

THE
CHAMBER MUSIC
JOURNAL

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

Franz Krommer: The Op.18 String Qts

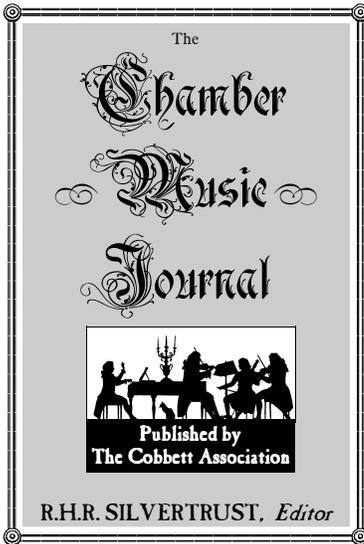
***Dohnanyi's Sextet for Clarinet,
Horn, String Trio & Piano and
The Third String Quartet***

Joachim Raff: Piano Trio Nos. 3 & 4

Volume XVII No.3

Autumn 2006

ISSN 1535 1726



Directors

Dr. Ronald Goldman
Professor Vincent Oddo
R.H.R. Silvertrust, MA (Oxon), JD

Board of Advisors

Dr. Nicholas Cunningham, Sally Didrickson, Dr. Ronald Goldman, Dr. William Horne, Dr. Bertrand Jacobs, Veronica Jacobs, Peter Lang, Andrew Marshall, Professor Vincent Oddo, Professor Keith Robinson, Dr. James Whitby, John Wilcox

The Chamber Music Journal is published quarterly by The Cobbett Association, Incorporated, a Not for Profit Organization. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome and will be handled with all reasonable care but responsibility cannot be assumed for such materials. Return postage must be enclosed to insure any return of same. Subscription is available by joining The Cobbett Association, Inc. Back issues of The Chamber Music Journal are available at a cost of \$6 per issue.

Offices of The Cobbett Association are located at 601 Timber Trail, Riverwoods, IL 60015, USA. www.cobbettassociation.org is our website address. ☎: 847 / 374-1800. Please remember when calling that we are located in the Central Time Zone of the United States, 6 hours earlier than GMT (Greenwich Mean Time, i.e London) E-mail address: cobbettassociation@sbcglobal.net

The International Cobbett Association is dedicated to the preservation, dissemination, performance, publication and recording of non-standard, rare or unknown chamber music of merit. To this end, The Association maintains a copying and lending library for its members. Contributions of such music are warmly appreciated.

The contents of The Chamber Music Journal are under copyright and are not to be reprinted or reproduced without the express written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. ISSN 1535-1726



The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



Herzogenberg & Brahms

I looked forward to Armin Hochbauer's article about the chamber music of Heinrich von Herzogenberg, because I too enjoy the music to the extent I know it. Still, I couldn't help but be astonished at some of Mr. Hochbauer's comments regarding Herzogenberg's relationship to Johannes Brahms. It is difficult for me to agree that some of Herzogenberg's music "could have been written by the master", as he states. Or that Herzogenberg wrote some music "that is every bit as good" as Brahms. To one who has played and heard quite a lot of both composers' work, the difference in staying power is unmistakable. Personally, I feel no astonishment that Herzogenberg is so much less well known.

That, of course, is a matter of opinion. What is not a matter is opinion is Hochbauer's statement that "Brahms himself grudgingly recognized this fact." I should like very much to know the basis for this statement, for my extensive reading in the Brahms literature informs me of no such thing.

Brahms considered H v H to be a pleasant, not untalented student of one of his Viennese friends, the then-conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic, Otto Dessoff. Brahms did not dislike him. On the contrary, he helped H v H get his first work published (by Rieter-Biedermann, in 1864), recommending him as someone who had written "some quite nice songs" and who "had a lively wish to see them printed". H. would be willing to defray the cost himself, Brahms wrote, hardly the arrangement Brahms would later make on behalf of another composer whose work he really admired -- Antonin Dvorak. Throughout his life, Brahms scrupulously avoided making any judgments about Herzogenberg's music despite the importunings of Elisabeth Herzogenberg, the wife who Brahms was indeed very fond of.

Brahms had been her piano teacher in Vienna, shortly after his arrival there, and found himself smitten by the very beautiful, tremendously talented 17 year-old aristocrat. He asked her former piano teacher to take her back, famously unwilling then or later to become entangled. She eventually married Heinrich Picot de Peccaduc, Freiherr von Herzogenberg, a far more suitable connection. Brahms ran into the couple in Leipzig ten years later. Elisabeth renewed the friendship, and now Brahms accepted gladly. He became a regular inhabitant at their home when concertizing in Leipzig, as witnessed by the Herzogenberg Brahms letters which make up the most enchanting volumes of all his correspondence. There is no question

but that Brahms loved Elisabeth at some level of love; to infer, however, as Hochbauer does, that envy fueled Brahms's reaction to H v H's music says more about Hochbauer than about Brahms. Brahms was unenthusiastic about his music long before Elisabeth was on the scene.

Nor do I find it correct to say that Brahms had at times a hostile attitude towards Herzogenberg. Rather, he was annoyed at being opportuned (by Elisabeth) to give an opinion of the various works sent to him for his approval, and in fact found a variety of the most ingenious ways to avoid saying anything without being offensive. Anyone who knows that Brahms was untactful (he was, at times), might want to read Brahms's replies and marvel at the variety of gentle ways he found to fend off requests for his judgments. The letters have been translated into English, and a good music library should have them.

It is also difficult to credit Hochbauer's statement that Brahms's attitude towards Herzogenberg was generally distant. After Elisabeth's untimely death, Brahms continued to write to him. The letters they exchanged are quite touching.

Therein lies the problem. Great composers write their music out of an inner need to express something, regardless of who approves. If their music is going to touch us, it has to come from them with intensity. Can one imagine Brahms, or Beethoven, or Shostakovich, or any other truly great composer, writing a piece of music and worrying about what another composer would have thought of it? Brahms surely did ask his friends for their opinions, at times; but he ignored their concerns far more often than he took them into account.

A composer needs to find his own voice. That is a cliché, and true. H v H, for all his abilities, for all that he wrote very nice music which is well worth spending an evening with, never reveals a voice that says to us "Of course! That's Herzogenberg"! This is not to put him down. It is to say simply that Herzogenberg's place in music has nothing now, nor had then, to do with Johannes Brahms. Whatever his due, it will come to him on his own merits, or lacks thereof.

Styra Avins
Ashbury, New Jersey

Armin Hochbauer Replies:

I would point out that my article was primarily about two pieces of chamber music for winds,

(Continued on page 4)

ERNST VON DOHNANYI: THE THIRD STRING QUARTET AND THE SEXTET FOR CLARINET, HORN, STRING TRIO AND PIANO

by R.H.R. Silvertrust

In the first three parts of this series, the author discussed Ernst von Dohnanyi's Piano Quartet, Piano Quintet Nos.1 & 2, Hochzeitmarsch for Piano Quintet, String Quartet Nos. 1 & 2, String Sextet and his Serenade for String Trio.



Dohnanyi's **String Quartet No.3 in a minor, Op.33** dates from 1926 and was composed some twenty years after the Second Quartet. More than twelve years separate it from his previous chamber work, his Piano Quintet No.2. Throughout this long period, he only composed seven works. Dohnanyi was not a prolific composer, in large part, because of the many other music

activities which took up his time. He became music director of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra and took it upon himself to promote the music of other Hungarian composers such as Bartok and Kodaly. Bartok was later to comment that Dohnanyi was "providing the entire musical life of Hungary." If this were not enough, throughout most of the 1920's, he continued to give solo concerts and to conduct both at home and abroad, including annual tours to the United States, where in 1925 he was appointed chief conductor of the New York State Symphony Orchestra.

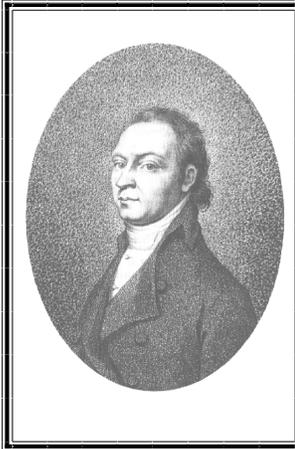
By the time Dohnanyi composed **String Quartet. No.3 in a, Op.33**, he was well into middle age and the landscape of European music had changed radically from that which had existed before World War I. He employs a different tonal language than that in his earlier works. Though he does not venture into the realm of atonalism, he clearly moves beyond traditional tonality.

(Continued on page 8)

Franz Krommer The Op.18 String Quartets

by Jiri Hladovic

When it comes to listings in the standard references, we find that **Franz Krommer** (1759-1831), is short-changed. *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* merely gives an erroneous guess at how many chamber works he wrote and then repeats a gossipy slur attributed to Schubert. In *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, you will not even find his name listed. Wilhelm Altmann, writing in the first volume of his *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler*, remarks that those who have the good fortune to play the Op.24 quartets will be astounded at their quality. Unable to review any other quartets, there being no modern editions at the time he was writing, Altmann simply concludes that Krommer, a superb violinist, knew how to write for string instruments and as a result what he wrote sounds brilliant. The *New Grove* tells us that Krommer was one of the most successful composers in Vienna at the start of the 19th Century. This is certainly supported by the fact that his works were frequently republished throughout Europe and even in the United States. The *New Grove* further states that Krommer "...was regarded (with Haydn) as the leading composer of string quartets and as a serious rival of Beethoven." In 1813, writing in the *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* (The New Historical & Biographical Dictionary of Composers), the highly respected music critic Ernst Ludwig Gerber stated that Krommer's works possessed, "enough original musical ideas, wit, fire, harmonic novelty and striking modulations to inspire the interest of music lovers everywhere."



Franz Krommer, as he has always been known outside of the Czech crown lands, was born Frantisek Kramár in the Moravian town of Kamenice now part of the Czech Republic. He emigrated to Vienna in 1785 at the age of 26, by which time

(Continued on page 5)

Joachim Raff's Last 2 Piano Trios

by Larius J. Ussi

In the first part of this article which appeared in the last issue of *The Journal*, the author discussed Raff's life and dealt with his Piano Trio No.1, Op.102 and No.2, Op.112

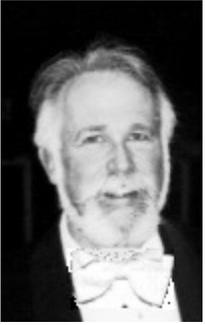
Some seven years passed before Raff returned to the genre of the piano trio again. By then, he had been living in Wiesbaden for nearly 15 years and had, despite the odds, been able to support himself and his family, albeit, by churning out innumerable "potpourris" for piano based on popular opera themes, in order to capitalize on the almost insatiable home-music market. As I noted in the first part of my article, after his death, it was this, more than anything else, which served to destroy his reputation as one of the leading composers of the mid 19th century. It did not, however, during his lifetime harm him. In fact it helped, to some extent, make him a household name. As a known composer, it served him in good

(Continued on page 10)

IN THIS ISSUE

Letters to the Editor	2
Dohnanyi: The Chamber Music—Part 4.....	3
Joachim Raff: Piano Trios—Part 2.....	3
Franz Krommer's Op.18 String Quartets.....	3
At the Double Bar.....	4
New Recordings	7
Diskology: Cassado, Vainberg, Turina, Romberg et al...13	

At The Doublebar



This is the time of the year that we send our third and final renewal notice to individuals who have not as yet renewed. While there are always a few people who respond because they have simply forgotten or misplaced the previous notices, the majority do not. Mostly, when we hear from those not renewing, it is because they tell us they are no longer able to play—certainly a very unpleasant occasion indeed. Occasionally, a family member or friend writes to tell us that so-and-so has passed away. These are things which come to all, and, as sad as they are, we can take comfort that it is these situations which account for the majority of the members we lose. But like any organization that periodically loses members on a regular basis, we must replace these losses or eventually we will cease to exist. While our present situation is by no means critical, nonetheless, I would like to remind readers that we are always looking for players and listeners who are interested in exploring the wider world of chamber music and would appreciate your referrals.

On a more optimistic note, I would like to draw readers attention to the happy fact that against all expectations, new recordings continue to appear on a regular basis of chamber music which is not in the basic repertoire. It is exciting to see younger chamber ensembles taking the initiative to strike out in these directions rather than making the umpteenth recording of the Beethoven quartets. Both our Diskology and New Recordings sections bear witness to this good news.

I want to thank Professors Ussi and Hladovic for their articles. As Professor Ussi notes, at least two, if not three, of Joachim Raff's piano trios ought to be part of the repertoire. As for the string quartets of Franz Krommer, while many may not be strong enough for the concert hall, most ought to find their way into the collections of amateurs where they will certainly provide many evenings of enjoyment. Lastly, Dohnanyi's 3rd string quartet and his marvelous Sextet, discussed in the installment of my article, ought to become known by all.—Ray Silvertrust, Editor

Herzogenberg & Brahms (*Letters to the Editor continued from page 2*)

piano and strings which Herzogenberg wrote and not about his life. I provided a brief biographical sketch for the sake of completeness which I believe is, despite Professor Avins' remarks to the contrary, uncontroversial. Professor Avins, who is the author of "Johannes Brahms Life & Letters" (Oxford Univ. 1997), takes me to task for suggesting 1) That Herzogenberg was as good as Brahms 2) That Brahms was critical of Herzogenberg's music, and 3) That Brahms was at times hostile and distant.

To the first point, I would answer that nowhere in my article do I say that I think Herzogenberg is the equal of Brahms. I wrote that he was a master composer in his own right and that, in my opinion, some of his works were the equal of some of Brahms'. Although Professor Avins is astonished by my opinion, I am not alone. Wilhelm Altmann, one of the most respected chamber music authorities of all time, puts forth a similar position in his essay on "Herzogenberg" (1904). Additionally, he highly praises the chamber works both in "Cobbett's Cyclopedea" and in his own "Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler." Many other commentators have since held this opinion. She is, of course, right to say it is a matter of opinion. But it is not mine alone.

Was Brahms critical of Herzogenberg's music? Was he at all hostile or envious of Herzogenberg? Professor Avins states that in her extensive reading, she finds no evidence of this. Her book presents a selection, but by no means all, of Brahms' letters. What one selects can make a tremendous difference in what picture one forms. I was unable to find, for example, Brahms' elegant but sarcastically subtle letter to Herzogenberg of August 20, 1876 in which he acknowledges the receipt of Herzogenberg's Op.23 Variations on a Theme by Brahms. Nor could I find Brahms' letter to Herzogenberg of December 5, 1885 in which he very sarcastically thanks Herzogenberg for sending him his Op.50 Symphony. Bernd Wiechert, in what is at present the definitive study of Herzogenberg ("Heinrich von Herzogenberg, Studien zu Leben und Werk", Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997), writes that Brahms' attitude of hostility and rejection toward Herzogenberg was understandable, especially in light of his deeper feelings toward him, expressed in a letter to Elizabeth, dated January 15, 1887 (again missing from Professor Avins' selection of letters). In that letter, Brahms commented that more than in the case of other composers, with regard to Herzogenberg's works, he had to think of himself and was reminded of himself. Wiechert demonstrates that in Herzogenberg, Brahms was forced to see, with great discomfort, a mirror image of himself. Herzogenberg came closer than just about anyone else in producing works like Brahms that were perhaps the equal of those from which they took their inspiration. (I only mention three examples, but there are others)

Professor Avins, as other past writers, suggests that Brahms was friendly to Herzogenberg. But Wiechert's research shows this assessment is based on earlier biographers who failed dismally in thoroughly examining the relationship between the two men. He pointedly notes that the number of letters that went back and forth between Brahms and Elizabeth far exceeded those exchanged by Brahms and Herzogenberg. While Brahms generally referred to Herzogenberg by the friendly nick-name Heinz when he wrote to Elizabeth (with whom he was on intimate terms), he kept his distance from Herzogenberg himself and his letters to Heinrich are, for the most part, frosty and his opinions of Herzogenberg's compositions could not, except in a few cases, be called kind. None of this constitutes a friendship in the normal sense of the word.

Certainly Professor Avins has every right to regard Brahms as a superior composer to Herzogenberg, an opinion which I myself, and which nearly everyone else, I would assume, holds. But it is quite another thing to write, "Can one imagine Brahms, or Beethoven, or Shostakovich, or any other truly great composer, writing a piece of music and worrying about what another composer would have thought of it?...H v H, for all his abilities, for all that he wrote very nice music which is well worth spending an evening with..." To say this is not a put down is somewhat ingenuous. And, of course, one does not need to "imagine" Brahms worrying about what other composers thought of his music because there is plenty of documentary evidence showing that he did worry.

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 Op.18 String Quartets of Franz Krommer

(Continued from page 3)

he was already a violinist of repute. Between 1785-95, he worked in Hungary on a number of different estates where he held positions. In 1795, he returned to Vienna, and remained there for the rest of his life. Eventually he rose to the position of Court Composer (Hofmusiker) of Franz I. He wrote well over 300 compositions which were, at one time or another, published. Perhaps as much as half of it was chamber music.

It is known that Krommer wrote at least 76 string quartets. For a long time, there was only one in print, Op.5 No.1. (At least it was a good one.) It was available from Musica Antiqua Bohemica. As of late, however, it has been out of print. In the mid 1990's, Edition Kunzelmann published a new edition of the three Op.24 quartets with which Altmann was much taken. In addition, Accolade has recently brought out a new edition of Op.5 Nos.2 and 3. These are excellent works and strong enough to be performed in concert. Also Merton Music has released entirely new editions of Op.85 No.1, Op.10 Nos.1-3 and 72 Nos.1-3, as well as photocopies of Op.85 Nos.2 & 3. Of all of these, only the Op.85 quartets have good part-writing for the lower voices, but unfortunately, the photocopies of the early Pleyel edition used are of extremely poor quality and not worth the trouble to play off of, especially in view of the fact that there are no rehearsal numbers or letters. As for the six quartets of Opp.10 and 72, they are among Krommer's weakest, at least in regard to part-writing, and cannot be mentioned in the same breath as the Opp.5, 24 or 85 quartets. To write that not of all Krommer's 76 quartets are of good quality is in no way to criticize Krommer. The same holds true for Haydn. One must remember the background of the times against which these works were written. This was a time before television, radio, computers and ipods. One of the major sources of entertainment was concerts. And it must be remembered that nearly all of the educated classes, at least in Austria, played instruments, hence the almost insatiable demand for new works. Under such circumstances, composers, in an attempt to capitalize on this demand, often hurriedly produced works which did not rise to the level of great art.

In general, as regards to most of Krommer's string quartets, one can readily see his own violinistic skill level by examining any of the first violin parts. While they do not usually require a virtuoso, the player choosing to sit at the first desk had best have a very fine technique. As Wihlem Altmann writes in his *Handbuch für Streichquartetspieler*, violinists can always learn something from Krommer. The fact that the first violin is given more of the work than the others is certainly typical of all of the works being written at this time, including those of Mozart and Haydn.

Allegro vivace

Measures 1-16 of the first violin part, starting with a forte (f) dynamic and including a piano (p) section between measures 11 and 16.

The Op.18 quartets, which have recently been published in an all new edition by Kunzelmann, the first since the original Artaria edition of 1800, were composed sometime in 1799 and dedicated to Count Maruice de Fries, presumably an amateur fancier. They are, like all of his quartets written before 1800, mostly in concertante style. After a brief fanfare of double stops, the opening theme to **Opus 18 No.1 in D Major** is stated by the first violin. (see example at left) It is a fetching tune full of possibilites. Krommer was a gifted melodist and had no problem coming up with appealing melodies. It is mostly an affair for the first violin, but the

second violin and viola are put to good use while the cello is restrained to the basso part throughout. The *Menuetto, allegro*, which comes next, has vague touches of Mozart and Haydn, but it is also true that this kind of music was "in the air of Vienna", a common shared language. Hence, it was probably not their influence. In any event, the music sounds fresh and not imitative. In the minuet, all of the voices contribute to the chordal structure of the energetic melody, whilst in the trio, the first violin is given a solo. The third

movement is a lovely *Adagio*, which though not marked as such, is a theme and two variations. The gorgeous main theme (on right) is given a rich harmonic support by the other voices. For the second variation, Krommer selects the cello which he has, for the most part, kept in the background. The Haydnesque finale, *Allegro*, is not in concertante style, and all of the voices contribute throughout on a more or less equal basis. In 6/8, the ingratiating main theme trips along, without any stormy interludes, from start to finish. This is a sound work which will give amateurs pleasure but I think not strong enough to be revived in concert.

Adagio

Measures 6-12 of the Adagio movement, starting with a piano (p) dynamic and including a trill (tr) in measure 6.

This is a sound work which will give amateurs pleasure but I think not strong enough to be revived in concert.

The Op.18 String Quartets of Franz Krommer

Continued from page 5

Opus 18 No.2 in A Major begins with an almost threadbare theme consisting of a series of downward notes which sound rather unpromising, but then in one of those famous sudden and original modulations for which Krommer (and the Wranitzky's) were justly famous, the music takes off. There doesn't seem to be much of a second theme so much as an extended development of the first theme. The cello, in particular, is given some very nice opportunities, some of them going up into thumb position. The sec-

ond movement, a very well put together *Adagio*, again takes the form of a theme and set of variations. Both the second violin and cello are given a variation for their own as solos and are generally treated well throughout. The *Minuetto, Allegretto* which follows is typical Krommer. It is clear that it could not have been written anywhere else but in Vienna during the classical period. It is also clear that the composer is a contemporary of Mozart and Haydn, and that the composer uses features common to both of them. Nonetheless, the music does not sound like theirs. One finds the usual touches, here and there, which someone who is familiar with Krommer, will recognize as his trademark. The net result is an original-sounding movement. The same can be said of the finale, *Presto*, which starts off in a rather ordinary way. It is as if Krommer has to work his way into it, but once he does, there are many fine moments. For some reason, looking at the cold page (right) simply does not convey the brilliance that the composer is able to achieve with an incredible economy of means. The music simply has to be heard. While it must be admitted that the first violin part is rather dominant in this movement, the other parts, though generally supportive, are quite important, for it is in their use that Krommer creates many of his fresh and unusual effects. This is a stronger work than Op.18 No.1, and while it does not rise to the level of the Op..5 quartets, it still could be performed in concert as an alternative to a Haydn or Mozart.

Menuetto
Allegretto

thematic material, but again, all three of the other voices are quite necessary to bring it off. But the running 32nd note passages in the first violin part are unnecessarily florid. They do not contribute anything to the music other than giving it a slightly busy quality, which mars what is otherwise a very nice movement. An excellent, somewhat muscular, Haydnesque *Menuetto, allegretto* (see above) follows. All four equally take part. The trio section (right) is quite unusual. Typical for Krommer, he takes an etude-like passage and then turns it into something quite special and original. Here, Krommer shows off his exper-

of each part here, vis a vis the thematic material, is entirely equal, and as such, cannot be called a concertante movement. Krommer sticks to the pattern established in the other quartets, and places an *Adagio* next. Here, the first violin is given the

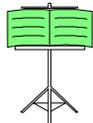
Trio

The third quartet of this set, **Op.18 No.3 in E Flat Major**, begins with a *Vivace*. The etude-like main theme consists primarily of scale passages. Though fairly pedestrian to be sure, Krommer is able to take this ordinary stuff and turn it into something quite interesting. The theme is hardly memorable, but the overall working out of it is excellent. The importance

tise in cross string bowing at speed, and the first violinist is required to have a technique to match. The finale, *Presto*, is without doubt the best of all the movements from any of these quartets. The melodies are memorable and appealing, the part-writing is good and, as always with Krommer, there are many little original and telling touches that make the music very attractive. Unfortunately, the fine opening theme really requires a score—which I do not have—to elucidate the music. Structurally, the music resembles the type of which Haydn was fond. However, the music itself sounds more like George Onslow (*who had yet to write his Op.1—ed.*). The off beats in the cello are absolutely required to give some idea of the music. There are so many original episodes that, rather than attempting to describe them, I have

asked your editor to include a lengthy sound-bite from this movement so that you can hear it for yourself. Just remember, you are listening to music from the 1790's. This movement alone would justify having Op.18 No.3 played in concert, but considering that the other movements are also good, it is fair to say that this is probably the strongest of the set. It deserves to be heard because it shows what other contemporary and original thinkers were able to accomplish alongside of Haydn and Mozart. And one ought not to ask whose works are better so much as to be thankful that there is yet another composer from this period who could, at times, rise to a very high level and give us works of great originality and freshness.

©2006 Jiri Hladovic & The Cobbett Association



New Recordings



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

String Quartets

Edgar BAINTON (1880-1956) Qt in A, Dutton Epoch 7163 / Arnold BAX (1883-1953) No.1, Dutton Labs 9762 / Fritz BRUN (1878-1959) No.3, Musiques Suisses MGB 6238 / Willy BURKHARD (1900-55) No.1, Musiques Suisses MGB 6228 / Adolf BUSCH (1891-1952) Quartetsatz, Telos 111 / Hubert CLIFFORD (1904-59) Qt in D, Dutton Epoch 7163 / Edric CUNDELL (1893-1964) Op.27, / Dutton Labs 9762 / Peter Maxwell DAVIES (1934-) Nos.5-6, Naxos 8.557398 / Friedrich FESCA (1789-1826) Op.1 Nos.1-3, Hungaroton 32302 / Hans GAL (1890-1987) Nos.1 & 4, & Variations Op.60b, Meridian 84530 / Cecil Armstrong GIBBS (1889-1960) No.7, Dutton Labs 9762 / Alberto GINASATERA (1916-83) No.3, Bridge 9192 / Reinhold GLIERE (1875-1956) Nos.1-2, Hungaroton 32401 / Alexander GRETCHANINOV (1864-1956) Nos.3-4, MD&G 603 1388 / John HARBISON (1938-) *The Reawakening*, Bridge 9192 / Heinrich KAMINSKI (1886-1946) Qt in F, Telos 111 / Wolfgang RIHM (1952-) No.10 & 12, col legno 20227 / Joseph Guy ROPARTZ (1865-1953) Nos.2-3, Timpani 1099 / Othmar SCHOECK (1886-1957) No.2, Musiques Suisses MGB 6238 / Erwin SCHULHOF (1899-1942) No.1, Telos 111 / (Antoni STOLPE (1851-72) Variations, Pro Musica Camerata 039 / Janos TAMAS (1936-95) Qt, Musiques Suisses MGB 6233 / Sergei TANEYEV (1856-1915) Nos.5 & 7, Northern Flowers 9934 / Viktor ULLMANN (1893-1944) No.3, Telos 111 / Moisei VAINBERG (1919-96) No.8,

Melodiya 10 00979 / Johann WENDT (1745-1801) *Mozart's Don Giovanni*, Orfeo 665 061 / Richard WERNICK (1934-) No.5, Bridge 9192

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Max BRUCH (1838-1920) Octet Op.Post., Naxos 8.557270 / Luigi CHERUBINI (1760-1842) Qnt (2Vc), CPO 777187 / Ernst von DOHNANYI (1877-1960) Sextet in Bb, Hungaroton 32300 / Joseph EYBLER (1765-1846) Str Trio Op.2 & Str Qnt Op.6 No.1, CPO 777 025 / Mihaly MOSONYI (1815-70) Sextet in c / Hungaroton 32300 / George ONSLOW (1784-1853) Qnt (2Vc) Opp. 19 & 51, CPO 777 187 / Ludwig SPOHR (1784-1859) Qnt (2Vla) No.7, Sextet Op.150 and Potpourri for 3 Vln, Vla & Vc, Op.22, Naxos 8.555968

Piano Trios

Arthur BUTTERWORTH (1923-) Nos.1-2, Dutton Epoch 7164 / Cesar FRANCK (1822-90) Op.1 Nos.1-2, Pavane Deluxe 7500 / Tom INGOLDSBY (1957-) Trio for Vln, Vla & Pno, Meridian 84534 / Moises VAINBERG (1919-96) Op.24, Hanssler Classic 98.491 / Alexander VEPRIK (1899-1958) *3 Folk Dances*, Op.13b, Hanssler Classic 98.491 / Pancho VLADIGEROV (1899-1978) Op.4, Hungaroton 32301

Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

James DEMARS (1952-) Pno Qt, Summit 443 / Alain LEFEVRE (196?-) *Un ange passe & Lylatov* for Pno Qnt, Analekta 2.9276 / Jesus RUEDA (1961-) *Bitacora* for Pno Qnt, col legno 20208 / Jan SLIMACEK (1939-) Qt, Cesky Rozhlas

0173 / Antoni STOLPE (1851-72) Sextet, Pro Musica Camerata 039 / Ernst TOCH (1887-1964) Pno Qnt Op.64, Talent DOM 2929 70 / Moisei VAINBERG (1919-96) Qnt, Op.18, Melodiya 10 00979

Winds & Strings

Elizabeth MACONCHY (1907-94) Qnt for Ob & Str Qt, Dutton Labs 9762 / Wolfgang RIHM (1952-) 4 Studies for Cln & Str Qt, Ars Musici 1385 / Janos TAMAS (1936-95) Qt for Cln & Str Trio, Musiques Suisses / Peter ZAGAR (1961-) Quintet for Cln & Str Qt, Stovart 0032

Winds, Strings & Piano

Arnold BAX (1883-1953) Trio for Vln, Cln & Pno, Naxos 8.557698 / Ernst KRENEK (1900-91) Trio for Cln, Vln & Pno Op.108, Hungaroton 32363 / Ferdinand RIES (1784-1838) Op.28, Trio for Vln, Cln & Pno, CPO 777 036 / Istvan SZIGETI (1952-) *Why Not* for Fl, Vc & Pno & *Vari-jatekok* for Fl, Ob, Vc & Pno, Hungaroton 32360 / Louise TALMA (1906-96) *The Ambient Air* for Fl, Vln, Vc & Pno, also *Episodes* for Fl, Vla & Pno, Naxos 8.559236

Piano & Winds

None this issue

Winds Only

Edgar ELGAR (1857-1934) Harmony Music Nos.1-5, Six Promenades, 4 Dances, 5 Intermezzos, *Evesham Andante*, *Mrs Winslow's Soothing Syrup*, Andante con variazione all for wind qnt, Chandos 241-33 / Johann WENDT (1745-1801) *Sussmayer's Der Spiegel von Arkadien* for qnt, MD&G 301 1380

ERNST von DOHNANYI: THE THIRD STRING QT AND THE SEXTET

(Continued from page 3)

It is interesting to read the commentary on this quartet by various critics. Donald Tovey, for example, writing in *Cobbett's Cyclopaedia*, states that it is not as serious a work as the Second Quartet. Of the first movement he writes that some concessions are made to recent (then 1929) tendencies in harmony. He calls it impassioned, but not tragic because of the coda which "lets off steam." Of the second movement, he suggests that the tempo marking *Andante religioso* is merely a warning not to play too fast rather than any claim that the music is solemn. He characterizes the finale as having high, satiric spirits. Music Professor Edward Eanes, in his jacket notes to the 1995 recording of the work by the Audubon Quartet on Centaur CD#2309 describes the quartet as "thoroughly Romantic in concept." He finds the chorale theme to the second movement creating an atmosphere of quiet reflection. The finale, *Vivace giocoso*, is a brilliant exercise in technical bravura and ensemble virtuosity. Wilhelm Altmann, writing in his *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler* thinks the Third Quartet more Hungarian than the first two quartets. He speaks of the opening movement as being impassioned but warm and also with a lyrical love theme. Altmann considers the variations of the second movement to be outstanding and based on a chorale. The finale is joyful and full of humor but clothed in modern tonality. These examples show there is a divergence of opinion as to this work and I would warn readers therefore to regard my comments in this spirit and to listen to the sound-bites on our website to make up their own minds.



The big first movement, *Allegro agitato e appassionato*, begins with a short, traditionally tonal introduction before the main theme is given in full. (on left at number 1) It is edgy and anxious, and characterized by a sense of nervous energy. One has to really listen quite closely to find what small traces there are of the Dohnanyi of the earlier works. There are some jarring moments in the fast middle movement of the Second Quartet which perhaps serve as signposts to this newer tonal language which is employed here

the introduction of the second theme but it is a partial restatement of the introduction. There is no development and the second theme, which is slower and more lyrical, is introduced in a distant key. (see below) As in the Second Quartet, he spends a great deal of time interposing the two themes, and then almost experimentally taking parts of each and grafting them together. It is the subsequent development sections which are tonally the most wayward. I do not hear much that could be considered Hungarian from a melodic standpoint although the first theme is treated to some rough-hewn rhythmic sequences that are perhaps Hungarian. I would agree with Tovey that the music is mostly impassioned and this is because the first theme dominates. But the fact that there is no sense of the tragic does not mean this is not serious music. The agitation almost rises to the level of violence and the coda does not "let off steam" so much as add a sense of finality, for it, too, is quite passionate. Professor Eanes' sense of the romantic must be very different from mine. I would describe this music, including the more lyrical second theme, as post romantic and, though unquestionably tonal in the traditional sense, primarily harsh and uncompromising in nature. Although the second theme is surely more lyrical, I would not consider it a warm love song. Certainly alongside of the first theme, it appears quite gentle. On the whole, this music is neither uplifting nor tragic, but perhaps best characterized by the word Angst, which so characterized the Zeitgeist between the two world wars.



A bridge passage, at first appears to be

A bridge passage, at first appears to be

The theme upon which the variations to the second movement, *Andante religioso con variazioni*, is based is, without doubt, a chorale. Here, we can find a direct link to the earlier Dohnanyi. The treatment and mood are very similar to the opening theme of the final movement to the Second Quartet. Certainly, the statement of the theme is solemn though not funereal. The variations, to be successful, could not be expected to maintain such a mood throughout, and they don't. The first variation, *Piu Andante*, is a quiet affair, tonally wandering, which does not make much of an impression, especially by comparison to next two rather impressive

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

variations. The second variation, *Molto vivace*, is an upbeat, and at times, an almost virtuosic scherzo. The next variation, *Tempo di "piu andante"* is a powerful statement of theme played over a droning rhythmic ostinato of $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$. This is probably the high point of the movement, which then closes with a restatement of the theme. Here, Dohnanyi has retreated a bit. This movement is not so dissimilar from the Theme and Variations of his Op.10 String Trio that were for the time (1904) very advanced tonally.

The concluding *Vivace giocoso*, though it does have a certain edginess to it, is not harsh but mostly light and upbeat. The main theme is based on a rising chromatic motif.

The image shows a musical score for the concluding *Vivace giocoso* movement. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and the tempo marking 'Vivace giocoso'. The music starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff continues the melody with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third staff concludes the piece with a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a piano (*p*) dynamic.

I would agree with Tovey, rather than Altmann, that the first movement is much more advanced tonally than the last two. Although, Dohnanyi uses sudden chromatic modulations throughout, and although the music sounds “modern” compared to Brahms, the tonalities stay within the bounds of those still writing tonal music, before the First World War.

This is a very fine quartet although it is true that it does not seem to have the same depth and weight as his Second. Still, it is an important work, very typical in mood of the period from which it comes. That we do not hear it in concert is really too bad. There is, as noted, at least one recording of it and the music is in print from Editio Musica Budapest.

Almost another decade passed before Dohnanyi wrote his last piece of chamber music, a **Sextet in C Major, Op.37**, dating from 1935. In the interim, Dohnanyi's musical activities continued to expand. In 1931 he became musical director of Radio Hungary, and in 1934, he was reappointed director of the Budapest Academy of Music. Coupled with his other activities, this was simply too much and he started to suffer from illnesses which eventually forced him to cut back on his career as a concert pianist.

The Sextet is for the unusual combination of clarinet, horn, piano, violin, viola and cello. This fact has virtually insured it would be little heard in concert—a great pity because it is a masterwork. From a tonal standpoint, the Sextet is much more conservative than the Third Quartet but it still shows Dohnanyi alive to the musical developments in the Europe of the 1930's, the jazz, in particular, which was gaining a real foothold throughout western and central Europe.

The opening *Allegro appassionato* is a big and, at times, turbulent movement, almost twice the size of the others. It begins with a marvelous heroic theme introduced by the horn. It has a dramatic, epic quality to it, combined with a sense of suspense. The overall mood is not particularly sunny and although the music gathers itself, from time to time, in attempts to break through the clouds toward the light, these surges are never entirely successful, and it always falls back into a darker and less optimistic realm.

The second movement, *Intermezzo, adagio*, begins quietly and in a dark vein with the piano playing a rising series of chords, piercing the longer-lined string parts. In no way is it an intermezzo in the Mendelssohnian sense. After some while, a menacing, highly dramatic slow march is introduced. One might imagine a gang of prisoners being paraded to the spot where their execution was to take place. Although the movement ends quietly, no sense of tranquility is created.

The third movement, *Allegro con sentimento—presto, quasi l'istesso tempo—meno mosso*, is a loose set of variations. The main theme, very Brahmsian, is entrusted to the clarinet, which presents it in its entirety. The first variation has the piano elaborating upon it quietly. The horn is used tellingly to create a Brahmsian sense of weight in the slower variations. The horn, as the movement draws to a close, brings back the opening theme of the first movement which leads, without pause, directly to the brilliant finale, *Allegro vivace, giocoso*.

Primarily written in the style of the European jazz of the 1930's, the mood is playful and yet at the same time, the treatment is also serious. As one wag has written, the music sounds like an inebriated Viennese hotel band's haphazard attempt to render Gershwin. Incredibly, right in the middle of the jazzy theme, a lopsided Viennese waltz is interjected, as if the musicians had suddenly become confused and lost their way, but continued nonetheless in a desperate attempt to save face. (One comes across this same treatment in Hindemith's *Overture to the Flying Dutchman as Sight-read by a Spa Orchestra at 7 am*) The coda is an extraordinary combination of the jazz elements, the waltz and the heroic opening theme.

This is an extraordinary work of the first magnitude. Here are four very striking movements, each quite different and yet interrelated. The part writing could not be better and one feels that nothing could be more natural than a work for piano, string trio, horn and clarinet. Of course, the exact opposite is true. Be sure and listen to the sound-bites of this fine work. Recordings are available.

This brings to an end my article on Dohnanyi's chamber music. Several masterworks are to be found therein, and while not every work rises to this highest level, all of them are good and show the trademark of a master composer. I hope you will take the time to acquaint yourself with them.

(Continued from page 3)

stead when he actually produced serious works of the first order. It took the critics and general public by surprise and helped to catapult him forward into the front rank of important composers. By 1870, the time at which he composed his **Piano Trio No.3 in a minor, Op.155**, he had "arrived", so to speak. It was published in 1872. In the opening movement, marked *Quasi a capriccio, Allegro agitato*, Raff takes his time before stating the main theme. He begins in a highly unorthodox fashion, not with an introduction or with something which at least sounds like an introduction, but with music which appears as if it is beginning in mid-phrase. (see right) The piano opens with an a minor (tonic) chord. Immediately, the cello enters with a phrase which sounds like it will introduce the theme, but instead the violin and then the piano quickly imitate this utterance. The music does not really seem to move forward but, nonetheless, suspense is built up, especially by the downward falling passage which does, in fact, lead to the agitated and passionate main theme. Surprisingly, we find that this unusual beginning, which is treated as a caprice, is the kernel of the main theme (see below). But then, as the movement progresses, we hear that Raff has virtually used every snippet of the caprice, each for a different and an important part of the material in the the *Allegro*. For example, the downward falling passage is used not only as a development tool but also as a bridge passage on more than one occasion. One cannot but admire the masterly way in which this is done. It is simply perfect. The only theme, whose roots cannot be found on the opening page, is the charming second theme that Raff introduces before developing either. This is, in my opinion, an absolutely outstanding movement, one of the finest in the romantic literature. It is highly creative, and, at one and the same time, full of passion and drama, but also

filled with lovely, lyrical melodies, ingeniously juxtaposed between the fiery counter-melodies. Beyond this, it has excellent part-writing and a thrilling coda. I would like to give an example of the lovely and lyrical second theme which provides a superb contrast to the theme you see on your left, but unfortunately space does not allow it and I recommend that you avail yourself of the new sound-bite service now being offered so that you can hear it. Although it is a big movement, it is not a measure too long, considering all of the wonderful material and fine treatment that Raff gives it.

As in his earlier trios, Raff places a scherzo, although he does not call it such, in the second position. This *Allegro assai* can almost be called an interlude, as it is rather short, but perfect in every way. Halloween Music is the phrase which best describes the main theme. It is spooky and conjures up images of goblins and ghosts. Raff calls for a rather fast tempo, which the music certainly requires to be effective. The pianist must have a very light touch indeed or else the sparkling effect of the writing will be entirely lost. Even his critics have conceded that Raff was an absolute master of the mercurial and fleet-footed scherzo. In this, he has few if any equals and no superiors. This *Allegro assai* is a good example why. The long-lined main theme in the strings cruises along and is then complimented by the piano's lightening responses,

Continued from Page 10: Joachim Raff's Piano Trio Nos. 3 & 4

which complete each phrase. There is no real ascertainable trio section, however, a second lyrical melody (see right), which is in no way haunting, is intertwined and combined throughout what is left of this short, exquisite morsel.



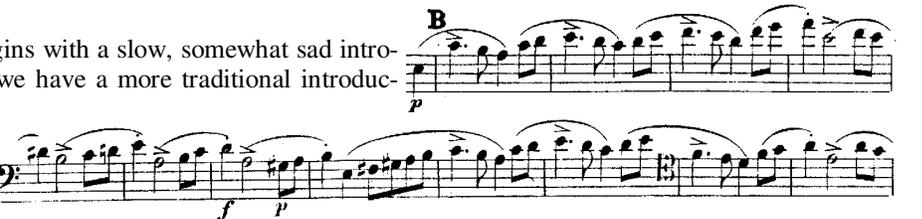
Adagietto. 2/4 98.



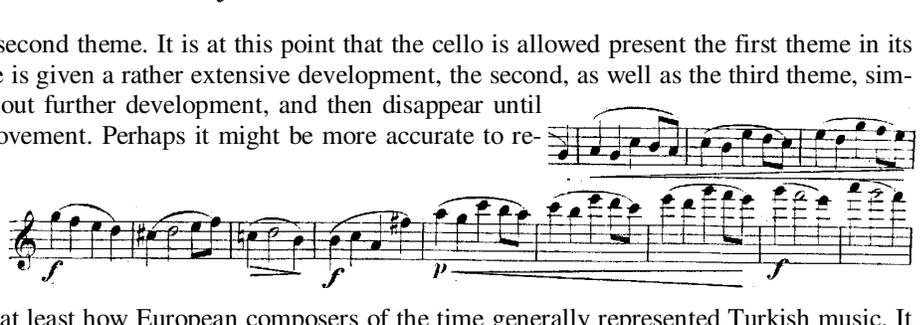
The third movement, *Adagietto*, is a theme and set of several variations. The solemn, but not tragic, theme is entrusted to the piano alone. In the first four variations, the strings are allowed to elaborate on the theme. The first variation, with the cello restating it in its middle-low register, is especially fine. (see left). In the second variation, the violin takes over but the solemn, quiet mood remains. In the third variation, the cello has a very long 32nd note passage which, given the tempo, is not intended to be rushed. One hears, if only a little, remnants of Beethoven. However, the

32nd note arpeggio sextuplets given to the violin in the next variation, four to a measure, are somewhat on the virtuosic side. Of importance is that they are meant to be played softly as a background against the theme in the piano. In the next few variations, the piano is then given free reign to explore the theme in what are very technically demanding passages. Yet, they must not be played heavily or in a way which draws undue attention to them. Once these are over, all three voices join together in presenting the peaceful coda that brings this movement to a close. Raff succeeds very nicely in creating a fine set of variations which hold one's interest from start to finish.

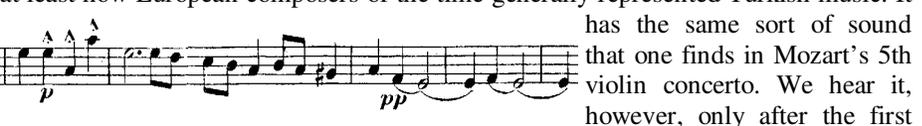
The magnificent finale, *Larghetto, Allegro*, begins with a slow, somewhat sad introduction. Unlike the opening movement, here we have a more traditional introduction, whose purpose is to build suspense. But the material in this introduction is not used elsewhere in the movement. The opening and main theme is briefly given out by the piano and then repeated by cello before the violin,



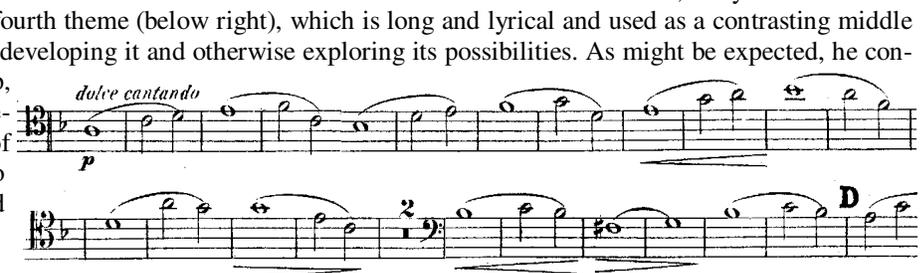
without further ado, states the first part of the second theme. It is at this point that the cello is allowed present the first theme in its entirety. (see above right) While the first theme is given a rather extensive development, the second, as well as the third theme, simply interrupt what is going on, are stated without further development, and then disappear until they make brief appearances later on in the movement. Perhaps it might be more accurate to regard them as bridge passages but they are both very fine. The second theme (right) follows immediately on the heels of the first and seems to fit beautifully. Some critics have referred to the third theme (below) as Hungarian, but I believe it more Turkish sounding, or at least how European composers of the time generally represented Turkish music. It



has the same sort of sound that one finds in Mozart's 5th violin concerto. We hear it, however, only after the first



theme has been entirely developed. There is a fourth theme (below right), which is long and lyrical and used as a contrasting middle section. Raff devotes quite a lot of attention in developing it and otherwise exploring its possibilities. As might be expected, he concludes with a suitably exciting coda. To sum up, this work, along with his First Piano Trio, belongs in the repertoire and is the equal to any of the other piano trios from this era. There is no modern edition, but copies can be obtained from the Cobbett Association Library.



(continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Piano Trio No.4 in D Major, Op.158 was composed a few months after the Third Trio. Raff's renewed interest in chamber music during the summer of 1870 can, in part, be explained by the incredible success of his Third Symphony *Im Walde* (In the Forest). Premiered in the spring of that year, it became one of the most popular symphonic works in Europe overnight, and was widely hailed as the finest symphony written since Beethoven. Raff therefore hoped that this success would draw the public's attention to his chamber music as well.

At the outset of my discussion of this work, I apologize for not being able to supply any musical examples. I loaned my performance copy to a friend, who has taken it on tour with him, and, despite his promises, has yet to return it to me. Therefore, readers will have to content themselves with my description and the sound-bites I am told your editor will put on The Cobbett Association website (www.cobbettassociation.org).

A point I forgot to mention earlier in this discussion is the fact that as Raff distanced himself from the *New German School*, he stopped his former practice of using German words to give tempo and other performance indications. Instead, he returned to the traditional Italian used by the so-called *Classicists* such as Brahms and his followers. Hence, while the movements of his first two piano trios, written in the early 1860's, use German, we find he has returned to Italian in his last two works in this medium.

The first movement, *Allegro*, begins with a sparking series of 16th note triplets lightly played in the piano whilst the cello introduces the noble main theme in a low registers. The violin takes it further, and then Raff, contrary to his practice in the other trios, develops this theme at some length. In doing so, the heroic nature of the music is slowly transmogrified into something lighter and more optimistic. But as a result, the music loses its dignity and becomes somewhat trivial. For my taste, the development goes on entirely too long. The second theme is closely related to the development and seamlessly evolves from it. This, unfortunately, creates a sense of monotony. The piano part is very difficult in that it has tremendously long, fast passages which require a secure technique and a very light touch.

Again, the second movement, *Allegro assai*, is a scherzo though not so marked. The first theme is a lugubrious dance, lumbering along in the strings and a little on the heavy side. The piano is used quite nicely to compliment what is going on. The second theme is lyrical and quite romantic. This is a good but not a great scherzo. It does not, in my opinion, rise to the high level of excellence that one generally finds in Raff's scherzi.

The impressive slow movement, *Andante quasi Larghetto*, begins with a fine melody first sung by the cello. Raff creates a magical similar to that which Mendelssohn achieves in some of his *Songs Without Words*. The violin then enters, taking the theme farther, and then the two strings present a beautiful "lovers' duet". The mood imperceptibly becomes elegiac and there is a real sense of loss, only partially lightened by the aura of calm which the coda brings.

The finale, *Allegro*, begins with a very brusque and modern (for that time) sounding theme. It is restless and driving, with some

similarity to a tarantella. It does go on for long, however, before the second theme is introduced. Not as rhythmically muscular, its development is frequently interrupted by the piano, loudly and violently playing the signature chords from the opening theme. This creates a very restless mood. Eventually, these interruptions become rather annoying since they are always played *ff*. The coda is short but adequately handled and brings the work to a competent finish.

Of Raff's four piano trios, to my mind, the Fourth is the weakest. Raff seems to have been trying a bit too hard. For once, his melodic muse does not pour forth the very best. The exception to this statement is the slow third movement, undoubtedly the high point of the trio. While it is not a bad work, it seems merely adequate, and alongside of the Second Piano Trio, not to mention either the First or Third, there is no reason to play it other than for variety's sake. Certainly, I would not suggest it deserves to be revived or placed in the concert repertoire. There are far too many other works, including Raff's own First and Third trios, which deserve that honor.



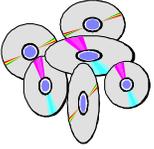
Raff's four piano trios have by no means been uniformly admired. The case of the famed chamber music critic Wilhelm Altmann is as good an example as any. He cannot seem to make up his mind. In *Cobbett's Cyclopedia*, in what is generally a dismissive article about Raff's chamber music, Altmann writes that the piano trios are the least attractive of his chamber works. He, as most other critics, complained that, "...side

by side with really impressive and good ideas are found others that are entirely commonplace." Yet, writing in his own *Handbuch für Klaviertriospieler* (Handbook for Piano Trio Players) some years afterward, he argues that the First Piano Trio deserves to be in the repertoire and that the Third Trio is every bit as good.

So then, when we come to sum up and consider Raff's piano trios as a whole, we must admit that they are not all of the same quality. The First and Third Trios are Raff's best. In these two works, we find an overabundance of really fine ideas which are very well executed. They rise to the highest level and can be called masterworks. The great originality of the first movement to the Third Trio is really unparalleled. That these two works are no longer in the repertoire is a shame because there is no question that audiences would find great enjoyment in them. Piano Trio No.2, though perhaps not as fine, is also a very good work that is strong enough to appear in concert.

That Raff's reputation has suffered, and that his fine serious music has disappeared from the concert stage in large part because of the narrow-minded view of those who believe a serious composer ought not to stoop to write salon music is a pity. As the famous pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow put it, "*Raff combined the most diverse styles and yet preserved the purity of all of them: the salon style in the best sense (in the salon music of Raff, a delicate irony shimmers through), and also the strict style.*" He goes on to marvel that Raff, as no one else, could do both.

Diskology: Hear Sound-bites to These CD Reviews On Our Website—www.cobbettassociation.org
Piano Trios by Gaspar Cassadó, Joaquín Turina and Enrique Granados
Works for Flute, Viola & Piano from Maurice Duruflé & Reynaldo Hahn



Chandos CD#9834 is somewhat unusual in that it presents piano trios by three Spaniards, played by three sisters from Kazakhstan who now live in Britain. The first work is **Piano Trio in C Major by Gaspar Cassadó** (1897-1966). It dates from 1926. Cassadó is primarily known as a cellist who was Pablo Casals' star student. He was more widely known in Europe than in the United States. Cassadó took composing quite seriously and apparently did a lot of it. In three



movements, his trio opens with a very appealing *Allegro risoluto* which immediately combines the Spanish idiom with the exotic perfume of Ravel. The Spanish rhythms are muscular and rustic while the music which shows Ravel's influence is more gentle. The highly original second movement, *Tempo moderato e pesante*, is filled with many striking effects, achieved through the use of pizzicato, glissandi and sudden changes in dynamics. It is a real tour d'force which demands virtuosic execution. The finale, begins with a modern Spanish sounding *Recitativo* played by all three instruments. The main part of the movement is marked *Allegro vivo* and is a light, cheerful dance, showing the influence of de Falla. It ends with a *Presto* coda. This is a tremendous work that can be described in one word: Wow! That is how audiences treated to it would surely respond.

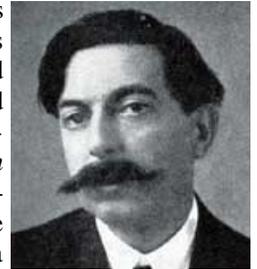


There are two works by **Joaquín Turina** (1882-1949) on disk. Born in Seville, Turina, who studied not only in Spain but also in Paris, imbued much of his chamber music with folk melodies of Andalusia and of southern Spain. However, one does not much hear of them in his **Circulo, Fantasia for Piano Trio, Op.91** dating from 1942. It

is a work in three short movements, each with the subtitles: *Dawn, Midday and Dusk*. *Dawn* begins quietly, the mood is dark, slow and quiet. *Midday* is somewhat more lively with some vague tinges of Spanish style. *Dusk* is the most energetic but ends peacefully. Though slight, *Circulo* is an ethereal and intellectual work of considerable charm. His **Piano Trio No.2 in b minor, Op.76** dates from 1933. Also in three movements, though more formal, it is hardly more substantial than *Circulo*. And, it lacks the sense of the esoteric one finds there. The first movement goes through three moods corresponding to different tempi, *Lento—Allegro molto moderato—Allegretto*. The themes are highly romantic and Andalusian melodies, although subtly presented, can be heard. The second movement, *Molto vivace—Lento—Molto vivace*, starts off as a scherzo, with the strings buzzing about as the piano plays a long-lined melody consisting of chords. The finale has seven distinct sections: *Lento—Andante mosso—Allegretto—Meno mosso—Moderato—Allegretto—Allegro molto moderato—Allegro vivo*. For all of this, it lasts less than six minutes. Interestingly, the mood does not change much between the various sections. This trio is at once romantic, but, at the same time, very modern-sounding.

Enrique Granados (1867-1916), almost a generation older than Turina, also studied in Spain and then Paris. During his lifetime,

he was primarily known, both in Spain and abroad, for his operas. But since his death, it has been his piano works (and arrangements of these), which have kept his name alive. The **Piano Trio, Op.50** dates from 1894 and although it was performed during his lifetime, it was not published until after his death. It is in four movements and begins with a *Poco allegro con espressione* that combines a French impressionistic sound with what might be called neo-Schubertian melodies of a highly romantic nature. The second movement, *Scherzetto, Vivace molto*, makes the strongest impression of the four movements with its use of pizzicato and whirling dervish thematic material. A slower second theme provides excellent contrast. This movement could easily stand on its own as an encore. Not particularly French sounding, and certainly not Spanish, all that one can say is that it is late 19th century mainstream. A slow movement, *Duetto, Andante con moto espressione*, is placed third. The piano hangs in the background as the violin is given a gorgeous melody of vocal quality. Although the cello primarily plays a supporting role, it is still a duet, a soft and gentle operatic lovers' duet. The middle section becomes slightly more dramatic before gently dissipating. This writing is of a very high quality. The finale, *Allegretto molto*, also makes a strong impression with its sudden shifts of moods and attractive thematic material. In summation, a first class work, but the only thing Spanish about it is the nationality of its composer. Only the first movement shows the influence of his Parisian studies while the last three movements could easily have been written by a central European influenced by Schumann. A highly recommended CD.



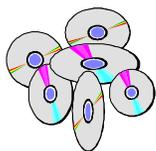
BIS CD#1439 presents four works for the unusual combination of Flute, Viola and Piano. The first is **Prelude, Recitatif et Variations, Op.3 by Maurice Duruflé** (1902-86), who made his name as an organist. He studied composition with Paul Dukas among others. Composed in 1928, the Op.3 is completely tonal and in the tradition of the French impressionists. Lasting about 12 minutes, it is quite attractive. It is in one long movement of three distinct sections played without pause. The Prelude begins slowly but gradually the music becomes very lively. In Duruflé's hands, this unusual combination sounds entirely natural.



Next comes a very short work (3 minutes) entitled **Romanesque by Reynaldo Hahn** (1875-1947). Born in Venezuela, Hahn's family moved to Paris when he was three. He studied at the Conservatory under Massenet who considered him a genius. Handsome and worldly Hahn drew his friends from a much wider circle than just musicians (e.g.: Marcel Proust and Sarah Bernhardt). *Romanesque* sounds like the background music for a plot taking place in mediaeval France.



(Continued on page 14)



Viola, Flute & Piano Trios by Mieczyslaw Vainberg & Tatiana Nikolayeva String Quartets by Johann Baptist Vanhal & Andreas Romberg



The **Op.127 Trio by Mieczyslaw Vainberg** (also Weinberg 1919-96) was composed in 1979. The piano part is an alternative to that of the Harp. From Warsaw, Vainberg fled to Russia during the Nazi invasion and spent the rest of his life in that country. The three movements of the trio have no traditional tempo indication, only a metronome marking: ♩ = 63, ♩ = 48 and ♩ = 92. The trio is tonal and in what might be

called a post-Shostakovich language. It would not be accurate to speak of themes so much as tonal episodes. One almost might think of the experimental effects some composers were looking at in the 1950's except for the recurrence of certain patterns. Of the three movements, it is the third which comes closest to any kind of traditional musical form. The trio is an interesting modern work.

The final trio on disk is by **Tatiana Nikolayeva** (1924-94) who is primarily remembered as a pianist and close friend of Shostakovich. Her **Op.18** trio dates from 1958 and is the most substantial work presented on this CD. It is in eight short movements: *Prelude, Scherzo, Monologue, Aria, Intermezzo, Pastorale, Fantasy March, and Finale*. The work exhibits a mastery of technique and understanding of the instruments. Each vignette is like a small delicacy. Entirely tonal, it still demonstrates a modernity of taste while tinged at times with the aura of the neo-baroque and neo-classical. It is also, without doubt, the most attractive work on disk. This CD, with its trios for a seldom heard combination by unknown composers, is worth hearing.



Johann Baptist Vanhal (also Jan Křitel Vanhal or Wanhal 1739-1813) was born in eastern Bohemia and received his early training from a local musician. He eventually secured work as a village organist and choirmaster. His big break came when a Countess, impressed by his violin playing, funded his studies in Vienna with Dittersdorf, one of the top violinists of the time. The Irish tenor Michael Kelly, in his memoirs, writes of attending Viennese quartet

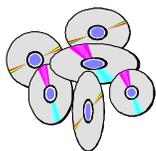
concerts given by Dittersdorf, Haydn, Mozart and Vanhal, the latter of whom played cello. Vanhal, like most composers of the age, was prolific, writing some 100 string quartets and 73 symphonies, not to mention anything else. Sources relate that his music became incredibly popular, allowing him to live entirely by composing. His symphonies achieved world-wide fame and were even performed in the United States. So, who hears his works in concert nowadays? No one, I would venture, unless the concert in question is of an historical nature. **Multisonic CD 31 0583** presents six of his string quartets—**Op.1 No.3, Op.2 No.3, Op.6 No.1, Op.6 No.5, Op.6 No.6, and Op.13 No.1**. I was going to write that they provide evidence of why his music is not heard, but, if one considers that these works all date from 1769-1771,

then, one cannot make this statement because these quartets are fairly advanced for their time. They show the influence of the Mannheim school and are not written in a concertante style. The four parts are generally treated equally but the music could just as easily have been written for string orchestra and probably would sound just as good. Space does not allow for a discussion of these works in detail but, in general, it can be said the melodic material is adequate. Although the themes are not dull, they do not have a particularly original stamp to them. Still, the writing is accomplished and the movements are written on a scale, i.e. not overly long, which entirely suits the quality of the material presented. But, I do not think any of these works ought to find their way into concert and I am not sure that anyone other those who are fans of the Stamitzes need take the trouble to obtain the parts. Of course, you can hear the sound-bites and decide for yourself.

The north German violin virtuoso **Andreas Romberg** (1767-1821) was almost an exact contemporary of Beethoven with whom he was on friendly terms. After many tours, he settled in Hamburg where he played an important role in its musical life. He wrote a total of 28 string quartets, 6 of which can be heard on **MD&G CD Nos.307 0963 & 307 1026**. I believe these are the only quartets at present recorded. On the first disk, Romberg's three Op.1 quartets are presented. They date from 1794 and as such predate Beethoven's Op.18 by several years. They were met with considerable contemporary acclaim. For example, the respected *Allgemeine musikalisch Zeitung* wrote that they could stand comparison to the quartets of Haydn and Mozart. But it is hard to posit this upon hearing Op.1 No.1, which I do not think matches up even to an ordinary Haydn oeuvre from Op.55 or 65. However, in Op.1 No.2, the melody of the first theme to the opening *Allegro* and the use of the cello, as well as the other voices, leaves a more lasting impression. This is also true of the following *Menuetto*. The thematic material of the *Andante* is not particularly inspired but the finale, which begins in canonic fashion, is a little more interesting. The main theme to the first movement of Op.1 No.3 is quite attractive but its treatment is only ordinary. The slow movement has a brief serenade section with the lower three voices playing *pizzicato a la Haydn's Op.3 No.5 quartet*. The following *Menuetto* is not bad but the finale is only average. In sum, keeping in mind that the Op.76 quartets of Haydn had yet to be published, I would say that while the part writing and structure of these quartets is fairly good, the thematic material is not as strong as Koze-luch or Pleyel at their best, and not even a match for an average quartet of Krommer or Paul Wranitzky, let alone Haydn.



On the second disk, we have the Op.2 No.2 from a set composed between 1797-99 and published in 1802. By then, Romberg may well have had the chance to familiarize himself with Haydn's Op.76. The opening theme to the first movement is good but definitely sounds like something from one of Haydn's quartets. The excellent *Menuetto*, while not exactly a canon, still sounds somewhat like the minuet of *The Quinten* (Haydn's Op.76 No.2). Its trio section is also quite good. A lovely and original sounding



Alexander Krein: A String Quartet & A Clarinet Quintet

Mieczyslaw Vainberg: String Quartet Nos.7-9

melody graces the *Andante* variations which come next. The finale has a strong theme and several dramatic episodes which hold the listener's interest. Op.2 No.2 is much better than any of the Op.1 and, if not a candidate for the concert hall, would certainly be enjoyed by amateurs. The next work, Op.16 No.2, is from a set written in 1806. By then, Beethoven's Op.18 would have been known to Romberg. (It is informative to remember that Onslow's first set of quartets, his Op.4, dates from this year. But in any comparison, Romberg comes off second best, and by a great distance at that.) The opening *Allegro* is unmemorable and clearly awkward to play. The following *Menuetto* is a better movement but shows no advance over the Op.2. A short *Grazioso* is pleasant if unremarkable. The very short finale holds one's interest throughout its 2½ minutes, but it's probably a good thing it does not go on for any longer than that. The last work on disk, Op.30 No.1, is from a set composed in 1810. An *Allegro moderato* begins with a promising theme and the second theme is also pretty good, but the treatment of the material does not fulfill the initial promise. The main theme to the *Menuetto* is better than average and its trio very effective. While this movement makes a lasting impression, it must be admitted that Haydn or Mozart were writing such music in 1785. The *Adagio* is workmanlike but leaves no impression. The finale, *Vivace*, is pretty good, but again a good 25 years behind the times—perhaps the equal to a finale from one of Haydn's Op.71 or 74 quartets.



Alexander Krein (1883-1951) was the son of a well-known Klezmer musician. He entered the Moscow Conservatory at fourteen, taking composition lessons from Sergei Taneyev. Subsequently, he joined the Society for Jewish Folk Music and began to weave Hebraic melodies into the format of orthodox chamber works. The first work of interest to us on this **ASD CD#DCA 1154** is his one movement **Poème-Quatuor** from 1910. This is a

substantial work with some very evocative writing but no Jewish thematic material. Distinctly impressionist in style, Scriabin's influence is clearly present. The eloquent lyrical sections are full of color. The harmony is very impressive, although at times there is that classic French impressionist sense of diffuseness. After several turbulent episodes, the quartet concludes on a gentler note. This is a very engaging piece, well-worth hearing. The other chamber work on disk is the **Jewish Sketches, Op.12 for clarinet and string quartet**. This is the first of a set of two, both from 1914. Here, Krein sets himself the task of introducing Jewish folk melody into a formal chamber music setting. In three movements, the opening *Lento*, has an elegiac quality and takes familiar, almost stereotypical, Hebraic material as its subject matter. The very impressive second movement begins with the cello and then the clarinet playing over the tremolo of the other strings. Suddenly, a klezmer melody thrusts its way forward. Krein's treatment is imaginative. The final movement, *Allegro moderato*, begins like something out of *Fiddler on the Roof*, with a fidgety dancing melody sung by the first violin and then the clarinet. Krein avoids sinking into cliché by introducing a warm cello mel-

ody and an exciting coda. Both works would be excellent in concert. Songs and piano works are also on this recommended CD.

Mieczyslaw (sometimes Moisei) Vainberg (often Weinberg) wrote some 17 string quartets. We reviewed Nos.1, 10 and 17 in Vol.X, No.1. (April 1999) On this **Olympic CD#686** are Nos.7-9. The three movement **String Quartet No.7 in C Major, Op.59** was composed in 1957. Its opening movement is a long, plodding *Adagio*. The mood is neither sad nor tragic, but one of depression and of being downtrodden. The musical language is clearly related to late Shostakovich but is perhaps a little more astringent tonally. The following *Allegretto* is remarkable for a its slow theme which is accompanied by fast, nervous background passages and the constant strumming of pizzicato. The mood, though not as grim as the preceding movement, is not cheerful even though the tempo eventually picks up. The finale, *Adagio—Allegro*, is in two parts. The first is clearly related to the thematic material of the opening *Adagio*. The *Allegro* section is a fugue followed by a series of variations, each ratcheting the intensity up a notch until a climax is reached and the variations are softly reprised in reverse order before the *adagio* introduction concludes this very original and impressive movement. **String Quartet No.8 in c minor, Op.66** was written some two years after No.7. Though titularly in one movement, there are four distinct sections: *Adagio—Poco andante—Allegretto—Allegro*. The *Adagio* is doleful and filled with a sense of mourning. There is hardly any forward movement. Eventually, this is supplied by the slinky melody of the first violin in the *Poco andante*, but after its conclusion, the mood darkens, although not to the blackness of the *Adagio*. The following *Allegretto*, while not exactly lively, has a march-like, rustic energy and some elements of folk melody. The mood remains overcast and then is interrupted by chordal bursts, some of clashing tonality. The music then becomes faster and angrier. There is a Shostakovich moment with a series of bowed and plucked chords. This anger burns itself out and the coda is a plunge into a dark pool of silence. The strange concluding pizzicato chords are like the ringed ripples, which come after a pebble is thrown into a pond, showing that something has disappeared. **String Quartet No.9 in f sharp minor, Op.80** dates from 1964. The opening *Allegro molto* is powerful and brusque, full of chords in all the voices. This gives it an orchestral quality. Anger, or perhaps angst, are the two words which probably best describe the mood of the music. It remains at fortissimo from start to its sudden finish. There is no pause, and the worried, scherzo-like *Allegretto* that follows is primarily soft and played pizzicato. The quartet's center of gravity is its big third movement, *Andante*, which appears to be a cross between a theme and variations and a passacaglia. The mood conveys a defeated sadness. The finale, *Allegro moderato*, begins quite softly and in a very unusual fashion. The sad main theme is a disembodied, very simple folk-dance, barely audible. The more voluble second theme is also dance-like. Anger hides beneath the energy, as at a party which may turn into a brawl. In conclusion, we have three grim and uncompromising works, which are also very interesting. They are unquestionably important and need to be heard in concert. Although difficult to follow at times, it well-worth making the effort to get to know these quartets. A recommended CD.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Tatiana Nikolayeva



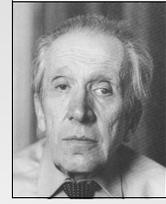
Franz Krommer



Ernst von Dohnanyi



Joachim Raff



Moisei Vainberg



Joaquin Turina



Gaspar Cassado



Maurice Duruflé



J.B. Vanhal



Enrique Granados



Andreas Romberg



Reynaldo Hahn

ONSLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL



HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANEYEV, REINECKE

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV