sound to it and I hear the influence of Schumann. The writing is quite good and the melodies, though not Spanish, are quite attractive. Surely we deserve to hear this in the concert hall. (Also recorded is a Romanza for violin and piano) A good CD.



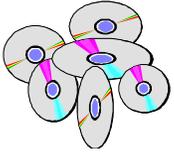
When most people hear the name **Peter Schickele** (1935-) they think of his creation, the infamous P.D.Q. Bach. But Schickele, who was born in Iowa and trained at Juilliard where he studied composition with Roy Harris, Darius Milhaud and Vincent Persichetti among others, is a serious composer with over 100 works to his credit. The first work on this Arabesque CD ZX6719 is a **String Sextet** in six movements dating from 1990. This is a com-

pletely tonal work. The first movement, *Moderately fast*, opens with a whiff of sound reminiscent of Brahms. Schickele (who wrote the jacket notes) writes that he had the Brahms 2nd



Sextet in mind when he began. But this is no mere copy of Brahms, far from it. There are all sorts of interesting effects. For example, there is the short, nervous second movement; a slow movement with American plains folk influence, then a fast-paced movement showing the influence of jazz, and then a lovely disembodied waltz movement. This is a magnificent work. I wonder if the parts are available. Next on disk is his **String Quartet No.2 In Memorium**, written in memory of his sister-in-law's husband, Russian dissident writer, Kiril Uspensky. Also tonal, the first movement uses harmonics to suggest the tolling of bells. The second movement alludes to the 2nd movement of Haydn's Lark Quartet, Op.64 No.5, in honor of the Lark Quartet (pictured with Schickele above) who commissioned the work and perform it on this CD. More modern sounding than the Sextet, this work is nonetheless quite accessible and enjoyable. **Piano Quintet No.2** was written after the Lark Quartet invited Schickele to go on tour with them (I heard them perform it in the Chicago area October of 1999), and he performs it with them on disk. Schickele writes that he specifically tailored it to his own technique, which is not that of a virtuoso, and the Quintet is all the better for it. This is a super work. The beautiful and finely crafted opening, *Flowing-A Bit Faster*, again shows some very Brahmsian influences. Schickele has always found himself drawn to Brahms' and one hears that here in the leisurely panoramic spaciousness. However, the rest of the Quintet is consciously "American" in sound. The next movement, *Lively*, shows a clear jazz influence, and in the trio section one can also hear 'boogie-woogie' and blues. The somewhat sad opening theme to *Slow, serene* which comes next, shows the influence of Broadway-blues writing. The rousing finale features a Bernstein-like show tune and then country square dance fiddling music, all brilliantly merged together. This CD is another Diskology Highly Recommended choice.

Although the jacket notes to this Signum CD# SIG X94-00 describe **Carl Czerny (1791-1857)** and **George Onslow (1784-1853)**, whose piano trios are recorded here, as unknown, they should be somewhat familiar to regular readers of the *Journal*. The criticism of Czerny has always been that he wrote too much and even his staunchest supporters, such as his pupil Liszt, recognized it. "A pity that Czerny had to weaken himself through immoderate productivity...(several works) I hold to be significant and beautifully formed compositions of the most noble kind. Unfortunately Viennese society and the publishing houses were not a good influence on him." Czerny wrote well over 1000 works and no one would argue they were all great, least of all Czerny himself. He often wrote for the marketplace and was not always aiming at a higher goal. However this is by no means true of all his works. Certainly when he applied himself, Czerny could write



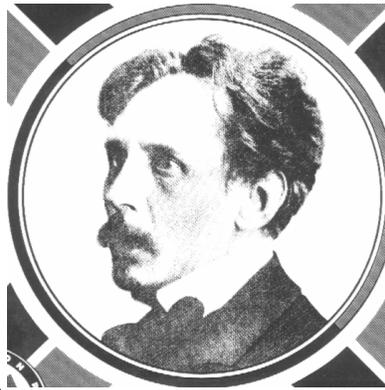
Piano Trios of Carl Czerny & George Onslow / Gustav Jenner: Trio for Clarinet, Horn & Piano / Mikolajus Čiurlionis' Works for String Qt.

very fine pieces of music, as one might expect from a man who had studied composition with Beethoven for 3 years. And Beethoven, himself, thought so. **Piano Trio No.4, Op.289 in a** is such a piece. In 4 movements and dating from the 1830's, it begins with a big and passionate *Allegro con brio* full of lovely melody. The hand of Beethoven, and to a lesser extent Hummel, can be felt. The following *Scherzo, presto*, complete with lyrical trio, is perfect and the match of any similar movement to be found in the early romantic literature for piano trio. An *Adagio* builds to a very effective dramatic climax of the type Beethoven sometimes used and the finale, *Rondo: Allegro capriccioso e vivace* begins with a folk song and has several interesting tonal effects. Czerny handles the instruments quite well although in the finale, the virtuoso piano part, which must be kept *soft* and in the *background*, will tax the technique of almost any amateur pianist. It is truly sad that we are so often presented the far weaker offerings of Haydn and early Mozart while a far superior work like this lies moldering on the shelf rather than seeing the light of day in the concert hall.

The jacket notes have little to say, including what number trio, Onslow's **Piano Trio No.8, Op.26 in c** is. Dating from 1824, it apparently enjoyed considerable popularity in Germany during the middle of the 19th Century. I did not find the introduction of the overly long opening *Allegro con brio* very effective. Worse yet, in the main section, the piano dominates with what is undeniably florid and insipid writing. There is an uninspired drawing room quality about the whole thing. The *Adagio* is adequate but the bareness of the thematic material makes the 7 minutes feel longer than it is. The *Minuetto: Presto*, really a scherzo, is considerably better. The thematic material is stronger both in the Minuetto and the effectively contrasting and tuneful trio section. Much of the finale, *Allegro agitato* is written in concertante style. The main melody is memorable, the thematic material is stronger, and the part-writing better, although there are a few parlor room moments. In (American) football, there is an old saying: you have to play well for 4 quarters (i.e., for the whole game) to win. Here, Onslow "played well" for the last two.

History has not dealt kindly with **Gustav Jenner (1865-1920)**, Brahms' only composition student. Not mentioned in the *New Grove*, he is only known by Brahms scholars. Jenner's book, *Brahms als Mensch, Lehrer und Künstler* (Brahms, the Man, the Teacher and Artist) is the single most, and only first-hand, account of Brahms' ideas on composition. One can only imagine what it must have been like to have been Brahms' student. Jenner relates that Brahms told him, *You will never hear a word of praise from me; if you can't stand that, then whatever is inside you only deserves to go to waste.*" Jenner persevered for some years and Brahms must clearly have thought the former talented or he would not have wasted his time. Jenner's **Trio in Eb for Clarinet, Horn & Piano** dates from 1900 and is in 4 movements. If Brahms could have heard it, he would have been pleased. The beautiful opening, *Moderato*, is genial and on a large scale. The part-writing could not be better. The music fits the instruments like a glove does a hand. This is an imaginative and satisfying

movement worthy of the Master himself. An expressive *Adagio* brings to mind lazing along the banks of a slow-moving river, with a blade of grass between one's teeth looking comfortably at the sky. Again, treatment of all three instruments is marvelous. A well-written *Scherzo* is next and is also heavily tinged with Brahms. The finale, *Allegro non troppo*, in tone and feel, is quite similar to the opening movement. There is a gentleness to the writing. Certainly worth the price of this CBC CD#MVCD 1133 which also has Brahms' Op.40 Trio for horn, violin & piano and six songs by Brahms arranged for clarinet, horn and piano.



Mikolajus Čiurlionis (1875-1911) was born in the Lithuanian village of Varena, the son of a parish organist from whom he received his first music lessons. From 1894-99, he studied at the Warsaw Institute of Music and in 1901 at the Leipzig Conservatory where he studied composition with Carl Reineke. He graduated in 1903 and then studied

painting at the Warsaw School of Fine Arts which allowed him to pursue a dual career as a composer and painter. He eventually moved first to Vilnius and then to St. Petersburg. Unable to make a living, he wound up in a mental asylum there and died at age 35. Today, in Lithuania, he is widely regarded as one of the founders of their nationalist school of composing. Čiurlionis' interest in Lithuanian folk melodies informs much but not all of his music. His **String Quartet** was written shortly after his graduation from the Leipzig Conservatory. It's fourth movement has unfortunately been lost. The opening theme of the large *Allegro moderato*, is more percussive than lyric. The second theme may be based on Lithuanian folk melody. While adequate, it is not entirely convincing. An *Andante*, which makes better use of folk music, follows. Čiurlionis called it a pastoral andante. This movement exhibits more originality and makes a greater impression. There is a tonal picture of moving water that bears some similarity to Smetana's *Ma Vlast (The Moldau)*. The third movement, *Menuetto*, is a romantic version of the classical Viennese model and well executed. A pity the final movement is lost. The other major work for quartet on this Russian Disc CD#10 008 is a real surprise. **Theme and Variations in b** was written in 1899 during his time at the Warsaw Institute of Music but is *not* a student work. To the contrary, it is one of the very best of its type for string quartet I have ever heard! If only it were in print. Because it is complete, this work would surely make an excellent performance piece for the concert hall. 4 other very short works appear on disk: **Canon in c**, **Canon in Bb**, a **Fugue in G** and **Fugue in f#**. All of these works were composed sometime before 1907. Both canons show compositional mastery of form. The same could be said for the fugues. They show the sureness of hand of a man whose music deserves to be heard. Here then is another CD, with a little-known composer well worth considering.