

THE
CHAMBER MUSIC
JOURNAL

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

John Ireland & Herbert Howells

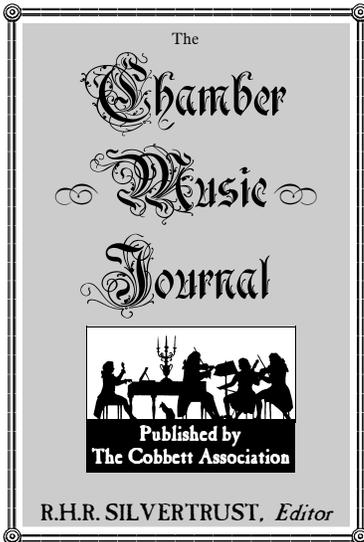
***Zdenek Fibich's 2nd String Quartet
& Quintet for Piano, Winds & Strings***

***A Practical Guide to Sight-Reading
Chamber Music—Part II***

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The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



Parts to Fibich's Piano Quartet in Print

I note that Professor Opolis in the last *Journal* said that he does not know if Fibich's piano quartet is in print, but hopes it is. Until recently he would have hoped in vain, but last month a friend lent me a copy of the old Urbanek edition, and the work is now in the Merton catalogue at No.4746 priced at \$14.40.

Theo Wyatt
London, UK

Readers interested in the parts to Fibich's piano quartet can contact Merton Music by e-mail at mertonmusic@argonet.co.uk or mertonusa@yahoo.com or telephone 00 44 20 8540 2708 or write to 8 Wilton Grove, London SW19 3QX.

Attention: Piano, Cello & Clarinet Trio Groups

I am inviting clarinet-cello-piano trio groups to contact me for a free full-score and set of parts and CD recording of one of the 14 works I have written for that marvelous combination. E-mail me at rick@sowash.com.

Rick Sowash
Cincinnati, Ohio

CD's of Mr. Sowash's wonderful chamber music have been reviewed in two previous issues of The Journal (Vol. XIV No.4 and XV No.4). This is a very generous and appealing invitation by Mr Sowash and I believe interested readers would do well to take advantage of it—editor.

Michael Bache

I am sorry to report we have received word that long-time Cobbett Member G. Michael Bache of Lavallette, New Jersey has passed away.—editor.

Is A Cello Quintet Arrangement of Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata Necessary?

While I take no exception whatsoever to Dr Marshall's excellent and interesting review of an arrangement of the Kreutzer Sonata for cello quintet, I have to wonder why publishers want to trouble with reprinting something like that, no matter how good it might be. Perhaps in 1832, the time that Simrock originally published this arrangement, only Boccherini's quintets were known (Schubert's had not been published or discovered and Onslow's were only just becoming known). But today, such a reason no longer exists. Surely, Beethoven never intended this work to be arranged or he would have done so himself as he did with sev-

eral of his works, perhaps the best example being Op.16, the quintet for piano and winds, which appeared in a number of arrangements he subsequently made including one for piano quartet.

If this were not bad enough, we learn that most of the material is for the first violin, that the two cellos are there to handle the octaves which appear in the piano part, and that the inner voices basically complete the piano accompaniment. Hence this arrangement is nothing more than an object of curiosity which cannot be justified by some dearth in the literature. What's more, it is unlikely to be performed in concert, unless it is at some concert of unauthorized arrangements of Beethoven's works.

Unlike players in 1832, we Cobbett members (if not the publishers) now know that there are several works for cello quintet deserving of republication. Dr Marshall himself created a short list, which appeared in *The Journal* several issues back (Vol.11, No.2—Summer 2000), of cello quintets of which Merton Music made copies. Few if any of these works on that list that I know of (save the Draeseke) have received modern republication. This is too bad because, no offense to Merton, several of the copied quintets are less than ideal to play off of.

It would seem to me that publishers ought to be bringing out works such as those of Bazzini, Cherubini, Onslow, Dessoff, Dobryzynski, Reissiger, Smythe, Taneyev, and Zolotariev among others rather than some unauthorized arrangement of a violin sonata which doesn't even fulfill cello quintet style as to the distribution of thematic material.

Alan Peterson
Los Angeles, CA

On the one hand, you make several valid points with which I think many would agree. If resources are finite, it is certainly fair to ask why a publisher would choose to allot them to such an arrangement rather than a fine, out-of-print work originally intended for the combination. On the other hand, the making of arrangements, especially for such combinations as piano 4 hands and piano trio, is a time-honored tradition. One must admit the cello quintet literature is not voluminous and any addition to it, perhaps, is better than none.

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.

Two 20th Century British Composers John Ireland & Herbert Howells

by William T. Horne

The twentieth century, certainly a turbulent one for Britain, produced an abundance of prolific, talented composers. Among the masters were counted Edward Elgar, Frederic Delius, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, William Walton, Michael Tippett, and Benjamin Britten. All these plus many other, talented, but less well-known composers also trained at the Royal College of Music under Charles Villiers Stanford from the period of 1883 to 1923. This article is about the chamber works of two of them.

John Ireland

John Ireland (1879-1962) is one of the few composers whose early success and lasting reputation derived from piano works, chamber pieces and songs. His few orchestral works appeared much later in his life, but are also lush and wonderful works.

Born in Cheshire to a 70 year old father and 40 year old mother, he was close to his mother and precocious on the piano. His home

life included great exposure to literature, especial Victorian and pre-Raphaelite poets. Despite this intellectual stimulation, his rather painful childhood led to insecurity; he was an outsider among his siblings who humiliated and beat him. He hated being sent away to school and ran away. The death of his parents in his early teens preceded his enrolling in the Royal College of Music at age 14, where he chose to major in composition after only one year, studying with Charles Villiers Stanford.



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Zdenek Fibich The Chamber Music

Part 3
by Renz Opolis

(In the first two parts of this article, the author discussed and analyzed Fibich's Piano Trio in f, the Piano Quartet Op.11 and his First String Quartet in A.)



As noted in the early part of my article, Fibich's first three chamber works dated from 1873-4, during the 18 months he worked in Vilnius as a choirmaster. He returned to Prague in the autumn of 1874 where shortly thereafter his wife died, soon followed by his infant daughter. During the next four years, he held various posts, the two most important being second conductor at the National Theater and conductor of the Russian Orthodox Church in Prague. In the interim he had remarried and his wife had given birth to a son.

Fibich's **String Quartet No.2 in G Major, Op.8** was composed in 1878 and is the only one of his three works for string quartet that was published during his lifetime. In four movements, the opening movement,

Allegro moderato, almost sounds like it is beginning in mid-phrase:



Genial in mood, it does not sound much different from the style of his earlier work. His clear gift for melody is very apparent not only here but throughout the quartet. Initially, there is nothing at all suggestive of Bohemian or Czech melody, and yet as

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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

PART 2

by Peter Lang

(In Part I, which appeared in the last issue, the author discussed the sight-reading problems of "soloists" and the concept of relative dynamics)

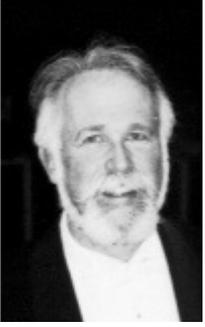
All musicians are subject to another problem that can make sight-reading a frustrating experience. In fact this problem affects all mortals in all their endeavors. *Habittis* is a good name for it. We are all subject to habits. Without them we could not function in anything we do. Of course this applies to playing a musical instrument. We must spend years struggling to learn good habits so that the vast majority of everything we do when playing our instrument becomes automatic. Good teachers will not only concentrate on helping us to develop good habits but also monitor us during our training to make sure we don't develop bad habits; i.e.

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At The Doublebar



Although we have always had an *Index to Back Issues of The Journal*, it has been an issue by issue type index, which has made it hard to find out, for example if there has been anything about a particular work by certain composer. I am happy

to announce that we have just finished a second index which is by composer and work. At present, this index runs 25 pages and has just under 1400 entries. We are pleased to make the Composer/Subject Index available to members at the cost of \$7.50 (\$10 for non US residents) which includes first class or airmail postage.

For the past several issues, we have noticed a gradual deterioration in the quality of the photographs (but not the text of musical examples) which have appeared. After trying numerous repairs to our existing equipment we were unable to resolve the problem and therefore obtained a new printer which I believe has resolved this problem.

I want to once again thank Peter Lang for his thought provoking and very interesting article on sight-reading. I don't believe I have ever seen anything like it anywhere else. Thanks also to Dr. Horne for another fine article, this time on two important but lesser known English composers: John Ireland and Herbert Howells. Lastly, thanks to Professor Renz Hopolis for his article on Zdenek Fibich's chamber music, the only one that I know of in English.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE

Starting November 2005

We Will Have a New Email Address
cobbettassociation@sbcglobal.net

Lastly, sad to report, we have had an unavoidable decline in membership as of late, largely due to members no longer able to play or who died. We would like to attract new members since, as with any organization, this is our lifeblood. So, please recommend us to your chamber music friends. If you know of individuals who might be interested, we will be happy to send you sample back issues of *The Journal* as well as application forms.

—Ray Silvertrust, Editor

A Practical Guide to Sight-Reading *(continued from page 3)*

those that interfere with or lessen our ability to play as well as we should. Good habits take most of us effort and time to develop. Bad habits develop by themselves and unfortunately can take very deep root within minutes. The worst part is that we will not be aware of the fact that this has happened. If we are no longer being monitored by a good teacher or a well meaning musical friend whose critical advice we can take to heart without malice we will be stuck with that habit without knowing that we have been infected by it, that is, we have become a victim of *Habittitis!* Unfortunately, this disease is often cumulative, that is, we can be infected by an unlimited number of bad habits. Getting rid of just one bad habit usually takes great effort and much time; getting rid of many at the same time requires Herculean strength and concentration. An infection with one or more of the bad habits of *Habittitis* is always a threat. However, that threat can be lessened by regular practicing of technique including scales and arpeggios. Even more important is taking occasional tune-up lessons and coaching sessions in order to others help us in spotting and changing a bad habit as soon as it arises.

Sight-reading groups that meet regularly for an enjoyable read must obviously be extremely circumspect and diplomatic if *Habittitis* becomes a problem. Often it is best to overlook the habit and simply adjust to it. For example if one of the members loses the ability to project a strong tone in a fortissimo solo passage, match the softer tone. If a tendency develops to push into the rhythm or cross the bar line just slightly ahead of the rest of the group, go with the flow. If the problem results from a temporary loss in confidence, inexperience with a complex rhythmic pattern, tension from the technical demands of a difficult passage or similar causes, and leads to repeated breakdowns in the reading, avoid confronting the musician who is having this problem directly. Do it indirectly by assuming the blame for the breakdown: "I am having difficulty with this passage. Let's try it slower"; "I may have been rushing here, give me another chance"; "I didn't play that very well, can just the two of us try it slowly?" In many instances the wisest approach is simply to skip over the hard passage.

Here is a list of some *Habittitis* infections and suggested treatments. Their cure will significantly improve sight-reading abilities:

Tuneritis: Primarily a string players' problem, using tuning the instrument to get rid of excess nervousness or tension by doing so very loudly, taking much time, and then launching into the beginning measures at fortissimo of some concerto passage. **Treatment:** string tuning is far more effective and accurate if done very softly; surprisingly it can then also be done very quickly. Tune softly and carefully to each other, not individually in isolation.

Vibratoitis: Also primarily a string player problem, can take many forms, the worst being the bad habit of only vibrating strongly with great amplitude on some fingers (often the second and third and never the first and fourth), another being vibrating in exactly the same way (never varying amplitude and frequency) or hardly at all. **Treatment:** Practice scales and arpeggios using different vibrato styles uniformly on each and every finger paying particular attention to a continuous vibrato sound from one note to the next.

Pickupitis: overemphasizing most pickups by playing them louder and/or with more accent, faster vibrato or faster bow stroke than the following notes, stretching the rhythm on most of them regardless of what the others in the group are doing. **Treatment:** Concentrate on how the others in the group are playing their pickups, rhythms and musical phrases and copy them.

Downbeatitis: overemphasizing most downbeats regardless of the musical shape of the melodic phrase either with an accent and/or a fast vibrato or a faster bow stroke; can be very destructive to the beauty of the music when one phrase ends on the same downbeat where another phrase starts; extremely important for pianists to avoid at the end of a melodic phrase particularly if the melody contained only a few notes per beat but ends in a multi-note chord on a downbeat; such chords must be played with extra care and, in almost all cases, softer than the preceding sound. **Treatment:** Concentrate

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on the flow of the musical lines, play downbeats softer unless you are sure they should be accented.

Dotitis: compressing or expanding dotted rhythms such as a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, a big problem particularly if one or more players have at the same time a steady sixteenth note pattern. **Treatment:** Listen at all times for repetitive rhythmic patterns and fit your notes into them. Make sure you differentiate clearly a triplet rhythm from a dotted rhythm.

Flowitis: failure to respond to a change in the increasing or decreasing flow of the rhythm and/or of the dynamics, most often occurs when a player passes a ritardando, accelerando, decrescendo, and/or crescendo to another who fails to respond to the impetus thrown over to him. **Treatment:** it is usually wise to make flow changes asymmetrically, that is to make only the last few notes the slowest, fastest, softest and/or loudest; look ahead to see how many beats of measures a flow change should cover and react accordingly.

Thirdbeatitis: compressing the last beat of any of the many types of three beat rhythmic patterns thereby causing a gradual increase in tempo and making it difficult for players with more notes per bar to fit into the flow. **Treatment:** Listen more carefully to all other musicians than in the case of even beat rhythmic patterns, feel the third beat as an upbeat to the next group of three beats.

Syncopationitis: emphasizing the second half of a syncopation rhythm with an additional impulse and/or crescendo, instead of using only a single impulse at the start of the syncopated note and then letting the note decrease in intensity. **Treatment:** Generally play all syncopated notes shorter than on-beat notes.

Timiditis: making little use of dynamic changes by playing mostly mezzo forte, making only small changes for tempo markings, making very little or no color changes in tone by playing most notes in the same manner, making very few or no differences between note attacks and/or lengths, and in general not using the full potential of one's musical energy. **Treatment:** Find where within your soul you have hidden your former intense love of music and/or learn to love it again by letting the enthusiasm of others in your sight-reading group inspire you. Concentrate on exaggerating dynamics and all other musical markings. Sight-reading requires courage.

Recommendations For Sight-Reading

Now that we have discussed many of the problems that make it difficult to follow the golden rule of playing chamber music:

► Always Make the Others Sound Good ◄

By listening to and imitating the others in the group

Let us turn to some of the recommendations that should make following that golden rule easier during sight reading sessions.

Resetting Musical Priorities: The Top Three

Playing an instrument well is a challenge. Playing an instrument well together with a small group of other musicians is an even bigger challenge. Sight-reading chamber music well is the biggest of all challenges. Why? Because these challenges involve doing an ever increasing number of things perfectly and, as much as is humanly possible, simultaneously. There are more than a dozen of them. This is of course possible to do only after many hours of careful practice unless you are a genius. Unfortunately, in the

case of sight-reading most mortals will have to make conscious priority choices. None of us have a brain that can simultaneously monitor all the complicated processes and actions that create soul inspiring and soul shaking music while we are sight-reading. The three most important ones in order of priority are:

Look ahead

This is not a reference to the obvious advantage of turning all the pages of the movement about to be sight-read before starting to play to get a feel of the land. Rather, this refers to the single most essential sight-reading skill, a skill that can be practiced and learned well quite easily. A teacher or musically savvy friend can help. Play a piece of music that you are already familiar with but have not memorized and have the teacher or friend simply cover up with a blank piece of paper the area one measure ahead of where you are playing. As your skill improves go for two measures or even more.

Rhythm

Regardless of how convoluted or intricate the passage you are attempting to sight-read may be you simply cannot afford to lose your sense of the ongoing beats. They take precedence over everything else. If necessary you must be able to skip over or simplify the notes on the page in front of you to make it to the downbeat of the next convenient measure. Preferably using a loud metronome this skill can also be practiced alone. Simply force yourself to always play at least the first note of every ongoing measure no matter how difficult the other notes are. Reduce the setting of the metronome until you are able to do so without breaking down. Pianists can initially attempt this exercise with just one of their hands at a time and even just a single note of the printed chord.

Dynamics

Exaggerating dynamics (of course within that vital concept of relative dynamics discussed earlier in this guide) in particular for passages marked mezzo piano or softer should also be a top priority. This is because it is easier for most musicians to quickly learn how to sight-read softer than it is to learn how to project a louder sound. However, exaggerating soft dynamics does not apply to pizzicato passages for strings. They should generally be played much louder than the printed dynamic particularly when other strings are playing arco and winds or a piano are part of the sight-reading group. Remember that the combined effect of several bowed, blown and piano sounds played pianissimo can only be matched by a forte or even fortissimo pizzicato. The overall effect will still be a soft one! In other words, depending on the texture of the on-going music, playing a pizzicato marked pianissimo at forte or more may in fact be what the composer intended. Only in the case of tutti pizzicato passages should soft dynamics be followed. Forte or fortissimo passages should be played such so as to be able to hear clearly what all the others are playing. Avoid the trap of starting a note with an accent unless so marked. Remember that an unaccented note should be started just under the marked dynamic and immediately pulled, pushed or blown into that dynamic. If an accent is indicated, agree with the other players on how to differentiate the various types of accents, for example, a forte-piano from a sforzando.

Other Important Musical Priorities

After these top three priorities, the others will depend on the instrument you are playing and the level of your training and experience.

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Notice that playing all the notes correctly is not a top priority for sight-reading. Those notes you are able to grab in the heart of battle should of course be played as beautifully and as much in tune as possible. This will be much easier to do by following the Golden Rule and always listening to and imitating the other players in the chamber music group. Note that the top priorities of staying within the rhythm, the dynamics and the harmonic structure will often require that you leave out or change notes.

Another priority that is important for most musicians that feel uncomfortable with sight-reading is "*space-time*". This is not a reference to Einstein's theory of relativity but to the ability to feel and sight-read the inherent space-time that lies between notes, groups of notes, and melodic phrases. Paradoxically, this *space-time* is far more important to making beautiful music, whether sight-reading or performing it, than merely playing the notes. Watch the page in front of you but learn to relax and enjoy the others in the sight-reading or performing group. Let fly what is going on. Let the music soar. Remember that music is essentially spatial in nature; it takes place between and beyond the mere notes. The nature of sight-reading does not demand perfection. Accidents do occur. Don't be frustrated by them. Enjoy the group and share the joy of tasting a piece of music for the first time.

Choosing players and music for the sight-reading session:

The most important ingredient for an enjoyable sight-reading session is *good group vibrations*, that is, good psychology: all participants must be able to feel at ease and to enjoy themselves. Tension, nervousness, disputes or any other type of negative feelings, if they arise, should immediately be resolved. This will rarely be a problem for groups that meet regularly. They have learned to adjust to each others musical idiosyncrasies, and can readily reach compromises. However, the musical horizons of the members of such groups can only expand if they also sight-read with other musicians and in other groupings.

It can be of great benefit to learn from others that know more than we do. It can be of equally great benefit to help others increase their knowledge and experience. However, matching the choice of music to the experience levels of such mixed groups is obviously the most vital ingredient to assure a successful session. To break the ice, start with a fairly easy generally familiar or standard work. As mentioned in the problems section above, early renaissance music can sometimes serve this purpose although it usually requires that the counting ability of all participants is at an advanced level. Music from the early classical period, J.C. Bach for example, is also an excellent way to warm up. If some of the parts to the music contain technically challenging portions consider giving those parts out ahead of time. Do not pick pieces that will obviously frustrate any of the participants. Twentieth century atonal music is not to everyone's taste.

Avoid critical statements. You are not rehearsing! You are there to have a good time and to make sure all the others will have a good time. Be encouraging. If someone just sight-read a beautiful lick, nod approval. Help each other whenever possible. Slow down tempi to make it easier for another player to get through a critical passage. Skip over the beat or the measure that someone miscounted to keep the music flowing. Never assume that a mistake is someone else's fault. Many mistakes occur because good *group vibrations* are missing. Just merely thinking critical thoughts can affect the group's confidence level and lessen the group's enjoyment.

Speaking while sight-reading

The ability to speak *while playing* is a skill that all string players and pianists that want to sight-read well must learn. Since they are playing from a score, pianists should take the lead in helping lost players find their way back into the fold by telling them where to rejoin the group. In complex music, it is wise for all the players in a group to signal every rehearsal number or letter to each other. The ability to speak while playing is also of great benefit if the group has difficulty imitating each others style. It is easy to simply state suggestions such as: "Let's try it much softer (or louder); Can you match my sound?; Let me breath; Give me some rhythmic freedom here; Let's use shorter notes; Let's play more legato; I think I have a counter melody- let me cut through; Let's take the second ending; That was so beautiful, let's repeat".

Leading, signaling and eye contact

As a general rule, the highest voiced instrument should assume the predominant leading and cue-giving role in a sight-reading session without a pianist: the first violin in an all string group, the flute in an all wind group, the first violin in a mixed string wind group. If a pianist is involved he should assume that role. Of course, if any other player has familiarity with the music or obviously has more sight-reading experience the highest voiced instrument or the pianist should share the role. Signaling is of great help. It can be done verbally: "Who starts on the down-beat? Who has an up-beat? (When a pianist is involved, he should always state how each movement of the work being read begins or restarts); I've got a pick up here; Hold it, bad page turn; I start with triplets." The benefits of frequent eye contact throughout the sight-reading session cannot be overemphasized. It is not a skill that comes naturally. It requires that the eyes which are struggling to sight-read unfamiliar notes look up briefly from the page of music to meet the eyes of another musician and then find their way back to the right spot on that page. This skill can and should be practiced alone by frequently focusing the eyes on some other object in the room and refocusing on the music being played. Paradoxically, this skill, once learned, reduces significantly any tensions or fears that sight-reading often causes. It creates vibrant warmth among the players of the group and magically makes it far easier to play well together, that is, it helps to create *good group vibrations*.

Avoiding breakdowns

It is a very good idea to talk about how to handle breakdowns before the sight-reading begins unless the group wants the session to turn into a rehearsal. Breakdowns can be frustrating if there are too many of them. They often cause a debilitating erosion of group confidence. Obviously, they make it difficult to enjoy the music being sight-read. Some players prefer to first "taste" an unfamiliar work as a whole. Generally speaking this should be the goal of sight-reading. Others want to correct mistakes immediately or repeat a passage that was not played as well as they feel it should have been. A prime example of this is the wish of a player to repeat a solo or, in extreme cases of *Soloitis*, a single note that was misplayed. Therefore reach a compromise and decide what the group as a whole prefers. Sometimes individual parts can be rhythmically confusing causing one or more players to loose their way. Depending on the kind of music, it is often possible to listen your way back into the flow. If you are lost and can't find your way back, simply ask the others, verbally or by some other signal for the next downbeat or the next rehearsal number: "I need a downbeat"; or "Tell me when we get to letter G". If it becomes obvious that someone is lost but is not immedi-

ately aware of it, count out loud the on-going beats or tell the lost player when the next rehearsal number is about to be reached. When pianists are involved they usually can assume the leading role in keeping the group from breaking down since they have the entire score in front of them. Sometimes page turns can cause breakdowns. Practice fast page turns on your own. Scan each movement of the work to be sight-read *before* you start playing. If you spot awkward page turns prepare for the problem by planning ahead to leave out notes just before you turn. Most importantly, learn to continue counting beats and measures in your head whenever you have a page turn. It then becomes easy to catch up with the group after completing the page turn by scanning over the missed measures.

This guide to enjoyable high quality sight-reading of chamber music is by no means comprehensive. It does cover most of the major problems that get in the way of reaching the highest level of enjoyment and gives some valuable suggestions to make it easier to reach that level. As explained at the beginning of this

guide, sight-reading in its broadest sense is inherently a part of all types of music making including practicing and performing. Improving your sight-reading skills will automatically reduce the practice time required to learn well any piece of music by making practicing far more efficient. These skills will also improve the performance of a practiced piece by giving the performer or performers the tools needed to adjust spontaneously to whatever the musical performance environment demands.

In summary, here again is the one simple thought that all enthusiasts of sight reading chamber music, including those that are just beginning to experience this greatest of musical joys, should always have in the back of their minds for every single note they are playing:

ALWAYS MAKE THE OTHERS SOUND GOOD
By listening to and imitating all the others
in the group at all times.

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New Recordings

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

String Quartets

Jean CRAS (1879-1932) No.1, BNL 112860 / Peter Maxwell DAVIES (1934-) Nos.3 & 4, Naxos 8.557397 / Einar ENGLUND (1916-99) Qt, BIS 1197 / Charles GOUNOD (1818-93) Qt in a, BNL 112860 / Ladislav KUBIK (19??-) No.1, col legno AU 031 814 / Albert MAGNARD (1865-1914) Op.16, Accord 465 789 / Joao OLIVEIRA (1959-) Peregrinacao, Electera 1242 / Harold SCHIFFMAN (1928-) Nos.1 & 2, North/South Recordings 1039 / Jean SIBELIUS (1865-1957) 33 Small Pieces, BIS 1376 / Ludwig SPOHR (1784-1859) Nos.24-5, Marco Polo 8.225306 also Nos.32 & 34, Marco Polo 8.225307 / Luis TINOCO (1969-) Qt, Electera 1242 / Antonio VARGAS (1951-) Monodia, Electera 1242 / Jacob WEINBERG (1779-1956) Op.55, Naxos Milken Archive 8.559457 / Nikolaus ZMESKALL (1759-1833) 2 Qts in g & D, Hungaroton 32332

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743-1805) Six String Quintets (2Vc) Op.10, G.265-70, Brilliant Classics 92503 / Georg DRUSCHETZKY (1745-1819) Three String Quintets (2Vla), Hungaroton 32290 / Louis GLASS (1864-1936) Sextet

Op.15, CPO 777 062 / Jeremy ROBERTS (1934-) Croquets for Str Trio, Lorelt 118

Piano Trios

Enrique Fernandez ARBOS (1863-1939) Tres Piezas, Verso 2017 / Marco Enrico BOSSI (1861-1925) Opp.107 & 123, Hungaroton 32293 / Robert CASADESUS (1899-1972) Nos.1 & 2, Millesime 20044 / Ladislav KUBIK (19??-) Trio, col legno AU 031 814 / Paul MORAVEC (1957-) Mood Swings, Scherzo & Variations, Arabesque 6791 / Camille SAINT-SAENS (1835-1921) Nos.1 & 2, Accord 465 811

Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

Arnold BAX (1883-1953) Piano Quartet, Meridian 84519 / Thomas DUNHILL (1877-1946) Piano Quartet Op.16, Meridian 84519 / Einar ENGLUND (1916-99) Piano Qnt, BIS 1197 / Louis GLASS (1864-1936) Pno Quintet Op. 22, CPO 777 062 / William HURLSTONE (1876-1906) Piano Quartet Op.43, Meridian 84519 / Theodor KIRCHNER (1823-1903) Pno Qt Op.84, Ars Musici 1384 / Roger QUILTER (1877-1953) Gypsy Life for Pno, Str Qt & Kb, Meridian 84519 / Camille SAINT-SAENS (1935-1921) Pno

Qnt Op.14 & Pno Qnt Op.41 Hyperion 67431

Winds & Strings

Frits CELIS (1929-) Elegie for Fl & Str Qt, Electera 1266

Winds, Strings & Piano

Paul JUON (1872-1940) Trio Miniatures Op.18 for Cln, Vc & Pno, Edition Hera 02113 / Robert KAHN (1865-1951) Trio for Cln,Vc & Pno Op.45, Edition Hera 02113 / Marc MATTHYS (1956-) Camel Caravan for Fl, Pno Qnt & Kb, Electera 1266 / Paul MORAVEC (1957-) Tempest for Clarinet & Piano Trio, Arabesque 6791

Piano & Winds

Amedee RASETTI (21759-99) Trios for Fl, Bsn & Pno Op.13, MD&G 603 1332 / Camille SAINT-SAENS (1835-1921) Tarentelle for Fl, Cln & Pno also Caprice danois et russes for Pno, Fl, Ob & Cln,m Op.79 Hyperion 67431

Winds Only

Lluis BENEJAM (1914-68) Quintet in E, La Ma de Guido 2063 / Ladislav KUBIK (19??-) Octet, col legno AU 031 814

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The Chamber Music of John Ireland & Herbert Howells *(continued from page 1)*

In 1904 he succeeded Holst as organist and choirmaster at St. Luke's, Chelsea, a post he held for twenty years while also serving as a professor at RCM. After a disastrous marriage to a young pianist, Dorothy Phillips, at age 48 for one year, he chose to be listed as a bachelor in "Who's Who." However another young pianist, Helen Perkin, to whom he dedicated his Piano Concerto, helped him survive this debacle. He taught composition at the RCM from 1920 to 1939, and among his pupils were Benjamin Britten, E.J. Moeran, and Alan Bush.

He loved the countryside and sea, and had actually moved to Guernsey in 1940 when the abrupt collapse of France and subsequent occupation of the Channel Islands by the Nazis forced an urgent evacuation. He finally settled in the Sussex downs, which he also loved, surrounded by 'the quiet haven of a few intimate friends', as Eugene Gossens described. In 1906 he began a close friendship with a Welsh writer, Arthur Machen, who brought out the Celt in Ireland, and whose pagan mysticism is reflected in some of his later orchestral works. Ireland remained fond of poetry since childhood and composed songs throughout his career. William Mann, a critic, once said that his songs are "perhaps the most important between Purcell and Britten." Ireland once stated that a fortune teller said he would live to age 81, but he hung on until age 82. For the last 15 years of his life he produced little and his earlier insecurities joined him again in old age. He felt his music out of favor in the harsher climate of post-War years.

Ireland's Chamber Music Compositions

There are two early string quartets, written in 1897. (An article on the string quartets appeared in Vol. XII. No.2, Summer 2001 of *The Journal*).

Intermezzo

Allegretto con grazia ♩ = 60

As he was still under the influence of Stanford, his *Sextet* for clarinet, horn, and string quartet was thoroughly Brahmsian. (He in fact had been stimulated by hearing the Brahms clarinet quintet in London.) It was written in 1898 but was not published until 1960 due to Ireland's sensitivity to a few words of criticism by Stanford. The opening to the third movement is given in the example to the left.

In the latter half of the first decade of the 1900's the new musical influences of Debussy and Ravel and Stravinsky swept through Britain and John Ireland embraced newer ideas of color and chromaticism to develop his own style. Many of the younger British composers embraced these new ideas, as well as the second Viennese school, despite the conservatism of Stanford.

In 1907 in the second competition for new composition sponsored by our eponymous W.W. H. Cobbett, Ireland's *Phantasie Trio in a minor* came in second behind Frank Bridge's. (They were both exactly the same age.) In it he managed to parallel the sections of a single movement 'fantasy' with the exposition, development, recapitulation and coda of a conventional sonata. The *Vivace giocoso*, example to right, is taken from the Trio.

21

Vivace e giocoso.

Vivace e giocoso. ♩ = 132-138.

p **leggiere**

f **subito**

A year later, he did better; his *Violin Sonata No. 1 in d minor* won the Cobbett prize over 133 other entries. In three movements, this work was his first major success, and was published, and performed. He revised it in 1917 and again in 1944. It was a highlight of his career, with youthful vigor and confidence, coupled with moments of introspection and poignancy.

Much like Frank Bridge, sensitive Ireland was affected by the horrors of World War I. Both produced works altered in character. Ireland's *Violin Sonata no. 2 in a minor* won a *Times* competition in 1917. It was dedicated to Albert Sammons, 30, a violinist who, with his pianist, first performed it in uniform. The resonance with wartime sentiment led to a leap from relative obscurity to popularity. The above example is from the second movement of *Violin Sonata No.2*.

His single movement *Trio no. 2 in E major* was also completed in 1917 and is strikingly tragic in character, a free variation of opening material. Edwin Evans described "it bears the impress of the grim contrast between the season and the wastage of war at the very springtime of life". The example (left) is from the one movement *Trio No.2*.

A final work of this period was his *Cello Sonata in g minor* performed in 1924 at Salzburg for the International Society for Contemporary Music. Three movements are connected thematically by material from the cello's opening. At first listening to and playing through the score of this work, I found it confusing, very difficult, and rather scattered. However, upon several listenings to a recording, I have come to enjoy the unique romantic style Ireland was developing. It is tender yet nostalgic in the slow movement.

In Ireland's *Trio no. 3 in E major*, he finally produces a four movement work, written in 1938. It was dedicated to William Walton and first heard in a BBC broadcast. Again the first movement material is connected and transformed in the other movements. It expresses most fully his mature style and fluidity. I find that his development has proceeded even further than before and his maturity and clarity of style have improved, over earlier works, which seemed a bit scattered to me. This work has a delightful scherzo with a gigue-like melody, galloping along. The slow movement has sensuous interplay between string parts over lush harmonies. The finale is jaunty and robust. Unfortunately, I have not found a copy of the work yet.

His last extended chamber piece was a *Fantasy Sonata* for clarinet and piano, composed in 1943 for clarinetist Frederick Thurston. He now reutilized the one movement *Fantasy* in a compact structure. Like the third *Trio*, it demonstrates his improving mastery of style, and, despite his own style of chromatic lyricism, is structurally tighter than earlier works.

Herbert Howells



Herbert Howells (1892-1983) came from extremely humble origins. He was born in Gloucester, the youngest of six children. His father was a businessman who later went bankrupt. However, Herbert confidently announced his intent to become a composer at a very early age. Through the beneficence of a wealthy landowner he was able to study at Gloucester Cathedral. In his two years there with Brewer he also befriended fellow composer, Ivor Gurney. In 1912 he won an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music and studied composition with Stanford and Parry, who became a close friend. Howells was one of the most brilliant and gifted pupils and his *Mass in the Dorian Mode* was sung on Stanford's recommendation at Westminster Cathedral while he was still at the college. Stanford considered him "my son in music". He persuaded young Howells to enter the first Carnegie Trust composition competition in 1916 and his *Piano Quartet, Op. 21* won an award. (an example from the third movement of this work appears at the top of the next page.)

Howells' first appointment was as sub-organist at Salisbury Cathedral, but in 1917 he developed a heart condition and was expected to live 6 months. He chose to embark on an experimental treatment which

(Continued from page 9)

over three years (1917-1920) restored him to health. During this time he was supported by the Carnegie Trust, who hired him as an editor of Tudor manuscripts. This enforced leisure allowed him to develop his mature style and be very productive. Most of his chamber music dates from this period

Herbert Howells: Piano Quartet Op.21, 3rd Movement

Several different influences are incorporated in his music. The most important is modal counterpoint derived from Tudor models. Elgar and Vaughan Williams had a great impact on him. Although he admired Ravel and French sensuous harmonies, he remained rooted in and influenced by the English countryside. After this early period of productivity in chamber music, and somewhat discouraged by the criticism of his first two major orchestral commissions, he immersed himself in teaching and produced few substantial works. Although affected by the human suffering and waste of World War I, it was a personal tragedy in 1935, the death of his 9 year old son from polio, which reawakened his creativity. From 1936 to 1962 he taught at St. Paul's Girls School in Hammersmith, where he succeeded Holst. In 1937 he was awarded a doctorate at Oxford and later awarded honorary degrees at Cambridge and St. John's. In 1950 he became a professor at London University

Fantasy String Quartet

Herbert Howells, Op. 25

Moderato, assai espressivo (♩ = 72)

Howells' Chamber Music Compositions

His Fantasy String Quartet, Op. 25, written in 1916, utilizes the Fantasy, a Elizabethan-Jacobean device, to knit together in one piece several themes in different tempi and moods, popularized by the composition competitions of W.W. H. Cobbett (1847-1937). It won a prize in 1917.

Howell's *Phantasy Quintet* for clarinet and string quartet, Op. 31, is another work in this style. Composed in 1919, it won a Carnegie award. He described the quintet as having 'a mystic quality' which pervades it from the initial theme. A contrasting, tender falling theme is later introduced by the clarinet. A short subsidiary idea arises in puckish merriment, but fades rapidly. Polyrythms abound in a more vigorous section, and then the music gradually softens to end with a serene beauty. An example from the slow movement, *Lento*, is given at the top of the next page.

In Gloucestershire, his third string quartet, is difficult to date. The first version was lost on a train. A second version, completed in the 1920's, also disappeared, but was reconstructed in the 1960's from a set of parts. Even when it was first performed is a mystery, probably not until after 1930

Other chamber works of the same period include *Lady Audrey's Suite* (1915) for string quartet, *the first Violin Sonata in E, Op. 18* (1917-19), *Three Pieces, Op. 28*, for violin and piano, a *Second Violin Sonata in Eb, Op. 26*, which was never published and withdrawn, perhaps because it resembled his Piano Concerto, which was criticized and he was so sensitive to criticism. His *Third Violin Sonata, Op. 38*, was written in 1923, inspired by Howells' first view of the Rocky Mountains on a trip to Canada. Howells later wrote an *Oboe Sonata* (1942) and in 1946 a *Clarinet Sonata* and *A Near Minuet*, for the same instruments, possibly conceived as another movement. He also wrote many songs, including settings to poems by his personal friend, de la Mare.

He had a lifelong love of church music, a perfect niche for his style of languor, choral texture, chromatic sensuousness. He essentially created an ecclesiastical style of music for the 20th century. Some descriptions of his music mention an underlying elegiac sense of transcendence and loss. His church music fit his reflective, introverted and nostalgic persona. He rose early to prominence, then seemed to wane in the 1920's; it seemed he did not achieve what was expected of him. He became known to the next generation only by his liturgical legacy. Posthumously, a rediscovery of his earlier works reveals more of his range and depth.

Lento, ma appassionato rit. a tempo

Clarinet in Bb
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello

rit. a tempo, ma un poco rubato

2

più marc. *mf*

più marc.

f più marc.

17 *f più marc.*

cresc.

tr

21

Discography: CDs:

John Ireland
Chamber Works: Chandos 9377/8

Herbert Howells

Rhapsodic Quintet Sonata #3, et al - Naxos 8.557188
In Gloucestershire; Dyson Three Rhapsodies
- Helios CDH 55045

Published Works I Could Find:

John Ireland

Augener: Cello Sonata.
Masters Music: Phantasie Trio and Violin Sonata #1.
Stainer & Bell: Sextet, Trio #2
Boosey & Hawkes: Fantasy Sonata for Cln & Piano

Herbert Howells

Stainer & Bell: Rhapsodic Qnt
Stainer & Bell: In Gloucestershire string quartet
Stainer & Bell: Piano Quartet.
Novello: Fantasy Quartet
Novello: Oboe Sonata,
Novello: Clarinet Sonata.

Sources

:Sleeves to several CDs by Paul Spicer, Lewis Foreman, and Andrew Burn.
Grove's New Encyclopedia of Music & Musicians
The Music of John Ireland by Fiona Richards
John Ireland: a catalogue, discography, and bibliography, compiled by Stewart R. Craggs

Zdenek Fibich's Chamber Music (continued from page 3)

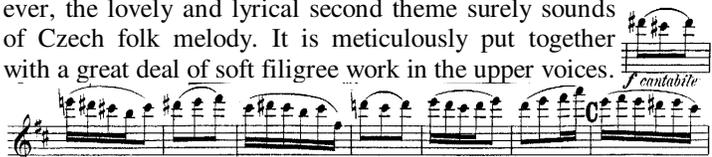
(Continued from page 3)

the movement develops, careful listening reveals that here and there, snippets of such melody are present as the example below clearly illustrates.



(This is certainly one of the main things which separates Fibich's music particularly from that of Dvorak's. He is not, so to speak, wearing his nationality on his sleeve. Unlike Dvorak, who wholeheartedly promoted Czech nationalism in his music, Fibich, as the child of a Czech father and an Austro-German mother and the recipient of a thorough German and French education, held a more ambiguous position with regard to Czech nationalism. However, in this case Fibich appears to have been quite fond of the motif and perhaps may have even over used it in what is otherwise quite a fine movement. In the development of the main theme, the first violin is given a long 16th note passage which, if played loudly, will ruin the movement and completely cover the long-lined melody in the lower voices, who are generously treated, melodically speaking.

The main theme of the magnificent second movement, *Adagio*, is solemn and prayer like, sung by all the voices in a choral fashion. Here there is nothing which can be pointed to as particularly Czech except perhaps for the Bohemian choral tradition. However, the lovely and lyrical second theme surely sounds of Czech folk melody. It is meticulously put together with a great deal of soft filigree work in the upper voices.



But the second violin and viola are often the carriers of the song whilst the first violin circles softly above them. The cello is used only as a pedal bass.

The main theme to the *Allegro scherzando* which follows is a whirling dance characterized more by energy than by melody.



In the second part of the scherzo, the first violin is given a characteristically Bohemian fiddle passage as shown in the example to the right.



The somewhat more relaxed trio section is a folk-song which provides good contrast.

In the finale, *Allegro vivace*, the main theme, as well as the second subject, sound of Czech folk music. After a whirling, pesante introduction of descending 16th notes in the first violin over open string G & C double stops in the cello, the buoyant and syncopated main theme is presented:



At this point, Fibich doesn't get involved with any kind of extensive development but quickly introduces the more lyrical second theme:



In the coda, the whirling, pesante introduction reappears to close the movement. In sum, this is quite a fine quartet, comparable say to Dvorak's Op.51. Nowadays, one rarely hears any Dvorak quartet other than the ubiquitous American and occasionally the Opp.105 and 106. It is a shame that works as fine as the Op.51 do not get an outing. The same can be said Fibich's Second Quartet. The parts are available from Merton Music and there is a recording of it on Orfeo CD 439 981 A.

The third and final work that Fibich wrote for string quartet was his **Theme & Variations in B Flat Major**. While one can find hundreds, if not thousands of examples, of a movement within a string quartet which is a theme and set of variations, there are very few stand-alone works which are in this format. The two best which come to mind are Joseph Rheinberger's superb Op.93 and Arthur Foote's delightful Op.32. Mikolajus Ciurlionis' *Theme & Variations in b minor* is also engaging and Samuel Webbe's Haydenesque *Variations on Adestes Fideles* deserve mention. Mendelssohn's variations, which are usually published with the scherzo, were not intended as a stand alone work. Fibich's were composed in 1883, but like his First String Quartet, was not published until after his death, in this case 1910. The theme, as is normally the case, sounds like it is based on a folk tune, but it is not at all lyrical in nature.



Nine relatively short variations and a coda follow. The beginning variation mostly features the first violin in quick leggiero pas-

(Continued on page 13)

sages. The second, based on triplets, is also quick, though not fast. The third, *Andante espressivo*, emphasizes the chromatic nature of the theme and is especially appealing. The fourth, *Allegro*, is a march which is followed by a slower but closely related *Allegretto*. In the sixth variation, *Vivace*, the cello is given the lead. The music is more thrusting and muscular than *vivace*. Next comes a *Larghetto* in D flat, nice but unremarkable. The same could be said of the next two variations, *Allegretto* and *Andante con moto*, competent but they do not stand out as particularly original or fine. The Coda, marked *Lento non troppo ma espressivo*, restates the theme but then allows the cello to sing a long and lyrical solo before a quiet, moody conclusion. Although it is a good work, it is too long to be an encore at 11 or 12 minutes, and not really strong enough to be presented on its own, as are the Rheinberger or Foote. The parts, to the best of my knowledge, are out of print but it has been recorded on the same Orfeo CD mentioned above.

Fibich's last piece of chamber music is also his best known, the **Quintet for Piano, Violin, Clarinet, French Horn & Cello, Op.42**. There can't be many works for this striking combination and as a result, Fibich authorized a version for piano and string quartet, no doubt with both a view toward having the music performed and to sales. The unusual nature of the ensemble explains why it is not heard in concert in the original version, and sadly, lack of imagination is why the second version is not heard. How often does one hear a piano quintet in concert that is something other than the inevitable Schumann or Dvorak? Occasionally we may be treated to the Brahms or more rarely the Shostakovich but beyond these, very few other piano quintets are heard in the concert hall today.

The quintet was composed in 1893 and first performed in 1894 with Fibich at the piano. Before discussing the work in detail, it must be noted that during the last decade of his life, Fibich was romantically involved with Anežka Schultzová who was first his student and later his mistress. He wrote over 400 short piano pieces for and about her in what has come to be known as his "love diary." These miniatures describe his moods, impressions and reflections. Many of the ideas found in the Quintet were borrowed from his piano miniatures and can be found in all of the movements, save the scherzo, which he "plugged-in" from an 1871 piano sonata. The first movement, *Allegro non tanto*, immediately showcases Fibich's gift for melody. (It is the only movement which calls for the brighter sound of a clarinet in A. The B flat clarinet is used in the other movements.) The main theme is sunny and optimistic. The opening phrase is given to the clarinet and completed by the violin before all the voices partake in it.

Clarinet
in A. *espi. viv.*



Violin *Allegro non tanto.*



No clouds appear to shade this lovely movement and the second theme, closely related in mood, also expresses geniality and well-being. While I prefer the original version for its tonal variety and the more attention-getting effect of the horn, the version for traditional piano quintet is surprisingly effective and, in its own way, quite as good as the original. The second movement, *Largo*, is

clearly the emotional center of gravity of the Quintet. The lovely and serene main theme is introduced in its entirety by the piano.

Largo

Pianoforte. *p molto cantabile.*



After this, the horn is given the theme while the clarinet and violin play the quick 32nd note passages. Not only does Fibich make very fine use of each of the instruments within the ensemble, but he also manages to give the violin, cello and piano cadenzas which in no way draw attention to themselves.

The third movement, *Scherzo mit wilden humor*, was written some 22 years before the rest of the Quintet but it is impossible to discern this from the music. Originally for solo piano, it is an extraordinary movement in many ways. The instrumentation is so marvelous that one is forced to wonder whether the piano version was threadbare. The main section comes close to being an energetic hornpipe dance.

Pianoforte.



There are two, rather than one, trios and each is fine in its own way. In the first, the horn is given a long and effective solo before the others join in what is a dignified and more sedate interlude. The scherzo is then repeated before the second trio is played. Here, the clarinet and cello are given the lead in presenting the attractive but slinky theme which is in d minor.

Allegretto vivace.



The triumphant main theme to the boisterous, superb Schumannesque finale, *Allegro con spirito*, is filled with joy and felicity.

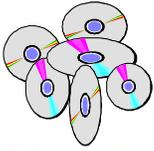
Allegro con spirito.

Pianof.



This Quintet, along with his Piano Quartet, is an unquestionable masterpiece in both versions, although the original is more striking because of the added tonal color obtained from the winds.

Of Fibich's five chamber works, two are masterworks and two of the other three are extremely good. Though they are not always Slavic and never as overtly Slavic as Dvorak's or Smetana's, they are nonetheless as fine and deserve to be heard in concert.



Friedrich Gernsheim: String Quartet No.2

Siegfried Karg-Elert: Chamber Music for Winds



Friedrich Gernsheim (1839-1916) is a composer whose music was held in the highest regard by critics during his lifetime. No less an authority than Wilhelm Altmann, perhaps the most important chamber music critic of all time, writes in his *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler* that Gernsheim's quartets are poetic and of a high intellectual content. But Gernsheim also had the misfortune to be born within 6 years of Brahms. A misfortune because, in what is surely an extraordinary phenomenon, virtually every composer in the

German-speaking countries born within a decade either side of Brahms were so eclipsed by him that their reputation and music virtually disappeared when that era was over. Names such as Rheinberger, Reinecke, Kiel, Bruch, Dessoff, and Herzogenberg, among many others, come to mind. Strangely, it did not even seem to matter if their music showed no influence of Brahms, as was the case with the first four mentioned. This probably explains why they (Kiel excepted) are better known than the last two whose music, in varying degrees, shows the influence of Brahms.

Gernsheim, somewhat of a piano and violin virtuoso as a child, was eventually educated at the famous Leipzig Conservatory where he studied piano with Ignaz Moscheles and violin with Ferdinand David. During the course of his life, he held academic and conducting positions in Cologne, Rotterdam and finally Berlin. He used his position as a conductor to advance the cause of Brahms' music. The two, while not close friends, carried on a correspondence for many years during which it was clear that Brahms had considerable respect and admiration for Gernsheim's work. An accolade which was, in Brahms' case, no mere flattery as Brahms never hesitated to be harsh and critical as his relationship with Herzogenberg among others clearly indicated.

Gernsheim composed in every genre except opera. Chamber music comes to nearly one fourth of his total output. He wrote 5 string quartets, 2 piano quintets, 2 string quintets (one with 2 Vla, one with 2 Vc), 3 piano quartets, a quintet for flute and string quartet, 2 piano trios and a number instrumental sonatas. **String Quartet No.2 in a, Op.31** was published in 1875 approximately two years after Brahms' Op.51 quartets appeared. It is expertly performed on **Audite CD 97.503** by our new members, The Mandelring String Quartet in what may well be its first recording. The first movement, *Allegro*, characterized by its elegiac mood of restless energy, clearly shows the influence of Brahms to the extent that there is even a near quote of one of the better known phrases from the Op.51. Still the music retains its originality. The lovely *Adagio* which follows is free of Brahms. The passionate middle section is especially impressive. Next is a muscular and very dramatic scherzo, *Molto vivace ed energico*, of which the second theme is especially fine. A short, dreamy trio section releases the tension and provides excellent contrast. The rhythmic finale, *Allegro moderato e molto energico*, seems to begin where

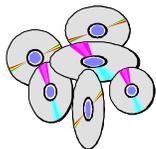
the scherzo has left off—it almost seems part of the same movement right down to the introduction of the lovely and lyrical second theme. There is also an ingenious fugal section in the middle of this captivating movement. Despite the influence of Brahms that one can clearly hear in the first movement (but not elsewhere), I find this is an absolutely first rate work, well worth the price of the CD by itself. But also on disk is a superb performance of Brahms' Op.51 No.1, which only provides further evidence as to why the Mandelring are in the front rank of performing quartets before the public.

Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933)

Karg-Elert trained at the Leipzig Conservatory and abandoned the career of concertizing pianist for that of composer. He attracted the attention of Grieg and Reger and with the latter is considered in the first rank of early 20th century composers for the organ. A while back we reviewed Karg-Elert's *Jugend Quartet* for piano, clarinet, flute and horn, a very nice piece. Here on this **Hungaroton CD 32166**, we have two more excellent works of chamber music for winds. The fact that Karg-Elert



also learned to play the flute, clarinet and horn must to some extent be the reason. The first work, **Trio in d for Oboe, Clarinet & English Horn, Op.49 No.1** dates from 1902. The quiet first movement, *Introductio*, has, especially at movement's end, a soft organ-like quality which in some ways permeates the entire work. Lazy and dreamy it meanders along showing some influence from the French impressionists, Debussy in particular. The second movement, *Doppelfuge*, takes J.S. Bach as its point of departure. It is a lively and exquisite double fugue, linearly developed. As close as the tonality approaches the early 18th century, there is some immaterial quality which gives it a slightly more modern touch. The Baroque provides the title to the third movement, *Sarabande*, but the mood and tonalities more closely resemble the first movement with its impressionist use of chromaticism. The lively finale, *Rigaudon et Musette* is bright and clever, sounding a bit of Jean Français. This short work, though of no great emotional depth, is a charming gem. The second piece on disk is the **Quintet in c for Oboe, 2 Clarinets, Horn & Bassoon**. The first of the three movements, *Leidenschaftlich*, while the most substantial, does not exactly open in a passionate way. The music is lively and full of humor, reminiscent a bit of *Til Eulenspiegel*. The parts are masterfully handled and the thematic material is very rich in ideas. The quiet, valedictory second movement, *Interludium*, has a lovely chorale quality to it. The music is characterized by a sense of serenity. The lively finale, simply marked *Finale*, has a bouncy rhythmic theme which carries the high spirited music along effortlessly. A slower and dreamy middle section provides a nice contrast before the return of the main theme and then the coda with its teasingly jarring penultimate chord. These are two fine works for winds, mostly in an impressionist and neo-classical vein. Also on disk are two sonatas for clarinet and piano. A worthwhile CD.



Tres Piezas Originales en Estilo Español for Piano Trio By Enrique Fernández Arbós



Those who remember **Enrique Fernández Arbós (1863-1939)** recall that he originally made his name as a virtuoso violinist and later as one of Spain's greatest conductors. After studying violin in Madrid, he continued his studies in Brussels under Vieuxtemps and later in Berlin under Joachim. He enjoyed a considerable solo career

but was also engaged as concertmaster of several orchestras including those of Berlin, Boston and Glasgow. In 1904 he was offered the position of principal conductor of the Madrid Symphony, a position he held for nearly 35 years. Its not clear how many chamber works Arbós wrote (New Grove lists none) but **Verso CD 2017** may be presenting all of them. Along with the **Tres piezas originales en estilo español, Op.1** there is a *Tango* for violin and piano and *Pieza de concurso* for cello and piano.

Arbós emphasized that his three pieces in the Spanish style were original, meaning they were of his own creation and not taken from Spanish folklore. Well, be that as it may, no one is going to guess this. Spanish—and delightful—they certainly are. Although the music is highly stylized and perhaps approaches the archetypical, it is more than salon music. The work dates from the late 1880's during which time he was still in Germany. Although the

official title is “Three Pieces”, Arbós usually referred to the work as the Spanish Trio. The first piece or movement is marked *Bolero*. Remove any thoughts you may have of Ravel because there is nothing here sounding like that except the quick rhythmic drum-beat triplets used as the back drop. Lively and formal, yet romantic, the music is captivating from first note to last, a real show piece, which like the other two movements, could stand on its own. This is followed by an atmospheric and moody *Habenera*. The dramatic dance follows the typical rhythmic pattern we have to come expect, especially after *Carmen*, from this kind of dance. But the slower middle section has some very interesting chromatic piano writing and other passages in the strings which create a kind of “nouvelle-cuisine” from a famous old standard dish. The deeply Spanish finale, *Seguidillas gitanas*, begins classically as you might expect. If this is Arbós' original creation, why does everyone seem to believe they have heard this gorgeous music somewhere else? Long-lined lyrical melodies in the strings are accompanied by perky angular rhythms in the piano. One is reminded a bit of the music in Albeniz's piano suite, *Iberia*. This joyful music makes you want to dance. Listeners will have real trouble keeping their toes still. Unfortunately, so will performers because this music is rhythmically complex if its not in your blood. This is a very attractive CD.

No piano trio group, amateur or professional, should be without this music, and happily, it is in print. (Belwin Mills). Performing groups should seriously consider this work for a change of pace where a lighter work is called for. A sure fire audience pleaser.

The Mandelring String Quartet Joins The Cobbett Association



We are very pleased to welcome the Mandelring String Quartet as new members. After winning a number of prestigious competitions including the ARD at Munich, the Evian, and the Reggio Emilia, the Mandelring quickly established an international reputation which has taken them to most of the world's great concert halls. They are regular invitees to such festivals as Lockenhaus, Montpellier, Montreal, Rheingau, Schleswig-Holstein and Salzburg music festivals.

For many years Sebastian (violin) and Nanette Schmidt (violin) have played string quartets with their brother, Bernhard (cello) and Roland Glassl (viola). They rehearse on a former wine estate in a room once housing the wine press. It provides them with the space and quiet necessary for inspiration in their work. *“To make music freely and under our own autonomy enables the most exciting discoveries; each year expanding our repertoire; sharing the stage with other musicians, but above all; to feel how the love of playing and the intense experience of music can sweep the public along, that is what makes playing in a quartet a dream career”* say the four musicians.

Exciting musical discoveries are often to be found in the quartet's concerts, a number of which they have also recorded. Amongst their CD recordings they count the works of the early Romantic French composer George Onslow; Friedrich Gernsheim, a close friend of Brahms, and the string quartets of

Berthold Goldschmidt (1903-1996). One of the quartet's Onslow recordings was nominated for the Cannes Classical Award and the Goldschmidt was awarded the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik. We review their recording of the Friedrich Gernsheim String Quartet No.2 in a, Op.31 in this issue's Diskology section on the preceding page. It is an honor, indeed, to have a quartet who shares our interest in the greater repertoire join our ranks!

FEATURED IN OUR THIS ISSUE



Fibich



Ireland



Howells



Gernsheim



Karg. Elert



Arbos

ON SLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL



HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANEYEV, REINECKE

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV