

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

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

***Charles Villiers Stanford—  
The Piano Trios***

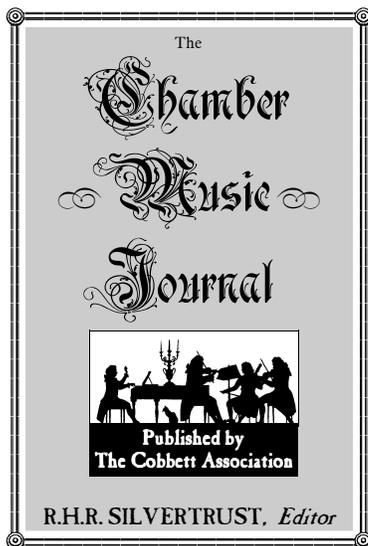
***Théodore Dubois' Quintet  
for Piano, Strings & Winds***

***The Works for String Quartet  
By Leó Weiner***

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# The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



## Tomas Bréton Chamber Music

I recently heard the first part of a piano trio by the Spanish composer Tomas Bréton. Unfortunately, I was in my car at the time and had to get out before I could hear the end of it. When I called the radio station several hours later to find out more, unfortunately, hard to believe though it is, no one, at least no one who was then there, could tell me the least thing about it, including the record label. Can you help? I would like to know more about this composer and the piano trio. If possible, I would like to know on what label I can find it and if sheet music is available.

James Andersen  
Portland, Oregon

What you heard was Bréton's Piano Trio in E Major. It was composed around 1891 and blends elements of the early Viennese romantic style with the richer more florid writing of late romantic French chamber music. There are two recordings available, one on the Marco Polo label, the other on Naxos.

As for Tomas Bretón (1850-1923), he was born in the Spanish city of Salamanca. He started playing the violin at age eight and within two years was already playing in theater orchestras helping to support his family. When his mother moved to Madrid, he entered the conservatory there, studying violin and composition. During his studies and after, he continued playing in theaters and restaurants. At the age of 30, he received a grant which allowed him to study in Rome and Vienna. Over the following years, he made his name as a composer of Zarzuelas (a kind of national operetta or light opera) but was also a pioneer of serious Spanish opera as well as instrumental music. These serious operas, orchestral works and chamber music were often attacked by his countrymen as not being Spanish enough. This despite the fact that he often infused Spanish melodies into these works, albeit more subtly than in his operettas. His chamber music is original-sounding not only because of the unusual and disparate influences it fuses together but also because of his harmonic boldness. He eventually became director of the Madrid Conservatory as well as the Sociedad de Conciertos--the forerunner of the Madrid Symphony Orchestra. In addition to this piano trio, there is also a String Quartet in D Major (dating from the 1880's) which has been recorded. The sheet music to both of these works is available from Edition Silvertrust. Though no other chamber music works by him have been recorded or are

in print, he is said to have written two other string quartets and a piano quintet. I don't believe that these works have ever been printed.

## Piano Ensembles with String Bass

Of course I know about Schubert's Trout Quintet but after we play that, our bassist has to sit out. I am looking for some other works which will also include our bassist. Recently, I came across another piano quintet with the same instrumentation by Hermann Goetz. There must be others.

Harlon Taylor III  
Dallas., Texas

Johann Nepomuk Hummel's Op.87 Piano Quintet for the same instrumentation should not be overlooked. It is available from a number of different publishers. Louise Farrenc wrote 2 Piano Quintets, Opp.30 and 31, for this instrumentation. Parts are currently in print Then there is also a Piano Quintet by Jan Dussek, Op.41 but it is not of the same quality as the Goetz or Hummel. It, too is available from more than one publisher.

## Are Robert Kahn's Piano Qts Recorded?

After reading your CD review (Vol.XIX No.3) of Robert Kahn's Op.45 Trio for either clarinet, cello and piano or standard piano trio, I went out and purchased it and also obtained the sheet music from Edition Silvertrust. I noticed that they also have the music to two of his three piano quartets available and have put sound-bites on their website. Can you tell me on which label these works were recorded.

Herbert Schmidt  
Frankfurt, Germany

You are speaking of his First Piano Quartet Op.14 and his Second Op.30. Unfortunately, neither of these works has ever been commercially recorded. The sound-bites were taken from German radio broadcasts. I have heard that the German pianist Oliver Triendl is working with the recording company CPO on a project which may produce a recording of all three.

## Dr. Richard Antemann

We regret to report that long time Cobbett Association member Dr Richard Antemann of Johnstown, Pennsylvania has recently passed away. —editor

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

# The Piano Trios of Charles Villiers Stanford

by R.H.R. Silvertrust



I have spent a good part of my life exploring the less well-known chamber music literature. And while I had heard of Stanford—as a graduate student I lived in England for nearly four years—until relatively recently, I never had occasion to look into his chamber music. No doubt, I might have been able to find some of his works in the music shops while I was living there or on my many subsequent trips, and perhaps I did come across some as I rummaged through cabinets of the shops I visited, but I never bought anything. Why? Be-

cause, for the most part, my exploration was limited to what I had learned about from radio broadcasts or records. (As many of you no doubt know, in live concert, very little of the wider literature is ever played.) In any event, there were no recordings of Stanford's chamber music nor any radio broadcasts that I heard. However, in the past decade or so, this has changed and now several of his works can be heard on disk.

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) was born in Dublin, the only son of a well-to-do Protestant lawyer. His father was an accomplished amateur musician who played the cello and sang, while his mother was a pianist. In such a family, it was inevitable that he would be given music lessons early on and so he was sent to study the violin, piano and organ as well as composition with local teachers. His extraordinary musical ability revealed itself early and was of such a degree that an article in the Musical Times of London mentioned it. At the age of 10, he was sent to London to continue his piano and composition studies with Ernst

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Leó Weiner:

## The Works for String Quartet

By Istvan Nagy

Leó Weiner (1885-1960) was born in Budapest and began by studying the piano as a youngster. In 1901 he entered the Budapest Academy of Music and studied composition with Hans Koessler. His rise was meteoric and he was widely regarded as a "wunderkind", winning virtually all of the important Hungarian and Austrian competitions between 1903 and 1908. Critics dubbed him the "Hungarian Mendelssohn," not because he sounded like that composer, but simply because his excellence showed itself at such a young age. Weiner was essentially a Romantic composer, with his roots in late German Romanticism. His compositions, though certainly featuring modern touches, never ventured into either polytonalism or atonalism.



Understandably then, until after the First World War, he and his music were far better known than that of his two now world famous contemporaries Bartok and Kodaly. But as the modern trends pioneered by Stravinsky, Bartok and Schonberg began to come into vogue, Weiner's reputation and that of his music slowly receded, as did the music of other contemporary composers who remained faithful to traditional tonality.

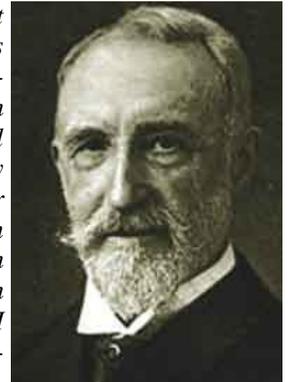
Except for three months of piano lessons, he had no other musical instruction as a young child. However, he related that he did spend some of his early years trying to decipher the piano works of Schubert and Delius—a rather peculiar combination! Weiner eventually enrolled in Janos (Hans) Koessler's composition class at the Budapest Academy of Music despite the fact that, "It did not even occur to me that I could become a composer. I saw composers in a holy and unattainable distance. I could not imagine that a simple, average man would ever be able to join the ranks of the greatest masters of musical history. The only reason I enrolled was so that the serious study of music would give me a deeper insight into the classical composers masterworks." In the same class at the Academy were Kodaly and several lesser known

(Continued on page 10)

## Théodore Dubois' Quintet for Piano String Trio & Oboe or Clarinet

by Eric Trentenaire

*"I don't think that people have always been fair and equitable towards me...I am not vain, but I still think that some of my works deserve better than the cold disdain that has greeted them I don't know if I am wrong; however, I almost have the certainty that if later, after I am gone, they fall into the hands of fair-minded musicians and critics, the tide will turn in my favor. I won't be there to enjoy it, but it doesn't matter. It is nice to think about it."*



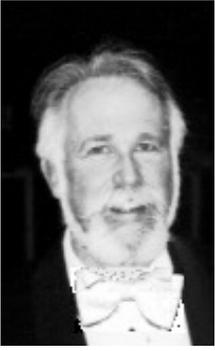
Of course, it mattered, or Théodore Dubois would not have written it in his diary. It is small consolation to have to hope one's works may find fair-minded musicians and critics after one is gone. It does not often happen.

*(Continued on page 8)*

### IN THIS ISSUE

Letters to the Editor.....	2
Charles Villiers Stanford's Piano Trio .....	3
A Quintet for Piano, Oboe & Str Trio by Th. Dubois ...	3
Leó Weiner: The Works for String Quartet .....	3
At the Double Bar .....	4
New Recordings.....	9
Diskology: Jongen, Thuille, Klughardt, Gál, et al.....	12

## At The Doublebar



This issue highlights the works of two composers who have really only received brief mention in these pages. Théodore Dubois is a composer I have only become familiar with in the past few years, as a result of several CDs which have come out. Since

that time, I have had the opportunity to play his piano trios and his piano quartet which are, in my opinion first rate works. It is unlikely that they ever received their due and do not appear to have been performed anywhere outside of France, and there not too often. While I have not played the Quintet for piano, oboe (or clarinet or violin) and string trio, I do have the recording and I have reprinted it. As Mr Trentenaire makes quite clear in his fine article, this is a very original work with what is certainly a unique, and quite successful combination of instrumental timber. I have been told by those who have played the standard piano quintet version (2 Vlns, Vla, Vc & Pno) it too sounds quite well.

As for Leó Weiner, no reference to him has been made since Robert Maas penned two sentences about his string trio back in 1992. In no way is this right. Weiner's chamber music is of a very high quality and ought not to be ignored. His three string quartets are each different. Not the sort of music that you can just sit down and sight read with ease, although experienced sight readers should be able to get through these works in one piece. I have found each of the works compelling and am regularly surprised by his ideas.

As for Stanford's piano trios, these are also relatively recent discoveries of mine from which I have derived great enjoyment. I recommend them to you and hope you find my article worthwhile.

Most of you have quickly renewed your subscriptions and I thank you for this. For those of you who just have not had a chance to get around to it, you will find another renewal notice enclosed with this copy of *The Journal*. Please send it back to us as soon as you are able—Ray Silver-trust, Editor

## Charles Villiers Stanford's Piano Trios

(Continued from page 3)

Pauer. In 1870, he won a scholarship to Queens College, Cambridge where he quickly established a commanding reputation. However, he soon transferred to Trinity College, where, while still an undergraduate, he was appointed college organist, a post he held until 1892. At the same time, he took over as conductor of the Cambridge University Musical Society, a position which gave him great opportunities to make his name known in wider musical circles. During his tenure, he was responsible for many important premiers and revivals.

From 1874 to 1877, he was given leave of absence for part of each year to complete his studies in Germany. He spent 2 years with Carl Reinecke at the Leipzig Conservatory and a further year with Friedrich Kiel at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. Reinecke and Kiel, along with Joseph Rheinberger, were then considered the finest composition teachers in the world. Stanford took his BA degree in 1874 and MA in 1878. An honorary degree of D.Mus. was given him by Oxford in 1883 and by Cambridge in 1888. He was knighted in 1901. Besides composing, Stanford held many important teaching posts and directorships: He was appointed professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in 1883; was conductor of The Bach Choir from 1886 to 1902; was professor of music at Cambridge, conductor of the Leeds Philharmonic Society from 1897 to 1909, and of the Leeds Festival from 1901 to 1910.

He first became known as a composer in 1876 with his incidental music to Tennyson's *Queen Mary* and in 1881 for his first opera, *The Veiled Prophet*. He followed these up with *Savonarola* in 1884, and *The Canterbury Pilgrims* also dating from 1884. His later operas were the comic opera *Shamus O'Brien* of 1896, *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1901, *The Critic* in 1916, and *The Traveling Companion* composed toward the end of his life.

In his day, Stanford was particularly known for his choral works, chiefly commissioned for performances at the great English provincial festivals. These include two oratorios, a Requiem (1897), and a Stabat Mater (1907), as well as many secular works, often with a nautical theme. Among the better known were *The Revenge* (1886), *The Voyage of Maeldune* (1889), *Songs of the Sea* (1904), and *Songs of the Fleet* (1910). His church music still holds a central place among Anglican compositions; particularly popular examples include his Evening Services and his Three Latin Motets. He also composed songs, part-songs, madrigals, and the incidental music to *Eumenides* and *Oedipus Rex*, as well as to Tennyson's *Becket*. He wrote lighter pieces of music under the pseudonym of Karol Drofnatski. His instrumental works include 7 symphonies, 6 Irish Rhapsodies for orchestra, several works for organ, concertos for violin, cello, clarinet, and piano, and many chamber compositions, including three piano trios, a piano quartet, a piano quintet, a string quintet and eight string quartets, several of which remain in manuscript.

The once high reputation that he enjoyed all but disappeared by the end of his life with critics writing him off as nothing more than a German "copycat" and another Brahms imitator. This criticism is both unfair and wide of the mark. Anything more than a cursory investigation of his music reveals his Celtic roots, as well as his intense individuality. This combining of German and Celtic traditions to create an integrated idiom was instrumental in establishing an English style upon which the next generation of British composers could build. While it is to some extent true, his early works show a German influence (sometimes Mendelssohn, sometimes Schumann, and sometimes Brahms), this should really come as no surprise for two reasons. First, during the last part of the 19th century, the British, unlike the French and the Russians, had yet to develop anything that could be called a national style. Second, one must not forget that in the 1870's, Stanford studied with two world-famous German teachers and composers. Since the time of Mozart, the leading composers of Austria and Germany were held up as the models to follow: Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Schumann showed the way. Later, men like Reinecke and Kiel, (who were admirers of Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn) transmitted this influence to their many students, a prodigious amount of whom, like Stanford, became famous in their own right. It should be noted that very few

who studied in Germany escaped or wanted to escape this German influence. Men from such disparate backgrounds as Borodin, Busoni, Respighi, Grieg and the American George Chadwick, to name but a few, are examples. As such, it seems particularly unjust to Stanford to complain that some of his early works show German influence, especially in view of the fact that he ultimately went on to help found an English style and contributed to the renaissance of British music. This was particularly true in the realm of chamber music where Stanford almost single-handedly jump-started the British repertoire. Among his many students were Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, Frank Bridge, William Hurlstone, Ernst Moeran, Arthur Bliss, Thomas Dunhill and Percy Grainger.

Upon his death, the Musical Times of London had this to say, "The distinguishing quality in Stanford the composer was his versatility. This country has surely not produced his equal so far as range is concerned. There is no branch in which he did not do work varying from the merely sound to the first-rate – oratorio, opera, orchestral and chamber music, works for various solo instruments, choral works from the largest to the smallest size for church and concert use, songs for grown-ups and infants, and countless arrangements of folk-music. His numbered works approach the two-hundred mark, and we believe a good deal is still in manuscript. As is inevitable in so vast an output there is much that is unoriginal, but impeccable workmanship is always evident. The matter may be perfunctory, the manner never. Young composers in a hurry, who despise the technique of writing, should learn a lesson from the fact that in a surprisingly large number of cases Stanford's workmanship carries him through. So unerring was his knowledge of effect – which is, of course, merely a branch of a composer's technique – that many a work, uninspired and dull on paper, 'comes off' so well in performance as to reach a degree of success denied to better music less well written."

To this tribute, I add my "two cents worth" of praise. While I agree that certainly not everything he wrote was first rate or a masterpiece (of what composer is the opposite true?), there are a surprising number of outstanding works which can stand comparison with anything produced by his more famous contemporaries, including Brahms. These first class works of Stanford, like those of his American cousins Arthur Foote and George Chadwick, did not achieve the fame they deserved or enter the standard repertoire simply by virtue of the then continental prejudice against Anglo-American composers, who, for the most part, were just not taken seriously. An exception to this was the famous chamber music critic Wilhelm Altmann who praised many of Stanford's works in his Handbooks. On the other hand, it is too bad that Thomas Dunhill, who wrote the article on Stanford for *Cobbett's Cyclopedia*, felt the need to be an undertaker, burying the Grand Old Man by unjustly damning him with faint praise.

Stanford's **Piano Trio No.1 in E flat Major, Op.35** dates from 1889. The opening *Allegro grazioso* begins in a relatively unassuming way and slowly builds momentum but always remains true to its *grazioso* character. The melodies are certainly ingratiating and Stanford clearly shows that he knows how to write equally as well for strings as he does for the piano..

*Allegro grazioso.*

VIOLIN. 

VIOLONCELLO. 



*poco cresc.*

*Allegretto con moto.*

VIOLIN. 

VIOLONCELLO. 

The light-hearted second movement, *Allegretto con moto*, performs the function of a brief, dance-like intermezzo. The strings present the charming melody to a Mendelssohnian accompaniment in the piano.

(Continued on page 6)

The tempo of the *Tempo di Minuetto* which comes next is perhaps that of a slow minuet but the music is more in the form of a lyrical andante. The finale, *Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco*, right from the start begins in an exciting fashion. The themes are thrusting and energetic and crown a well-crafted and appealing work. If the composer of this work had been German, no one would have hesitated, even today, to place it in the front rank of piano trios from this time period. Sadly, the prejudice against Anglo-American composers led to its being marginalized.

*Allegro moderato ma con fuoco.*

VIOLIN.

PIANO.

**Allegro moderato.**

Violino.

Violoncello.

PIANO.

Stanford's **Piano Trio No.2 in g minor, Op.73** was written when he was at the height of his powers and dates from 1899. The Trio opens with an impetuous theme, (example on left) *Allegro moderato*, rich and full-blooded. A questioning bridge passage leads to the romantic and lyrical second subject.

In the second movement, *Andante*, the piano presents the gentle theme alone for sometime before the strings finally enter to restate it. There is a short fugal bridge section which leads to the powerful, dramatic climax of the movement. This is followed by a *Presto*, which is a muscular and thrusting scherzo. The

gorgeous trio section is slower and provides excellent contrast. The finale, *Larghetto--Allegro con fuoco*, begins with a slow, introduction, pregnant with expectation, in which several parts of what is to be the main theme, are heard in a distended version.

**Allegro con fuoco.**

Then, after a brief pause, the powerful *Allegro* bursts forth fulfilling the expectations created by the *Larghetto*. (example on right.)

**Piano Trio No.3 in A Major, Op.158** was composed in the spring of 1918. Despite the fact that Stanford was 66 at the time he composed the trio, it shows the vigor of a much younger man. Although the work is dedicated to the memory of the sons of two of his friends who had been killed in the First World War, the music does not commemorate their deaths.

The main theme to the opening *Allegro moderato ma con fuoco* is thrusting and energetic while the second theme is lyrical and reflective.

The middle movement, *Adagio*, is sweet and a bit sad, but not funereal. Even when it rises to moments of heightened passion, there is no bitterness.

*Allegro Maestoso e moderato (alla breve)*

The finale, *Allegro maestoso*, begins ceremonially with a celebratory, jovial melody (see example on left) and continues on in a triumphant vein.

Several factors contributed to Stanford's Third Piano Trio being unjustly ignored upon its publication in April of 1918. First was the timing, the closing months of the First World

War, which was not a particularly auspicious time for a work to come out. Second, was the fact that it was written in a romantic idiom and for many years during and after the War, such works were, en masse, viewed as entirely irrelevant, without any examination as to their intrinsic merits. As a result, many outstanding compositions, such as this trio, fell into instant oblivion and sadly have stayed there.

All three of Stanford's trios are quite worthwhile. I have never heard one performed in concert, and living in the U.S. probably won't, but I certainly hope that they have received some attention in the UK. For a long time it has been impossible to obtain the parts but that has now been remedied and all three are available from Edition Silvertrust.

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 Remember we cannot continue to operate without your contributions.

Dubois (1837-1924) was born in Rosnay in Marne. He studied with Louis Fanart (choirmaster at Reims cathedral) and later at the Paris Conservatoire under Ambroise Thomas, where he was adjudged one of its very top students. He won the Prix de Rome in 1861. In 1868, he became choirmaster at the Church of the Madeleine, and in 1871 took over from César Franck as choirmaster at the Basilica of Sainte-Clotilde. In 1877, Dubois returned to the Church of the Madeleine, succeeding Camille Saint-Saëns as organist. From 1871 he taught at the Paris Conservatoire, with the eminent composers Paul Dukas and Florent Schmitt among his pupils.

Dubois was director of the Conservatoire from 1896 (succeeding Thomas upon the latter's death) to 1905. He resigned two months before the refusal to award the Prix de Rome to Maurice Ravel, this created nonetheless a substantial public outcry, which was increased by an open letter from the novelist and musicologist Romain Rolland. Gabriel Fauré took over from Dubois as director.

Although he wrote many religious works, Dubois had considerable hopes for a successful career on the operatic stage. His fascination with Near-Eastern subjects lead to the composition to his first staged work, *La guzla de l'émir*, and his first four-act opera, *Aben-Hamet*, which broke no new ground. His other large-scale opera, *Xavière*, has a wildly dramatic tale set in the rural Auvergne. The story revolves around a widowed mother who plots to kills her daughter, Xavière, with the help of her fiancé's father to gain the daughter's inheritance. However, Xavière survives the attack with the help of a priest, and the opera finishes with a conventional happy ending.

The music of Dubois also includes ballets, chamber music, oratorios and three symphonies. His best known work is the oratorio *Les sept paroles du Christ* (The Seven Last Words of Christ composed in 1867), which continues to get an occasional airing. His *Toccata* for organ, composed in 1889, is also heard now and then. The rest of his large output has almost entirely disappeared from view. He has had a more lasting influence in teaching, with his theoretical works *Traité de contrepoint et de fugue* (On counterpoint and fugue) and *Traité d'harmonie théorique et pratique* (on harmony) still being sometimes used today.

Dubois, almost an exact contemporary of Saint-Saëns, whom he admired and with whom he was friendly, is virtually unknown outside of France, except perhaps to organists. He receives a dismissive paragraph in Cobbett with no discussion at all of any of his chamber music other than the fact that Ysaye was extremely taken with one of his violin sonatas. While he did not write a great deal of chamber music—two piano trios, a piano quartet, a string quartet and the quintet which is the subject of this article—it is all of very high quality and certainly as good, if not better than the chamber music of his other contemporaries, including Saint-Saëns. What is surprising, with regard to the chamber works, is the fact that Dubois waited until he was 66 to publish his first piece of chamber music.

The hope that future generations might discover and highly praise one's work, which has been ignored by contemporary society, is a common one. And for the most part one which is rarely realized. Being ignored while alive almost always results in staying that way ever after. In Dubois' case, the embers of rivalry have begun to glow, nearly 80 years after his death. We can only hope that they will continue to do so until his name and his works are restored to the place they deserve.

**Théodore Dubois' Piano Quintet in F Major for Violin, Viola, Cello, Oboe and Piano** was written when Dubois was in his 68th year, one would hardly guess this by listening to it. It has the vitality of spirit you would associate with a much younger man.

Although Dubois composed the Quintet with the oboe in mind because of its special timber, he, nevertheless without any prompting from his publisher, wrote in the score that the music could also be played with either a clarinet or second violin in lieu of the oboe, and he provided the parts which appeared at the time the work was released. The opening movement, *Allegro* is characterized and dominated by its main theme which radiates optimistic energy. (example above right) The second movement, *Canzonetta*, provides a wonderful dialogue (example on left & below) between the five instruments and is particularly clever in its use of timber.

A highly expressive *Adagio non troppo*, full of sentiment, follows. (example on left)

The lively finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, reintroduces many of the themes

which have appeared in the previous movements, while at the same time giving them a different treatment. This Quintet is a highly original work not only because of its instrumentation, but also because of the way Dubois combines the timber of the oboe with the strings, using the former's lower registers and assigning it the role given to the second violin in a string quartet. A recording of this work, quite possibly the first, in 2007 on Atma CD#2385 led to the Quintet being reprinted later that year by Edition Silvertrust. Your editor tells me that since that time, the work has generated considerable interest both in Europe (though sadly and surprisingly not in France) as well as North America. If you listen to the sound-bites on the Cobbett website, I think you will see why.

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## New Recordings



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

### String Quartets

William ALWYN (1905-85) Nos.1-3, Naxos 8.570560 / Jos-Ermend BONHAL (1880-1944) Nos. 1-2, Arion 68504 / Anton BRUCKNER (1824-96) Qt in c, Naxos 8.570788 / Peter Maxwell DAVIES (1934-) Nos. 9-10, Naxos 8.557400 / Stephen DODSON (1924-) Nos.3-4, Dutton Epoch 7214 / Alexander GLAZUNOV (1865-1936) Suite Op.35, MD&G 603-1238 / Alfred HILL (1869-1960) Nos.4,6 & 8, Naxos 8.572097 / Joseph JOACHIM (1831-1907) Qt in c, Talent 94 / Joseph JONGEN (1873-1953) No.3, Op.67 & 2 Serenades Op.61, Pavane 7524 / Paul von KLENAU (1883-1946) Nos.1-3, Dacapo 8.226075 / Colin MATTHEWS (1946-) No.2, NMCD149 / Ian PARROTT (1916-) No.4, Lyrita 284 / Ignaz PLEYEL (1757-1831) Op.11 Nos.1-3, Hungaroton 32593 / Ludomir ROZYCKI (1884-1953) Op.49, Hyperion 67684 / Roger SMALLEY (1943-) No. 2, Melba Recordings 301112 / Karol SZYMANOWSKI (1882-1937) Nos.1-2, Hyperion 67684 / Mieczyslaw WEINBERG (1919-96) Nos.7, 11 & 13, CPO 777 392 / Georges WITKOWSKI (1867-1943) Qt in E, Arion 68715 / Joseph WÖLFL (1773-1812) Op.4 Nos.1-3

### Strings Only-Not Quartets

Anton BRUCKNER (1824-96) Quintet &

Intermezzo for Qnt, Naxos 8.570788 / Alexander GLAZUNOV (1865-1936) Quintet, Op.39, MD&G 603 1238 / Sandor KUTI (1908-45) Trio serenade, Hungaroton 32597 / Colin MATTHEWS (1946-) Divertimento for Dbl Qt, NMCD149 / George ONSLOW (1784-1853) Qnt Nos.21 & 34, Pierre Verany 707031 / Roman PALESTER (1907-73) Trio No.2, Acte Prealable 0181 / Max REGER (1873-1915) Trio No.2 Op.141b, Naxos 8.570786 / Sergei TANEYEV (1856-1915) 3 Trio Eb Op.31, d & D, Hyperion 67573

### Piano Trios

Joe CUTLER (1968 Archie, NMCD134 / Hans GAL (1890-1987) Op.18, Op.49b & Variations Op.9, Camerata 28149 / Sylvio LAZZARI (1857-1944) Op.13, Arion 68360 / Ignaz PLEYEL (1757-1831) B.436, 440, 442 & 573, Gramola 98768 / Donald TOVEY (1875-1940) Opp.1 & 8, Toccata Classics 0068

### Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

John CRAMER (1771-1858) Pno Qnt Op.79, Brilliant Classics 93771 / Carl GOLDMARK (1830-1915) Piano Qnt Nos. 1 & 2, CPO 777 177 / David HARRIES (1933-2003) Pno Qnt, Op.20, Lyrita 284 / Max REGER (1873-1915) Piano Qt, Op.133, Naxos 8.570786 / Roger SMALLEY (1943-) Pno Qnt, Melba Recordings 301112 / Carlos SURINACH

(1915-97) Pno Qt, Albany-Troy 1052 / Alexandre TANSMAN 1897-1986) Suite for Pno Qt, Albany Troy 1052 / Joquin TURINA (1882-1949) Pno Qt, Op.87, Albany Troy 1052 / Georges WITKOWSKI (1867-1943) Pno Qnt in b, Ariion 68715

### Winds & Strings

Paul KLETZKI (1901-73) Trio for Fl, Vln & Vla, Acte Prealable 0181 / Jukka LINKOLA (1955-) Clarinet Qnt, Alba 246 / Colin MATTHEWS (1946-) Oboe Qt No.1, NMCD149 / Roman PALESTER (1907-1973) Petite serenade for Fl, Vln & Vla, Acte Prealable 0181 / Ignaz PLEYEL (1757-1831) Qnt for Fl, Ob & Str Trio B.282, 3 Qts for Ob & Str Trio B.381, 391 & 394 Hungaroton 32572 / Alessandro ROLLA (1757-1841) 2 Flute Qts, Dynamic 594

### Winds, Strings & Piano

Joe CUTLER (1968-) Trio for Cln, Vc & Pno, NMCD134 / Alessandro ROLLA (1757-1841) 2 Divertimenti for Fl, Vln, 2 Vla, Vc & Pno, Dynamic 594 / Roger SMALLEY (1943-) Trio for Hn, Vln & Pno, Melba Recordings 301112

### Piano & Winds

None this Issue

### Winds Only

Franciszek LESSEL (1780-1838) Sextet Nos.1, 3 & 4, MD&G 301 1509

# Leó Weiner: The Works for String Quartet

Hungarian composers, still known in their homeland. Weiner was eventually offered a post as Professor of Composition and Chamber Music at the Budapest Academy of Music. Among his composition students were Antal Doráti, Géza Anda, Andor Foldes und György Kurtág. However, he made a lasting mark as a teacher of chamber music performers. Dozens of well-known performers including the Lener, Hungarian and New Hungarian String Quartets were coached by him.

Weiner's **String Quartet No.1 in E flat Major, Op.4** was composed in 1906, predating the first efforts of Kodaly and Bartok by many years. At its premiere, a leading Budapest music critic wrote, "The nation must honor this 21 year old master as an innovator of Hungarian music. Though he deftly respects tradition, he has an individual voice of his own. However, it is futile to look for any references to folk music, although the heroic moving voice is quite Hungarian in its tone. There are certain Hungarian motifs in his melodic and rhythmical structures..."

The first movement, *Allegro*, is idyllic and pastoral. It has a sprightly, simple main theme of a folkloric nature first given out by the second violin.

Allegro.

*p dolce e semplice*

*pp*

*un poco rit.*

*p* *pp* *p* *molto ff* *p*

*1 a tempo*

*2*

A rubato section has a definite Hungarian aura to it.

The second movement, *Allegretto vivo e grazioso* is a scherzo. There are several themes but the dominant theme is a lively dance-like rhythm. The trio provides an excellent contrast.

Allegretto vivo e grazioso.

*pp*

*ten.*

*f*

*pp*

*p*

*ten.*

*cresc.*

*ff*

In the dignified third movement, *Andante espressivo*, the recurrent sets of three 16th notes, almost sounding as triplets, give the touching lyric melody, which serves as the main theme, an almost tragic quality.

Andante espressivo.

*pp espr. poco rubato*

*1*

*accl.*

*accl.*

*poco animato*

*sf*

*p*

*2 a tempo*

The finale, *Allegro molto vivace*, is very original and full of colorful tonal effects. The movement opens with a few bars of 20th century urban angst before the upbeat and attractive main theme begins in the fifth measure.

Allegro molto vivace.

*p*

*f*

*p*

*pp*

*f espr.*

*pp*

Weiner waited fifteen years before writing another quartet, a form he wrote was the most difficult and perfect of all. Part of the wait was of course due to the First World War and its aftermath in which the Habsburg empire of Austria-Hungary was dismantled. It was only in 1921 that he produced his **String Quartet No.2 in f sharp minor, Op.13**. "A convincing, perfectly proportioned masterwork," wrote Hungary's then leading music critic, Aladar Toth. He was not alone in this opinion. In 1922, the year after Weiner composed this work, it won the prestigious Coolidge Prize for Chamber Music.

The opening movement to String Quartet No.2 begins with a slow, somber, even gloomy *Lento* which proves to be an introduction of substantial length.

Lento

*pp*

*cresc.*

Eventually it softly dies away and is followed suddenly by two loud chords and quick chromatic passages which herald the arrival of the *Allegro* with its powerful, post-romantic theme deep in

*p dolce*

*espr.*

*poco*

the cello's lowest registers.

The second movement, *Molto vivace*, is a nervous, modern scherzo. Full of energy, the music is always moving forward. One critic called it a witty French dance conjuring up images of little devils running about. The tricky syncopation of the main theme against a continuous stream of rushing 16th note triplets make the

Molto vivace

*p dolce*

movement somewhat difficult to keep together. But it was on the strength of this scherzo, that the critic for the Parisian *Le Revue Musicale* wrote that Weiner "belongs to the Mendelssohn-Saint Saëns school of composition, but with definite Hungarian tonal

(Continued from page 10)

colors, which strongly connects with today's Hungarian musical efforts.

The lovely, but questioning, main theme to the slow movement, *Andante*, which follows the scherzo without pause, is first given out by the cello. The mood is reflective and a bit mysterious.



The lilting finale, *Allegro con anima*, moves effortlessly, dance-like and graceful.



Again a long period elapsed before Weiner returned to the string quartet. **The Divertimento No.2, Op.24a** was composed in two versions, the original for string quartet and a second version for string orchestra. It dates from 1938, Weiner's so-called second or middle period. In the earlier works, Weiner was influenced by the Romantic composers but wrote in a post-romantic style. Then, in the second period, unwilling to abandon tonality, but feeling that the time for post-romanticism was finished, he devoted himself, much like Bartok and Kodaly had earlier, to investigating and using original Hungarian folk melodies. The Divertimento consists of four movements, each based on a different folk melody. The first is entitled *Wedding March, Tempo di csardas*. It is based on a Verbunkos, and a close relative to the famous Hungarian recruiting marches in spirit. It is lively and full of élan.



The second movement, hard to translate is perhaps best put as, Teasing Pranks. Though marked *Allegro scherzando*, the mood of the main section is that of an intermezzo, while the trio section, usually slower, here is quicker.



The very short third movement, *Lament*, is an *Andante sostenuto*. The title expresses the emotion. But it is really nothing more than a brief interlude whose purpose seems, like that of a sorbet, to separate two entrees, in this case the scherzo and the finale. The finale bears the title *The Jovial Shepherd* and is based on a well-known Hungarian folk song, *Simon has gone a stealing pigs*, but although it is exotic-sounding and exciting, it is fair to say that the music does not conjure up any image of this. It is an unrelied whirling dance which brings the Divertimento to a close.



A few months after finishing the lighter Divertimento, Weiner wrote another work for string quartet, **String Quartet No.3 in G Major, Op.26**. It is in three movements and neither as massive nor as ambitious as his first two quartets. The opening movement, *Pastorale*, though lyrical, is also light and airy. The main theme found in the first violin strong reminds one of birdsong.



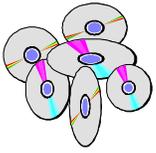
To be sure, there are several episodes of dissonance but overall traditional tonality, albeit of a modern nature, is maintained. The second movement, *Fantasy*, bears the tempo marking *Poco adagio*. There is a pentatonic tonality which reminds one of Vaughan Williams. The main theme is dreamy and wandering.



The lively finale is a *Fugue* based, according to the Hungarian folk music expert Ljszlo Lajtha, on an old Hungarian folk melody. It is first given out by the second violin. The tonality here is more traditional and less adventurous in that Weiner has cleansed the music of all dissonance.



While none of the three string quartets are beyond good level and experience amateur players, the first and third are more accessible from a tonal standpoint. The second is perhaps Weiner's best quartet but it is not particularly easy to put together. The Divertimento is just good fun. All four of the above works have been recorded and parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.



Diskology: Hear Sound-bites to These CD Reviews On Our Website—[www.cobbettassociation.org](http://www.cobbettassociation.org)  
**Joseph Jongen: String Quartet No.3 & 2 Serenades for String Quartet**  
**Piano Trios by Rosalind Ellicott, Alice Verne-Bredt, Thomas Dunhill & Ernest Austin**



**Joseph Jongen** (1873-1953), on the strength of an amazing precocity for music, entered the Liege Conservatory (in Belgium) 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. By the time he published his opus one, he already had dozens of works to his credit. On **Pavane Records CD ADW 7524** we are presented with the world premier recording of his last works for string quartet. His **Two Serenades for String Quartet Op.61** date from 1918, while Jongen was living in London, where he spent the remainder of the First World War after Germany invaded Belgium. Each serenade is in three movements which are played without pause. The first, *Sérénade tendre*, begins with a melancholy theme in the upper voices against the cello pizzicato which creates the sound of a guitar accompaniment. The theme of the second section is closely related to that of the first, but the treatment is edgy and tonally exotic. The third section, closely related to the others, has a mysterious quality to it. The second, *Sérénade dramatique*, begins with all four voices playing a disjointed pizzicato introduction before the first violin introduces a sad, penetrating melody. Slowly one realizes that this is music of the night. The middle section begins simply with a lovely theme into which Jongen inserts fascinating dissonances that slowly changes the mood. The final section has a bright tune for its main theme. Quickly it broadens and builds both tension and excitement leading to wonderful coda. These are both very appealing works which would do well in concert. Wilhelm Altmann, writing in his *Handbook for String Quartet Players* states, “*These two serenades are among the finest examples of light music in the absolute best sense of the word. They are full of rich inspiration and wonderful tone colors.*” The other work on disk is his **String Quartet No.3 in D Major, Op.67**. It was composed in 1921 and premiered in Brussels two years later to considerable acclaim. It is a big work, classic in conception, still showing the elegance of French impressionism and perhaps might have entered the standard repertoire if atonalism and neo-classicism had not been all the rage at the time. In the opening movement, *Allegro non troppo*, a somewhat tense main theme is introduced by the first violin and the cello, with the former taking a highly charged and romantic melody further alone. The second theme is calmer. A bright and lively *Scherzo* comes next and is followed by a big slow movement, *Andantino molto cantabile*. A somber, but not sad, melody is presented in chordal fashion by all four voices. Carefully and over time, tension and drama are built up. The highly rhythmical first theme to the finale, *Trés animé*, is upbeat and full of optimism. The second section, opened by the cello, is highly dramatic and full of intensity. This is a first rate work which should interest both amateurs and professionals. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust. A highly recommended CD.

The title to **Meridan CD#84478** is *English Romantic Trios*. The author to the jewel box notes begins as follows: “*It is a sad reflection on Britain's attitude towards its own music that British composers have rarely been accorded the attention they merit. This was particularly the case in the 19th and early 20th centuries when all too often a work was forgotten after its first performance.*” In an attempt to partially remedy this, Meridan presents the world premiere recordings of piano trios of four little known British composers: Thomas Dunhill, Ernest Austin, Rosalind Ellicott and Alice Verne-Bredt,



Of the four, **Thomas Dunhill** (1877-1946) is probably the best known. He grew up in London and was part of the Dunhill family which founded the famous tobacco shop in that city. He studied composition at the Royal College of Music with Charles Villiers Stanford. After graduating, he enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a teacher and composer, eventually serving as a professor at the Royal College. He was especially fond of chamber

music and wrote a considerable amount. His one movement **Piano Trio in C Major** from 1900 (not to be confused with his Op.26 Phantasy Trio in c minor from 1907) is the first work on disk. We are not told whether he intended to write more movements or was satisfied with the substantial quarter of an hour *Allegro moderato*. Lovely though the melodies are and fine as the part-writing is, the work could well have been written by Schubert or certainly by Schumann. It is really only of historical interest although I am sure many would like a chance to play it.



Next comes **Piano Trio No.4, Op.26** by **Ernest Austin** (1874-1947). Austin was, so the box notes tell us, largely self taught. He had initially made a career in business and did not decide to work full time as a composer until he was 33. In 1924, Macmillan's *New Encyclopedia of Music* describes his works as exhibiting “*ultra modern tendencies.*” The author of this nonsense probably thought of Vaughan Williams an atonal composer.

The trio was composed in 1909 and published a few years later. Though in one movement, it really has four sub-movements—*Allegro moderato con vigore*, *Allegro con animato*, *Allegro con vigore* and *Molto allegro con fuoco*. It is not a big work, lasting a little more than 12 minutes. The music flows effortlessly, is melodic and well formed. This is a good work which could be performed in concert.

**Rosalind Ellicott** (1857-1924) was born in Cambridge and studied piano at the Royal Academy of Music with Thomas Wingham, a pupil of William Sterndale Bennett. At first she devoted herself to composing ambitious works for chorus and orchestra, cast in a traditional, broadly Romantic vein. She turned her attention to chamber music at the end of the 19th century, hoping that there



## Sextet for Piano & Winds by Ludwig Thuille / Wind Quintet by August Klughardt A Trio for Clarinet, Horn & Piano by Carl Reinecke / 3 Piano Trios by de Beriot

would be more opportunities for it to be performed. There weren't, and she began disappearing from the public eye in 1900 dying in obscurity in 1924. Little of her work has survived; although a complete published copy of her **Second Trio** (1891) is one of the few. The big first movement, *Allegro appassionato*, is very Schumannesque with some tinges of Mendelssohn. The second movement, *Andante sostenuto*, is highly romantic, lovely though very saccharine. It too harks back to the 1850's or even before. The *Scherzo* which comes next is well done, but again rather dated. The finale, *Allegro molto*, is the finest of the four movements. From the opening notes, it is dramatic and exciting.



The final work presented is by **Alice Verne-Bredt** (1860-1938), born of German parents who had settled in Southampton. She studied piano with a daughter of Robert Schumann and became a prominent performer. Her one movement 9 minute **Phantasie Trio** was composed in 1908 for one of the Cobbett competitions. This is quite a good work, and though romantic, it does not hark back to

Schumann or Mendelssohn but is considerably more *au courant*. Summing up, this is an interesting CD, but, only the Verne-Bredt and Austin trios, in my opinion, are worthy or revival.



**Ludwig Thuille** (1861-1907) was born in the then Austrian town of Bozen located in the South Tirol (now in Italy and called Bolzano). Thuille studied with Josef Rheinberger at the Bavarian Royal Conservatory in Munich. He befriended Richard Strauss when he was ten and they remained friends for the rest of Thuille's life. Strauss' influence on Thuille's music was certainly as great as that of Rheinberger. The last part of his life, Thuille

spent as a music professor and composer, achieving considerable fame for his operas. He was the founder of the so-called New Munich School of composition. Among his many students was Ernest Bloch. Thuille wrote in most genres and often turned to chamber music. **The Sextet for Piano & Wind Quintet in B flat Major, Op.6** was composed in 1888. Strauss was instrumental in arranging for the premiere performance and held a high opinion of the work. In four movements, it begins with an atmospheric and engaging *Allegro moderato*. The huge movement begins softly with a horn solo bringing forth a melody of nobility, of almost heroic quality. But the music is genial and relaxed, creating no sense of urgency, but rather of well-being. The *Larghetto* is somber and dignified. The very effective third movement, *Andante-quasi allegretto*, is a charming, somewhat haunting dance that brings to mind puppets. The finale, *Vivace*, is an exciting romp, full of high spirits and lovely melodies. A really fine work.

The next work is the **Wind Quintet in C Major, Op.79** of **August Klughardt** (1847-1902). Klughardt was born in the German town of Köthen in Saxon-Anhalt. After studying music locally, Klughardt began to earn his living by conducting. He served in

several locales, including Weimar where he worked from 1869 to 1873. There, he met Franz Liszt, which was very important for his creative development. While influenced by Wagner and Liszt, Klughardt did not by any means entirely adopt the ideology of their New German School and the influence of Schumann, and to a lesser extent Brahms, is equally important. In four movements, the Quintet dates from 1901. After a slow introduction, the opening *Allegro non troppo* starts off in a mysterious vein, but quickly changes mood into a playful series of interludes between the voices. The second movement, *Allegro vivace*, is a sprightly scherzo. The *Andante grazioso*, which serves as the slow movement, is in the form of a stately minuet. The finale begins with a lengthy *Adagio* introduction before the main sections, *Allegro molto vivace*, which is full of high spirits.



The last work on this **Etcetera CD#KTC 1295** is **Trio in Bb for Piano, Clarinet & Horn, Op.274** by Carl Reinecke (1824-1910).

Nowadays, Reinecke has been all but forgotten, an unjust fate for a man who excelled in virtually every musical field with which he was involved. As a performer, Reinecke was one of the finest concert pianists before the public. As a composer, he produced widely respected and often performed works in every genre. As a conductor, he helped turn the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra into a group with few if any peers. As its director, he helped the Leipzig Conservatory become what was widely regarded as the finest in the world. As a teacher of composition and of piano, he was considered to have few if any equals. Among his many students were Grieg, Bruch, Janacek, Albeniz, Sinding, Svendsen, Reznicek, Delius, Stanford, Arthur Sullivan, George Chadwick, Ethel Smyth, Felix Weingartner, Karl Muck and Hugo Riemann. Hearing this trio, composed in 1901, the listener might well think they are hearing a work by Brahms. The expansive approach to the thematic material, the cross rhythms and the full texture of the music are there, but even with the obvious influence, this is not second rate music. The big opening *Allegro* is marvelous. The lovely second movement, *Ein Märchen*, *Andante* tonally looks back toward Schumann. The *Scherzo* which follows is both effective and exciting and challenging for the horn which is given most of the melodic material. The finale is big and genial. In all a very attractive piece. A highly recommended CD. All 3 works are in print.



**Talent CD # DOM 2913 127** presents three piano trios by the Belgian violin virtuoso, **Charles de Beriot** (1802-1870) Born in Leuven, de Beriot studied violin with Viotti and Baillot but was also influenced by Paganini. Most violinists, if no one else, will have heard of him. While I make it a practice never to mention the quality of the performance, the playing on this CD is so atro-

## A String Trio and Piano Quartet by Max Reger

### Hans Gal: String Quartet Nos.1 and 4 / Jan Dussek's Three String Quartets

cious that I feel I must make mention of it. De Beriot had a nice gift for melody and many of his works are unjustly forgotten and perhaps the **2 Grand Trios Opp.58 and 64** along with his **Op.4** trio are among these, but it really is impossible to tell. It was painful to listen to this work, very sad since this is the only recordings of these works, but nonetheless I must advise you to avoid this CD.



**Max Reger** (1873-1916) was born in the small Bavarian town of Brand. He began his musical studies at a young age and his talent for composition became clear early on. After studying with the eminent musicologist Hugo Riemann, Reger was appointed to the prestigious position of Professor of composition at the Leipzig Conservatory. In addition to this he was widely regarded as one of the best living conductors and organists. In a career that only

lasted 20 years, Reger wrote a prodigious amount of music in virtually every genre except opera and the symphony. Chamber music figures prominently within his oeuvre. **String Trio No.1, Op.77b** dates from 1904. The opening movement begins with a brief, somewhat depressed and worried introduction reminiscent of late Beethoven. Then the tense main theme of the *Allegro agitato* literally explodes. Only briefly does the sun peek out of the clouds but then with the appearance of the lovely, lyrical second theme, all is sunny. The reflective second movement, *Larghetto*, is characterized by a deeply introspective quality. The brilliant third movement, *Scherzo, vivace*, is a humorous take off on the traditional German Dance. In the finale, *Allegro con moto*, Reger quotes a well-known theme from Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* and then dresses it up in modern clothes. The second theme, wayward tonally, provides an beautiful contrast. For good measure, a march is thrown in before the satisfying and jovial coda. This is one of Reger's more appealing works. The **Piano Quartet in d minor, Op.113** dates from 1910. He called the work his own solution to finding new paths and a thorough adherence to an expanded tonality. The massive 17 minute *Allegro moderato ma con passione* which opens the work is both rugged and yet at times gentle and filled with yearning. The ideas are spread upon a huge tonal canvas and are extraordinarily effective. In my opinion, a far more satisfactory solution than Schönberg arrived at. The second movement, *Vivace-Adagio-Vivace*, is what Reger himself described as a "crazy scherzo." At once forceful and ponderous, there are some very clever, surprising and original ideas to be found in this ingenious movement. To say that the slow trio section provides a fine contrast is a big understatement. A substantial 13 minute *Larghetto* follows and is clearly closely related to the slow section of the scherzo. The finale, *Allegro energico*, is a theme in search of a tonality. It seems to always be closing in on one, which like a desert mirage disappears as one gets close. Again there are many fine ideas along the way to the powerful coda. The Quartet takes close to 50 minutes to perform but the material sustains it. It is an important work deserving concert performance. This **Naxos CD#8.570875**, in my opinion, is well worth hearing. I say this as someone who is not particularly a fan of Reger. Parts are in print.



**Hans Gal** (1890-1987) was born in the small village of Brunn am Gebirge, just outside of Vienna. He was trained in that metropolis at the New Vienna Conservatory where he taught for some time. Later, with the support of such important musicians as Wilhelm Furtwangler, Richard Strauss and others, he obtained the directorship of the Mainz Conservatory. Gal composed in nearly every genre and his operas were particularly popular during

the 1920's. Upon Hitler's rise to power, Gal was forced to leave Germany and eventually emigrated to Britain, teaching at the Edinburgh Music Conservatory for many years. His **String Quartet No.1 in f minor, Op.16** was published in 1924 but was probably written some years before this. Although the tonalities of the Quartet are certainly post-Brahmsian, it nonetheless is somewhat in the style of Brahms, it is also indebted to Schubert and to the general musical milieu of 19th century Vienna. The first movement, *Moderato ma con passione*, has a rich, lyrical main theme which is quite inspired. The second movement, *Molto vivace*, is a scherzo which can trace its roots back to Schubert and provides a pleasant interlude. The appealing third movement, *Adagio*, is full of warmth and affection.. The melodies of the finale, *Allegro energico, un poco sostenuto*, are imbued with humor and good feeling. Of its kind and time this is a first rate work which can stand alongside of works of Weigl, Zemlinsky, and others from this period, circa 1918. **String Quartet No.4, Op.99** dates from 1972. Though still tonal, as you might expect, it is has a very different musical language from No.1. The first movement *Legend, Adagio-Allegro*, is playful and light-hearted. The restless but happy *Burlesque-vivace* is quite attractive. The slow movement, *Elegy, lento*, though tinged with sadness, has no sense of tragedy. There are several very lovely moments. The finale, *Capriccio fugato, allegro con spirito*, exudes a busy, bustling theme handled with great plasticity and ingenuity. One might call the style a mix of neo-neo classicism and neo-neo romanticism. Too bad more modern works are not as attractive and engaging as this one. Also on disk are his *Improvisation & Variations on a Theme by Mozart, Op.60b*. Highly recommended.



**Jan Dussek** (1760-1812) was one of the first great touring piano virtuosi during the last quarter of the 18th century. He concertized throughout Europe and served as Pianist to the likes of Catherine the Great, whom he was later accused, probably speciously, of trying to assassinate. He also served as pianist for the King of Prussia, Marie Antoinette and later Talleyrand. While in England, he collaborated with the famous piano maker John Broadwood and encouraged him to extend the piano's range and power. It was Broadwood's piano with Dussek's improvements which became Beethoven's favorite. He wrote a tremendous amount of music. Unfortunately his three **Op.60 String Quartets** found on **Musikmanufaktur Berlin CD#476**, his only works without piano, are pretty ordinary. Though composed in 1806 they sound more like something from 1760. I can see no reason why they were recorded nor any why they should be revived.

## Piano Trios by Jean Cras, Alexandre Tcherepnin And Nikolai Tcherepnin



Nearly forgotten now for more than a half century, **Jean Cras** (1879-1932) stands out in stark contrast to virtually every other French composer of his generation. He was born in the coastal town of Brest into a family with a long naval tradition. Although his affinity for music and his talent showed itself early, he was, nevertheless, enrolled at the Naval Academy in 1896. But, in his spare time, he studied orchestration, counterpoint and composition. Feeling he could go no farther alone, he sought

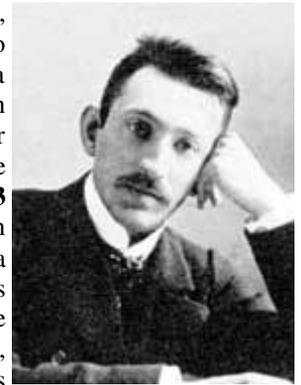
out a respected teacher, Henri Duparc. Duparc was astounded by Cras' talent and meticulously exposed him to the compositional techniques of Bach, Beethoven and his own teacher, César Franck. These were Cras' only lessons in composition.

As a composer, Cras' greatest problem was a chronic lack of time to devote to his art as he became a fully commissioned officer in the French Navy. He loved the sea, but served in the navy only out of a sense of patriotism and family tradition. Unlike Rimsky-Korsakov and Albert Roussel, both of whom began in the navy but later resigned, Cras never left the navy and eventually rose to the rank of Rear-Admiral. His maritime experiences sowed the seeds of an imagination and introspection which enabled him to understand profoundly the alienation of the human condition. And it is this which truly provides the key to his music. Although he was, as so many other of his contemporaries, drawn to cyclical composition pioneered by Franck, he employed it with a unique iconoclastic language of his own. It was a meticulous and sophisticated autobiographical synthesis of the things which were paramount in his life: the sea, the Church, his native Brittany, and the exoticisms discovered on his many voyages.

**Timpani CD#1151** presents his **Piano Trio** composed in 1907. The opening movement, *Modérément animé*, begins rather darkly in the lower registers of all the instruments. But beneath the plodding rhythm burns hidden passion. The second movement, *Lent*, is subtitled *Chorale*, and indeed, from the opening chords of the piano, we hear an updated version of a Bach chorale. Somber and reflective, the piano sets the tone with its long introduction. When the violin and later the cello enter with their long-lined cantilena melody, the music takes on an aura of a Bachian aria. Very different in mood and feel is the lively *Trés vif*. The main theme is a sea shanty but with modern tonalities. The finale, also marked *Trés vif*, begins as a fugue. The theme has a jaunty military air about it. This is a very interesting and original trio which is clearly a first rate work. Highly recommended.

**Nikolai Tcherepnin** (1873-1945) was born in St. Petersburg and studied at the Conservatory with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov later striking up close friendships both Korsakov and Liadov. After graduating he worked as an opera conductor both in Petersburg and Paris. When the Revolution came, he first fled to Georgia and taught at the Tiflis Conservatory before eventually emigrating to

Paris. Primarily a composer of opera, ballet, vocal works and works for solo piano, chamber music does not play a large role in his output. Besides an early string quartet, there are a number of pieces for winds and piano. The jacket notes of **Vista Vera CD#00123** provide absolutely no information about his **Trio Dacha, Op.38 No.4**, a one movement work of three minutes duration. The jacket notes claim the movement marking is *Allegro giocoso*, but this must be an error for it sounds like an *Andante pastorale*. Quite lyrical and melodic. Judging from the tonality, it was written before the First World War.

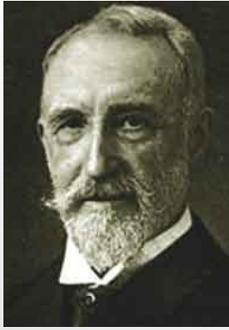


Alexandre Tcherepnin (1893-1977) was Nikolai's son. He studied piano and composition at the Petersburg, Tiflis and Paris Conservatories where his family moved after the Revolution. He enjoyed a cosmopolitan career teaching both in Europe and U.S. His time in Georgia was of considerable significance to his later work as a composer as he became very interested in Georgian folk music with its different tonalities. This and



his fascination with the major-minor triad and its modal possibilities led him to create a 9 tone scale divided into three tetrachords. He used this scale to compose most of his works and wrote a treatise on the subject. His early works were said to combine the Romantic impetuosity (but not the Romantic textures) of Rachmaninov and Scriabin with the grotesquerie of early Prokofiev. In the mid-late 1920's his work gravitated toward neo-classicism. He followed what he called "the road of simplification" in a series of lyrical and witty works, sometimes based on motor rhythms, often on variation techniques. This process culminated in what became one of his most often-played chamber works, the tiny **Piano Trio, Op.34**. It is in three short three movements. The first *Moderato tranquillo-Allegro*, begins softly with a somewhat depressed and dragging theme. The tonality is rather muddy and uncertain. However, this changes in the tense and exciting *Allegro*. A definite melodic theme can be heard and is logically developed in a way which can be easily followed. In the coda, the slow section reappears but ends on a tonic. The very appealing second movement *Allegretto* is very chromatic. It combines an elegant lyrical melody with bizarre flourishes. The middle section is quick and lively. The opening section then reappears to conclude the movement. The hectic, frenetic finale, *Allegro molto*, is also highly chromatic. A relentlessly pounding theme of the sort Shostakovich was later to use is featured. It is a very approachable work and not hard to see why it was often performed. A very interesting work and worthwhile CD.

# FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Théodore Dubois



Charles V. Stanford



Leó Weiner



Joseph Jongen



Ludwig Thuille



August Klughardt



Carl Reinecke



Max Reger



Hans Gál

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HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANAYEV, REINECKE

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV