

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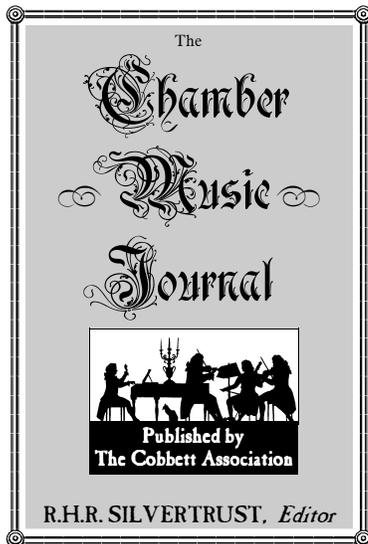
*The Essential Guide
For Players & Listeners
To The Wider World
of Chamber Music*

Edward Bache's Piano Trio
Nonets You Are Likely To Play
Carl Nielsen:
The String Quartets, Part II

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The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



Raff's Fourth Piano Trio vs His Others

As to which of Raff's piano trios is his best, I agree with neither Mr. Crookes nor Professor Ussi. Mr. Crookes (*see: Letters to the Editor, last issue*) assured us that if we followed his experiment of listening to all four piano trios, we would be sure to agree with him that the Fourth was the best. Besides playing the piano, my other hobby is dog breeding and in the dog game, we would call Mr. Crookes' comments "Kennel Blindness", that is, looking at one's own dogs through rose color lenses and concluding one's own dogs are better than the rest. One's opinion is nothing more than that. Professor Ussi states that Piano Trio Nos. 1 & 3 are Raff's best. Well, that's *his* opinion. I happen to think that No.2 is the best. It is certainly my favorite. But unlike Mr. Crookes, I have no illusions that if you listen to all four of Raff's trios, you will certainly adopt my opinion. Herman Patterson
Detroit, Michigan

Agreed, but hats off to Mr. Crookes if his letter has succeeded in rekindling interest in Joachim Raff's four fine piano trios and has led to their being played and listened to.

Adventures with Nepomuceno

I very much liked your article on Nepomuceno's string quartets. (Vol.XVIII No.1) It certainly was an incredible story you related about the difficulty in obtaining the music, a real adventure. And since purchasing No.3, *The Brasileiro*, my group has enjoyed the adventure of playing this colorful and exotic work. William O'Malley
Nashville, Tennessee

I am sure there are several members who probably have had quite interesting experiences tracking down music they wished to play. We would welcome hearing from you if you have a story to tell.

Article on Holmboe's String Quartets

I am enjoying your series on the string quartets of Carl Nielsen. May I suggest an article on Vagn Holmboe's quartets? Though he did not study with Nielsen, he was certainly influenced by him and can be considered his successor as an important Danish composer of string quartets. I believe that he wrote as many as 16. Sheldon Cohen
New York, New York

We have published a fine article on Vagn Holmboe's string quartets by David Canfield.

It appeared in Vol.VI No.2 (March 1995) of The Journal. If this was before your time or if you no longer have that copy of The Journal, you may order that issue or any back issue by visiting our website at www.cobbettassociation.org.

Why No Sonatas

Why is it that there are never any articles on the sonatas of various composers. Certainly, sonatas, too, are chamber music. Also, I have noticed that there is never anything on instrumental duets, or works with voice, harp or guitar. Why is that? Arlene Schechter
St. Paul, Minnesota

It is true that the standard definition of chamber music is music suitable for performance in a room or small hall rather than in a larger concert hall. Cobbett's Cyclopedia, in its lengthy article on chamber music includes duets making special mention of Spohr's for 2 violins. Yet, when one thumbs through the pages of the Cyclopedia, there is nothing more than a brief mention of any duet, never any real discussion, and that includes those of Spohr. So, while clearly duets are chamber music, they were not apparently the kind of chamber music which Cobbett thought deserved any real attention. It is also true that on occasion an article in Cobbett will discuss an instrumental sonata, but by and large, sonatas are also ignored. The article on Beethoven is a good example of this. Further, nowadays, one tends to think of an evening of sonatas as a sonata evening rather than a chamber music concert. Most people, if told they were going to a chamber music concert, I think, would be surprised to find it was only a sonata concert. As for compositions including voice, harp or guitar, they are few and far between and it is the rare evening indeed that one obtains a singer or harpist for an evening of chamber music. We have felt, like the editor of the Cyclopedia, that since the subject is almost inexhaustible and space is limited, it is preferable to concentrate on works which interest the greatest number of players and these are trios, quartets, quintets, sextets etc. for strings, winds and piano.

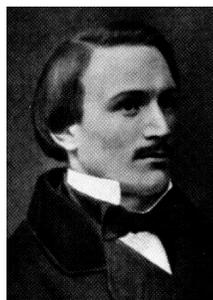
Dr. Sandor Shapiro

It is with regret we report that long time Cobbett Association Member Sandor Shapiro passed away this summer.

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.

EDWARD BACHE'S PIANO TRIO

by John France



The achievement of Francis Edward Bache (pronounced Bay-ch) has been well summed up by English musicologist Lewis Foreman. He writes that if we wish to listen to a representative example of chamber music from mid-Victorian Britain we have to turn to Bache's *Piano Trio in D minor Op.25*. This, he insists, is 'a little gem, well worth the attention of groups looking to expand their repertoire of this period...' He concludes by noting that this is very much "young man's music [but] it underlines what was lost when Bache died soon after its composition."

but [compared to other contemporary works] it is impossible to avoid the conviction that somehow, somewhere, in this allegedly barren soil, seed was germinating."

Francis Edward Bache was born in Birmingham on 14 September 1833. He was the eldest child of seven: his father Samuel was a Unitarian minister and his mother Emily was a gifted amateur musician. From an early age Bache was destined for a musical career; he was playing the piano by his fourth year and later went on to learn the violin and the organ. He was educated at his father's school and studied the organ with James Stimpson, who was the Birmingham City Organist. At the age of thirteen he was playing the violin in the Birmingham Festival Orchestra at a performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, conducted by the composer.

In 1849 Bache went to London where he studied with William Sterndale Bennett for three years. During his residence in London he fulfilled the role of an all round musician, spending time

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Walter Wilson Cobbett simply says that the composer's early death was a serious loss to British Music: the *Trio* showed considerable promise. And lastly, when considering the apparent dearth of mid-nineteenth century music in Britain, Edwin Evans wrote that the "*Piano Trio of Francis E. Bache, who died in 1858 aged only twenty five, may not have been a work of great genius,*

Carl Nielsen: The String Quartets

by Per Larsen

(In the first part of this article, which appeared in the last issue of The Journal, the author outlined the composer's early life and musical education and discussed his first two string quartets: No.1 in g minor, Op.13 and No.2 in f minor, Op.5)

Nearly eight years were to pass before Nielsen attempted to compose another string quartet. Then, in December of 1897, he began work on what was to become his **String Quartet No.3 in E flat Major, Op.14**. In his diary, Nielsen tells us he finished the first movement at the end of December of 1897 and had begun work on the second movement, an *Andante*, by the beginning of January of 1898. But almost the entire year was to pass before he was able to complete it. In part, this was because of marital problems he was experiencing. These had led to he and his wife living apart throughout the summer of 1898 and he was not much able to concentrate. The first public performance of the work took place the following spring in May, 1899. Subsequent to this, he took the manuscript to his publisher Wilhelm Hansen.



What happened next was quite interesting, as Nielsen relates. While cycling to his publisher's of place of business in Copenhagen, where he was then living, he came across a carriage with a horse that had stumbled and fallen. As a boy raised on a farm, he was familiar with horses and stopped to help the stranded owner of the carriage. He handed his manuscript to a small boy, who was standing nearby, so that he could right the horse. By the time he had got the horse back up and on its feet, the boy had run off and Nielsen was forced to reconstruct the entire work mostly from memory. As he himself admitted, the result was not identical to the original version which has never been found. In any event, as a consequence of this

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Nonets You Are Likely to Play

by Larius J. Ussi

It may well be that there are no nonets you are ever likely to play but I did not think it suitable, and I am sure your editor would not have accepted, a title that read, "Nonets You Are Likely To Play If You Were To Play Nonets". So, we will begin from the assumption that at some point in your chamber music life there may or will be an opportunity to play nonets. This multi-part article will examine in depth the most likely candidates that will cross your music stand.

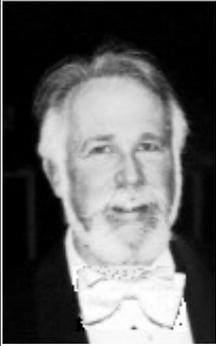
When first asked to write on the subject, I did not think there would be precious little information to be had about it. Having performed in concert what are probably the two best known nonets, and having had the chance to play several others, I just assumed I would easily be able to assemble general information suitable for an introduction to such an article as this without difficulty. But, in fact, the opposite has

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At The Doublebar



I have just returned from a trip to Germany and once again was struck by the great difference in concert programming one gets in much of Europe versus what we in the United States experience. I realize the statements I am about to make are generalizations based mostly, but not entirely, on my own concert-going experience, as well as my service on three different chamber music organizations. Nonetheless, I feel they are probably more accurate than not, although I am sure I will receive letters from members telling me their own chamber music concert series is very adventurous and innovative in its programming. I welcome such news. But in my opinion, while what can be heard at chamber music concerts in Germany and Britain is varied, and often includes works by the kind of composers Cobetteers like to discuss and play, here in the U.S., the opposite seems to be the case. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert & Brahms and right away you have at least 2/3 of most concerts. Sometimes there may be Mendelssohn and Schumann. Of the "moderns" it will almost always be Bartok, Shostakovich or Schönberg or perhaps some atonal, experimental work which has been commissioned by the group performing. The argument is box office: give them what they know or they won't come. Well, I think they will still come for a concert of Mozart, Rheinberger & Weigl or Wranitzky, Beethoven & Stenhammar or Haydn, Onslow and Britten. If one is lucky enough to get a Russian work it's inevitably Tchaikovsky—what about Gliere, Taneyev, Arensky, Gretchaninov, Glazunov, Kopylov or Sokolov to name but a few. If it's a Soviet work, you know it will be Shostakovich or Prokofiev, but what about Kabalevsky, Miaskovsky, Shebalin, Filippenko, or Vainberg. If it's a French work, why must it be Ravel or Debussy when there are excellent works by Saint-Saëns, Dubois, Chaminade, Godard, Gounod, Francaix, Gouvy, d'Indy and a dozen others? The answer, of course, is that it does not have to be this way. But those of us who know and love these neglected composers of merit must lobby for them.—Ray Silvertrust, Editor

Nonets You Are Likely To Play

turned out to be true. Unless you are prepared to do some digging and serious research, there is not much information to be had from the standard reference sources. *The New Grove* gives us all of one paragraph. *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* has no entry, nor does the *Oxford Companion to Music*. In fact, probably the best source of such general information appeared right here in *The Journal* in an article by John Wilcox back in 1996. (Vol.VII No.1) It was a brief survey of the literature.

Let us first start with a definition. *The New Grove* states that a nonet is "A composition for nine solo instruments." I would take issue with the use of the word solo. Other than that, it seems adequate. The nonet, as we have come to understand it, is a group undertaking and not a group of soloists. Yes, the various instruments are given solo passages from time to time, but they are not soloists. *The New Grove* then provides this additional description: "Such works are generally designed for a string quartet to which a double bass and a group of wind instruments are added." Fair enough, but which wind instruments will we find included? The answer is that there is no set group, no standard nonet *per se*. But, is there, then, a more common combination that one might find? The most famous nonet of all, though certainly not the first, was composed by Ludwig (a.k.a.



Louis) Spohr. This is his Op.31, composed in 1813 and published in 1817. It is the one nonet that you are likely to know about or to have heard. Interestingly, Spohr did not use the standard string quartet, but rather a string trio, i.e., violin, viola and cello, to which he added a double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn. Mr. Wilcox considers this combination as the most likely and I tend to agree.

Wilcox noted that he had come across as many 200 works for nonet, but you are highly unlikely to ever make the acquaintance of more than a few. Which ones? *The New Grove* lists those by Spohr, George Onslow (1784-1853), Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901), Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), Arnold Bax (1883-1953), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Heitor Villa Lobos (1887-1959), Alois Haba (1893-1973), Walter Piston (1894-1976), and Hans Eisler (1898-1962). Of these, I believe we can, for various reasons, eliminate the nonets of Milhaud, Villa Lobos, Haba, Piston and Eisler as works you are likely to encounter. Having said this, parts to all but the Villa Lobos have been available, if not easy to find, in the past twenty years. Still, should one of them be placed on the music stand, it is highly unlikely your group will get very far unless it is of professional quality and with experienced players of atonal and or polytonal music.

Wilhelm Altmann in Volume IV of his *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler*, in addition to the above-mentioned Spohr and Rheinberger, discusses nonets by Ernst Naumann (1832-1890), Kurt Striegler (1886-1958), Egon Kornauth (1891-1959), Bruno Stürmer (1892-1958), and Ernst Krenek (1900-1991). Living in Vienna for long periods, I have had the opportunity to play a few of these, some off first editions from collectors. All, in varying degrees, except Krenek's nonet, can be said to be tonal. Altmann especially praises Naumann's Op.10 Serenade of 1872 for string quartet, bass, flute, oboe, bassoon and horn. The parts are, in fact, available from Amadeus Verlag and I have played it. The Striegler also receives some praise, but as far as I know, only collectors might have it. The others are difficult and also, with the exception of the Krenek, unavailable.

Mr. Wilcox, in the aforementioned overview, lists the nonets of Spohr, Rheinberger, Onslow, Louise Farrenc (1804-1875) and Franz Lachner (1803-1890). I believe each of these works is worthy of consideration. To this group, I intend to add the nonets of Naumann, Stanford, Samuel Coleridge Taylor (1875-1912), Bax and Bohoslav Martinu. Beyond this group of ten, you are unlikely to travel. Of the works I shall consider, the Spohr Nonet in F Major, Op.31 was the first to be composed and it is the obvious place to begin. All of the other nine composers certainly would have known of Spohr's nonet and several would have studied it before undertaking their own.

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At least to string players, and violinists in particular, **Ludwig Spohr** (1784-1859) is still relatively well-known. He was one of the foremost musicians of the 19th century, a renowned concert violinist and an important teacher, composer and conductor. The first question one might ask is how it was he came to compose a work for such an unusual ensemble. In his autobiography, Spohr described the circumstances which led to the nonet's composition:

“Word had hardly gotten around Vienna that I was to settle there when one morning a distinguished visitor presented himself: a Herr Johann von Tost, manufacturer and passionate music lover. (Tost is remembered today, if at all, for commissioning two sets of string quartets from Haydn, Opp. 54 and 55) He began a hymn of praise about my talent as a composer, and expressed the wish that, for a suitable emolument, everything that I should write in Vienna be reckoned as his property for a period of three years. Then he added, ‘Your works may be performed as often as possible, but the score must be borrowed from me for each occasion and performed only in my presence.’ I was to think it over and myself determine the fee for each type of composition. With this he presented his card and took his leave.

“I attempted in vain to fathom the motive of this proposal, and I finally decided to question him directly. First, however, I made some inquiries about him, and determined that he was a rich man and a great lover of music who never missed a public concert. This was reassuring, and I decided to accept his proposal. As fee, I set 30 ducats for a quartet, 35 for a quintet and so forth. When I asked him just what he proposed to do with my works, he was reluctant to answer, but finally said, ‘I have two objectives. First, I want to be invited to the musicales where your pieces will be played, and therefore I must have them in my possession. Secondly, I hope that on my business trips the possession of such treasures will bring me the acquaintanceship of music lovers who, in turn, may be useful to me in my business.’ While all this did not make much sense to me, I found it most pleasantly flattering, and I had no further reservations. Tost accepted the fees that I had set, and further agreed to pay upon delivery. The appropriate documents were drawn up and signed accordingly.”

Tost apparently went to some effort and expense in helping Spohr and his family in their move to Vienna. He even went so far as to purchase furniture for Spohr's new flat.

“Thus we found ourselves in possession of an elegant and tasteful establishment, which no other artist family in the city could match,”

However, even with Tost's financial help, Spohr had incurred considerable expenses in his move and he was in need of funds to pay off these debts. Therefore, as soon as he settled in, he quickly sent Tost two string quartets. He then set to work on his opera *Faust*. After finishing it,

“I bethought myself of my obligation to Tost, and asked him what he would like. He thought for a moment and decided for a nonet, made up of four strings plus flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn, to be written in such a

way that each instrument would appear in its true character. I was much attracted by the difficulty of the assignment and went right to work. This was the origin of the famous Nonet, which remains to this day the only work of its kind (Spohr was writing these words in 1838, obviously unaware that, insignificant though they might be, other nonets had been written before his). I finished the work in short order and delivered it to Tost. It was played at one of the first musicales of the new season and aroused such enthusiasm that it was repeated frequently in the course of that same season. Tost appeared each time with the score and parts under his arm, set them out on the music stands himself, and gathered them up again after the performance. He was as pleased by the applause as if he himself had been the composer.”

In discussing the Spohr nonet, like most works, it is well to keep in mind the period from which it dates. 1813 was a transitional period. It represented the closing years of the so-called Vienna Classical era and the newly emerging style of the Romantic. As such, it is not surprising to find that in structure, melody and format, the nonet is definitely classical, yet its use of chromaticism, which one finds in most of Spohr's music, was clearly characteristic of the emerging Romantic movement. Although it is certainly not modeled on Beethoven's Op.20 Septet, one is nonetheless struck by a vague similarity in feel that both works share. And this similarity can be traced to a common antecedent, the Divertimento. The Divertimento was primarily a vehicle for wind instruments during the classical era. Their inclusion into a chamber work with strings inevitably brought some of the moods found in such works with them.

The first thing one notices is, despite the fact that the winds outnumber the strings, the quality of the writing is such that the string parts can always be heard. Though written on a grand scale, (and indeed Spohr called it a Grand Nonetto), there is, as might be expected, no introduction. It begins immediately with an *Allegro* whose main theme is presented by the violin and repeated by the winds. It is merely a eight note motif:



Spohr's mastery is evident from the first measures in the interplay of the instruments and the sureness of phrasing and harmonic direction. This motif constantly reappears throughout the movement in various guises and comes to dominate it entirely. It was a demonstration of his being able to organize and develop, *à la Haydn*, an entire movement from a very small bit of melodic material. The second theme contains dotted rhythmic figures to set it apart from the cantabile of the main theme.



The second movement is, for a *Scherzo*, in the unexpectedly somber key of d minor, and the main theme (example top of next page) has a somewhat mysterious quality to it.

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Spohr adds a second trio, again a characteristic generally found in divertimenti. The first trio is given over to the violin with a pizzicato accompaniment in the other strings. It resembles a Ländler of the sort Mozart or Krommer often used. In the canonic more serious second trio, Spohr, in full command of his resources, gives the lead to the winds.

A soulful *Adagio* serves as the third movement. The main theme is one of his more beautiful and attractive and is given alternatively to the strings and then the winds. Though it is not so immediately apparent, both this theme as well as the second theme are derived from the eight note motif of the first movement.



In contrast to the main theme, the second theme is presented in concertante fashion with various instruments being allotted cantilena solos.

Boisterous, celebratory and appealing is the main theme to the wonderful *Vivace* finale.



The music trips along with infectious high spirits of the sort Schubert was to create in many of his best chamber works. The development section is particularly noteworthy. Rather than building on the main theme, Spohr dissects it and uses imitation.



The powerful imagination which Spohr displays, especially here, but also throughout the earlier movements, with regard to his use of the instruments to create a multitude of tone colors, is but one of many reasons why this work can be considered a masterpiece. It is certainly one of the very best pieces of chamber music he wrote. There are, as might be expected, several recordings of this fine work. The parts are available from Edition Peters.

We must wait a whole generation and more, specifically some 35 years, for the appearance of another nonet of any consequence. And then, in the revolutionary year of 1848, two were written, both by French composers: George Onslow and Louise Farrenc. The evidence suggests that Onslow's was written first.

At least in the pages of *The Journal*, if not elsewhere, **George Onslow** (1784-1853) has received his due. However, on the assumption that the reader may not have read those pages, a very short biographical sketch is in order. Onslow was the son of an

English father and French mother. His father Edward was the son of an earl who had served as prime minister. A sexual scandal forced Edward to flee England in the early 1780's. Onslow's mother was also from aristocratic stock. George, named after his important grandfather, was born and raised in France. French was his first language and he, as well as everyone else, considered himself French. Nonetheless, George visited England frequently, sometimes for lengthy periods, keeping in close contact with his cousins and other members of the English aristocracy, as well as overseeing land which he had inherited. This English link is important with regard to his nonet.

Onslow was given a well rounded education, and musically was trained as a pianist by John Cramer among others. As one can see from his dates, he was an exact contemporary of Ludwig Spohr, although there is no evidence that the two knew each other. By 1800, Onslow developed a passion for chamber music, specifically for works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. In France, this was extraordinary as those composers were hardly known and almost universally disliked at the time. To facilitate his interest in performing quartets, he learned to play the violin and the cello, rising to a professional standard on the latter. Largely self-taught as a composer, he did receive a year's worth of composition lessons from Anton Reicha in Paris in 1808. During his lifetime, he enjoyed a stellar reputation in Germany, Austria and England, though not in France, whose musical public was, at the time, not in the least interested in chamber music. Unlike most composers who rose to fame, Onslow made his name solely on the basis of his chamber music. Such luminaries as Schumann and Mendelssohn regarded it as the equal of the chamber music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Throughout much of the 19th century, Onslow was considered a composer of the first rank, at least as far as chamber music went. But after the First World War, his name and music, along with that of many others, fell into obscurity. It has only been in the past 20 years that he and his music have been rediscovered with much delight.

Although he wrote symphonies and operas, Onslow only did so in hopes of gaining the attention of the French musical public which was opera mad. However like Boccherini, Onslow's main compositional interest was chamber music. He wrote 36 string quartets and 34 string quintets. Again, like Boccherini, the bulk of these were for 2 cellos. He also wrote a substantial number piano trios, sonatas and other chamber works.



Onslow was 64 when he wrote his nonet

His nonet, as previously noted, dates from 1848. This year has been called Europe's most important historical year between 1789 and 1914. In France, it was to mark the beginning of the end of the French aristocracy. And on the continent, monarchs and the aristocracy were everywhere threatened by revolutions aimed at ending their privileges and creating republics. The monarchs of Europe were reviled by the rising middle classes for their failure to share any political power. Only in England did the prestige of the monarchy and the aristocratic system remain. Hence European aristocrats looked to England as a bulwark. In

no small part did this contribute to Onslow dedicating his **Op.77 Nonet in a minor** to Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert. Albert was esteemed throughout Europe as a progressive thinker and was himself an accomplished singer, organist and composer. Perhaps even more importantly, he was the most important promoter of instrumental music in London. Under his management, important works by Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann received their premiere performances. He knew Onslow personally as they were both members of the London Philharmonic Society.

It appears that Onslow, who was 64 when he wrote his nonet, did so for at least two reasons. First, what little interest there was in chamber music in France at that time was for works involving winds, strings, and or piano in some combination. By composing a work for 4 strings and 5 winds, Onslow felt he could receive some recognition in France. Secondly, by dedicating such a large scale and grand work to a figure such as Albert, he would certainly enhance his already fine reputation in England, and especially in royal circles. The dedication deeply pleased Albert who in gratitude sent Onslow an autographed copy of a collection of his own compositions.

Was Onslow familiar with Spohr's nonet at the time he set down to write his own? There is no way of knowing for sure but what evidence there is seems to suggest that he was. First off, the instrumentation he choose—Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon. Coincidence? As they say on TV crime shows—you decide. Given the vogue for big works for winds combined with strings that existed in Paris among that small section of the musical public which attended chamber music concerts, it is fairly likely that Spohr's nonet would have had several performances during this time. Further, the Paris Conservatory, where Onslow taught, was perhaps the leading school for wind players and the faculty surely would have known of it, as Reicha octets and quintets often appeared on the Conservatory's concert programs.

The first movement, *Allegro spiritoso*, begins with a somewhat virtuosic first theme played forte and led by the violin. It is characterized by its nervous excitement. Then comes a softer section followed by the working out, which sounds as if it were borrowed from Spohr, not only the downward plunging chromaticism but also the actual writing. This in itself is quite unusual because Onslow rarely sounds like Spohr and vice versa. In this movement, and throughout the nonet, we see Onslow combining unison passages that approach the symphonic, juxtapositioned against passages in which chamber music dialogue dominates the proceedings. One is not very aware of the second theme, which though good, does not provide much of a contrast. The main theme of the second movement, *Scherzo agitato*, has the same nervous excitement found in the first movement. There seems to be a connection between the thematic material. The frantic pace of this edgy music never lets up. It begins softly and quickly rises in pitch. The theme in the trio section, led by the horn, is more relaxed and has a misty, mysterious quality. The nonet's center of gravity is its big, slow movement, *Adagio*. The theme is quiet, and pleasant but not particularly memorable. A set of five variations follow. Here, Onslow changes the ensemble groupings, rather than varying the mood or tempo of the music. The finale, *Largo, Allegretto quasi Allegro*, begins, as the title suggests, with a slow theme, pregnant with possibilities and slightly ominous.

The Allegretto, however, is bright and though there is considerable bustling and movement of the gurgling brook type, there is no great sense of the dramatic one so often finds and is captivated by in Onslow's best works. It is a pleasant, good work, the part-writing is fine and fun to play, but it is not one of his best works and it is not particularly easy to play. The demands on the first violin and the upper winds are equal to, if not more difficult than those found in the Spohr. The Nonet was published by Kistner in Germany and Brandus in France and is now available from Phylloscopus. There is at least one recording.

Onslow subsequently arranged the nonet for a Sextet consisting of Piano, Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, and Bass. It was in this version that it became better known, at least in France, This was because keyboard works in combination with winds were enjoying a tremendous vogue at this time..



Louise Farrenc (1804-1875) also wrote a nonet in 1848. She enjoyed a considerable reputation during her own lifetime as both a performer and a teacher. She was a piano prodigy and studied with such greats as Ignaz Moscheles and Johann Nepomuk Hummel. At the Paris Conservatory studied composition with Anton Reicha. While the great bulk of Farrenc's compositions were for the piano alone, chamber music was of great interest to her and she produced

chamber works for various combinations of winds and or strings and piano throughout her life. Her reputation as a pianist was such, that in 1842 she was appointed to the permanent position of Professor of Piano at the Paris Conservatory, a position she held for thirty years and one which was among the most prestigious in Europe. (No woman in the 19th century held a comparable post.) Fetis the famous music critic, explaining why Farrenc's works were not better known, wrote. "*Unfortunately, the genre of large scale instrumental music to which Madame Farrenc felt herself called involves performance resources which a composer can acquire for herself or himself only with enormous effort. Another factor here is the public, as a rule not a very knowledgeable one, whose only standard for measuring the quality of a work is the name of its author. If the composer is unknown, the audience remains unreceptive, and the publishers, especially in France, close their ears when someone offers them a halfway decent work...Hence her works have fallen into oblivion today, when at any other epoch her works would have brought her great esteem.*"

Farrenc's **Nonetto in E Flat Major, Op.38**, like Onslow's nonet, is for the same combination of instruments as the Spohr. It is ironic that of all her chamber music, the work which achieved the most popular success was a piece without piano. It was this Nonetto which made whatever name she had as a composer during her lifetime. It may, in part, have been due to the tremendous popularity of the young and dashing Joseph Joachim—one of Europe's leading violinists—who in 1850 participated in the public premiere of the Nonetto in front of a large audience. What led to her deciding to compose a nonet without piano is now lost in

(Continued on page 8)

history. Certainly there were not many prior examples for her to consider. The only one of any consequence was that of Ludwig Spohr composed in 1813. As in the case of Onslow, perhaps a recent concert at which it was performed served as her inspiration. But, there is no evidence for this. Still, some of the writing “reeks” of Spohr, especially that for the violin toward the end in the finale. There is also Onslow, a colleague at the Paris Conservatory, who also composed a nonet in 1848. Could this have been the inspiration? It is inconceivable that she would not have known of his nonet or heard of it especially *after it was published*. But was it published before she completed her own nonet? Considering how different the two are, it seems unlikely. Then there was her teacher Anton Reicha. Though he wrote no nonets, he did compose two Octets for winds and strings and at least one and probably two Dixtuors also known as Grande Symphonies de Salon. These were scored for wind quintet, string quartet and bass. It seems the most likely that it was these works, composed while Farrenc was still studying with Reicha, which served as her models.

And, in fact, the nonet shows the influence of Reicha more than it does that of Spohr. The first of its four movements, *Adagio—Allegro*, begins with a majestic 23 measure introduction. While pleasant, it does not create any sense of expectation, however the



beautiful opening theme of the *Allegro*, (example below) full of potential, is much better. The second theme is also very good. Because there was no piano and hence no temptation to gift her own instrument with virtuoso passages, the part writing remains uniformly good. The excellent integration of the string and wind writing must be attributed, at least in part, to what she learned from Reicha. This is tasteful, good-natured and genial music. However, it lacks a sense of excitement and drama one expects to find in a first movement. In this respect and in comparison to the 1st movements of either the Spohr or the Onslow nonets, the Farrenc cannot compete. The second movement, *Andante con variazione*, begins with a very attractive theme (below)

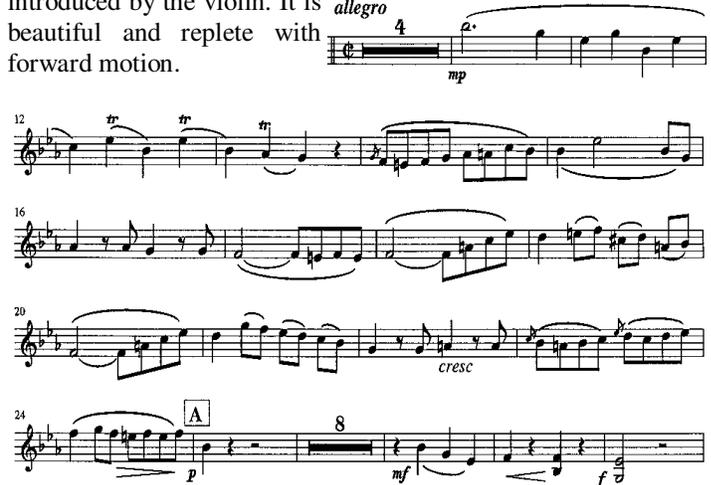


introduced by the violin. The first variation features the oboe by itself in a lyrical, syncopated and serene episode. The viola joins in toward the end and the mixed timbre of the two instruments is exquisite. In the second variation, the violin is given an etude like series of 32nd note runs. The viola, flute and clarinet are brought in for cameo appearances. Then comes the bassoon who plays *primus inter pares* within a woodwind quintet. The horn is given a turn in the fourth variation charmingly accompanied by a series of triplets in the minor by the strings. All participate in the *Allegretto* coda, even the bass is suddenly exposed to the light of day for a brief second. This is an absolutely first rate movement, an excellent set of variations which serve to

showcase Farrenc’s compositional skills. The third movement is a superb *Scherzo vivace*. It begins with great originality as the strings quietly strum the exciting opening theme, which sounds of the chase. (see below)



The winds restate it and the music then takes off. It is in the tradition of grand and exciting scherzi, complete with wonderful chromatic passages. The second theme, actually more of a long trio section, first played the by winds in their upper registers, a dreamy, children’s nursery song. When the strings briefly take over the melody, it becomes very lyrical. With the recapitulation, the scherzo returns and plunges ahead to a short coda. Again, we have a little masterpiece. Everything is perfect, the thematic material, the part writing. It shows great creativity and verve. The finale, *Adagio-Allegro*, begins with an introduction which this time *does* create a sense of expectation, especially as the oboe’s cadenza brings it to an end and the horn sounds a four measure “call to attention”. The opening theme (below) to the *Allegro* is introduced by the violin. It is *allegro* and replete with forward motion.



The development section fulfills the expectation created by such a fetching opening melody, and the second theme, which is brought forth by the lower strings, provides a nice contrast and is well developed. The coda, replete with a short episode of virtuosic violin playing that Spohr himself might have penned, is quite nicely done. While there is no question that the first movement is weaker than the Onslow, the final three movements are, in my opinion better, and on the whole this nonet must rank as the stronger of the two. Is it as good as the Spohr? The answer to this, of course, is subjective. I think it can be said that it is almost as good. Although the writing in the first movement does not create great excitement, this cannot be held as a major flaw. And the work clearly improves as it goes along. The final three movements are very fine. Of course, it deserves to be heard on the concert stage, but how often are we hearing nonets nowadays? As for amateurs or private music-making, you can’t go wrong. The parts are available from Phylloscopus and it has been recorded at least once on CD. (This article will be continued in the next issue of *The Chamber Music Journal*.)

Edward Bache's Piano Trio *(continued from page 3)*

teaching, composing and studying. He successfully negotiated a contract with a London publishing firm of Addison, Hollier and Lucas for a series of pot-boilers—mainly solo piano pieces.

In 1853, Bache left England for the Leipzig Conservatorium and a period of study with Moritz Hauptmann. His sister reports that he wrote at this time, “*I heard no opera in Dresden, as Hector Berlioz was there, monopolizing the opera house with his horrid rubbish. I prefer Wagner to Berlioz though Wagner is so abominable that you cannot imagine such a noise as yet in England.*” And later he wrote that “*I have lately played much of Schumann's music and every successive piece increases my dislike to it in toto...everything is confused, and noisy (the Schumannites say deep)*...” This antipathy to Berlioz, Schumann and Wagner is evident in his music; he owes virtually nothing to them. He returned to London in 1855 as the first signs of his fatal illness were beginning to be apparent. Following a short lived appointment as organist in Hackney, he went North Africa in search of a cure for tuberculosis. After what amounted to a tour of Europe including Algiers, Paris, Leipzig and Rome, he came back to England. In April 1858, he returned to Birmingham where after three months of suffering he died on 24 August.

The bulk of Bache's works is for the piano. Many of these pieces have titles that were typical and popular in the mid 1800's: *Impromptu*, *Mazurka de Salon* and *Characteristic Pieces*. Interestingly, he wrote two sets of *Souvenirs* from his travels—one, quite predictably from Italy, but the other was written when in Torbay on the South Devon Coast. The title is surely tantalising to all enthusiasts of British music—*Souvenirs de Torquay!*

If Bache had survived, he would almost certainly have become an operatic composer. In fact, he did write two operas: *Which is Which?* and *Rubezahl*, neither is believed to have been staged. The overture *Jessie Gray* was his first performed orchestral work and he went on to compose three piano concertos and one for flute. Bache is noted for his songs which many regard as an important contribution to the genre of English ‘lieder.’ In particular, the *Six Songs* Op.16 nod towards Sterndale Bennett and Mendelssohn and have a touch of the English Victorian Ballad about them. The striking key changes recall Schubert. Lastly, Bache wrote a number of chamber works including a *Romance* for cello and piano Op.21 and a *Duo Brillante* for violin and piano. There is also an un-resurrected *String Quartet in F* from 1851.

There was and is a prevalent view that England in the 19th century was a ‘Land without Music.’ Of course it is true that there were no towering giants to compare with the great composers of Austria and Germany but that is not that same as saying that these British men and women lacked inspiration and technical ability.

A second myth is that English music of the period was totally beholden to Felix Mendelssohn. Now much has been written about this but the truth is that it was in the field of choral music and oratorios that this influence was most keenly felt. And perhaps the ubiquitous *Songs without Words* had more impact than was good for British music at that time. Yet even the briefest glance at key Victorian composers reveals allegiances to Rossini, Spohr, Gounod, Brahms, Wagner and Dussek.

There is no doubt that the *Trios* of Schubert and Mendelssohn would have been well known to Bache. In fact, even a superficial

hearing of the present work reveals a number of passages that could have been written by Schubert and it is not difficult to hear echoes of Mozart and Beethoven and of course the ubiquitous Mendelssohn. However, the most obvious candidate for influence on Bache's present work must be the *Trio in A major* by William Sterndale Bennett. The basis of this work has been described by Nicolas Timperley as founded “on the slender tradition of English piano trios.” Sterndale Bennett's work was published in 1839, some ten years before Bache became his pupil. Yet in spite of the mediocre press by Cobbett, this is the first British *Trio* where the violin and cello are “fully emancipated, and are given parts consistent with their dignity” – a point that was not lost on Bache. The conclusion is that Edward Bache was able to take a number of models known to him and was able to synthesise his own creation. Of course not all traces of the models were expunged; however there is no way that this *Trio* can be described as derivative.

The *Trio in d minor* was written for, and dedicated to, the English pianist Arabella Goddard, regarded as one of the leading British pianists during the second half of the 19th century. Born in 1836 she began her career as a prodigy, commencing piano lessons with Kalkbrenner in Paris at the age of six! Later she completed her studies in London with Lucy Anderson and Sigismund Thalberg. By the time that Bache was introduced to her in December 1852 she was well known in the recital rooms and the concert halls of London. Bache is quoted as saying that he was determined “*to dedicate a piece to her as soon as I write one which I think is worthy of her unrivalled mechanism.*”

The *Trio* was published seven years after the composer's death by Kistner of Leipzig. Copies of the score are held in the British Library, the Barbican, Birmingham Library, Oxford and in the Library of Congress. The holograph of the *Trio* seems to have been lost. The score was reprinted in 1875 and 1900.

The opening of the *Allegro* quite definitely nods towards Sterndale Bennett. It is the piano that impresses in the opening pages of this movement – with busy figurations. Soon the cello and violin explore a gorgeous singing melody that has a reminiscence of Mendelssohn or perhaps even a contemporary operatic aria. There is no obvious break between the first and second subjects: the latter hardly being a contrast to the former. A section follows marked *con passione* and *con amore*. Listening to this music, it is not hard to imagine that Bache was impressed with more than Arabella Goddard's pianistic ability. The exposition is repeated and there is little in the way of classical development. The composer is content to explore ideas presented in the first bars of this movement. Strangely the conclusion of the first movement is quite reserved, with a restrained coda: these closing pages are perhaps the most original music in this part of the work.

The slow movement, *Andante espressivo*, is quite definitely the heart of this *Trio*. It begins with a number of significant piano chords and melody before the strings enter. There is a heartfelt contrapuntal working out of the initial theme. The second subject seems to emerge from the proceedings without much ado: the piano reflecting on the events with decorated snippets of the melody. There is a slight change of mood: faster music allows the strings to play *con passione*. Yet this is not destined to last long—after a brief climax the mood returns to the expressive opening

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

theme. Once again we hear the interplay between the violin and the cello, this is a true dialogue between all three players. There is a little intense outburst before the music settles down to a quiet and relatively undisturbed reminiscence of the opening music.

The *Allegro molto e appassionato* is perhaps the most satisfying movement of the Trio—at least from a formal point of view. Bache has managed to create a perfectly balanced piece of music that is not only well constructed but is totally agreeable to the ear. It opens with a skipping tune that is first heard on the piano. Soon the strings join in the debate. There is much impressive writing that is reminiscent of Schubert. The pace slows down for a moment as if the composer is about to announce a new theme – but suddenly it is off skipping again. However the slower tune does arrive and it is played as well harmonised chords that sound as they came straight from the piano works of Sterndale Bennett. Yet soon the movement's opening tune returns in all its glory. As the end of the work approaches the slower music is restated – this time the melody is given to the strings with the piano in a supporting role. The tempo slowly increases towards the conclusion of the work with exiting piano and string figurations leading to a reprise of the opening. The short coda ends impressively.

After nearly a century of neglect Bache's *Trio* was revived at a Victorian Society concert given in London in September of 1964.

Some time later, a recording was made for the BBC by violinist Manoug Parikan, cellist Amaryllis Fleming and the pianist Bernard Roberts. Jane Faulkner, of the English Piano Trio, believes it was around 1984. The English Piano Trio began to include the work in their repertoire in late 2004. The first and only recording of Francis Edward Bache's *Piano Trio* Op.25 is on the 2004 Dutton Epoch CD# 7145, (*Reviewed in Vol XVIII, No.1*)

There are two common threads that emerge from virtually all discussion of Bache's *Trio in D minor*. Firstly, that it is an exceptional work of its period. It may not be a work of genius but it is well regarded. It is understood to be well constructed and not lacking in inspiration. It could be argued that the composer wears his heart on his sleeve, but this heartfelt quality is endearing rather than off-putting. The colourful and skilful instrumentation is exceptional for the period. (*The parts will be available from Edition Silvertrust in early 2008*)

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New Recordings



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

String Quartets

Malcolm ARNOLD (1921-2006) Nos.1-2, Naxos 8.557762 / Nikolaus BRASS (1949) Nos.2-3, Col legno WWE ICD 20238 / Carlos CHAVEZ (1899-1978) Nos.1-3, Cambria8853 / Lex van DELDEN (1919-88) Nos.1-3, MD&G 603-1436 / Ignacy DOBRZYNSKI (1802-67) No.1 in e, Op.7, Dux 0561 / Alexander GLAZUNOV (1865-1936) 5 Novellettes Op.15, Naxos 8.570256 / Francois GOSSEC (1734-1829) Op.14 No.5 & Op.15 No.1 Musique en Wallonie 0208 / Alois HABA (1893-1938) Nos.1-16, Bayer 100-282-5 / Jennifer HIGDON (1962-) *Impressions*, Naxos 8.559298 / Johann KALLIWODA (1801-66) Nos.1-3, Calliope 9357 / Stanislaw MONIUSZKO (1819-72) Nos.1-2, Dux 0561 / Quincy PORTER (1897-1966) Nos.1-9, Albany-Troy 918-19 / Joseph-Guy ROPARTZ (1864-1955) Nos.4-6, Timpani 1C1115

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Alexander GLAZUNOV (1865-1936) Qnt Op.39, Naxos 8.570256 / Francois GOSSEC (1734-1829) Str Trio, Op.9 No.1, Musique en Wallonie 0208 / Gordon JACOB (1895-1984) 6 Shakespearian

Pieces for Str Trio, Dutton 7177 / Gabriel PIERNE (1863-1937) 3 Pieces for Str Trio, Timpani 2C1110 / Wolfgang RIHM (1952-) Music for 3 Str Instruments, VMS 157 / Joseph Miroslav WEBER (1854-1906) Qnt in D, Cello Classics 1017

Piano Trios

Wolfgang BOTTENBERG (1930) Trio in D, Disques 21-1561 / John HARBISON (1938-) No.2, Naxos 8.559243 / Jennifer HIGDON (1962-) Trio, Naxos 8.559298 / Gabriel PIERNE (1863-1937) Op.41, Timpani 2C1111

Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

Wolfgang BOTTENBERG (1930-) Qt in Bb, Disques 21-1561 / Frank BRIDGE (1879-1941) Phantasy Qt, Albany Troy 910-11 / Herbert HOWELLS (1892-1983) Qt in a, Op.21, Albany Troy 910-11 / Gordon JACOB (1895-1984) Qt, Albany Troy 910-11 / Paul JUON (1872-1940) Qnt, Op.40, Musique Suisses 6243 / Alexander MACKENZIE (1847-1945) Qt in Eb, Op.11, Albany Troy 910-11 / Bohuslav MARTINU (1891-1959) Qnt Nos.1-2, Naxos 8.557861 / Gabriel PIERNE (1863-1937) Quintet Op.45, Timpani 2C1110 / Jean SIBELIUS (1865-1957) Qnt in g, BIS 1412 / Charles Villiers STANFORD (1852-1924) Qt No.1, Op.15, Albany Troy

910-11 / Ludwig THUILLE (1861-1907) Qnt in Eb Op.20 & Qnt in g WoO, CPO 777090 / William WALTON (1902-83) Qt, Albany Troy 910-11

Winds & Strings

Howard BLAKE (1938-) Qnt for Fl & Str Qt, Op.493, Meridian 84553 / Gordon JACOB (1895-1984) Qt for Ob & Str Trio, Dutton 7177 / J.B. VANHAL (1739-1813) 3 Qts for Fl & Str Trio, Op.7 Nos.2,3 & 6, Naxos 8.570234

Winds, Strings & Piano

Carl FRUHLING (1868-1937) Trio for Cln, Vc & Pno, Op.40, ORF 299 / Paul JUON (1872-1940) Octet (Chamber Sym) for Vln, Vla, Vc Pno, Ob, Cln, Bsn & Hn, Musique Suisses 6243 / Lowell LIEBERMANN (1961) 2 Trios for Fl, Vc & Pno, Opp.83 & 87, Artek 0014 / Gabriel PIERNE (1863-1937) Sonata for Fl, Vc & Pno, Timpani 2C1110 / Alexander ZEM-LINSKY (1871-1942) Trio for Cln, Vc & Pno, Op.3, ORF 299

Piano & Winds

None this issue

Winds Only

Gabriel PIERNE (1863-1937) *Praeludium e fugetta & Pastoral* for Wind Qnt, Timpani 2C1110

Carl Nielsen: String Quartet Nos. 3 & 4 (continued from page 3)

mishap, the work was not published until December of 1900. It was dedicated to Edvard Grieg. This version received its first public performance in 1901. It was coldly received by the critics with one of them writing, "I can describe the music of this quartet as follows: It reminds me of how a fight between a dog and a cat might sound. Nielsen apparently wishes his performers to tear at their strings." This kind of criticism is not surprising in light of the fact that there was nothing which sounded anything like as modern in 1900 as this music. Listen to the sound-bites and you will see how Copenhagen's musical public must have been confused and shocked. But even three decades later, Wilhelm Altmann in his *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler* (Handbook for String Quartet Players) calls the Third Quartet a difficult and ungrateful work to play.

Allegro con brio. (M.M. ♩ = 144.)

Andante sostenuto. (M.M. ♩ = 52)

Andante. (♩ = 60)

Because of the amount of time between the Second and Third Quartets, a time which was a very important formative period of development for the young composer, the Third Quartet represents a major advance in Nielsen's tonal language. There is no getting away from the fact

that the opening measures of the first movement, *Allegro con brio*, have an uncompromising harshness to them. But it is just this quality which has led later day critics to consider the quartet as a descendent of Beethoven's Late Quartets. Full of contrapuntal effects, the music is boldly assertive, in your face, to put a modern spin on it. It stands up and says, "look at this".

The second movement, however, casts off this mantle of harshness for one of lyrical introspection. After a brief, hesitant and chromatic *Andante sostenuto* introduction, the first violin states the main theme at the *Andante*. From this quiet and restful theme, Nielsen builds an edifice which at times rises to great dramatic heights of considerable harmonic complexity.

Allegretto pastorale. (♩ = 100)

The third movement, *Allegretto pastorale*, is an intermezzo and the most striking and immediately appealing of the four movements. It is characterized by wayward chromaticism in the theme given out by the first violin against a very imaginative accompaniment in the other voices. This is very attractive writing, but Nielsen tops it with an incredible *Presto* trio section in which "all

hell breaks loose". Stormy and exciting, the triplets against powerful double stop chords, sometimes syncopated, in the other voices. This is then followed by a very beautiful, lyrical interlude before the return of the main section.

Presto. (♩ = 120)

The main theme of the finale, *Allegro coraggioso*, begins in a fashion which would allow it to serve as music to a cowboy western movie, something of the sort Aaron Copeland was later to write. Then, after the full statement of the main theme, Nielsen introduces a second theme upon which

Allegro coraggioso. (♩ = 120)

he begins a series of fugues followed by an appealing and original pizzicato intermezzo section. When things really get going, one

(Continued on page 12)

hears the polyphony of the opening movement, but in a much tamer setting. Perhaps Nielsen recognized that three more movements as unrelenting as the first was unacceptable. This is a very good, though somewhat uneven, work. Still, it ought to be programmed in concert. Though the first movement must be worked at, amateurs should be able to navigate the others fairly smoothly.

Nielsen composed his last **String Quartet No.4 in F Major, Op.44** in 1906. After hearing it played for the first time, he confided to his diary, "Today we played my new string quartet and it sounded like I expected. I understand now the real nature of string instruments. It is strange how one can for many years court and cajole a tender thing such as a string quartet before she surrenders. Only now do I feel that I have gained acceptance with that chaste, evasive character." Initially the quartet appeared as Op.19 and was subtitled *Piacevolezza*, however, Nielsen later revised it and Peters published it as his Op.44 in 1923. Critics have generally attacked the work as being light-weight. They have looked at the score to the first movement and have expressed chagrin over the disparity



between the technical excellence and the level of substantive content. (For example, Altmann writes the thematic material is almost feeble but the compositional technique is outstanding) There is no denying it is not a weighty work, but what these critics forget is that the composer did not intend it to be.

Piacevolezza can be translated as agreeable and charming. The opening movement, *Allegro non tanto e comodo*, was originally marked *Allegro piacevole ed indolente*. One could easily make the argument that this movement is a perfect example of studied casualness by a composer who was an expert at creating music of a specific character whenever he chose. For his treatment of the thematic material, Nielsen proceeds exactly as an early 20th century Mozart might have—not an ersatz neo-classical Mozart, but a real 20th century one. So it is true, the music lacks drama, power and emotion, but it makes up for this in its *laissez faire* charm.

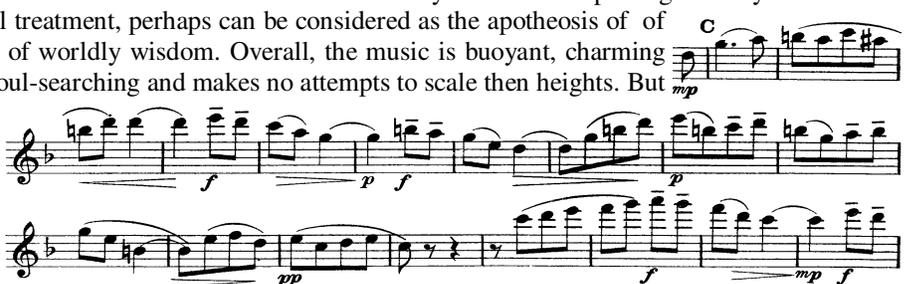
If faint praise damned the first movement, the second movement, *Adagio con sentimento religioso*, has not lacked for supporters. Altmann hailed it as an extraordinarily fine example of a choral fantasy, while others have recognized that though it lacks the lyricism of his other slow movements, it still shows his preoccupation with the Danish national song style. Certainly, the contrapuntal elaboration of the main theme is quite fine.

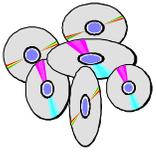
Again, one finds that the most original, most striking and immediately appealing is his third movement, *Allegretto moderato ed innocente*. This is a playful scherzo full of surprises and unexpected twists and turns. The theme begins in an quiet and unassuming fashion, *simplice* if you will, and then suddenly a forte glissando followed by a powerful crash of 8 32nd notes disrupt the whole proceedings. This is then followed by a cute and charming rondo section. The trio is equally fine, beginning with a singing melody in the cello. Rather than proceeding *a la Verdi*, Nielsen introduces all of the others into the fray and creates a brief dramatic crescendo before returning to the main section.



The finale, begins with a very brief *Molto adagio* introduction which is really nothing more than a few double stops held for several beats. Then, the main section, *Allegro non tanto, ma molto scherzoso*, is let loose. What begins primarily as a rondo (see example on left) has many unusual interludes, some slow and a bit wayward. The uplifting and lyrical second

theme (below right), which is given a brief fugal treatment, perhaps can be considered as the apotheosis of of the entire work: Light-hearted, but with a tinge of worldly wisdom. Overall, the music is buoyant, charming and at times full of humor. Yes, it is devoid of soul-searching and makes no attempts to scale then heights. But why should that be held against it when it is perfect in what it sets out to achieve. A fine work that should be in the repertoire and which should provide no great technical problems for amateurs.



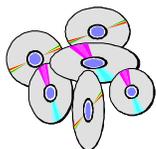


Georg Druschetzky: Four String Quintets Chamber Works with Clarinet by Pietro & Giovanni Bottesini

Originally, I was going to say that string players could be forgiven if they had never heard of **Georg Druschetzky** (1745-1819 Jiří Družecký in the Czech form) because the bulk of his compositions are for wind instruments for which he was said to have written exceptionally well. However, Druschetzky may have written as many as 24 string quartets and perhaps as many as 10 string quintets. Yet, the only published string music by him that I have ever come across is a duet for violin and cello. Like his contemporaries the Wranitzky brothers, Franz Krommer, Haydn and Mozart, Druschetzky was a prolific composer. He is said to have written 150 Octet Partitas for winds, several of which are still in print. Born in Bohemia, he was trained on the oboe and the timpani. He served as an Austrian regimental musician between 1760-75, rising to the rank of Kapellmeister. Though active in Linz and later Vienna, he primarily worked in Pressburg (Bratislava) and Buda where he was active as a court composer and music director. In the past few years, there have been several “revival” releases of music by lesser-known composers, such as Florian Gassmann and Anton Zimmerman (see Vol.XII No.2 & Vol.XVI No.1), from the Vienna-Classical era. Most of these disks, in my opinion, have only served as a *prima facie* case for why the music does not deserve revival. However, there have been one or two promising discoveries such as Johann Spech (Vol.XV No.1). Based on the quintets recorded on **Hungaroton CD 32290**, I would say that some of Druschetzky’s music certainly merits revival. One must keep in mind that composers from this era were, in the course of their employment, forced to churn out new works on a regular basis, and it is unfair to expect that most of these would be great works. Unfortunately, the jewel box notes provide no information about these works other than their key. Of the four quintets, I found the first, entitled *Quintetto concertando in F Major*, the best of the lot. It is the only one in three movements. The style of the writing is a combination of concertante and the more advanced style pioneered by Mozart and Haydn in the mid 1780’s. What is particularly appealing about the work is the melodies writing which shows a considerable gift. Quite good use is made of the cello, something one only really comes across in the Wranitzkys. My guess is this work dates from the early 1790’s. Though influenced by Mozart and Haydn, it has that same freshness and originality one finds in the better works of Paul Wranitzky with its fresh and clever touches. The remaining three quintets each have four movements, being given a minuet. The first three movements of the next work, *String Quintet in g minor*, were borrowed from a quartet for oboe quartet. The melodic writing here is also quite good, surprisingly, as this is not one of those works which only showcase one voice as was often the case with works for one wind instrument and a group of strings. This is not to say, the first violin is not given a substantial part, but it is no larger than had this been originally a work only for strings. The opening, baroque-sounding Adagio introduction is particularly effective. The *String Quintet in E flat Major* is also a good work. The final *String Quintet in D Major* is perhaps the weakest but the last two movements are effective. Here is music, which when at its best, is the equal of the so-called lesser Vienna Classical Masters. One must keep in mind that Druschetzky was born in 1745. A worthwhile CD.

The name of Bottesini will forever be associated with the string bass, for **Giovanni Bottesini** (1821-1889) is perhaps its best, and certainly its most famous, executant. Giovanni’s father **Pietro Bottesini** (1792-1874) was a clarinetist and a relatively unknown Italian composer. **Talent CD DOM 2910 124** presents what it has titled “*Bottesini: Chamber Music with Clarinet*”. But while this lovely and very melodic music is certainly for small chamber ensembles, it is not really chamber music, as it generally is understood so much as solo works for clarinet with a supporting cast. These works are clearly related to the quatuors brilliant that Spohr often wrote. Six of the seven works are by Pietro. The first of these, is *Theme & Variations for Flute, Clarinet & String Quartet* in which the clarinet alone is given a very long solo, stating not only the theme but also the first variation entirely by itself behind a soft right hand piano type accompaniment in the strings. Some three minutes into the work, the flute finally enters. While it is very charming, and while the variations are quite well done, it is little more than a vehicle for the two wind instruments and it must be said the accompaniment is less than unremarkable. Next is a *Divertimento for Clarinet in A and String Quartet*. The strings are given the introduction before the clarinet enters playing an engaging, slow melody, embellished by virtuoso flourishes. Here at least, the strings are actually given a part to play, albeit only in very brief stretches before the clarinet takes the music away. I would liken the writing, which, as one might expect from a clarinetist is quite good, to a quatuor brilliant. The music most closely resembles that of Carl Maria von Weber. Then there are 2 quartets for Clarinet, Violin, Cello & Guitar. Both are one movement affairs but these movements seem to consist of several sub-movements of different tempi. The first, No.3 (Pietro wrote 6 in all for this combination) has the flavor of Rossini and is dominated by the clarinet and violin, who have all of the thematic material and play it alternately but never together. The cello and guitar are relatively unnecessary. The second quartet, No.6, also sounding of Rossini, again gives the lion’s share of the material to the clarinet and the violin, however, both the guitar and cello are given brief solos of their own. Here, the violin and clarinet are used together to create very pleasant soprano duets. There are also two works for clarinet and piano. The remaining work is by Giovanni, his *Grand Duo for Clarinet, Doublebass & Piano*. It dates from 1841 and was meant as a concert vehicle for the 17 year old son and his father. The work is equally divided into two sections, a slow and a fast. Although the piano is given the introduction as a solo, it is mostly an accompanist as the title suggests. The clarinet and bass are each given brilliant solos as well as lovely passages together. The music was clearly inspired and influenced by the melodic tradition of the Italian opera. Certainly this music should interest clarinetists and bassists. I am sure string players will enjoy hearing such tuneful music but I doubt they will ever want to play it. This is a pleasant and enjoyable CD which is easy to listen to and to like. Recommended.





Joseph Jongen: Two Piano Trios A Piano Quartet & Piano Trio by Pere Tintorer i Sagarra



Joseph Jongen (1873-1953), on the strength of an amazing precocity for music, entered the Liege Conservatory at the extraordinarily young age of seven where he spent the next sixteen years. The admission board was not disappointed. Jongen won a First Prize for Fugue in 1891, an honors diploma in piano the next year and another for organ in 1896. In 1897, he won the prestigious Grande Prix de Rome which allowed him to travel to Italy, Germany and France. He began composing at the age of 13 and immediately exhibited extraordinary talent.

His Piano Trio No.1 in b minor, Op.10, which dates from 1897, is in three movements, though written on a large scale. The opening *Allegro appassionato* has a flowing and passionate, song-like melody for its main theme. The second theme bears an amazing resemblance to the melody found in the second part of Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade. This may have or may not have been coincidence. Of course, it receives a very different treatment. The lovely middle movement, *Andante molto sostenuto*, begins almost as a recitative. As the music progresses, both themes from the first movement make an appearance, though in quite a different setting. The trio concludes with a sparkling *Allegro deciso*, which begins with an urgent and searching melody. This occupies the first section. But then, all of the themes which have preceded it are brought together and masterly worked out before giving way to a brilliant coda. It is hard to understand how a work of this quality is not better known. The parts are available from Edition Silvertrust. The second work on disk, **Trio for Violin, Viola & Piano, Op.30**, was composed some ten years later in 1907. The idiom and style have advanced considerably over the earlier work. Though not immediately apparent, it is monothematic like many of Cesar Franck's works. In three movements, the most important is the middle section, *Très modérément*, a theme and set of variations. Interestingly, the first movement, *Prélude*, is also a variation of the theme, as is the finale, *Très décidé*, despite their being a separate movements. It is not an accident that the movement titles are in French rather than Italian, as in the preceding trio, for the writing quite clearly shows Jongen had moved away from the mainstream Central European style and had adopted some of the language of the French impressionists. This is a masterly work, the treatment of theme and variations is very plastic and the music, always beautiful, has many moments of intense passion. **Phaedra CD#92041** is highly recommended.

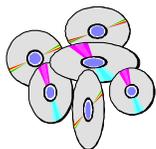


There is not a lot of information to be had on **Pere Tintorer i Sagarra** (1814-1891). He is unknown to the editors of *The New Grove*, as well as those of the Oxford and Baker's dictionaries. Cobbett's, who styles him Pedro and spells his last name incorrectly, has a one sentence entry stating he composed four piano quartets, a piano trio and a string quartet. On **La Ma de Guido (LMG) CD#2059** one of these piano quar-

tets (they do not state which one) and his piano trio are recorded. No information is given about either work, although we do learn something about Tintorer's life. He was born in Palma de Mallorca of Catalonian parents and grew up in Barcelona. Initially trained as a flutist and chorister, he then studied piano locally before attending the Madrid Conservatory where he won first prize in piano. After this he studied composition at the Paris Conservatory subsequently teaching for many years in Lyon and then back in Barcelona. While in Paris, it is thought he may have had lessons from Franz Liszt. He is known to have composed over 100 works including two symphonies and the above mentioned chamber music. The **Quartetino**, as the piano trio is called on disk, is in two movements. The first, *Andante mosso*, begins vaguely sounding of the opening bars of the cello introduction to the William Tell Overture. The the violin, and to a lesser extent the viola, are given most of the melodic material which is clearly related to the Italian vocal style. There is an interlude given to the piano which almost sounds like a player piano giving forth salon music. The second movement, *Allegro ma non tanto*, begins with a theme which sounds like it could have come from Beethoven's Op.1 piano trios. The style is that of the late Vienna Classical or early romantic periods. The themes are attractive but again better use could certainly have been made of the viola and cello, who only come into there own when the strings are massed together briefly to create an orchestral effect. My guess is the music was composed before 1840. Certainly pleasant enough, it is no more than drawing room music. The opening *Allegro* to the **Piano Trio** begins a bright and clever melody, however, its elaboration though attractive and appealing often veers across the border in the land of drawing room music, though of a high quality. The cello is allowed to present the main theme to the middle movement, *Andante moto*. It is simple but lyrical and there is a vague Spanish flavor to it, although it is mostly dressed in the clothing of early the romantic period in Vienna. The substantial finale, *Allegro moderato*, begins with a charming and sprightly melody. The music is gay and carefree, attractive and appealing. This could be said of every movement of both the trio and the quartet. There is no profundity or even any real depth of feeling. This is sunny light-hearted music. I enjoyed listening to it and probably would not mind playing it on occasion, if parts were available, as I am not a highbrow who can only spend time with music which is deep, dramatic and emotional. It probably was not intended to be more than it is, very pleasant. With that caveat, I recommend this CD on which there are also works for piano and a grand duo for violin and piano.

One does not come across recordings for bassoon, violin, viola, cello and piano everyday. This in itself makes **MDG CD#603 1175** something special as it gives three such works by **Johann Evangelist Brandl** (1760-1837). Brandl, born in Regensburg in Bavaria, spent his entire youth as a boarding student at various monasteries. Beyond the usual religious courses, he was given a thorough musical education and had





Johann Evangelist Brandl: Three Quintets for Bassoon, String Trio & Piano Viktor Ullmann: String Quartet No.3 / George Onslow: 2 Piano Trios

extensive voice, violin and piano lessons. He was, nonetheless, headed for a career in the priesthood but in 1779, before taking orders, decided to study law instead. However, lack of funds forced him to abandon this plan and he was forced to give violin lessons to make a living. Not long after, he embarked on a concert tour in Switzerland, subsequently obtaining the post of Kapellmeister at several German princely courts. During this period, the late 1780's, he began an intensive study of Haydn's string quartets and symphonies. By the mid 1790's, Brandl had composed several chamber music works and a symphony which helped to establish his reputation in the German speaking lands. A prolific composer, his chamber music was often played during his lifetime and throughout the first half of the 19th century. **The Three Quintets for Bassoon, String Trio & Piano, Opp.13, 61, &62** are thought to have been written between 1796 and 1800. Op.13, which is in F Major, apparently was recycled and is identical to another quintet Op.63. There is a modus operandi which is common to all three works. Only the piano, which by far is given the largest share, the bassoon, and the violin are used to present the melodic material. The viola and cello are merely along for the ride, filling the gaps where necessary. The Op.13 and Op.62 follow the fast—slow—fast three movement format common to classical era works. The middle work, Op.61, has four movements, placing a Minuetto between the *Adagio* slow movement and the *Allegro* finale. The style of writing is, for the most part, concertante. The thematic material is never pedestrian but always appealing, showing that Brandl had a gift for melody. Some of the movements are quite original in conception, in particular the finale, *Allegro*, to Op.61. Op.62 has no slow movement, its middle movement being a *Menuetto Allegretto*, which is another one of his more original movements. However, the lengthy finale, begins with an *Adagio* introduction and is made up of several sections, some of which are slower in tempo. It is highly unlikely that one is ever going to have the chance to hear these works in concert—Brandl most likely composed them upon a commission from a bassoonist—so I recommend you avail yourself of the opportunity of doing so by obtaining this CD.



Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944) was born in Teschen near the Czech-Polish border. Although both his parents were Roman Catholics and his father was an Austrian noble, the families were originally of Jewish descent. He studied composition with Arnold Schönberg in Vienna, Alexander von Zemlinsky and Alois Hába in Prague. He held various positions as music director and professor. He was trapped in Prague during the Nazi invasion of 1939 and was in

1942 interned at Terezin. He was encouraged to compose while there and completed some 16 works, among them his **String Quartet No.3, Op.46**, which was completed at the beginning of 1943. It is recorded on **Praga CD#250 180**. It must be noted that Ullmann was a serial composer, however, his tone rows were different from Schönberg's 12 tone rows. He seems much more at-

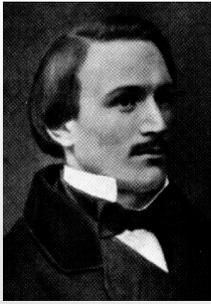
tracted to traditional tonality, although this is not a tonal work in the traditional sense, it is tonal rather than atonal. Its themes could even, in part, be sung. It is in four movements that are all linked. The opening *Allegro moderato* begins in a sad and yearning mood mixed momentary outbursts of passion. It is lyrical in nature. Later, comes a *Presto*, it is an attractive scherzando section which resembles a spooky waltz. The dark *Largo* which follows is empty and bleak. The short finale, *Allegro vivace*, is a thrusting affair which creates the sensation of falling downward in spiral. It is full of suspense, dread and even horror, but it is not harsh. The coda introduces the opening theme from the first movement and fashions a rousing conclusion. This is an important work, deserving to be heard in concert. The parts are available from Schott. Piano works are also on disk. Recommended.

Musicaphon CD 56888 presents two piano trios by the French composer **George Onslow** (1784-1853), specifically: **Piano Trio No.7 in d minor, Op.20** and **Piano Trio No.8 in c minor, Op.26**. The jacket notes provide no information whatsoever about these works, give a defective biography and do not know that the composer's name is George and not, though he is French, Georges. A few years back, I reviewed Piano Trio No.8 (Vol.XI No.3) and had this to say about it: *Dating from 1824, it apparently enjoyed considerable popularity in Germany during the middle of the 19th Century. I did not find the introduction of the overly long opening Allegro con brio very effective. Worse yet, in the main section, the piano dominates with what is undeniably florid and insipid writing. The Adagio is adequate but the bareness of the thematic material makes the 7 minutes feel longer than it is. The Minuetto: Presto, really a scherzo, is considerably better. The thematic material is stronger both in the Minuetto and the effectively contrasting and tuneful trio section. Much of the finale, Allegro agitato, is written in concertante style. The main melody is memorable, the thematic material is stronger, and the part-writing better, although there are a few parlor room moments. In (American) football, there is an old saying: you have to play well for 4 quarters (i.e., for the whole game) to win. Here, Onslow "played well" for the last two. Hearing it again, I have had no reason to change my opinion. As for Trio No.7, it was composed in 1822 and it, too, was popular, especially in Germany, where it remained in the repertoire well into the last part of the 19th century. Its opening Allegro begins in a bombastic and florid fashion. The main theme is pretty, but fussy, however, an exciting moto-perpetuo section is quite riveting. The second movement, a Thema con variazione, is not bad but not out of the ordinary. Next comes a Minuetto, Presto. It is not a minuet but a whirling and exciting scherzo with a finely contrasting trio. The main theme to the finale, Allegro, is attractive with a good, if somewhat involved development. Excitement is maintained throughout. Onslow, who played all three instruments well, can and does write well for them. On the whole this is a better work, I think, than No.8, although it does not match his quartets or quintets. Still this CD is well worth hearing.*



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FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Edward Bache



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Viktor Ullmann

ONSLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL



HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANEYEV, REINECKE

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV