

THE  
**CHAMBER MUSIC**  
**JOURNAL**

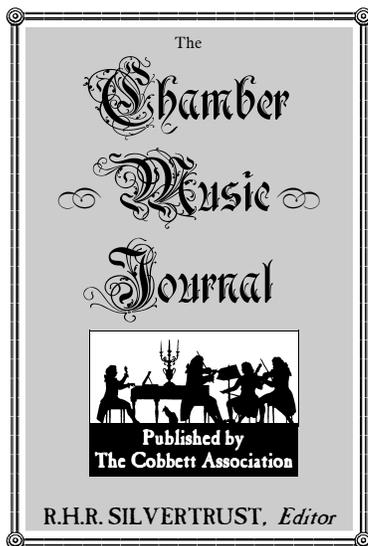
*The Essential Guide  
For Players & Listeners  
To The Wider World  
of Chamber Music*

***A Brief Survey Of String Sextets***  
***The Other Mendelssohn's***  
***D Minor Piano Trio***  
***Nonets You Are Likely To Play-Part II***

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R.H.R. Silvertrust, MA (Oxon), JD

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# The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



## Anselm Hüttenbrenner's Chamber Music

Recently, I heard a string quartet from the classical era which appealed to me, in part, because it appeared to have an excellent viola part. I called the radio station and learned that it was a string quartet by a composer called Anselm Hüttenbrenner. Hoping to purchase the CD, I learned the recording was on an old LP entitled Schubert and His Friends. Surprisingly, the person who fielded my call was unable to give me any information other than the composer's name. What can you tell me about him and is any of his music in print?

Jack Allen  
Los Angeles, California

Anselm Hüttenbrenner (1794-1868) was an Austrian composer from the Austrian province of Steiermark (Styria). He studied law, piano and composition in Graz before moving to Vienna in 1815 where he studied with Antonio Salieri. It was there that he struck up a lifelong friendship with his fellow student Schubert and also became a friend of Beethoven. Today, his name only survives because of his connection with Schubert and Beethoven. Hüttenbrenner composed some eight symphonies, a number of operas and over 200 songs. His chamber works consist of two string quartets, which date from around 1816-7, a string quintet (2 violas) and a number of duos for violin and piano and cello and piano. His string quartets, out of print for 200 years, were brought out in 2000 by Accolade Musikverlag. String Quartet No.1 is noteworthy primarily because it has a movement which bears a striking resemblance to the slow movement of Schubert's Death & The Maiden String Quartet. Hüttenbrenner composed his quartet a year before Schubert even wrote the music to his song and nearly eight years before the string quartet. The String Quintet for 2 Violins, 2 Violas and Cello also dates from roughly the same period and was also published by Accolade.

## Where to Find Reviewed CDs

I enjoy and look forward to the Diskology section in each issue of *The Journal*, however, I am frequently unable to find the CDs which you review at my local record shops. Can you tell me where else I might be able to locate these recordings?

Janice Murphy  
Seattle, Washington

I am not surprised that you are not having much luck at your records stores, given the fact that the recordings we review are not in any

way classical mainstream sellers. Just like grocery stores, shelf space is what it is all about. The whole category of classical music is often relegated to some small area at the back of record store. Hence, and they are not going to waste valuable space purchasing rare recordings for what is already a very specialized market. If you have a computer, here are some websites where you will find vast collections of chamber music. They usually carry the recordings we review: Amazon, ArkivMusic, Berkshire Record Outlet, CD Universe, Crotchet Classical Music, H&B Recordings Direct, Presto Classical, Qualiton Imports, JPC Music, Records International.

## Mixing Up His Boccherini

A friend of mine has a fabulous record collection and a while back played a Boccherini Quintet for Guitar and String Quartet which I believe was called the Retreat from Madrid. There was a very unusual section with a wild Spanish dance with castanets. As a violinist, I am very interested in finding this music but have been unable to do so.

Bill Harris  
Houston, Texas

*La Ritirata di Madrid (the Retreat of the Military Night Watch of Madrid)* was used by Boccherini on several occasions. Its first use was in his String Quintet G.324 *La Musica Notturna delle Strade di Madrid (The Night Music of the Streets of Madrid)* for two violins, viola and two cellos. It was one of two programmatic pieces that he wrote. Of the *Ritirada*, he described it as follows: "One must imagine sitting next to a window on a summer's night in a Madrid flat and that the band can only be heard in the far-off distance in some other part of the city, so at first it must be played quite softly. Slowly the music grows louder and louder until it is very loud, indicating the Night Watch are passing directly under the listener's window. Then gradually the volume decreases and again becomes faint as the band moves off down the street into the distance." In this version, the parts are available from Edition Silvertrust. Boccherini subsequently used the movement in two other quintets, one for guitar and string quartet and one for standard piano quintet. However, in neither of these is the castanet called for. Perhaps you are confusing it with his Quintet for Guitar and Strings, G.448 No.4 known as "Del Fandango."

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 Other Mendelssohn's D Minor Piano Trio

by R.H.R. Silvertrust



Surely, you really would have been surprised had I pulled out a piano trio by the son of one of Felix Mendelssohn's cousins, Arnold Mendelssohn (1855-1933). But this article is about the **Piano Trio in d minor, Op.11** by Felix's gifted sister **Fanny Mendelssohn** (1805-1847) or more correctly Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel which was her married name.

That it was a cultured household which held music in high esteem can be seen from Lea Mendelssohn's gleeful comment that her infant daughter Fanny had *Bachische Fugenfinger*, that is, the long fingers necessary for performing Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge* (The Art of the Fugue).

The Mendelssohns were ahead of their time in that they gave their two daughters the same fine education they lavished on their sons. All of the Mendelssohn children, starting with Fanny, began piano lessons with their mother virtually as soon as they were big enough to sit on a piano stool. Being the oldest, Fanny was the first to show a prodigious musical talent both as a pianist and as a composer of short pieces. Of course later, Felix, four years her junior, showed a similar level of talent. The two shared many of the same tutors, including music teachers such as Carl Zelter and later Ignaz Moscheles. Visitors to the Mendelssohn household in the early 1820s, including Moscheles, were equally impressed by

*(Continued on page 7)*

Fanny was born in Hamburg, the first of four children that Abraham and Lea Mendelssohn had. A banker, Abraham Mendelssohn was the son of Moses Mendelssohn a well-known Berlin philosopher and the so-called Father of Jewish emancipation. Abraham used to joke that in his youth he was known as Moses Mendelssohn's son and in adulthood as Felix Mendelssohn's father. Taking a cue from his father, Abraham converted to Lutheranism and changed the family name to Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

## A Brief Survey of String Sextets

by Renz Opolis

Author's Disclaimer: You may know of a sextet which I do not mention in this article. You may know of several, especially if string sextets are your thing. However, this is a "brief" and opinionated, but not an exhaustive survey. I have no idea as to how many sextets are out there, surely a hundred or more. But the fact of the matter is, how many people have the opportunity to regularly play sextets? Will you have 25 chances in your lifetime to share an evening of sextets? I hope so, but even if you do, should you spend any of these with the likes of Anton Rubinstein's sextet? I don't think so. My goal here is to give you a number of alternatives to the inevitable Brahms and Dvorak sextets. And there are, believe it or not, some pretty worthwhile alternatives out there. But before I begin, let me say up front that if you are only going to have a very few chances to play sextets, then you must play the two of Brahms, Opp.18 & 36. To them, I would also add Tchaikovsky's

magnificent *Souvenir d'Florence*, as long as you have technically assured players. I cannot say that I think Dvorak's Op.48 is good enough to be included in this must-play category. I personally find it rather weak and pretty average. I would far rather play one of Eduard Franck's two fine sextets or Hans Koessler's superb effort. Of course, these opinions are mine and I expect several of you will not agree. That's what makes life interesting. However, I will, from time to time, give someone else's opinion, just to create the appearance of objectivity, but don't be fooled. So, let us begin.

**Luigi Boccherini** (1743-1805), the Italian cello virtuoso who spent most of his life in

*(Continued on page 9)*



## Nonets You Are Likely to Play

—Part II—

by Larius J. Ussi

*(In the first part of this article, which appeared in the last issue of The Journal, the author discussed nonets generally, including their origin, and then dealt with the nonets of Ludwig Spohr, George Onslow and Louise Farrenc)*

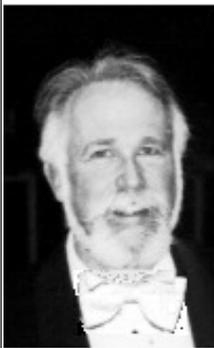
From 1848, the date of both the Onslow and Farrenc nonets, a generation passes before we come to another such work worth our attention and that is the Nonet of **Ernst Naumann** (1832-1910). He studied music at the Leipzig Conservatory and made his name primarily as an organist, editor and conductor. He served as Kapellmeister of Jena from 1860 until his death fifty years later. His compositions were not numerous and a large part of them are chamber music. Besides his nonet, he composed two viola quintets, a string quartet, a string trio and a trio for piano, violin and viola. The **Nonet in A Major, Op.10** dates from

*(Continued on page 4)*

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# At The Doublebar



I want to thank Renz Opolis and Larius Ussi for their very interesting articles about string sextets and nonets.

It is a coincidence, and certainly not by design, that this issue includes articles, on ensembles—sextets and nonets—that most of us rarely, and perhaps in some cases never, get a chance to play.

There is no question but that it is easier to put together a string sextet evening than one of nonets. I have been fortunate over the years to have had many opportunities to play sextets. In the process, I have had the chance to get to know the Brahms and Dvorak sextets. Beyond them, I have had the opportunity to play the sextets of Spohr, Eduard Franck, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Krug, Gliere, Reger, Klengel and Bridge. I felt all but the Spohr were quite enjoyable, though I admit the Reger did not please me at first and required several play-throughs before I warmed to it. If you have the chance to explore, you can't go far wrong with any of them. Professor Opolis has now stimulated my interest and put me on the trail of some of the others he mentions.

As for Nonets, here I have been less fortunate and have only had three sessions that I can recall. Still I am grateful for the opportunity to have had the chance to play the nonet of Spohr on each of those occasions as well as the nonets of Onslow, Farrenc, Lachner and Rheinberger. I would agree with Mr Ussi that after the Spohr, the Rheinberger is a must and any of the other three are fine to round off the evening. Now that I know about the Naumann, if another chance arises, I shall go for it.

With regard to Fanny Mendelssohn's d minor piano trio, I hope that I have piqued the interest of those of you who have neither heard nor played it. I found it a worthwhile work. Its quality certainly raises the question of what might have been had she not been under the social and familial restraints of the time.

—Ray Silvertrust, Editor

# Nonets You Are Likely To Play

(Continued from page 3)

1872 and is for two violins, viola, cello, bass, flute, oboe, horn and bassoon. Those of you who read the first part of this article may recall that *The New Grove* defined a nonet as a work for string quartet, bass and a group of four wind instruments. It did not specify which ones. You may also recall that the most famous nonet of all, Ludwig Spohr's Op.31 Nonet in F, does not use such an ensemble but rather uses only four strings, i.e., only one violin, a viola, cello and bass to which *five* wind instruments were added: flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon. George Onslow and Louise Farrenc each used the exact same instrumentation as Spohr and there is evidence that they, at the very least, were familiar with the Spohr Nonet and quite possibly used it as their model. It is somewhat harder to make that claim for Naumann, given that he uses two violins and only four wind instruments, leaving out the clarinet. What's more, Naumann subtitled his nonet "*Serenade*". It could well be that Naumann had Brahms' serenades in mind, the first of which, if not the second, started out as a nonet for strings and winds. Certainly, Naumann did not have 18th century serenades in mind. Such works typically were lightweight in subject matter and often began and ended with a march. Of course, neither of Brahms' serenades, though they each have more than four movements, are lightweight works. Neither resemble an updated version of the 18th century serenade, but rather are works meant to be taken seriously. Naumann's Nonet is in four



movements. The fresh, opening theme (left) to the first movement *Allegro con brio* begins

in lively fashion. The lyrical and original second theme (below), presented by the two violins and viola alone provides an excellent contrast. Perhaps best of all is the thorough and interesting contrapuntal development of both



themes. The lovely second movement, *Andante con moto*, has all of the hallmarks of a Schumann romance. Of particular beauty is the theme given to the cello, which grows in



intensity as ascends from its tenor into its treble register. (See left) Like the Brahms serenades, Naumann uses a minuet. However, this *Menuetto*, the tempo



marking to which is *Allegro assai*, does not have the character of a minuet but is much more like a scherzo despite the title. The trio section, *Ein wenig ruhiger* (a little calmer) has a very simple melody which provides an excellent contrast and impresses by virtue of its simplicity. The finale, *Allegro vivace, ma non troppo*, is brimming with appealing



thematic material. The fleet first theme (above) starts things off in a Mendel-

sohnian fashion. And the stylish and jaunty second theme (right) keeps things moving right along. But this is not to say that Naumann has opted to exclude lyricism from his finale, to the contrary, the charming third theme (below), while



not really slowing down the proceedings, nonetheless relaxes the pace just a bit, however, this is barely noticeable. In my opinion, this is really a fine work which presents no real technical problems for the players and makes a very favorable



impression upon your audience should you have one available to

listen. The parts are in print and are available from Amadeus Verlag.

**Franz Lachner** (1803-90)



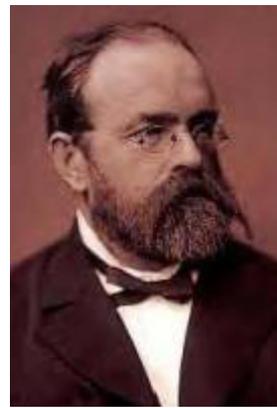
was born in Rain am Lech, a small Bavarian town and trained in Munich. In 1823, by winning a musical competition, he was awarded a position as an organist in a church in Vienna. There he met Schubert. "We two, Schubert and I, spent most of our time together sketching new songs. How quickly the hours seemed to pass, days, months, exchanging ideas and thoughts. [It was] a wonderful experience for us both. We were the closest of friends, mornings performing for each other and discussing in depth every

imaginable topic with the greatest of candor." It should come as no surprise then that Schubert influenced Lachner's musical compositions more than anyone else. However, the **Nonet in F** for standard wind quintet, string trio and bass shows a greater affinity to the work of early Beethoven, especially the Op.20 Septet. It was published in 1875—Lachner was 72 at the time—without opus number. For the life of me, I do not believe the septagenarian Lachner was composing music which sounded like it was written in the 1820's or 1830's. While I have no proof, I believe that this is a work which Lachner had more or less finished early on, and then in retirement returned to it, putting on the finishing touches and sending it to his publisher. The question arises as to whether he knew of the Spohr. This is not easy to answer, for while the instrumentation is the same, the music, the structure and many other things point to Beethoven's Septet as well as his own. Although the overall layout of the Nonet does suggest the structure of a string quartet rather than of a divertimento, the way in which Lachner proceeds does not. The Nonet opens in typical divertimento fashion with a slow introduction, *Andante*, which is rather somber, with the lower instruments playing in very dark registers. Only afterwards is the gloom is lightened by the violin and upper winds.



A substantial Mozartian cadenza is given to the the first violin as a bridge passage between the introduction and the main part of the movement, which further creates the impression of a divertimento. This relaxed and genial atmosphere of the Allegro immediately recalls Beethoven's Septet. The melodies are appealing and the writing for the instruments is very fine. The second movement, *Menuetto, allegro moderato*, has all the hallmarks of a divertimento, light and charming. The use of the bassoon and winds, again, is similar to that which Beethoven employs in the Septet. The mood is light, no drama and no storm clouds appear on the musical horizon. The slow movement, *Adagio*, begins in a very diffident and uncertain fashion. The mood is hard to pin down. It is not quite pastoral because there is an underlying uneasiness, which does not rise to the level of any

dramatic climax. Here the music is perhaps more Schubertian than elsewhere but without the compelling melodies, rather we have themes which are dreamy and pleasant. All in all, the mood remains much closer to the traditional 18th century divertimento rather than a serious concert hall piece like the Naumann. It is the catchy finale, *Allegro ma non troppo*, which is the most original and memorable movement of this fine work. The opening main theme ticks along effortlessly and we are finally treated to some drama and excitement. There are no big technical problems to be found here—although there are some virtuosic solo passages, mainly for the first violin. The partwriting is for the most part good, although there is, at times, some extensive doubling. I do not wish to get into a ranking discussion, but it is fair to say that while it is not on the same level as the Spohr, I think it is more or less comparable to either the Onslow and Farrenc, though sounding of an earlier era. The parts are in print from Phylloscopus.



The nonet by **Joseph Rheinberger** (1839-1901) is, after the nonet by Spohr, probably the best known. Rheinberger attended the Royal Conservatory in Munich where he studied with Franz Lachner. After completing his studies, he remained in Munich for the rest of his life, eventually obtaining the position of Professor of Composition at the Conservatory. During his lifetime, he was widely regarded as one of Germany's best composers after Brahms and Wagner. And, along with Carl Reinecke and Friedrich

Kiel, Rheinberger was considered one of the finest teachers in the world. Today, he is, unfortunately only remembered for his organ compositions which are considered the most important ever written after those of Bach. His **Nonet in E Flat, Op.39**, although finished in 1884, had in large part been completed in 1861. It had begun life as an octet and was reworked into a nonet for the same combination of instruments as that of Spohr's (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, string trio and bass). Presumably the octet of 1861 was structurally modeled on Schubert's. As for the Nonet, even though Onslow, Farrenc, Naumann and his own teacher Franz Lachner had all written nonets, only Spohr's had achieved any real popularity and it was the only one performed with any regularity. Hence, it was probably the only one with which Rheinberger was familiar. Yet, it does not sound like he gathered much, if any, inspiration from Spohr. Rather, the thematic material harks back to Beethoven's Op.20 *Septet*. While the opening bars to the first movement, *Allegro*, give out the main theme



(above) which is not Beethovenian, however, when the winds enter a few bars later, one could well be listening to the Ludwig himself. The beautiful second theme, first presented by the oboe, is rather more appealing.



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(Continued from page 5)

The second movement, *Minuetto, Andantino*, is mostly an attempt at an updated version of a rococo minuet. The melodic material is rather pedestrian, but the trio section has attractive melodic material as well as a very clever pizzicato bridge passage. The third movement, *Adagio molto*, is clearly the center of gravity for the nonet. The attractive main theme is broad and leisurely.



The compelling and gorgeous second theme has late Schubert as its antecedent.



The Finale, *Allegro*, is full of lively melodies and is great fun to play. The opening theme begins in a Mendelssohnian fashion with several ascending and descending sixteenth note runs.



Several ceremonious horn calls interrupt the flow of the music before a fresh and somewhat sinister melody, given first to the bassoon and then the cello makes an appearance.



But as attractive as this theme is, Rheinberger does not allow it to continue on for long and ushers in a joyous mood with a vibrant third theme.



The opportunity to play nonets is surely rare, but if you are able to schedule such an evening, this one, along with the Spohr of course, should be on the program. (To be continued in next issue)

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## New Recordings



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

### String Quartets

Ernest BLOCH (1880-1959) 4 Episodes, Naxos 8.570259 John CORIGLIANO (1938-) Black November, Turkey & Snapshot, Naxos 8.559180 / Peter Maxwell DAVIS (1934-) Nos. 7-8, Naxos 8.557399 / Stephen DODGESON (1924-) Nos. 1, 5-7, Dutton Epoch 7182 / Jefferson FRIEDMAN (1974-) No.2, Naxos 8.559180 / Olivier GREIF (1950-2000) No.4, Triton 331122 / Alfred HILL (1869-1960) Nos.1-3, Naxos 570491 Adrian JACK (1943-) Nos.3-6, Deux Elles 1116 / Hugo KAUDER (1888-1972) Nos.1-3, Centaur 2840 / Bohuslav MARTINU (1891-1959) Nos.1-7, Supraphon 3917 / Vincent PERSICETTI (1915-87) Nos.1-4, Centaur 2833 / Jean SIBELIUS (1865-1957) Complete Wks for Qt, BIS 1466 / Rudolph SIMONSEN (1889-1947) Nos.1-2, Classico 635 / Alexander TANSMAN (1897-1986) Triptyche, Naxos 8.570235

### Strings Only-Not Quartets

Emanuele BARBELLA (1718-??) Six Trios for 2 Vln & Vc, Tactus 712701 / Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743-1805) Op.18 Nos.1-6 Quintets (2Vc) / Hans

KOESSLER (1853-1926) Qnt (2 Vla) & Sextet, CPO 777 269 / Joseph ROPARTZ (1864-1955) Str Trio (1928), Timpani 1118 / Sergei TANEYEV (1856-1915) Qnt (2Vc) Op.14 & Qnt (2Vla) Op.16, Northern Flowers 9944-5

### Piano Trios

Olivier GREIF (1950-2000) Trio, Triton 331128 / Carl NIELSEN (1865-1931) Trio in G, Dacapo 8.226064 / Christian PALMER (1811-75) Nos.1-3 & 5, Hungaroton 32442 / Joseph ROPARTZ (1864-1955) Trio (1918), Timpani 1118 / G.B. SAMMARTINI (1700-75) Nos.1, 3-5, Tactus 704402 /

### Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

Richard FRANCK (1858-1938) Qt Nos.1-2, Opp.33 & 41, Audite 92.522 / Xavier GOLS (1902-38) Qnt in G, Columna Musica 0129 / George ONSLOW (1784-1853) Quintet Op.79 bis for Pno, Str Trio & Kb, Sextet Op.30 for Pno, Str Qt & Kb, MD&G 603 1442 / Sergei TANEYEV (1856-1915) Qnt Op.30, Northern Flowers 9944-5 / Felix WEINGARTNER (1863-1942) Sextet for Pno, Str Qt & Kb, Op.33, CPO 777 049

### Winds & Strings

Carl NIELSEN (1865-1931) Serenata in vano for Cln, Bsn, Hn, Vc & Kb, Dacapo 8.226064 / Ferdinand RIES (1784-1838) 3 Qts for Flute & String Trio, Inedita 2506 / Rudolph SIMONSEN (1889-1947) Cln Qnt, Classico 635 / Alexander TANSMAN (1897-1986) Musique for Cln & Str Qt, Naxos 8.570235

### Winds, Strings & Piano

Alexander TANSMAN (1897-1986) Musique a Six for Cln, Pno & Str Qt, Naxos 8.570235 / Felix WEINGARTNER (1863-1942) Octet for Pno, Cln, Hn, Bsn & Str Qt, CPO 777 049

### Piano & Winds

None this issue

### Winds Only

Malcolm ARNOLD (1921-2006) Qnt, Op.2 & Divertimento for Fl, Ob & Cln, Naxos 8.570294 / Ernest BLOCH (1880-1959) Qnt, Naxos 8.570259 / Friedrich KUHLAU (1786-1832) 3 Trios for 3 Flutes Opp.13, 86 & 90, Naxos 8.570220 / Carl NIELSEN (1865-1931) Qnt, Op.43, Dacapo 8.226064 / Antonio ROSETTI (1750-92) 8 Wind Octets, Partitas, Pan Classics 10194

## The Other Mendelssohn's D Minor Piano Trio *(continued from page three)*

both children, with more than one person giving the edge to Fanny as being the slightly more talented. Little good this did her, as the prevailing middle-class bourgeois attitude toward women precluded any career as either a pianist or a composer.

In 1820 when Fanny expressed a desire to become a musician, Abraham told her that it was acceptable, though perhaps not desirable, that her brother might become a musician, but for her, it was out of the question. Music could only be an ornament, one of her many accomplishments useful in attracting a husband. Felix, though a mere boy, was more supportive, perhaps because she had been his big sister mentor, helping him with his studies and even with his piano playing. But as he aged, he backed away from his earlier support and discouraged her from publishing anything under her own name or from performing in public as a concert pianist. So it was that Fanny refrained from angering her father and “disgracing” the family name and chose not to have her works published. Later, with her permission, Felix published several of Fanny’s songs under his own name. In a peculiar twist of fate, Felix, during a concert for Queen Victoria, was forced to admit that one of her favorite songs, which she thought was his, was actually Fanny’s.

It was only upon her marriage in 1829 to the painter Wilhelm Hensel, who supported her desire to be a musician, that Fanny began to perform her own works at private soirees. Still concerned for the sensibilities of her parents, she held off giving a public concert until

Allegro molto vivace

Violino

Violoncello

Pianoforte

*p*

the treatment bears to Felix’s own d minor trio, the Op.49. It seems highly improbable that Fanny did not have it in mind, or the score to it nearby, as she began her own. There is the same sort of long-lined and compelling melody in the strings played over a restless and very florid piano accompaniment. One has to assume that she intended the piano part as a vehicle to showcase her dazzling technique, and she is said to have performed it public on several occasions before her death. The same criticism which has been leveled against the piano part in Felix’s trio, certainly applies here. And that is, is every note really necessary? The task she has given the

after their deaths. It came at last in 1838, when she performed Felix’s Piano Concerto No. 1. Sadly, she did not attempt to get any of her works published until the year before her premature death. When she at last took the plunge, and sent her Op.1 songs to the publishers Bote & Bock, it was with some trepidation as her letter to Felix reveals: “*I’m beginning to publish...and I’ve done it of my own free will and cannot blame anyone if aggravation within the family results...I hope I shall not disgrace you all, for I am no femme libre...If it [my publication] succeeds, that is, if people like the pieces and I receive further offers, I know it will be a great stimulus to me, which I have always needed in order to create. If not, I shall be at the same point where I have always been.*” Even once the deed was done and Felix complimented her, she doubted the sincerity of his feelings, writing in her diary. “*Finally Felix has written to me and in a very charming way given me his approval; though I know at the bottom of his heart, he disapproves.*” Poor Fanny, when she suddenly died of a stroke in 1847, she had only published six songs, from the more than 450 works she had composed. These are mostly for solo piano or voice and piano, but she also composed an orchestral overture, a string quartet (discussed in Volume XII No.3 of *The Journal*) and her Opus 11 Piano Trio.

Eight years after its composition, the Trio was taken by her son to Breitkopf & Härtel and brought out in 1854. In four movements, it begins with a big *Allegro molto vivace*. The main subject, a broad melody of yearning, is brought forth by the strings over a restless flowing accompaniment in the piano. (left). One is immediately struck by the resemblance

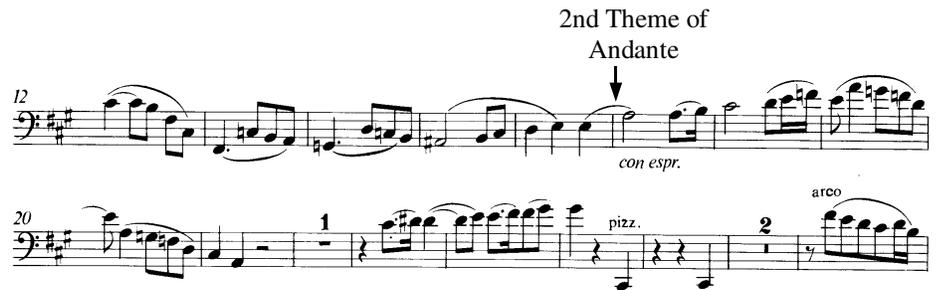
pianist is perhaps the hardest a chamber musician faces: that of playing a very florid part, which though essential, is only really a background accompaniment necessary to create a mood and which should in no way attract attention to itself.

Unfortunately, this is not something which a lot of pianists can pull off, even professionals. I know because I have two recordings of this trio and in one, the pianist is struggling to get all of the notes and by so doing instantly attracts attention away from the melody and causes the listener to wonder what the composer had in mind. This criticism aside, the writing for the strings is surprisingly good as is the lovely second theme first given out by the cello. (above right) The development and interweaving of both themes is quite well done and all things considered, this is not a bad really a movement.



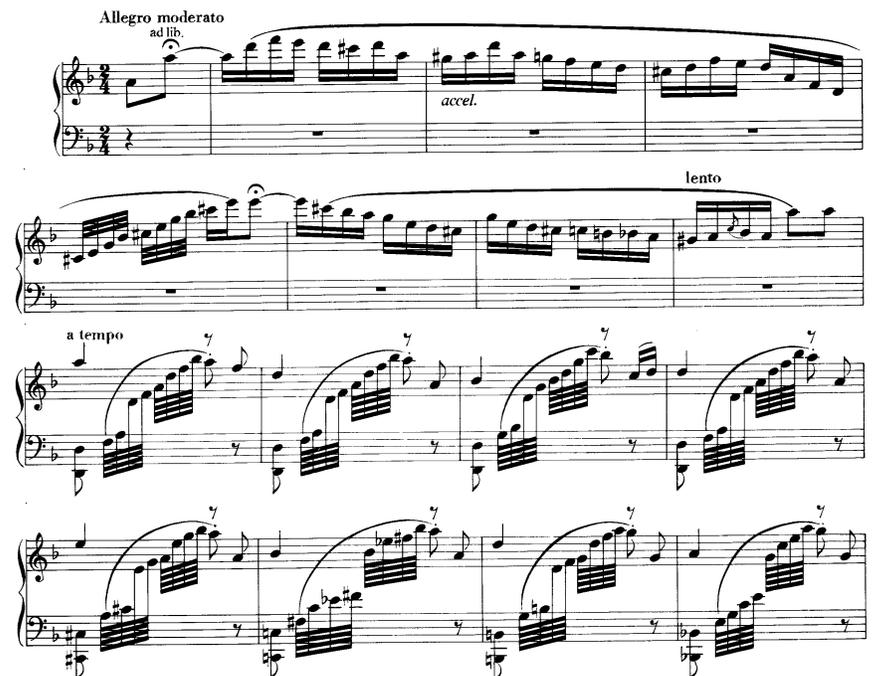
The gorgeous, *Andante espressivo*, which follows is an outstanding gem. So fine is it, that it puts the other movements in its shadow. The piano is given the highly romantic but introspective opening theme by itself. (on left) The treatment of the strings is absolutely masterful. Their entrance, as a lovely duet, serves to enhance the beauty of the melody. The second theme, even more beautiful than the first, is seamlessly brought forth in canonic fashion. (see below)

What appears to be an intermezzo like development section, characterized by alternating 16th note passages in the strings is actually the introduction of a third and equally lovely melody in the piano, but one is not really aware of it because of the excellence of the filigree part in the strings. It is only when the violin is given the chance to sing it and the piano takes over the 16th note passages that one realizes this is the third theme. (below) It is done so effortlessly, one is taken unawares.



Next follows a very short, lovely little *Allegretto*. Perhaps it was meant as an intermezzo Its simplicity is charming and it might be likened to a Songs Without Words.

The finale, *Allegro moderato*, has a very lengthy solo piano introduction (small part shown on right) In it, the main theme is presented rather ingeniously, but it requires a technically assured pianist. The length of the solo makes it pretty clear that it was intended as another showcase for the pianist. The main theme is heavy and Hungarian, sad but not tragic. It could have come out of a Liszt Rhapsody. When the strings finally enter, the melody is fleshed out and developed very nicely. However, the second theme, when heard initially, has a rhythmic triviality to it which is quite jarring. Although it is developed successfully as the music goes along, the juxtaposition of the Lisztian Hungarian episodes alongside quintessential Mendelssohnian ones is both odd and not entirely successful. In sum, Fanny's Trio is a solid work with several flashes of brilliance. The parts are available from a number of publishers.



# A Brief Survey of String Sextets (continued from page 3)

Spain working for the royal court, wrote six string sextets, not counting five others which he called Notturmi. These six, now known as Op.23, were published as a set in 1776 and have traveled under the opus number of 24, given to it by Boccherini's Paris publisher Sieber. Although not so titled in the modern Zanibon edition, the sextets were, in the original, called *sestetti concertanti*, which gives us a good clue as to the style of their construction. As with string quintets, it might be said that Boccherini was more or less pioneering the form. If you are familiar with his more popular quintets, you will have some idea what these works sound like. They *are* in concertante format, which for the most part means that one voice has the melody while the others are accompanying. However, with Boccherini, the accompaniment—unlike his German contemporaries—is interesting both rhythmically and harmonically and not just the mere repetition of linked eighth or sixteenth notes. Also of note is the fact that all of the voices are treated more or less equally. That is to say, they are all given solos. The second violin part quite often is equal in difficulty to the first violin part and not infrequently rises to a virtuosic level, as does the part of the first cello. Nor does he forget the violas, which are regularly kept quite busy. Hence to make these sextets go, you need to have especially strong players on those parts. It must be admitted that there is a certain sameness to these works, at least to the extent that I would not want to spend an evening—as I actually did in preparation for this article—playing three of them. One is enough. I have played all six and cannot say one stands out from the rest. Each one has some pretty good movements, and each has some very average stuff. The melodies are gentle, with considerable subtlety, but not particularly memorable. As a listener, they are a perfect background for lying upon a divan and having a servant lower grapes into one's mouth. Boccherini's overall sonic signature is unique and for the most part, he does not sound like anyone else but himself. These sextets are certainly good to play from time to time as a divertissement. A modern edition is available from Zanibon. If at this point, you are asking—well, why should I play these? The answer is because they are good enough to deserve it and because all of the other sextets are from either the early, mid or late romantic period.

Wollenweber  
Unbekannte Werke der Romantik

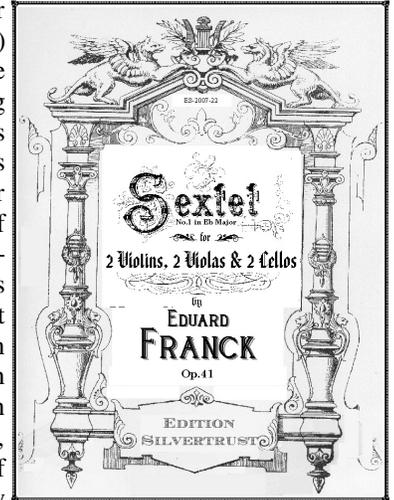


**Louis Spohr**  
Sextett op.140

**Ludwig Spohr** (1784-1859), the German violin virtuoso, composer and conductor, was no longer young when he penned his Op.140 Sextet in 1848. He was the first since Boccherini to have composed in this genre. Unfortunately, like so many of his works, we find that otherwise fine writing is marred with the insertion of passages of which he as player excelled but which do little to advance the music. The thematic material of the first movement is lovely though thin. Spohr tries to fluff it out by excessive reliance on trills which quickly becomes pretty tiresome. The slow movement is altogether better. The final two movements, a scherzo, in the form of a mazurka, and a presto,

are actually cleverly combined into one movement. This is an enjoyable work, at times good, but certainly not great. Wilhelm Altmann, the famous chamber music critic, on the other hand calls it an “outstanding, magnificent work” in his Handbook. Yet when you read his remarks more closely, he levels some of the same criticisms I make here. A modern edition is available from Wollenweber.

The German composer **Eduard Franck** (1817-1893) a student of Mendelssohn, like Brahms, wrote two string sextets. The first, Op.41 was published in 1882. In this sparkling work, we are never far from the influence of Franck's great teacher and inspiration, Mendelssohn. This influence shows itself not only melodically but also in the lightness of touch which Franck employs. It stands in stark contrast to the heavy, full-bodied sextet writing of Brahms. Here, we find clarity



of line and a surprising weightlessness, especially for an ensemble two thirds of which are lower voices. Yet at the same time, Franck differs from Mendelssohn in how he makes the most of the sonic possibilities of a large ensemble. The opening theme to the first movement, *Allegro*, is genial and somewhat relaxed. But slowly tension is built, primarily by means of the rustling notes which are passed from voice to voice. A very Mendelssohnian technique. The quiet second movement, *Andante*, ticks along peacefully until the first violin brings forth a melody of extraordinary beauty. Next comes a lively and energetic scherzo, followed by an exciting finale, *Presto*, which is filled with élan and fetching melodies. This is a first rate work which would go well with the heavier Brahms sextets. Your editor, reviewing a CD of the Sextets a year or so ago (Vol.XVII No.2 Spring 2006) did not, at least with regard to the final two movements, agree with me: “I found the...scherzo, somewhat disappointing...the thematic material is rather ordinary—not bad, not good and not particularly memorable. The finale, Presto,...sounds like a continuation of the busy but insignificant third movement...After two very fine movements, Franck seemed to have run out of real inspiration.” Interestingly, this did not stop him, or at least Edition Silvertrust, from publishing the parts and score, perhaps he has come round to my opinion. The Second Sextet, Op.50 was not published until after the composer's death with the result that the proofs were not carefully checked and it was printed with serious errors, including missing measures. I found this out by playing it from a copy of the original and I wondered if as a result whether it was ever performed. Certainly the Edinger Quartet, which recorded it for the CD, performed some kind of surgery to make it playable as did Edition Silvertrust for their edition. The Second Sextet, though it shows some of Mendelssohn's influence, has much less than the first. The opening *Allegro* is spacious and written on a

*(Continued on page 10)*

large scale. The elegiac second movement, *Adagio molto espressivo e sostenuto*, is truly superb. The third movement, *Allegro*, is a masterful scherzo which starts heavily but evolves into an elves dance. It is in the finale, that Franck presents a tribute to Mendelssohn, but this cannot take away from the fact that it is an effective tribute. Another first rate sextet to investigate.

The Dane and colleague of Mendelssohn **Niels Gade** (1817-1890) composed a sextet, his Op.44 in 1865. Try as I might, I have never been able to get real excited about Gade's chamber music. It certainly is not bad, it is all right, well-put together and so on, but it's the thematic material that fails to impress. The Sextet like many of his other chamber music works plays well, sounds good and has reasonably good part-writing for all. Altmann recommends it to amateurs but finds it too weak for the concert hall. Personally, if you have access to either of the Franck Sextets as well as several others mentioned further on in this article, I would not recommend it. But if you only have the 2 Brahms sextets available and an old copy of the Gade (there is no modern edition) laying around, then by all means play it.

end admits that the quality of the thematic material is often commonplace and thin. Beyond this, the only way the parts can be obtained, if at all, would be from those who are selling photocopies. Based on the experience of my regular quartet, I have mixed feelings about this. We have purchased photocopies, or "facimile copies" as they are euphemistically called, from merchants in the United States, the U.K. and from one in Hungary with varied results. Sometimes, we have had good luck and fine copies but we have also purchased copies that should not have been sold at any price, crooked, too faint to read, missing notes, full of fingerings and bowings and so forth. So it is *caveat emptor* if you go that route.

The once famous **Joachim Raff** (1822-1882) wrote a great deal of chamber music, and in my opinion much of it is very good indeed. His Op.176 sextet certainly begins in a very promising fashion. The opening *Allegro* is quite exciting and has a beautiful main theme. It does require technically competent players to pull off the accompaniment which is full of rushing passages. The short but excellent scherzo which follows begins in a

Mendelssohnian fashion and quickly turns into a wild tarantella interspersed with an equally wild Hungarian melody. The trio, with its guitar-like accompaniment in the lower voices, is particularly effective and quite original. A big slow movement, *Larghetto*, is a theme and variations. If Raff meant for this movement to be the showcase of the sextet, he miscalculated. The theme, though pleasant, is unexceptional. As for the variations, there simply are too many and while several of them are quite good, a number of weaker and less interesting ones are included. Though it is not a bad movement, it is rather too long. The somewhat Mendelssohnian finale is fairly short. It quickly establishes tension. The thematic material is average, which is somewhat of a problem since it follows the excellent material found in the first two movements. Altmann recommends the sextet to amateurs but feels the final two movements make it too weak for public performance. I disagree. While it is somewhat of a shame that the best material comes first, there is much fine writing in the last two movements and the finale is both exciting and commendably short. A new edition is available from Nordstern.

I suppose, for the sake of fairness, I should point out that while I put down the **Sextet, Op.97** of **Anton Rubinstein** (1829-1894), Wilhelm Altmann does have nice things to say about it, but in the

It is thought that **Alexander Borodin** (1833-1885) wrote his **String Sextet in d minor**, of which unfortunately only the first two movements survive, around 1860. It was during this period that Borodin was in Heidelberg furthering his studies in chemistry. He divided his time between the laboratory and frequent chamber music evenings and probably wrote the Sextet for performance at one of these evenings. Of the Sextet, Borodin himself

referred to it as 'Mendelssohnian', but the influence is neither obvious nor excessive. The first movement, a charming *Allegro*, is canonic in nature with each of the various voices entering with the theme one after the other. The second movement, *Andante*, is clearly based on a soulful Russian folk melody. Parts are available from a number of publishers including Kunzelmann, Masters Music and Silvertrust.

In 1876, **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908) composed his

five movement **String Sextet in A Major**. Unlike his String Quartet, this is a pretty good work, although I would agree with Altmann that not all of the movements are equally fine. The main theme of the opening *Allegro vivace* is extraordinarily nice—Korsakov must have thought so too because he repeats it way too many times. Additionally, he could have done more to develop it. Despite this, there is much to admire here. The second movement, *Rondo fugato*, is from the technical standpoint, quite an achievement.

The melodic material, though hardly above ordinary, is well-suited for a fugue and Rimsky creates a rather clever double fugue. Surprisingly, another quick movement, *Scherzo, Vivace alla Saltarello*, follows. The main theme is good, but again is re-

peated too often. The second theme is pedestrian. Korsakov makes up for this with his *Andante espressivo*. Here, the first cello is given the lead. It not only presents the hauntingly beautiful main theme, but also takes the lead in the very sophisticated development. The somewhat Russian-sounding finale, *Allegro molto*, though a bit thin melodically, is handled effectively. Parts are available from Belwin Mills and Wollenweber.



The German composer **Arnold Krug** (1849-1904) wrote his **String Sextet in D Major, Op.68** in 1897. It was known as the "Prize Sextet" because Krug won the Stelzner Prize for chamber music with this composition. Alfred Stelzner was an inventor who developed two instruments--the Violetta and the Cellone--which he believed would create a revolution in composing for string instruments. The Violetta, tuned an octave below the violin, was said to fill the gap between the viola and the cello. The Cellone was a big cello, tuned two octaves below the violin, or a fourth below the cello, and meant to fill the gap between the cello and the contrabass. He vigorously promoted his instruments through advertising and obtained endorsements from many famous musicians of the day, including Joseph Joachim, Eugene Ysaye, David Popper, and August Wilhelm. The Prize Sextet was originally for 2 Violins, Viola, Violetta, Cello and Cellone, but the publisher of the work wisely hedged his bets and produced an edition for the standard combination of 2 Violins, 2 Violas and 2 Cellos. The first movement, *Allegro*, begins with a short but powerful introduction which gives the impression of storms ahead. Instead, the main melody is quite genial and broad. Later, Krug cleverly weaves the introduction into the second theme and uses it as part of the coda. The second movement, *Adagio tranquillo*, is characterized by a calm, deeply felt melody, which is interrupted by an urgent and highly dramatic middle section. There is no scherzo, but the lively first theme to the finale, *Allegro*, seems to fill this gap. A quieter and more lyrical second theme provides excellent contrast. Available from Wollenweber and Silvertrust.



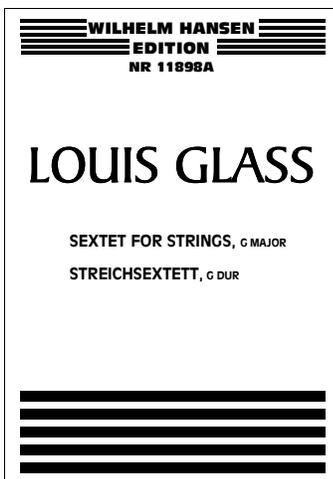
Without doubt, the best unknown late romantic string sextet is the **Sextet in f minor** by **Hans Koessler** (1853-1924). This outstanding work dates from 1902 and unfortunately has never received the attention it deserves. It is multi-faceted and highly original throughout, beautiful sounding and grateful to play. The opening movement begins with a very atmospheric *Adagio non troppo* introduction which is followed by a gradual transition to the tempo of the main section, *Allegro*. This movement

is packed full of lovely melodies. Koessler follows this up with a Hungarian *Scherzo* and a very melodic trio section. The slow movement, a warm-blooded *Adagio*, has Schumann for an antecedent. The Finale, *Allegro con brio*, is no ordinary finale. It makes incredibly clever use of counterpoint in presenting its

high-spirited and at times humorous themes. This is a work not to be missed. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.

There two worthwhile sextets from the Danish composers **Louis Glass** (1864-1936) and **Hakon Børresen** (1876-1954). Unfortunately, the Børresen, which is a fresh and appealing work, is not in print, (although I understand that Edition Silvertrust is planning to bring it out sometime in 2008), I will not discuss it here. The Glass, however is available from Wilhelm Hansen. Glass was almost an exact contemporary of Nielsen and like Nielsen was a student of Niels Gade. However, Glass also studied at the Brussels Conservatory where he became enamored of the music of Cesar Franck and Anton Bruckner, both of whom stylistically influenced his writing. Glass' **Sextet in G Major, Op.15** dates from 1893. The powerful opening movement, *Molto allegro marcato*, begins in a rather turbulent fashion and starts off as a quick restless and thrusting march. Tonally, it is interesting that there is much, especially the treatment of the attractive second theme, which reminds one of early Nielsen. But in view of the fact that Nielsen had only just begun to compose, perhaps it might be that Nielsen was influenced, during this period, by Glass rather than the other way around. They were both active and living in Copenhagen at the same time. The coda is quite dramatic and exciting. The second movement, *Andante con moto*, begins in a quiet and reflective mood and, though it occasionally rises in volume with the promise of drama, remains primarily a peaceful idyll. The following *Scherzo* begins in the same turbulent and thrusting style as the first movement, however, almost immediately, Glass adds some quite original and exotic tonal color which creates an entirely different mood. The trio section provides excellent contrast and is full of pathos. The finale, *Allegro giocoso*, has none of the angst or anger of the earlier movements. Somewhat jolly, its use of syncopation is quite effective. There are quite a number of themes, including the main theme from the first movement, which one traverses before coming to the effective but somewhat orchestral conclusion.

The **Sextet in F Major, Op.118** by **Max Reger** (1873-1916) is one of his late works which he finished in 1910. I would be the first to tell you that this is *not* an easy work to play. And, I realize that for many, Reger is an acquired taste. Nonetheless, I include him here because, in my opinion—and Altmann's too by the way—it is a very original and well executed work. The opening movement, *Allegro energico*, begins *ff* and literally ex-



**Max Reger**

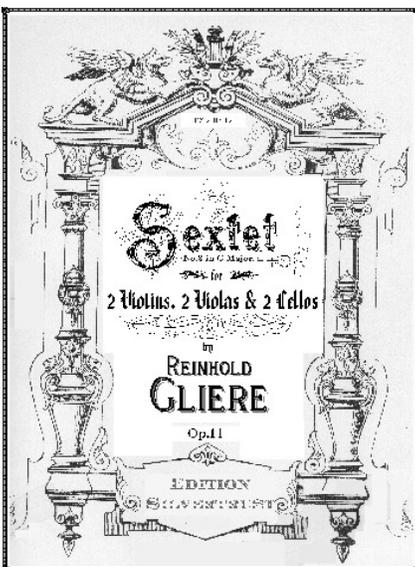
**Sextett F-dur**

**Für 2 Violinen, 2 Violen  
& 2 Violoncelli, Op.118**

Stimmen

**Bote & Bock**  
Berlin - Wiesbaden

plodes with tremendous power. It is followed by several other very interesting themes all of which are in one way or another based on the main theme. The second movement, a fast moving *Scherzo, vivace* is somewhat unusual with regard to its various modulations through which it passes. Reger is said to have been experimenting with a new idea. Today, after all of the works of the serial composers, it does not sound quite so daring to our ears. The center of gravity for the Sextet is its slow movement, *Largo con gran espressione*. This is music full of deeply felt emotion. It bears with it that transcendental sense one so often finds in the slow movements to Bruckner's symphonies. The finale, *Allegro con moto*, is of an altogether lighter nature relieving the religiosity of the preceding *Largo*. It is also a good movement but, following on the footsteps of such an outstanding and deep movement, does give the impression of being a little "light-weight", perhaps a term which is not entirely suitable to describe Reger's music. All in all, this is a very good sextet, but unless your players are quite strong sight readers, it's a good idea for everyone to have a look at their parts beforehand and if possible get a recording. Parts are available from Bote & Bock.



**Reinhold Gliere** (1875-1956) today is primarily known for his symphonies, ballets and operas, however, he was also a composer of superb chamber music, most of it written early in his career during the dying days of the old Russian empire. One can think of the influence of Sergei Taneyev, Anton Arensky and Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, all of whom he studied with, as well as that of Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov and Liadov. He wrote three very fine string sextets, all

of them originally published by Belaiev. All have been long out of print until last year when Edition Silvertrust reprinted his **String Sextet No.3 in C Major, Op.11**. Of it, Wilhelm Altmann writes: "This magnificent work, composed in 1905, is packed with a treasure chest of wonderful musical ideas. The writing is so powerful it approaches the orchestral in nature. It is a work with which every friend of chamber music should become familiar." Who am I to disagree. Actually, I emphatically agree with this assessment. The joyful themes to the opening *Allegro* are inspired by Russian folk melody and reminiscent of the tonal coloring of Borodin. The lyrical, elegiac and emotionally charged second movement, *Larghetto*, is an excellent example of Gliere's technical mastery. The singing quality of the strings approaches that of the human voice. The third movement, *Allegro*, is a very Russian scherzo, with folksong melodies, alternating with ever faster dance episodes. The superb finale, *Allegro vivace*, begins in festive fashion. It is here in particular that the brilliance and richness of the tone Gliere elicits approaches the orchestral in its intensity. This is one of the real jewels of the sextet literature and of all of the sextets of which I have spoken, it is this one I would add to must-play list along with those of Brahms. It does not present any extraordinary technical problems and is very grateful for all.

**Erich Korngold** (1897-1957) was yet another one of those talented Viennese *wunderkind* forced to leave "The City with the Golden Heart" upon the return of his fellow countryman (Hitler) from Berlin. Like several others, he eventually emigrated to the United States. He wound up in Hollywood where he became well-known as a composer of film music. One who writes for the films cannot be taken seriously, so goes the mantra. Thus, unfortunately, his

other music, like that of several other composers who made a career writing for the movies, languished and fell into oblivion. Korngold's **Op.10 Sextet** was composed in 1916 and published by Schott the following year. Parts are still available from them. Of all of the sextets I have discussed, this one is, without doubt, the most difficult to play, not because of any technical difficulties—it is not difficult from a technical standpoint, but because of the challenging rhythms and the intonation problems which are to be found within. However, strong players should be able to navigate through it. The rest of you should not be discouraged but simply recognize that this sextet requires some serious practice before it will repay you with handsome dividends. It is definitely a tonal work, although the tonality as to its key is often in doubt. The opening movement, *Moderato* (although it alternates between three different tempi) begins with an dramatic, almost operatic main theme which Korngold develops in a masterly fashion before introducing the calmer and more reflective second subject. The second movement, *Adagio*, perhaps requires more than one hearing before its rare beauty becomes apparent, but beautiful it is as it slowly rises to a tremendous dramatic climax. The third movement, *Intermezzo*, is the most straight forward and easiest to immediately pull off. It is a tribute to fin de siecle Vienna, with its gaiety and care-free attitude, a Vienna which, by the time this music was written, had already perished. Korngold employs glissandi and pizzicati to great effect and even presents an updated early 20th century waltz. The finale, *So rasch als möglich*—as quick as possible, begins with a praeludium and then moves on to the lyrical main theme. There is a sense of joy, warmth and humor as the music quickly zips along to its satisfying conclusion. I will tell you that I have played this work with several people who have not enjoyed it—the impatient type who require immediate gratification. You will not find it here unless you are a professional. However, as I have said, amateurs, willing to work a bit, will be well rewarded by learning a very good modern string sextet.

A short Honorable Mention List would consist of the sextets by Heinrich Hoffmann, Julius Klengel, Heinrich Prince Reuss, Ferdinand Thieriot, Jan Brandts Buys, Frank Bridge, Vincent d'Indy, and Egon Kornauth.

E. W. KORNGOLD

# SEXTETT

2 VIOLINEN, 2 BRATSCHEN,  
UND 2 VIOLONCELLE

OP.10

ED 3134

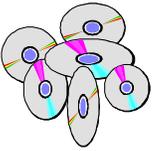
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## Quintets, Quartets & a Trio all for Strings by Joseph Eybler

### Three String Trios by Ignaz Pleyel



Joseph Eybler (1765-1846) enjoyed considerable success as a composer and was certainly well-thought of by his contemporaries as the letter of recommendation Mozart wrote for him illustrates: *"I the undersigned hereby testify that I have found the bearer, Mr. Joseph Eybler, a worthy pupil of his famous master Albrechtsberger, a thorough composer, equally skilled in chamber and church styles, very experienced in compositional technique, as well as an excellent organ and piano player—in short a*

*young musician such as regrettably has few peers."* Eybler, who was both a student and friend of Mozart, in 1824 was appointed to succeed Salieri as imperial kapellmeister, a position he held for the rest of his life. Yet, it wasn't very long ago that there were no recordings of his chamber music. Then, suddenly, within the past few years several have appeared. There are three recordings alone of his **String Trio in C Major, Op.2** for violin, viola and cello. Members of the Quintett Momento Musicale recorded it on **MDG 603 1321**. The Deutsches Streichtrio perform it on **CPO 777 025**, and the Belvedere Trio Wien recorded it on **Hungaroton 32219**. The trio, composed in 1797, is certainly one of his best works. Mozart's K.563 *Divertimento* almost certainly served as Eybler's model. For the most part, the trio is written in the newer style pioneered by Mozart and Haydn, although there are still some concertante sections. In five movements, the part-writing is excellent—in some ways better than Mozart's, in that the viola and cello are not asked to duplicate fleet-footed passages that first appear in the violin but are much harder for the lower voices to bring off, q.v. the first movement of K.563. Of particular note is the fourth movement, *Minuetto*, which has three different trios in which each instrument is given the chance to lead. Normally, I do not discuss which recording I prefer, largely because there is rarely more than one available. I would merely note that my personal favorite was by the Deutsches Streichtrio on CPO, although the Belvedere Trio Wien on Hungaroton are also excellent. This is a first rate trio and the parts are available from Amadeus.

The MDG CD couples a **Quintet in D Major for 2 Violins, Viola, Cello & Bass** (no opus number). This work remained unpublished until it was brought out by Amadeus in 1993. No date as to its composition is given by them, but it certainly sounds to be from the same period as the trio. Eybler tended to view his quintets in the typical 18th Century Austrian tradition, as serenades. Unlike his quartets, which strictly follow the classical Viennese prescription set down by Haydn of 4 movements, the quintets all feature at least five and sometimes more movements. This Quintet is in 6 movements, 7 if one counts the dramatic opening 21 bar *Adagio*. It is a big, lengthy work, lasting nearly three quarters of an hour, but full of appealing melodies. All of the voices, including the bass, are given grateful parts, but the solos, in all but the first violin part, are mostly in concertante style. The addition of the bass gives the work extra weight and

makes it sound like it would be suitable for chamber orchestra. Mozart's influence is never away. Although the rendition of the trio was, to me, the least appealing of the three, it is still adequate. However, I did not buy the CD for the trio but for the quintet.

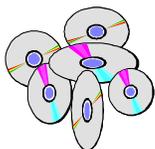
CPO also couples a quintet with the trio, Eybler's **Quintet for Violin, 2 Violas, Cello & Bass in D Major, Op.6 No.1**. The Quintet was published in 1801. Sadly, it was never played very often, because of the unusual combination which is called for. This is too bad because it is an excellent work. To remedy this, Edition Silvertrust brought the parts in two versions, the original with two violas and also a version with a second violin part which replaces the second viola, thus making it playable by string quartet and bass. The peculiar instrumentation in this quintet, which substitutes a bass for the second violin, reveals Eybler's fondness for the overall deeper sound produced by an ensemble of one soprano voice, two altos, a tenor and a bass. His concertante treatment of the parts allowed him to give both violas as well as the cello, and not just the violin, long soloistic passages. The considerable and noteworthy prominence given to the lower voices endows the music with an extraordinary depth of sound. Overall, the thematic material is stronger than that of the preceding quintet and, as such, this quintet can be considered in the forefront of works of this type from its period.



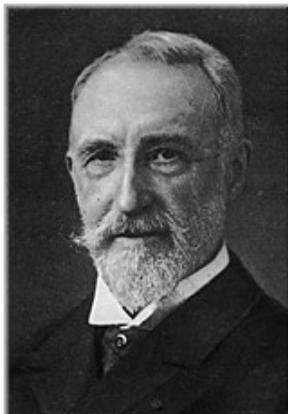
The Hungaroton CD couples Eybler's trio with **Three Trio Concertante, Op.11 Nos.1-3 by Ignaz Pleyel** (1757-1831). Mozart had high hopes for Pleyel and is said to have called him the next Haydn. Although, Pleyel briefly made a name for himself as a composer, primarily of chamber music, it was as one of the lesser lights of the Viennese Classical era. He stopped composing while relatively young and devoted himself to music publishing—his firm later became C.F. Peters—and to the manufacturing

of pianos. These three trios date from 1787. Each is in two movements, with no slow movement, each instrument being given solos. The trios, while not brilliant, are tuneful and well-crafted. Amateurs have been able to play them as the parts have been continuously available from International for many years.

Eybler's **Op.1, Three String Quartets on Analekta CD#2-9914** are all in four movements, are not in concertante style, and for the most part, sound like music from Haydn's *sturm und drang* period. The thematic material of the first two quartets is rather ordinary, excepting the last movement of each. The third quartet is probably the best of the lot with a somewhat dramatic slow movement and an effective finale. In sum, there is nothing wrong with these works, they are well put together, but in general are weaker and less memorable than the other works discussed here.



## Théodore Dubois: Two Piano Trios & 3 Shorter Pieces Vincent d'Indy: Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano



**Théodore Dubois** (1837-1924) was born in the French town of Rosnay. After an impressive career at the Paris Conservatory, where he studied with Ambroise Thomas, he won the coveted Prix de Rome. Among the many important positions he held during a long career was that of director of the Madeleine, where he succeeded Saint-Saëns, and later of the Paris Conservatory. Among his many students were Paul Dukas and Florent Schmitt. Dubois wrote a considerable amount of music in nearly every genre. Like

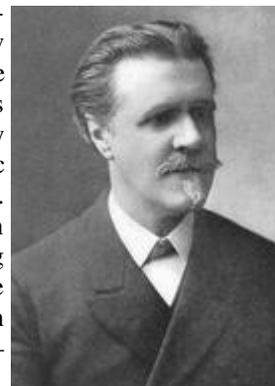
Saint Saëns, he eschewed impressionism, and continued on in the French Romantic tradition which the former had helped to pioneer. His style is characterized by logic, clarity, fine melody, drama and a refined sense of taste. His music is finely crafted and clearly shows that he was a gifted melodist. It is truly a pity his chamber music is unknown because it is absolutely first rate. **ATMA CD #2362** presents his two formal piano trios and three lesser works.

**Piano Trio No.1 in c minor** (no opus number) dates from 1904, at which time he was 67. This witty, spontaneous and energetic music very much sounds like the work of a young man, however, the sophistication and polish are clearly the product of much learning and experience. The opening movement, *Modéré mais avec un sentiment agité*, is by turns restless, then warmer and more optimistic. The opening melody to the slow movement, *Assez lent, très expressif*, is a highly romantic and beautiful love song. The original and witty scherzo, *Vif et très léger*, is full of gaiety and elegance. The finale, *Très large et très soutenu--Vif et bien rythmé, très articulé, très chaleureux*, begins with a long, slow introduction which builds suspense, then a lively and energetic section, which begins with a magnificent fugue, takes flight. This trio is a first rate work by any standard and a marvelous example of late French romanticism.

**Piano Trio No.2 in e minor** was composed, and premiered to critical acclaim in 1911. The broad and expansive opening theme to the first movement, *Allegretto con moto*, first heard in the cello, sets the tone and pace for the entire work. The second movement, also *Allegretto*, is lighter, less romantic, and more airy than the first. Here, Dubois creates an interesting dialogue between the piano and the strings. This is followed by an *Adagio* of a serious nature. Perhaps the emotional high point of the trio, the music is characterized by very fine harmony and contrapuntal writing. The finale, *Allegro*, is a witty synthesis of the many motifs from the earlier movements. Gentler and somewhat less dramatic than the First Trio, this, nevertheless, is a very fine work.

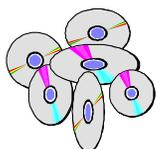
Also on disk are three shorter works: *Promenade Sentimentale*, *Canon* and *Cantilène*. They are each gentle, lovely and highly romantic with the *Promenade* being the most substantial. The parts to both trios, as well as *Promenade Sentimentale*, are available from Edition Silvertrust. A highly recommended CD.

**Vincent D'Indy** (1851-1931) was born of aristocratic stock. His musical talent was recognized by his grandmother who raised him and saw that he received piano lessons from famous teachers. Despite this, he was sent to law school in Paris. Instead, D'Indy, who was intent on becoming a composer, joined a Parisian orchestra as a timpanist to learn music "from the ground up." Both Massenet and Bizet were impressed by his early compositions and encouraged him to show his work to César Franck. Franck did not share their enthusiasm and was reputed to have told D'Indy, "You have ideas but you cannot do anything." Apparently those ideas were enough, however, to convince Franck to show D'Indy how to do things, as he took the latter on as a pupil. Though D'Indy was to assimilate and be influenced by many different sources, Franck and his music left the most telling mark on him. D'Indy's reputation, during his own lifetime was considerable, having founded, in 1900, what was to become the most important music school in France after the Paris Conservatory—The Schola Cantorum.



D'Indy's **Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano in B flat Major, Op.29** presented on **Naxos CD#8.557347** is, without question, an important work, a masterwork, for this ensemble. D'Indy, though his main instrument was the piano, was also able to play the cello and the clarinet and, no doubt, this is part of the reason that the writing is so effective. The trio was composed in 1888. The big, opening movement, *Overture, modéré*, begins with a gentle, broad theme which serves as a highly effective and atmospheric introduction to the main theme. The unison writing in the clarinet and cello is particularly striking. The main theme is more dramatic and has more forward motion. The second movement, *Divertissement: vif et animé*, is an attractive, gay and somewhat quirky scherzo, which sports many rhythmic surprises. This is followed by a beautiful *Chant élégiaque, lent*. Although the music is slow, it is not funereal. It is peaceful and calm but not at all sad and is closer to reverie than an elegy. The substantial finale, *Animé*, begins with a theme full of élan and explores many moods along the way. Coupled with the trio are Max Bruch's Eight Pieces, here played in the version for clarinet, cello and piano. A recommended CD.

For many years there were next to no recordings of the chamber music of **Joachim Raff** (1822-82). And Raff was, in his time and for forty years thereafter, generally considered as one of Germany's leading composers. Most contemporary critical sources mentioned him in the same breath as Brahms, Wagner and Liszt. His meteoric disappearance has been explained in previous issues of *The Journal*. Only now, after a period of some 75 years, is he being reevaluated and rediscovered with great interest. **Tudor CD# 7116** presents two of his eight string quartets as part of a complete series. The first work is his 1874 **String Quartet No.6 in c minor, Op.192 No.1**, subtitled *Suite in the Ancient Style*. Here, Raff creates a suite whose structure is from the baroque era



## Joachim Raff: Two String Quartets

### Ferdinand Ries: A Septet & An Octet Each for Winds, Strings & Piano



but clothes it in the language of the Romantics. It was the type of work of which at which he excelled, and this quartet, in my opinion, must be considered a real masterwork. In five movements, the opening *Praeludium* begins with a powerful *Larghetto* at the end of which an extraordinary cadenza in the first violin leads to an *Allegro*. Here the main theme of the *Larghetto* is combined with that of a superb fugue. The second movement, a *Minuetto*, starts off as a classical minuet but quickly morphs into something far more romantic and enticing with the introduction of the lovely lyrical theme. There is no trio but a powerful middle section, which suddenly dissolves into a gorgeous and ethereal melody in the cello. A *Gavotte* and particularly atmospheric *Musette* follow. The fourth movement, *Arie* is a broadly phrased, expansive and stunning melody given forth by the first violin to a hushed accompaniment in the other voices. The finale is a fleet-footed *Gigue*. The second work on disk, **String Quartet No.2 in A Major, Op.90** dates from 1857 during his "New German School" period when he served as Liszt's secretary. The very lengthy opening movement, *Rasch, jedoch ruhig*, opens in an unpropitious manner with a rather pedestrian theme which without warning quickly rises to an excellent dramatic climax before dropping back to a development which is as pedestrian as the opening theme. The sweet, lyrical second theme is altogether better. His accomplished development is reminiscent of Wagner's treatment in his *Siegfried Idyll*. This is followed by an superb scherzo, *Rasch*. The ghostly trio section with its telling use of trills and harmonics is especially effective. The slow movement, *Langsam, doch nicht schleppend*, begins quietly with a simple theme but slowly builds to an extraordinarily dramatic and highly passionate climax in the middle section before retracing the steps by which it had risen into quietude. The finale, *Rasch*, begins in exciting fashion but this excitement quickly dies away as the music wanders into less interesting byways. From time to time, the excitement threatens to return but this takes a rather long time to happen, in fact, the movement is more than half over before it occurs, and when it does, Raff is either unwilling or unable to sustain it for very long. Here is a work which cannot be painted with one brush. The opening measures to the first movement are weak, although the movement improves substantially as it goes along. The second and third movements are absolutely first rate, but then the finale is unable to rise above the ordinary. Certainly for Quartet No.6 alone, this is a very worthwhile CD.

Up until recently, **Ferdinand Ries** (1784-1837) was only remembered as a friend and student of Beethoven, as well as his first biographer. Little or none of his music was available on disk. However, in the past ten to fifteen years, this has changed radically. There are more than 15 CDs of his music currently available. Ries' **Grand Septour Op.25** for Clarinet, 2 Horns, Violin, Cello, Bass and Piano is thought to be the first of this genre which was subsequently added to by such composers as Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Ignaz Moscheles, Alex-

ander Fesca, George Onslow and Ludwig Spohr, although not always with the exact instrumentation. Earlier Septets were either for Winds or for Winds and Strings as was Beethoven's famous Op.20 Septet of 1800. Beethoven's Septet, said to be the most famous of all his works during his lifetime, was enjoying tremendous popularity throughout the German-speaking lands as well as England when Ries chose to write his Septet in 1808. However, Ries was not then living in any of these lands but in Paris. In 1805, Ries, as a citizen of the city of Bonn, had been forced to leave Vienna. Beethoven, who himself had been toying with the idea of moving to Paris, recommended that Ries try his luck there. However, in Paris Ries was unable to make any headway as a young virtuoso pianist. Parisian audiences generally were not interested in instrumental concerts, although there was a small sector of what had been the aristocracy, along with the professors at the Paris Conservatory, who were interested in chamber music. So it was that Ries undertook to establish himself as a composer

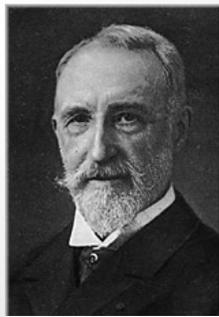
of high quality chamber music. But despite writing two rather engaging works, his Op.13 Piano Quartet and this Septet, he failed and could not even get a Parisian publisher to take either work. The fact that a piano was included probably reflected contemporary French taste in such matters. The Septet had to wait until 1812 when Simrock of Bonn, a personal friend of the Ries family, brought it out. It met with positive reviews and, for the next 25 years, was frequently performed throughout Germany and Austria. In four movements, it starts with an excellent *Adagio molto* introduction, the opening bars to which begin in dramatic fashion. The sprightly main movement, *Allegro molto con brio*, is full of charming melodies and in the style of Beethoven's Septet. The piano is very nicely blended into the ensemble and one does not gain the opinion that the Septet is in any way a vehicle for the pianist. The second movement, *Trauermusik*, is funereal and according to scholars, stylistically modeled on the slow movement of Beethoven's Third Symphony. Perhaps, but I doubt hardly any listeners would draw that conclusion. Though the music has just the faintest tinge of a march, it is too delicate to be one. The fetching middle section is altogether lighter in mood. A racing *Scherzo* comes next. It features a hunting motif stated by the horns, juxtaposed against light running passages in the piano and longer-lined, lyrical melodies in the strings. In the finale, *Rondo*, the piano is allowed to give out the appealing main theme but the others quickly join in. This is a fine work, well worth hearing. The three movement **Octet, Op.128** for Piano, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, Violin, Viola, Cello & Bass was composed in 1816 upon the commission of the London Philharmonic Society and Ries intended to perform it at its premiere as a concert vehicle for his virtuosity. As such, it might be considered more of a piano concerto with mini orchestra, which is the purpose the other seven instruments serve. Though pleasant enough to hear, this is not chamber music, except in the same sense as a Spohr Quatour Brillant. Still a recommended CD for the Septet alone.



FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Franz Lachner



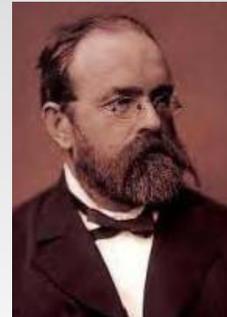
Théodore Dubois



Fanny Mendelssohn



Reinhold Gliere



Joseph Rheinberger



Vincent d'Indy



Joachim Raff



Arnold Krug



N. Rimsky Korsakov



Louis Glass

ONSLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL



HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANEYEV, REINECKE

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV