

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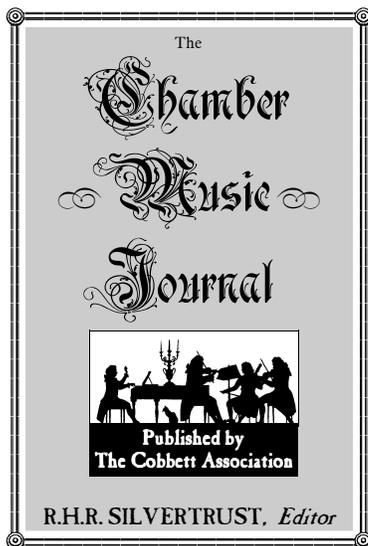
*The Essential Guide
For Players & Listeners
To The Wider World
of Chamber Music*

***The Piano Quintet
In the 20th Century—Part II
A Practical Guide to Sight-
Reading Chamber Music
Zdenek Fibich: String Quartet No. 1
& The Piano Quartet, Op. 11***

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The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



More About Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata Cello Quintet Arrangement

I was pleased to see a mention of the Beethoven "Kreutzer" cello quintet in the last issue of *The Journal* (Vol. XVI No.1, Spring 2005) I have reviewed it for ESTA (European String Teachers' Association.) You may like to reprint my review in the next *Journal*, I'm sure ESTA would be delighted. Whilst thinking on double cello quintets, I am soon to start transcribing a set of parts and score of Witold Malichevsky's Quintet Op 3. This gets a poor write up in Cobbett, but I still think it will be worth making it available. Interested Cobbett members can e-mail me at admarshall.dn37@tiscali.co.uk.

Andrew Marshall
Grimsby, UK

We have reprinted Mr. Marshall's review (below) which I believe many readers will find useful. The work is available from SJ Music.

There are relatively few double cello quintets around and I'm always on the lookout for other quintets to pair up with the Schubert for an evening's music making. This Beethoven offering fits the bill exactly! A double bonus indeed-music by Beethoven and an extra cello in the quintet! It has been fascinating to follow the score to the original violin/piano Kreutzer and to note how the arranger has divided up the interest most democratically amongst the instruments. This is not a version for violin with four accompanying instruments! For example, it's cello 1 who gets the first snatch of violin tune at the start of the first allegro, not the 1st violin as one might expect and second violin has the lion's share at the beginning of the last movement. Why two cellos? The answer is soon apparent - shortly into the first movement's development they are used together to emphasize the octaves originally in the pianos' left hand. And of course much use is made of the first cello's ability to carry the tune, even if it's the original violin solo an octave or two lower. This arrangement was made by an anonymous hand and first published by Simrock in 1832. All credit is due to Paul Barritt for preparing a modern reprint. Highly recommended!

Fibich's String Quartets Available

I noticed that the first part of a series on Zdenek Fibich's chamber music appeared in the last issue of *The Journal*. Although he has not yet discussed them, I thought Professor Opolis and your readers would like to know that all of his works for string quartet are available from Merton Music.

Theo Wyatt
London, UK

Thank you for this information. Readers may contact Merton Music by e-mail at mertonmusic@argonet.co.uk or mertonusa@yahoo.com.

Paul de Wailly Chamber Music

As a contribution to your coverage of French chamber music I would like to mention the very charming and gifted Franck-pupil Paul de Wailly (1854-1933). There is a Serenade for flute and string trio (Op. 25, 1899) a Piano Quintet (Op. 15, 1890), and a Poème for string Quartet (Op. 20, 1895), all relatively extensive works. They are available from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Stephan Schwarz
Copenhagen, Denmark

Thank you very much for this information. I am sure readers will be interested to learn of the existence of these chamber works.

New Works Available from Edition Silvertrust

I would like to draw your readers attention to the fact that Edition Silvertrust (website: www.editionsilvertrust.com / ☎ 847-374-1800) has brought out several new works, which I have edited and which are sure to be of interest to your readers. First are **two of George Onslow's finest string quartets: No.19, Op.46 No.1 and No.22, Op.47**. Out of print for more than a century, these are two masterworks that are as good as anything from this period (1830's). They are tonally advanced, original, dramatic and exciting. They belong on the concert stage but are within the reach of competent amateurs. Also available now is **Carl Bohm's Piano Trio Op.330 No.2**. Tune-ful and with no technical difficulties, this work is interesting in that Bohm uses a theme from Schubert's *Trout* quintet and develops it in a very clever way. The **Romanza for Piano Trio by Heinrich Marschner** would make a suitable encore for professional trios. Taken from Marschner's Fifth Piano Trio, it is a perfect example of mid 19th century romanticism. The **String Quartet Op.6 of Joachim de Neergaard** is another masterwork. It dates from 1908-10 and is written in a very late romantic style. This string quartet by a little-known Danish composer is a real find which will please both professionals and amateurs. Readers who wish to hear some of this music can find sound bites from most of these works at www.editionsilvertrust.com.

Loren Silvertrust
Bloomington, Indiana

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

The Piano Quintet in the 20th Century (Part 2)

by Dr. Ralf Brueckmann



The French composer and conductor **Henri Co-stant Gabriel Pierné** (1863–1937) was a childhood friend of Debussy, with whom he grew up at the Paris Conservatoire. His teachers included Franck and Massenet. Pierné’s personality appeared especially in his chamber music concisely and clear with a rich variety of expression. His *Quintette pour piano et cordes*

Op.41 was composed in 1917 and premiered in 1919 with the composer at the piano. Pierné’s quintet is solidly constructed with an interesting second movement, a Scherzo, based on a Basque dance rhythm. The opening movement, as well as the third, reflect Pierné’s classicism; both are remarkable for their breadth and gravity. (Recording: MUSIFRANCE 2292-45525-2)

Frank Martin (1890–1974) was born in Switzerland, the youngest child of a Calvinist minister. He started to compose at the age of eight. Joseph Lauber, a student of Rheinberger, was his only

musical teacher, Martin never went to a conservatory. A performance of the St. Matthew Passion heard at the age of ten left a deep impression on him. The influence of Bach’s harmony is apparent in his *Quintette pour piano et quator à cordes*, composed in 1919. The slow movement, shows the influence of an arioso from Bach’s St. Matthew Passion: *Ach Golgatha*. The atmosphere of the third movement is melancholy and introverted. Martin’s Piano Quintet shows the different inter-

mediate levels in his transformation process to achieve a diatonic diction. (Recording: Jecklin-Disco JD 646-2)



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Zdenek Fibich The Chamber Music Part 2

by Renz Opolis



(In the first part of this article, the author discussed the composer’s early life and the reasons why his music is not as well-known as that of Dvorak and Smetana. Additionally, Fibich’s Piano Trio in f was discussed.)

After completing his piano trio in 1873, the following year, Fibich, while still in Vilnius, composed two more works of chamber music—a string quartet and a piano quartet. These are the subject of this part of my article. While it is unclear which of these works came first, it seems likely that it was the **String Quartet No.1 in A Major**, given the fact that Fibich assigned it no opus number and that it was not published during his lifetime. The piano quartet was assigned Op.11 and was published by his regular publisher, Urbanek. It is worth noting that apparently, as in the case of Dvorak and his publisher Simrock, there were irregularities in the num-

bering of Fibich’s works by Urbanek. String Quartet No.2 dates from 1878, some four years after he had composed the Piano Quartet which Urbanek numbered Op.11, yet, it was given the number of Op.8.

Despite the fact that the quartet was not published during his lifetime, there is no evidence that Fibich was embarrassed by his effort or that he never wanted it to see the light of day. It is more probable that the quartet held private memories for him of a happy time before the terrible tragedy he experienced only a short time later. There are reports that copies of the manuscript did circulate in Prague, but as far as I know, it was never given a public performance.

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A Practical Guide To Sight-Reading

**FOR EXPERIENCED MUSICIANS AND
THOSE WHO WANT TO BECOME SO**

Or
*How improving your chamber music sight-reading skills
will make you a better performer*

by Peter Lang

Most musicians define sight-reading as the playing or performing of a piece of music on seeing it for the first time. They assume that the ability to perform efficiently at sight has little to do with the ability to give a first class performance. This article will argue that sight-reading and performing are in fact closely related and that developing high level sight-reading skills will make most musicians better performers. In all cases, possessing such skills will make far more efficient and shorten the practice time required to work up a top level performance.

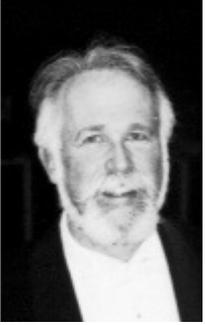
According to historical sources, the first public performance of the Beethoven Violin Concerto was given by George Bridgetower without the benefit of a single rehearsal with the orchestra.

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At The Doublebar



I have good news for those members who live outside the United States. Up until now, you have had to pay in US dollars or Sterling. (We have been very fortunate to have had Theo Wyatt as our UK remitting agent for many years) This left

our non US/UK subscribers in a difficult position because obtaining a check in US dollars usually costs 2 to 3 times as much as the amount being sent. And from our end, a check on a foreign bank, even in US dollars, sometimes costs us more to cash than the amount for which it was made out. The obvious solution was to accept payment by credit card but up until now it has been too costly for us to implement. Recently, we have found a major US bank whose credit card division is offering this service at a very reasonable cost. The result is that beginning in 2006, we will be able to accept payment by major credit card. It will cost approximately \$5 more than paying by check. (a huge improvement over the \$35-\$50 is has cost just to issue a check in US dollars) US subscribers or those who are able to write checks on US banks will still be able to pay by check. Details will follow in the Autumn and Winter issues.

Readers will recall with pleasure, the first installment of Dr. Ralf Brueckmann's survey on the Piano Quintet in the 20th Century. In this issue, we are pleased to offer the second part of his article. Without doubt, this survey will serve as an excellent reference resource for years to come.

Readers will also find Part 2 of Professor Opolis' excellent article on the chamber music of Zdenek Fibich, dealing specifically with his first string quartet and his piano quartet.

Our third feature is the first part of an entertaining and highly informative article on the art of sight-reading by Peter Lang. I can tell you from personal experience that Peter is an excellent sight-reader and hence we have an author who has mastered that about which he is writing.

This will be your last issue if a renewal notice is enclosed. To prevent your subscription from lapsing, please return it to us promptly.—Ray Silvertrust, Editor

A Practical Guide To Sight-Reading

However it can be safely assumed that the soloist was thoroughly familiar with Beethoven's musical language and all the techniques required to perform early romantic music (and probably had been given a handwritten part to look at before the performance). Viewed from that perspective, this was not pure sight-reading. Similarly, four experienced string players who have played through several of Mozart's mature string quartets and then decide to read through one they have not tried before are only partially sight-reading since they have already been exposed to Mozart's musical language.

A professional string quartet that has spent hundreds of rehearsal hours perfecting a particular work and performed it numerous times may be required to apply some of the elements of high-level sight-reading to a performance of that work. For example, the acoustical and/or climatic environment of an unfamiliar concert hall may be so radically different that the performers are forced to alter their well rehearsed standard performance. Tempi, dynamics, sound colors, vibrato speed and amplitude, the attack and duration of notes, bow pressure and speed, point of bow contact, fingerings, bowings, melodic phrasing, and numerous other elements of music may need to be changed spontaneously and instantaneously without benefit of prior discussion. On the other hand a group of musicians with little sight-reading experience that have never played together before would be greatly challenged to sight-read well an unknown work by an unknown composer written in a musical language with which they are unfamiliar.

As these examples show, some elements of sight-reading in its broadest meaning (i.e. not just reading notes but listening and reacting to all the sounds of the on going music) are inherently a part of all music making, even of the highest quality public performance of a well rehearsed work by a soloist. Of course, this applies even more if two or more musicians are playing without a conductor, that is, playing chamber music. Groups with more than eight players generally have difficulties sight-reading well without the help of a conductor but if the advice of this guide is followed by each player it can be done. Symphony concerts in Haydn's and Mozart's time were often performed without conductors and rehearsals. In other words, they were sight-read.

Sight-reading chamber music well is among the most pleasurable activities known to both amateur and professional musicians. The obvious meaning of this double word seems to imply that it can not be practiced, it can only be done. No doubt, musicians that have sight-read many styles of chamber music over numerous years in different groupings can do so with very pleasing results. This guide is aimed primarily at those that have in-depth sight-reading experience who have repeatedly read through the standard chamber music literature for strings, piano and strings, and/or mixed ensembles of strings, winds and piano by the well known composers. They will possess rhythmic, technical, and musical skills that have been acquired by many hours of well guided and efficient practicing both alone *and* in professionally coached chamber music groups.

However, as those of us who have such skill and experience know, sight-reading regularly will still not be sufficient to reach the highest possible level of sight-reading enjoyment. To experience the heavenly ecstasy of that highest level each and every member of a sight-reading or performance group must develop, maintain, and, most importantly, continuously apply the Golden Rule of Chamber Music throughout any sight-reading session or performance.

Golden Rule of Chamber Music

The well known Golden Rule, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" should be rephrased as follows when applied to playing chamber music: **ALWAYS MAKE THE OTHERS SOUND GOOD.** *This can be done and only be done by listening to and imitating all the others in the group at all times.*

Before turning to various practical recommendations that can make following the golden rule of chamber music easier, let us first analyze the basic reasons and problems why it is a challenge to do so.

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PROBLEMS OF SIGHT-READING

At the very top of the list are the inevitable differences in musical personalities. The two extremes are familiar to all musicians: the “precisionist” and the “romanticist”. If these two go to war in a sight-reading session, the whole group will go straight to sight-reading hell.

The precisionist prefers steady tempi with minimum changes for melodic ebbs and flows, subtle retard and/ or accelerandi, a minimum of vibrato, and generally shorter notes. He avoids body movement signals because he abhors any musical interpretation that is not marked in the parts. The romanticist feels music in exactly the opposite way. His music making emphasizes expressiveness, flowing and ebbing tempi changes, lush vibrato, generally longer legato notes, lots of body movements to signal musical phrases and ideas that are often unmarked but spontaneously felt. He is delighted by Bartok’s famous answer to the question if the metronome markings in his scores applied to an entire movement: “No, only to the first measure”.

The precisionist and the romanticist often differ in how to “cross a bar line”. Their innate sense of the precise moment when to play the next downbeat is not the same. The precisionist will generally feel that moment a split second before the romanticist. This does not refer to either rushing or dragging the rhythm since both can be playing their parts within a steady beat. They are simply not feeling on-going beats together. This difference is often so subtle that it is only vaguely felt but not consciously heard. It can cause a feeling of unease and agitation both for players and listeners.

If not *all* the musicians in the sight-reading group have the ability or willingness to play in both of these styles a compromise should be discussed. Usually, it is somewhat easier for a romanticist to control his musical passions and to imitate the style of the precisionist than the other way around. But the precisionist must also attempt as best as he can to be flexible. It is sometimes wise before starting to agree on using just one style for a given work or to play the work twice in different styles. (Discussing and applying the concept of “Performance Practice”, that is attempting to perform the music of various eras in the style of those eras, is well worth the effort for any sight-reading group.)

However, even if all the members of a group agree to sight read in similar styles another major problem can keep them out of sight-reading heaven: *Soloitis*. Sight-readers, particularly if they have performed frequently as soloists, may at times go off into their own world the moment they feel their part is more important than that of the others. They stop listening to anyone else thereby committing the worst possible sin for a sight-reader. All musicians occasionally succumb to this temptation.

Soloitis is often closely associated with ignoring the vital concept of *Relative Dynamics*. Of course all musicians occasionally fail to apply this concept. However, because of the very nature of their relatively more powerful instrument, pianists sometimes have more difficulty with it. They usually spend many years practicing and playing alone and thus must first learn how to concentrate on sounds other than their own when starting to play chamber music with other musicians. Large modern pianos can produce a volume far in excess of the combined fortissimo of even a larger group of chamber music players. In fact, they can match the sound of an entire orchestra.

In most chamber music works pianists have by far the hardest part to sight-read. Therefore, those pianists who have become good sight-readers have learned to leave out or change notes while emphasizing the left hand. They have also learned *never* to let loose the full power of their instrument when sight-reading or performing chamber music. Even when they have a solo marked fortissimo they will always match the fortissimo of the instrument or group of instruments with whom they are reading or performing chamber music. For example, if they are playing with just one string player, this may mean reducing the volume of their fortissimo solo to a mezzo piano, with a string quartet to a mezzo forte! This rule applies even when the pianist’s solo passage is not accompanied by other instruments. If a modern grand piano is being used, it will be much easier to apply this concept of *Relative Dynamics* if the lid is opened to the smallest setting. Opening the lid all the way makes good sense for piano solo recitals and piano concertos but rarely for chamber music.

Pianists must also be listened to at all times, particularly their left hand notes and their fast moving rhythmic and ornamental passages which so often accompany the melodic solo lines in the other instruments. Non-pianists with melodic lines often have a tendency to ignore the pianist who is struggling to sight-read such passages softly and transparently. In such cases let the complex demanding piano line determine the rhythmic flow. Whenever such passages occur, it is advisable to let the tempo slow somewhat to give whichever instrument has to sight-read a technically challenging passage a chance to get most of the notes correctly. Another solution is of course to simplify the passage by changing of leaving out notes or simply to skip it.

First violinists often have challenging parts and are sometimes the more experienced or advanced players in a sight-reading group. Their strong musical personalities may at times unknowingly and unintentionally upset or intimidate other players in the group. Setting tempi that far exceed the sight-reading ability of the others, stopping the music in order to repeat a solo passage because of a small mistake, overemphasizing fast moving ornamental passages that should only be background to another player’s solo line (a trap that all musicians can fall into) – these are just a few of the ambiance destroying musical oversights that can unintentionally reduce the joy of sight-reading. All violinists should learn to sight-read equally well both first and second violin parts (and preferably viola parts as well).

Single wind players with strings or string-piano groups generally are able to fit their dynamics into the groups’ range. However in groups of two or more they sometimes fall into the trap of playing as if they were in an orchestra by locking only into each others sounds, particularly when playing a series of long notes or so-called balloon note passages. Such passages almost always accompany and should only give color to melodic material being played by the strings. In an orchestra the sound of a handful of winds is usually balanced by 40 or more strings. In chamber music there will most often be only three to five strings. Thus a woodwind balloon note passage must be played delicately to be in balance with the considerably softer collective string sound.

On the other hand, a solo in the low register of, for example, a flute will sound much softer than the same passage in a high register. Thus, accompanying string instruments may have to play

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their notes at mezzo forte or less even though the passage may be marked fortissimo for all.

Surprisingly, it is also possible for one or more sight-readers with a simple repetitive rhythm, which is obviously not the solo, to succumb to *Soloitis*. Many musical phrases or themes are enhanced by allowing them to flow and ebb to some degree not only rhythmically but also dynamically even though this will usually not be indicated in the printed parts. If such phrases or themes are forced into a rhythmic straight-jacket by a repetitive accompaniment played with machine-like perfection at the same volume their beauty can be considerably diminished if not destroyed. The same principle can apply to a simple whole note or series of whole notes that support a melodic solo line. Played with great warmth and appropriate coloring in perfect support of the melody, these whole notes will open the gates to sight-reading heaven for all the members of the group. As those of us lucky enough to be able to play viola know, some of the most glorious passages in the chamber music literature occur when the viola has the lowest slow moving notes within the ensemble.

On the other hand, there are many instances in sight-reading where taking even small liberties with rhythms or solo lines will not work. If a solo is accompanied by complex rhythms divided among two or more instruments, both solo and rhythm must be played with precision. Another good example is polyphonic renaissance music in which every part is a solo. (Such music will however benefit greatly by changes in sound color and the addition of dynamics both of which can and should be done while sight-reading.) Starting off any sight-reading session with polyphonic music is always a good idea. It fine-tunes the group to each others sounds and helps to keep the problem of *Soloitis* under control, challenges all members of the group equally, and generally sets a cooperative tone for the rest of the session.

As the above examples have shown, *Soloitis* usually infects an individual musician. The only known cure is for that musician to change his or her basic attitude toward playing chamber music, that is, to play so as to *always make the others sound good*. **Relative Dynamics** on the other hand is a concept that the sight-readers must understand and always apply both individually and as a group. Here is a very quick and efficient way to do so. At the start of every sight-reading session make a sound test of the group's dynamic range capacity. This is important even for steady groups that regularly sight-read together because neither the dynamic range of an individual musician nor his instrument is a constant. Among many other factors, it depends on the kind of energy a musician has on a given day: not so good if his spouse has just nagged him or her about attending too many sight-reading sessions, heavenly if the new reed worked on for many hours turned out just perfectly.

How well different instruments project can change significantly with temperature, humidity, and the acoustics of the venue. Start by testing the pianissimo sound of the group as a whole with a simple tutti scale or picking the first pianissimo passage of the first piece to be sight-read. In an orchestra, pianissimo for a string player means he should just barely hear his own sound. Surprisingly that meaning should also apply to each musician of a chamber music group. The softest sound a string instrument can make is a pizzicato created by gently placing the tip of a finger on the string without depressing it and then simply lifting the tip of

the finger. That can be considered a measuring rod for triple pianissimo that other non-string players in the group should attempt to match as closely as they can. Holding pianissimo contests between just two musicians is also an excellent idea. Surprisingly, clarinetists and horn players can often win such contests against string players!

Next, test the group's fortissimo capacity. Start with the low instruments (viola, cello, bassoon, contrabass). Their strongest sound should never be drowned out by the higher instruments. It is good to remember that a chain can break not only at the weakest link but also where a very heavy large one joins smaller light weight links. In other words, if the sight-reading group includes one or more players that can produce a volume much in excess of the other players they must underplay such as never to exceed the sound of the softer sounding instruments. This will not always be a pianist. It could be a violinist with a very strong instrument, or an oboist used to punching sound through the forty or more strings of an orchestra. Piano Trios with violin and cello (or viola) can serve as an excellent example. Experienced musical pianists will always be able to hear *every single note* of the cello (or viola). For instance they will always play notes that double the cello line softer than the cello.

As a general rule for sight-reading, even when your part indicates fortissimo, stay on the transparent softer side of your sound and listen to what the others are doing. If a part or group of parts is an accompaniment, their projection must be less than the melodic material. If your part is an octave higher than another part, always play softer than the musical line below you. This will often mean, particularly for very high passages, that you must literally cut your dynamics marking by half, i.e. ff to f, p to pp. Conversely, if you are playing the lower octave, project your sound more strongly than the instrument above you. Remember, strength of sound and projection must always come from the bottom.

The start of the Mendelssohn String Octet is marked fortissimo in all parts. However seven strings accompany one solo line in the first violin. If they all play at the very top of their dynamic capacity that solo will hardly be audible. Depending on the strength of sound the instrument of the solo line can produce, the other seven must collectively adjust their volume so that their *collective sound* does not exceed the sound of the solo. In extreme situations this may require that each of the seven plays pianissimo if, for that occasion the cumulative effect of the seven pianissimo sounds equals the loudest sound the first violin can produce!

There are numerous other examples from the standard chamber music literature of the importance of **Relative Dynamics**. However, an even more instructive example is any present day live concerto performance compared to a recording of that same performance. Current recording techniques electronically increase the volume of the solo instrument so that it can always be heard and will be in relative balance with even a triple fortissimo of the mightiest orchestra sound. But in a live performance, most soloists (with the exception of pianists) will be inaudible for long stretches regardless of how powerfully they can project because it is practically impossible for modern orchestras in big modern day concert halls to meet the requirements of **Relative Dynamics** no matter what the conductor does. (Electronically amplifying the soloist would solve this problem as guitarists have discovered). *(This article will be concluded in our next issue)*

Fibich's 1st String Quartet & Piano Quartet (continued from page 1)

I speak of a "happy time" because judging from the generally sunny and carefree mood which pervades most of this work, the tragedy of his daughter's death had not yet occurred. (In the last issue, I inadvertently and incorrectly stated that his wife had also died in Vilnius. While she became ill there, she did not actually die until the Fibichs returned to Prague in the autumn of 1874)

The string quartet is four movements. The main theme to the first movement, *Allegro grazioso*, opens in a questioning manner, however, it is immediately restated in the major and remains bright, upbeat and graceful.

(I apologize to my readers for the quality of the musical examples, however, my copy of this quartet was obtained at a time when it was impossible to obtain the music. In 1979, whilst in Prague and after trying to obtain the parts from various music shops, I stumbled into a rental library by accident, thinking it was a shop as well. They happened to have an extra copy of the 1951 Orbis edition which had been poorly produced and which bore shadow smudge marks around the notes. Still, when they offered to trade me it for some Aaron Copeland chamber music I brought with me, I accepted at once.) The lovely second theme is more lyrical but also graceful.

Lacking drama or excitement, geniality is the word which best sums up the mood of this movement,

The second movement is a slow and very romantic *Andante semplice*. And, on first hearing, the music sounds simple enough but further hearings reveal that there is much here which is highly original and unusual. For example, the lyrical main theme is introduced in its entirety by the second violin.

Then, on several occasions, Fibich, in mid-phrase, abruptly interrupts what is an idyllic mood with a brusque and questioning unisonic passage which sounds very similar to the technique Sibelius employed decades later. Perhaps more notable yet, and surprisingly few if any critics seem to have picked up on it, is the fact that the lyrical second theme (see top of next column) is clearly of Czech origin and of the sort Dvorak would later use. It must be admitted the 64th note filigree runs add nothing at all to the music but they cause no real harm either.

It is the third movement, *Allegretto*, which surely would have drawn the musical public's (especially the Czech musical public) attention to Fibich. While not so marked, Fibich used—for what was the first time—a Slavic dance form, specifically a polka, in a string quartet. Unfortunately, by failing to publish this quartet, no one could know that it was he, and not Dvorak and Smetana, who had been the trailblazer. It is true the main theme does not sound particularly Czech or Slavic but measures 8 through measure 11 (see below) do sound Slavic, as well as several passages which occur later on.

The finale, *Allegro*, in my opinion, is the most original and unusual of all. The opening theme is a frenzied and tonally advanced fugue begun by the viola.

Seven measures later, the 2nd Violin joins in; at measure 15, the cello, and finally at measure 19 the 1st violin. The fugue at this point, if anything, seems to accelerate, becoming tonally tamer, now a bit reminiscent of Mendelssohn. Then, suddenly and without warning, "Fugus Interruptus": A powerful *Maestoso* is thrust forward. Played *ff* and twice as slow as the fugue, it is in the form of a late 17th century chorale. The first part arguably sounds Bohemian, though it might be German. The second part, at least to me, sounds 19th century Czech.

But this is not all, for those who wish to carefully listen, there are several clearly Czech touches to this music. The most obvious comes when the fugue returns after the maestoso and is then followed by what is clearly a lyrical Czech melody. The exciting-coda combines the fugue with the maestoso to create a very effective closing. This is quite a good work which deserves to be better known. I am told the parts can be obtained from Merton Music of London. While amateurs will no doubt enjoy playing this quartet, professional groups will find that it is quite suitable for the concert hall.

Svému příteli Dru. Ot. Hostinskému.

Quartetto

pro
Klavír, housle, violu a violoncello
Piano, Violine, Viola a Violoncello.

aložil von

ZD. FIBICH.

Op. 11.

That Fibich's next chamber work was a piano quartet is perhaps explained by the great popularity of this ensemble in the 19 century. Only the string quartet and piano trio were more popular. In contrast to the preceding work, the mood in Fibich's **Piano Quartet in e minor, Op.11** is restless, full of unease, tragedy and impending doom. Hence, though it too was written in 1874

violin and then briefly reiterated by the piano before the strings join in.

The first variation, *Un pochettino piu mosso*, primarily in the lower voices, is more or less a seamless continuation, at least in mood, to the theme. The second variation, primarily in the piano, is faster and somewhat upbeat except for short interruptions by the strings which break the mood and insert an aura of reflection. The third variation, *Sostenuto*, is dark and pensive. The striking fourth variation, *Tempo di Thema*, has the strings playing the theme against a Schubertesque decoration in the piano while the deeply felt fifth variation, *Piu adagio*, brings to mind the unrest and foreboding felt in the slow movement of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*. The sixth variation, though marked *Allegretto giocoso*, is not by any means jocular. Though certainly quicker in tempo, the piano part, which is pitted against pizzicato in the strings, remains somber. There is a second part, *Meno mosso*, that prepares the way for the seventh variation which is made to sound like a continuation of the sixth. Here, racing triplets in the piano are juxtaposed against a development of the main theme. The eighth variation, *Allegretto*, is more in the manner of an introduction to the valedictory coda.

The piano is given a short introduction to the finale, *Allegro energico*. The main theme is thrusting and powerful, belted out in unison. While not tragic, there is certainly a sense of destiny to the music.

Fibich increases the tension as the movement progresses by judicious use of tremolos and trills. The second theme is closely related to the first but somewhat more lyrical.

The movement is in perfect sonata form until near the conclusion, when the valedictory coda from the second movement is reintroduced changing the mood entirely. This is immediately followed by the soft tremolo in the strings and the powerful opening theme which is briefly reintroduced and then used to create a short but dramatic coda.

This is an unqualified masterpiece (from a 24 year old no less) and was recognized as such by the famous critic Hanslick as well as many others when it was published. It is the equal of any work in this genre. That it could disappear is shameful. I do not know if the parts are in print but I would hope so. (This article will be concluded in the next issue of The Journal)

while he was still in Vilnius, it is not unreasonable to assume it came after the string quartet which shows none of these traits. The opening measures to the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, immediately establish a sense of unease. Against a very soft tremolo in the strings, the piano carefully brings forth the turbulent main theme.

The tension and dynamics build before the unison string entrance in which the theme is powerfully restated. The second theme, more lyrical and even a bit hopeful, is eventually introduced by the strings but it never really competes for control of the overall mood of the music.

This is a big, powerful movement, superb in every way. Fibich's technique is masterly. Without doubt, one of the finest movements in the piano quartet literature.

The second movement, *Thema con variazioni, Adagio non troppo*, is based on a peaceful, perhaps elegiac, theme with eight really fine variations and a coda. The theme is first stated by the

The Piano Quintet in the 20th Century

(Continued from page 3)



The American conductor and prolific composer, **Henry Kimball Hadley** (1871–1937), wrote fluently in all genres. He studied counterpoint with Mandyczewski in Vienna and was a student of George Chadwick at the New England Conservatory of Music. His chamber works include two string quartets, two piano trios, a violin sonata and the *Piano Quintet in a minor, Op. 50*, composed between 1919–1920. The work is Brahmsian in style with vigorous themes in the first movement, atmospheric themes in the second and with beautiful, expressive melodies in the finale. (Recording: VOX CDX 5057)

Reynaldo Hahn (1875–1947) was born in Caracas and at age three moved with his parents to Paris where he remained for the rest of his life. At the Paris Conservatoire he studied composition with Massenet, who thought highly of him. Like Massenet, Hahn is often referred to as a "musician of the Belle Epoque". Having a gifted voice and being an excellent pianist, Hahn needed no assistant for the vocal concert he often gave. His *Quintette pour cordes et piano*, composed in 1920, was dedicated "to Monsieur Edouard Hermann. It is typical in its own style in terms of expression. The second movement starts with one of Hahn's beautiful melodies, presented by the cello accompanied by repeated chords from the piano. (Recording: Maguelone MAG 111.107)



Korngold loved late romantic harmony and was gifted with a rich melodic inventiveness. The opening of the first movement is romantically expressive. A deeply felt slow movement is followed by a dramatic last movement which leads to an exciting conclusion. (Recording: Marco Polo 8.223385)

The French composer **Jean Emile Paul Cras** (1879–1932), a friend and student of Duparc, was almost entirely self-taught. He wrote numerous works in different genres, among them the opera *Polyphème* and a virtuoso, monumental piano concerto. Many of his compositions reflect his interest in the sea and for his four movement *Quintette pour piano et cordes*, composed in 1922, Jean Cras provided a program, which indicated his ideas: "1. Clear and joyful. The intoxication of breathing pure sea air. A foretaste of the impressions that will arise in the course of the voyage. The resulting emotion, a mix of impatience and desire. 2. Calm and peaceful. The ecstasy of a European soul giving itself over to the intense poetry of an African evening. 3. Alert and decisive. The exuberance of living in the sun, the eyes full of bright colours, the ears excited by the rich musical intensity of an Arab town. 4. Passionate and proud. The return voyage, the soul full of memories, liberated by the open air from the pretty things of life." (Timpani 1C1066)



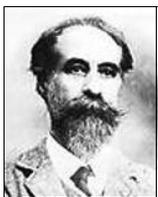
The Swiss-American composer and teacher **Ernest Bloch** (1880–1959) first studied composition with Dalcroze in Geneva and then violin with Ysaÿe in Brussels. Later he continued his composition studies with Rasse in Frankfurt and then with Knorr and Thuille in Munich. In 1916 Bloch went to the USA for the first time; he became a citizen in 1924 and lived and worked in New York, at the Cleveland Institute of Music, San Francisco Conservatory and, from 1940, on as a professor of music at the University of California at Berkeley, where he taught until 1952. Bloch received numerous honors, among them the first gold medal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He composed his *Quintet No. 1 for Piano and Strings* between 1921–1923. The English critic Ernest Newman wrote: "No other piece of chamber music produced in any country during that period can be placed in the same class with it".



The quintet explores an enormous range of sound and emotion and to assign it to a specific style is not possible. "I write without any regard to please either the so-called 'ultra moderns' or the so-called 'old-fashioned'". This quotation from Bloch explains his deep commitment to his personal singularity in musical language. Bloch's last work for chamber ensemble was the *Quintet No. 2 for Piano and Strings*, written in 1957. The Second Quintet, compared to the First, is a highly concentrated composition with a density of musical material. It seems that Bloch intended to express realms of thought and emotion in music direct and pure. (Recording: Koch 3-7041-2 H-1, Cascavelle VEL 3040, only No. 2)

Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) was considered by Maurice Ravel to be "probably the most important young French composer" of his time. A close friendship with Paul Claudel from 1913 on

(Continued on page 10)



The French composer and musicologist **Charles Louis Eugène Koechlin** (1867–1950) came from a family of engineers, artists and industrialists from Mulhouse in Alsace. At the Paris Conservatoire, he studied harmony with Toudon and composition with Massenet. In 1910 Koechlin, along with Fauré, Ravel, Caplet and among others, founded the Société Musicale Indépendante (SMI). The Société made it possible to perform contemporary compositions. Koechlin also wrote many books on such subjects as counterpoint, fugue, orchestration and polyphony. His *Piano Quintet, Op. 80* was written in 1920/1921 and was first performed 1934 in Brussels. It can be considered as a symphonic poem; the composer had indeed intended to orchestrate it. Koechlin's writing evokes a broad range of emotions and can be quite complex. While composing his quintet, Koechlin made the following interesting remark: "Quarter tones have been necessary to verify the musical ideas". (Recording: Cybella CY 829)

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957) was born in Hungary, the son of the well-known Viennese music critic Julius Korngold. Mahler called the young boy "a genius" and advised study with Zemlinsky. In 1934, Korngold went to America and subsequently became one of the better known composers of film music. His *Piano Quintet in E major, Op. 15*, composed 1920/23 clearly shows that

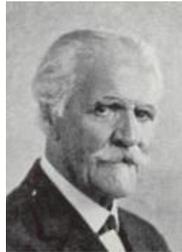


The Piano Quintet in the 20th Century



brought Milhaud to many countries which opened him to all kinds of musical influences. In 1922, he toured the United States and, inspired by listening to the authentic black jazz in Harlem, he composed a ballet entitled *La Création du Monde*, Op. 81a for piano quintet the following year. As to his enchantment with jazz, Milhaud wrote: "I couldn't get away from it, it had such a sweeping effect on me. More than ever, I wanted to use jazz in chamber music." (Recording: RCA 74321 801032)

Paul Marie Théodore Vincent d'Indy (1851–1931) was born in Paris. He worked as a composer, theorist, teacher, and writer on music. In 1894, he founded the famous Schola Cantorum, which in some ways competed with the Paris Conservatory and which flourished throughout his lifetime. D'Indy was a paradoxical composer, on the one hand devoted to absolute music, on the other hand relying on emotional inspiration. His *Quintet in g minor for piano and strings*, Op. 81, was composed in 1924. This appealing composition shows the Gallic character of d'Indy's personality and a relaxation of the cyclical form. A beautiful theme presented by the strings opens the second movement and liveliness infuses much of the finale. (Marco Polo 8.223691)



The Austrian composer, teacher, pianist and cellist **Franz Schmidt** (1874–1939) came from Pressburg. A child prodigy.



Schmidt was nonetheless outshone by his near contemporary, Dohnányi, who was considered an even greater prodigy. Family financial troubles forced the young boy to earn a living by playing music. But by 1914, he had obtained the position of professor at the Vienna Staatsakademie. His chamber music is retrospective and romantic in character and often dominated idyllic moods. Some of Schmidt's chamber music

as well as solo works were written for Paul Wittgenstein, who had lost his right arm in the First World War. The *Piano Quintet in G major*, composed in 1926, is cheerful dance-like music. The piano is truly the equal of the strings. Schmidt uses full sounding harmonies and sets rhythmically accentuated material against melodically flowing parts. (Orfeo C 287921 A)

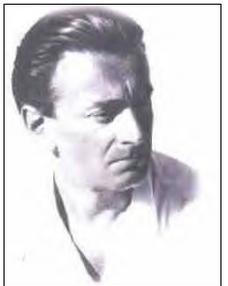
The Swedish composer **Kurt Magnus Atterberg** (1887–1974), in addition to his music studies also studied engineering and then spent his working life in the patent office. His many activities included the formation of the Swedish Society of Composers as well as a copyright organization. In 1927, Atterberg composed his Sixth Symphony which took first prize at an international competition. Sir Thomas Beecham was very fond of the symphony and secretly recorded it in 1928. Its success led Atterberg to arrange it for piano quintet, which became known as his Op.31b. (Recording: Marco Polo 8.223405)



The American composer and pianist of Russian birth **Leo Ornstein** (1892– 2002) started his studies at the Petrograd Conservatory, continuing them at the Institute of Musical Art after emigration with his family to New York. He abruptly ended his career as a concert pianist in 1920, appearing afterwards only occasionally. One of his last public appearances was with the Stradivari String Quartet at which he played the piano part to his Piano Quintet composed in 1927. Ornstein wrote: "I have never been interested in devising a personal system in which to compose. That would at once create its own limitations". The quintet is tonal with asymmetrical rhythms and sweeping melodies. In the slow movement one can hear a deep expression of humanity and Russian soulfulness. (Recording: New World Records 80509-2)



Miklós Rózsa (1907–1995) was born and educated in Budapest but completed his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory. After living for some years in Paris and London, he settled in Hollywood and began a long and successful career as composer for films. He also taught at the University of Southern California from 1945-65. He wrote almost ninety film scores, among them the film music of *Quo Vadis*, *Jungle Book*, *Ben Hur* and *Ivanhoe*. His early *Quintet for Piano and Strings*, Op. 2, was composed in 1928 during his time at Leipzig. It is a work of youth, when Rózsa was beginning to form the style that made his music so strongly his own. (Recording: Cambria CD-1034)

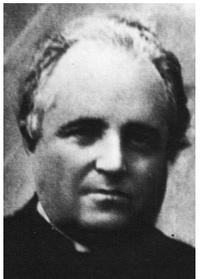


The American composer and teacher **Ruth Crawford-Seeger**



(1901–1953) belonged a group of American composers which included among others Henry Cowell, Charles Ruggles and Edward Varèse. They were known as the *Ultra Modernists* and aimed at a fundamental renewal of musical language. Most of Crawford's music is atonal and dissonant. She developed specific techniques of rotation and permutation of sequences of notes. Some of her techniques, such as serialism, became common in later years. The *Suite No. 2 for Four Strings and Piano* was composed in 1929 and shows a strong concentration on motives and themes. The melodic forms are linked together through a network of motivic relations. (Recording: CPO 999 670-2)

The Italian **Lorenzo Perosi** (1872–1956) became a church musician after his studies at the conservatories of Rome and Milan. He worked as a choirmaster at St. Marks in Venice, and later as music director of the Sistine Chapel. In the beginning of the 20th century, Perosi's church music and specifically his oratorios enjoyed international success. The majority of his chamber compositions date from 1928–1931. Between 1930 and 1931, Perosi composed four quintets for piano



and strings. *Quintetto no. 1 in F Major for String Quartet and Piano* was written in 1930. The dedication reads “*Rome Winter 1930/endless sadness on the death of my brother, the Cardinal*”. His *Piano Quintet No. 2 in d minor* was also dedicated to his brother. All the quintets are inspired works and impressively original. (Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 5108-2, GB 5079-2, GB 5103-2)

Marc Briquet (1896–1979) was born in Geneva and had his early studies at conservatoire there with Lauber and Barblan. He then went to Paris where he studied with Widor and d'Indy. Briquet lived several years in Turkey and Egypt working as an organist but went blind in 1956 and spent the remaining years of his life deepening his theological and philosophical reflections. He composed his *Quintette pour piano et cordes* in 1931 and a final revised version in 1936. The work is traditional in tonal harmony with some beautiful elegiac passages. The main role is played by the piano, but Briquet always allows the strings the opportunity to achieve the desired instrumental cohesion. (Recording: Cascavalle VEL 3040)

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968) was born in Italy and started composing at the age of nine. He attended the Florence Conservatory studying composition with Pizetti and then in 1939 emigrated to the United States where he took citizenship in 1946. From 1946 on, Castelnuovo-Tedesco taught composition at the Los Angeles Conservatory. He composed his *Quintetto in Fa Op. 69* in 1932 for a festival in Venice where he took the piano part at the work's premiere. Of the quintet, he wrote: “*Among all my chamber works of this period, the best, without any doubt is the quintet. It is emotional, robust and in a certain sense romantic*”. (TROY 191)

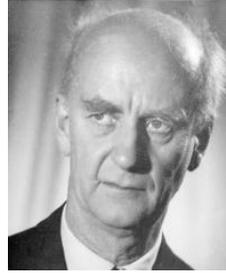


The prominent 20th century Czech composer **Bohuslav Martinu** (1890–1959) was extremely productive and wrote over 400 works. Chamber music plays an important part of his output and includes some 91 compositions. Besides the standard genres, he wrote works for unconventional combinations of instruments to experiment with new sound worlds. Martinu's two excellent contributions to the piano quintet repertoire are from two different periods of his compositional life. The *Piano Quintet No.1* (H. 229) was composed in 1933 while *Piano Quintet No. 2* (H. 298) dates from 1944. The first quintet is a tonally relaxed and rhythmically varied four-movement work written with unsentimental lyricism. The second quintet is one of Martinu's most successful chamber works and came at a time during which he was finally receiving international recognition. The work is clear in tonal outline and has an uncomplicated harmonic structure and rich melodic ideas. In contrast to the near-expressionism of the first piano quintet, the second is broad and melodically gratifying. (Recordings: Supraphon 819013-2 131; ASV DCA 889, only No. 2)



The German conductor, composer and author **Gustav Heinrich Wilhelm Furtwaengler** (1886–1954) was brought up in the late

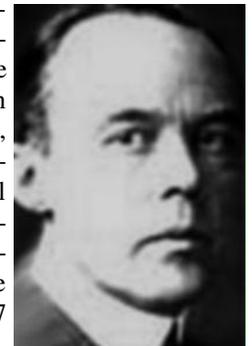
19th century cultivated environment of German liberalism. He began studying the piano at an early age and later studied composition with Rheinberger. Furtwaengler concentrated on a career as a conductor, ultimately becoming world famous. Describing Furtwaengler's conducting, Menuhin remarked: “*Listening to him gives an impression of vast, pulsating space which is most overwhelming*”. His *Piano Quintet in C major*, completed in 1935, stands clearly in the tradition of Brahms and he himself referred to his own



quintet as following in Brahms' path: “*He (Brahms) showed that it was possible to do other things in music than expand and magnify one's material ad infinitum*”. (Recording: Timpani 1 C 1018)

The following two piano quintets were written by American composers: **Charles Wakefield Cadman** (1881–1946 on left) and **John Alden Carpenter** (1876–1951 below right). Both wrote works reflecting American traditions. Cadman became interested in the music of the American Indians and wrote many

songs which became enormously popular like *From the Land of the Sky-blue Water* Op. 45. No.1. Carpenter sometimes introduced the elements of ragtime and jazz into his music and was also recognized as an outstanding song writer. The Piano Quintets of both were composed in 1937 and were characteristic of their late periods. Cadman's quintet was still conservative in nature with some dissonances and a minimum of the broad lyricism for which he was usually known. A rhetorical gesture in piano part opens the quintet of Carpenter, after which the strings bring forth an expressive response. Introduction of beautiful themes throughout the work and a transformation of the opening with all five instruments brings the quintet to an impressive conclusion. (Recordings: Naxos 8.559067 [Cadman]; Naxos 8.559103 [Carpenter])



Aloys Georg Fleischmann (1910–1992), was an Irish composer of German origin. His studies were divided between Munich and Cork. In 1934, he obtained the position of professor of music at University College, Cork a post he retained until his retirement in 1980. Fleischmann contributed significantly to the development of Irish music. He wrote his Piano Quintet in 1938 and at the premiere in Cork one year later his mother took the piano part with the Kutcher String Quartet. This early work with its linear design clearly reflects the great love of Fleischmann for Ireland. (Marco Polo 8.223888)



The Romanian **George Enescu** (1881–1955) was a remarkable violinist and an extraordinary conductor and composer. His three passions were late German romanticism, contemporary French music (Faure and Massenet considered him one of their best stu-



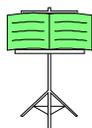
dents) and Romanian folk music. He was one of the greatest and most versatile musicians of his country. Enescu composed his *Piano Quintet, Op. 29* in 1940. It is a late work written when he had become sophisticated, philosophical and dramatic. Characteristic shades of Romanian folkloric instrumentation are obvious in the piano part of the *Andante*. The music is full of emotional substance from hidden passion to introverted sorrow. (Nonesuch 7559-79682-2)

The Soviet composer **Dimitry Shostakovich** (1906 – 1975) is, of course, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century. Besides his 15 symphonies, he also composed 15 string quartets.

Shostakovich finished his *Piano Quintet in g minor, Op. 57* in 1940. He, himself, premiered the quintet with the Beethoven Quartet that year in Moscow. The work was well received and Shostakovich won the Stalin prize for the best chamber music composition of the year. It is one of the best in the 20th century. The *Prelude* opens with a broad gesture from the piano. An impressive, arch-shaped *Adagio-Fugue* follows. It is profoundly sad. In the *Intermezzo*, there is a reference to the opening sorrowful *Lento*. In the finale, *Allegretto*, there is no more baroque polyphony, but diatonic happiness with some Slovakian elements. (Recording: CRD 3351)



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New Recordings



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

String Quartets

Arthur BLISS (1891-1975) No.2, Naxos 8.557394 / Frank BRIDGE (1879-1941) Qt (1900), Meridian 84525 also Nos.2 & 4, Naxos 8.557283 / (Anton BRUCKNER (1824-96) Qt, MD&G 307 1297 / Gerd DOMHARDT (1945-97) No.1, New Classical Adventure MA 98 09 838 / Gaetano DONIZETTI (1797-1848) Nos.4-6, Tactus 790402 / Pascal DUSAPIN (1955-) Nos.1 & 4, Accord 476 1919 / Hanns EISLER (1898-1955) Qt, Accord 476 2398 / Thierry ESCAICH (1965-) *Scenes du bal*, Accord 467 1282 / Alexander GLAZUNOV (1865-1936) Nos. 2 & 4, MD&G 603 1237 / Jacques IBERT (1890-1962) Qt, Accord 472 320 / Rene KOERING (1940-) Nos.2-3, Accord 476 1919 / Artur SCHNABEL (1882-1951) No.5, CPO 999 881 / Charles STANFORD (1852-1924) Nos.1-2, Hyperion 67434

Strings Only-Not Quartets

William BLANK (1957-) Str Trio, Musikszene Schweiz-Grammont 79 / Frank BRIDGE (1879-1941) Qnt (1901) Meridian 84525 / Anton BRUCKNER (1824-96) Qnt, MDG 307 1297 / Adolf BUSCH (1891-1952) Sextet Op.40, Raum Klang 006 / Hanns EISLER (1898-1955) *Praeludium & Fuge uber BACH* also *Scherzo* both for Str Trio, Accord 472 2398 / Hyacinthe JADIN (1769-1802) 3 String Trios, Op.2 / New Classical Adventure 9912846-215 / Gordon JACOB (1895-1984) 6 *Shakespearian Sketches* for Str Trio, Audite 97.517 / Ernst LEVY (1895-1981) Qnt for Str Qt & Kb, Musiques Suisses 6201 / Frank MARTIN (1890-1974) *Rhapsody* for 2Vln, 2Vla & Kb, Musiques Suisses 6201 / Sigismund NEUKOMM (1778-1858) 2 String Quintets: *Une fet de village en Suisse & L'amante aban-*

donce / New Classical Adventure 60122-215 / Hermann SUTER (1870-1926) Sextet Op.18 for 2Vln, Vla, 2Vc & Kb, Musiques Suisses 6201 / Helmut ZAPF (1956-) *Approximation* for Str Trio, New Classical Adventure MA98 09 838

Piano Trios

Edward BACHE (1833-58) Op.25, Dutton Epoch 7145 / Georgy CATOIRE (1861-1926) Op.14, Hyperion 67512 / Vagn HOLMBOE (1909-96) Opp.64 & 129, Dacapo 8.226009 / Carl NIELSEN (1865-1931) No.1, Dacapo 8.226009 / Anders NORDENTOFT (1957-) *Doruntine*, Dacapo 8.226009 / Per NORGARD (1932-) *Spell*, Dacapo 8.226009 / Ferdinand RIES (1784-1838) Opp.2 & 143, CPO 777 053 / Joseph RHEINBERGER (1839-1901) Nos.1-4, MD&G 303 0419 / Artur SCHNABEL (1882-1951) Trio, CPO 999 881

Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

Ernest BLOCH (1880-1959) Pno Qnts Nos.1-2, Musiques Suisses 6203 / William BOLCOM (1938-) Pno Qt, Albany Troy 730 / Frank BRIDGE (1879-1941) *Fantasy* for Pno Qt, Naxos 8.557283 / Georgy CATOIRE (1861-1926) Qt, Op.31, Hyperion 67512 / Thierry ESCAICH (1965-) *La ronde* for Pno Qt, Accord 467 1282 / Lee HOIBY *Rhapsody on an Air by James Joyce* for Pno Qt, Albany Troy 730 / Florent SCHMITT (1870-1958) Pno Qt Op.51, Accord 465-801 / Jean SIBELIUS (1865-1957) Complete Pno Qnts, BIS 1182 / Richard WILLIS (1929-97) *Variants* for Pno Qt, Albany Troy 730

Winds & Strings

Arthur BLISS (1891-1975) Clarinet Quintet, Naxos 8.557394 / Domenico CIMAROSA (1749-1801) 6 Flute Qts, Accord 472-348 / Franz DANZI (1763-1826) 3 Bns Qts, Op.40, Centaur 2708 / Hanns EISLER

(1898-1955) 2 Septets for Fl, Cln, Bsn & Str Qt & Nonet No.1 for Fl, Cln, Bsn, Hn & Str Qnt, Accord 476 2398 / Gordon JACOB (1895-1984) Oboe Qt, Audite 97.517 / Giovanni PAISIELLO (1740-1816) 7 Divertimenti for 2Fl, 2Cln, 2Bsn, 2Hn & Kb, Bayer 100 361 / Charles STANFORD (1852-1924) Fantasy for Hn & Str Qt, Hyperion 67434 / Pavel VRANICKY (Wrانitzky 1756-1808) 3 Fl Qts, Op.28, Accord 472 349

Winds, Strings & Piano

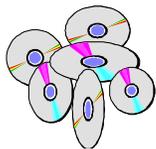
Sebastian BODINUS (1700-59) 3Qts—1 for Fl, Vln, Vla & Pno—1 for 2Fl, Vln & Pno and 1 for Fl, Vln, Hn & Pno, Meridian 84523 / Hanns EISLER (1898-1955) *14 Arten den Regen zu beschreiben* for Fl, Cln & Pno Qt, Accord 476-2398 / Charles KOEHLIN (1867-1950) *Paysages et Marines* for Pno, Fl, Cln & Str Qt, Accord 465 894 / Johann MOLTER (1696-1765) Overture for 2Ob, Bsn, 2Vln, Vla, Pno & Overture for 2Hn, 2Ob, Bsn, 2Vln, Vla & Pno, MD&G 341-1279 / Anton RUBINSTEIN (1829-84) Octet Op.9 for Fl, Cln, Hn, Str Trio, Kb & Pno, Orfeo 422 041 / Georg TELEMANN (1681-1759) 3 Qts for Fl, Vln, Vla & Pno, Meridian 84523

Piano & Winds

Franz DANZI (1763-1826) 3 Qnts for Pno & Winds, Opp.41, 53 & 54 / New Classical Adventure 60102 215 / Maurice EMMANUEL (1862-1938) Sonatines for Fl, Cln & Pno, Accord 476 165 / Anton RUBINSTEIN (1829-94) Qnt for Pno & Winds Op.55, Orfeo 422 041 /

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Hanns EISLER (1898-1955) Divertimento Op.4 for Wnd Qt, Accord 476 2398 / Jacques IBERT (1890-1962) 3 Short Pieces for Wnd Qt, Accord 472 320



Diskology: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: The Clarinet Quintet & Nonet Piano Quintets by Guiseppe Martucci & Ottorino Respighi



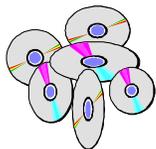
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was born London, the product of a mixed race marriage, his father being an African from Sierra Leone and his mother a white Englishwoman. His musical talent showed itself early and he was admitted to study the violin at the Royal College of Music where he eventually concentrated on composition when his gifts were ascertained. On **Centaur CD 2691** we hear his **Clarinet Quintet in f#**

minor, Op.15 for the A clarinet, composed in 1895 as the result of a challenge issued by his composition teacher Sir Charles Stanford. After a performance of the Brahms clarinet quintet at the RAM, Stanford is reputed to have said that no composer could now write such a composition without escaping the influence of Brahms. Within 2 months, Coleridge-Taylor did just that and, in the process, had produced what is an undeniable masterpiece. Those who have heard or played it generally acknowledge it is as fine as either the Brahms or the Mozart clarinet quintets. That it has disappeared from the concert stage is unconscionable. In describing the piece, it could be said that if Dvorak had written a clarinet quintet, it might not have been far different from this. One especially hears the Czech composer's influence in the lovely second movement, *Larghetto affectuoso*, which recalls the slow movement of the *New World Symphony* and the exciting finale *Allegro agitato*. There is no denying the rhythmic complexity, especially in the slow movement—and while on the whole the technical challenge may be of greater difficulty than the Brahms, it is by no means beyond experienced players. The parts are in print (*Musica Rara et.al.*) and every clarinet quintet party, professional and amateur, should make its acquaintance. The **Nonet, Op.2 in f minor** (Ob, Cln, Hn, Bsn, String Trio, Kb & Piano) was composed in 1894 and is no more a student work than his clarinet quintet. Also in four movements, the scoring along with the use of a piano, gives the work an orchestral sound. I can't agree with the author of the jacket notes who found the opening *Allegro energico* to sound of Dvorak. The themes are spacious and lovely and sound of mid-19th century mainstream German romanticism, but they show little or no Slavic influence that I could hear. The second movement, *Andante con moto*, has a few minor flourishes that remind one of Dvorak but it would be a stretch to say the movement sounded Slavic. A striking and original *Scherzo-Allegro* follows. The use of string pizzicato is particularly telling. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, has a somewhat Tchaikovsky like introduction but the main theme erases any influence of it. A second theme sounds a bit like Elgar. The scoring is marvelous, so assured and deft that one realizes what a prodigy the 19 year old student must have been. A great work but one which because of the instrumental combination is unlikely to be played or heard by many of us. All the more reason to get this CD. Also on disk are his *Four African Dances* for violin and piano.

Readers may recall that I reviewed the **Piano Quintet in f minor** composed in 1902 by **Ottorino Respighi** (1879-1936) which appears on **Chandos CD# 9962** in Vol.XIV No.4 (Winter 2003) so I will not engage in any detailed discussion of it here. In a nutshell, I concluded that it is "*An extremely attractive work, it would be nice if professional groups would occasionally program something like this when a piano quintet is to be had rather than the inevitable Schumann or Dvorak.*" Those who have not purchased the Chandos CD may be interested in **Aura CD #416** because it is coupled with the **Piano Quintet in C Major, Op.45** by **Giuseppe Martucci** (1856-1909). A gifted pianist (his playing was said to be admired by Liszt and Anton Rubenstein), conductor and teacher, Martucci, judging from the space allotted for his entry in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey*, was regarded as



a fairly important composer of chamber music. Be that as it may, I have never heard any work of his performed live in concert. Perhaps the situation is different in Italy, though I rather doubt it given that 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 Brahms or Wagner and the like. Although Martucci's name seems not to be entirely unknown, he has joined the ranks of those whose name rings a bell but whose music does not. The Piano Quintet is a fairly big work in four movements. The spirit of Brahms hovers over the marvelous, spacious opening *Allegro giusto* which in my opinion comes closer in mood to *affettuoso* than *giusto*. The leisurely opening theme is a lovely haunting melody which dominates the proceedings. The part writing is magnificent but one must admit that one would never guess this was music by an Italian composer. Much of what I wrote about the *Allegro giusto* could also be said of the second movement, *Andante con moto*. However, here we find a more vocal quality to the main theme, though, once again, it is not particularly Italian in nature. The third movement, a bustling *Scherzo, allegro vivace*, is more muscular and thrusting in nature but certainly is not harsh or rough. Though it does not sound like Schumann, nonetheless there are hints of that master's influence in this very fluent and appealing music. The full-blooded finale, *Allegro con brio*, again sports the aura of Brahms, but oh how lovely this music is—there is no sense of mere imitation. The main theme is powerful and driving while the richly scored second theme sung by strings is some of the most gorgeous late-romantic music you will ever hear. This is an absolutely first rate work from start to finish. It goes without saying that it belongs on the stage and in concert halls. I don't know if the parts are available but if they were, I would put my money down for them in a heartbeat. I can think of no reason why this music has remained in obscurity other than the fact that it is written by an Italian who took main stream German romanticism for his model. Here is a highly recommended CD.



String Quartets by Franz Grill, Franz Anton Hoffmeister and Stanley Grill

Regular readers of this column will be aware of the fact that against all odds, CD companies are bringing out, one after another, the string quartets of several forgotten 18th century composers. Some, such as those by Florian Gassmann, Andre Gretry, Johann Eschmann, Frantisek Lessel and Anton Zimmermann are, in my opinion, best left lying where they were—in oblivion. But others, such as those of Johann Spech and Manuel Canales deserve renewed attention. The six string quartets of **Franz Grill** (1756-92), in my opinion, fall into this latter category. Grill, about whom Cobbett and Grove are silent, was an Austrian German active in Hungarian part of the Habsburg empire according to the jacket notes of **Hungarton CD 31944**. Although almost an exact contemporary of Mozart, Grill's **Op.7 String Quartets** show no familiarity with the advances made by either Mozart or Haydn. All six works are quartetti concertante, that is, each voice is given solo passages to what is usually a simple accompaniment. Still, these works show

the touch of a gifted melodist and also have interesting rhythmic flourishes. It is the strength of the melodic writing along with these small original touches, reminiscent of the Wranitzky brothers for whom Grill briefly worked, that make these works worth revisiting. They are even strong enough to be programmed in concert by those groups looking for early works from the Viennese classical era and they are certainly far preferable to hearing arrangements of music never intended for string quartet, such as that from Purcell, Pachabel and Bach which some professional quartets have taken to fobbing off on their audiences. It is worth noting that Grill's quartets spread throughout Europe and, at least briefly, enjoyed considerable popularity. A modern edition of these works would not be unwelcome. Recommended.

Another similar release features **Three String Quartets Op.14** by **Franz Anton Hoffmeister** (1754-1812). Today, his name lives on only because of his close friendship with Mozart, who named his K.499 D Major string quartet after him in recognition of all

the money Hoffmeister had given him. Few people are also aware that he became a famous music publisher, his firm known to us today as Edition Peters. Hoffmeister arrived in Vienna at age 14 from western Germany where he had intended to study law. Like

so many before and after him, he was lured away by the siren song of music. He decided on a career as a composer and, like most of his contemporaries, was a prolific one. We know from contemporary accounts that his music was held in high regard and those who have had the opportunity to play or hear it usually agree that there is much of value to be found therein. This is certainly true of the 3 quartets presented on this **Naxos CD# 8.555952**. They show fine workmanship and that Hoffmeister had assimilated many of the advances Haydn and Mozart made. At a time (1791) when almost everyone else was still producing concertante quartets, Hoffmeister's are in the form of Haydn and Mozart's late quartets. The melodies are fresh

and attractive while the part-writing surprisingly good. Highly recommended.

Quite a while back, Stanley Grill, a Cobbett member, unsolicited, sent me two CDs of his music for review. I was hoping he would supply some information about the music and himself but none has been forthcoming so I have decided to include this short notice. From the internet, I learned that Mr. Grill was raised in New York in the Bronx and graduated from the Manhattan School of Music where he studied piano with Robert Helps and Leon Kushner and composition with Ursula Mamlok and Joseph Probstakoff. The two CDs have works for string quartet on them which are quite attractive. They are entirely tonal, original sounding and well-worth investigating. Unfortunately, I do not know how one might do that except by contacting him personally. His e-mail address is stgrill@msn.com.



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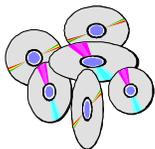
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Sergei Taneiev's Piano Trio

String Quartets by Miklos Rosza And Sir Arthur Sullivan



Centaur CD#2571 presents both the Piano Quartet Op.20 and the **Piano Trio in D Major Op.22 of Sergei Taneiev** (1856-1915). The quartet was recently reviewed (Volume XV No.3, Autumn 2004) and I will not discuss it here. Of the late 19th century Russian composers, Taneiev's chamber music is arguably the most important. Certainly, it is the most substantial. All of his chamber works can be styled as massive in both structure and content.

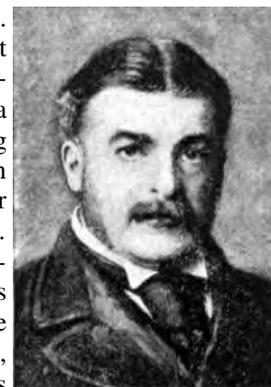
The Piano Trio, which dates from 1907, is no exception. In four movements, it can last over 40 minutes depending on the tempi taken. A huge and spacious *Allegro* opens the trio. Like many of his works, there is no trace of Russian-sounding music whatsoever. The tonal world is that of typical late 19th century central European (read Austro-German) romanticism. For an opening movement, the *Allegro* is rather low-keyed with very little drive or drama. The melodic material, at least to me, does not sound particularly inspired, especially for the length to which it is dragged out. The second movement, *Allegro molto*, is a big, long scherzo, heavy and brooding. The writing is more inspired and the thematic material more appealing. Taneiev contrasts the dark mood of the scherzo with a lighter middle section. Again, I would have to say that the material, though more substantial, still does not justify the length of the movement. Next comes an *Andante espressivo*, the shortest movement of the entire work by half. It begins with a sweet, almost cloyingly so, main theme. In some ways it sounds rather like the kind of parlor music Schumann could write. Something for a lazy Saturday afternoon but surely very outdated by 1907. The finale, *Allegro con brio*, begins with a sprightly, but not overly inspired, theme. Again it sounds quite outdated, perhaps by as much by half a century. It is another long movement whose length is not, in my opinion, justified by the quality of the thematic material. To sum up, while the thematic material is not threadbare, it does not justify the extensive and excessive treatment it receives at the composer's hands. For some reason, I find that Taneiev's chamber music with piano just doesn't seem to measure up to his fine works for strings alone.

The name **Miklos Rosza** (1907-95) for most readers probably brings to mind Hollywood and his career as a famous film composer. Trained at the Budapest and Leipzig conservatories, Rosza, despite his great fame as a composer for the cinema, also pursued a career as a composer of concert music throughout his life. It was this fact which led him to title his autobiography *Double Life*. There he wrote, "*My public career as a composer for films ran alongside my private development as composer for myself...two parallel lines, and in the interests of both, my concern has always been to prevent their meeting.*"



Rosza's two string quartets are recorded on **ADV CD 1105**. **String Quartet No.1, Op.22** dates from 1950 and was dedicated to Peter Ustinov whom he met and befriended during the filming of *Quo Vadis* in Rome. In four movements, it opens with a quiet and reflective *Andante con moto* which slowly picks up speed and angularity. The tonal language we hear is that of Bartok and late Kodaly. The second movement, *Scherzo in modo ongarese*, is restless and rhythmically quite pointy. The trio section uses folk melody expressed through the filter of polytonality. The third movement, *Lento*, begins in a brooding mood with a sense of claustrophobic opaqueness. Gradually the music oozes forth like some thick liquid from under a closet door. There are vague elements of blues-like dissonance mixed with a passionate but very chromatically wayward theme. The introduction to the edgy finale, *Allegro feroce*, pounces forth without warning. Again, there is the influence of Bartok. Clearly Rosza rejected serialism for a very modern sounding tonality, sometimes expressed in polytonality. **String Quartet No.2, Op.38**, also in four movements, dates from 1981. The opening *Allegro con brio* sounds, at least to me, as a continuation of the earlier quartet. Pounding, harsh and restless, it is nonetheless still tonal but, of course, not in the traditional sense. A limp and introspective *Andante* follows. Again we have a Hungarian *Scherzo all'Ungherese*. The main theme is played over a continual restless strumming by the other voices. The second theme is full of 20th century angst, but it does have a lighter quality which might pass as a kind of playfulness. This is the most immediately appealing of the four movements. The finale, *Allegro risoluto*, begins with a theme full of nervous energy whilst the second theme, much slower in tempo, is very atmospheric, full of mystery and suspense. These are two fine very tightly written modern works which are entirely approachable. Recommended.

Two words one does not generally associate with **Sir Arthur Sullivan** (1842-1900) are "string quartet". He did however compose two short pieces for this ensemble, which are presented on **Somm CD233**. The first is a one movement **String Quartet** lasting about 11½ minutes. It was written in 1859 while Sullivan was studying under Moscheles at the Leipzig Conservatory. Sullivan was the Royal Academy of Music's first Mendelssohn Scholar and his quartet shows the great man's influence but without being a mere imitation, much the same way Mendelssohn's string symphonies show the influence of Bach and Mozart. The piece is a fluent, accomplished work and certainly a tribute to a boy of 16. It was performed at Leipzig several times and garnered critical acclaim for the young Englishman. It is tuneful and exciting with fine part-writing. The second work, a **Romance in g minor**, is also from 1859. Here the influence of Mendelssohn is more pronounced. The mood and style are quite similar to a Mendelssohnian intermezzo. A lovely 3 minute morsel, it would make a charming encore. The rest of the CD is devoted to Sullivan's works for solo piano. Recommended.



WRANITZKY—RIES—GOUVY—RHEINBERGER—TURINA,—KROMMER—TOCH

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Zdenek Fibich



Giuseppe Martucci



Miklos Rosza



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

ROTA—LACHNER—GRANADOS—VAN BREE—D'INDY—GRETCHANINOV

ONSLOW—SPOHR—STENHAMMAR—FUCHS



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