

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

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

***Salomon Jadassohn's  
Last Two Piano Trios***

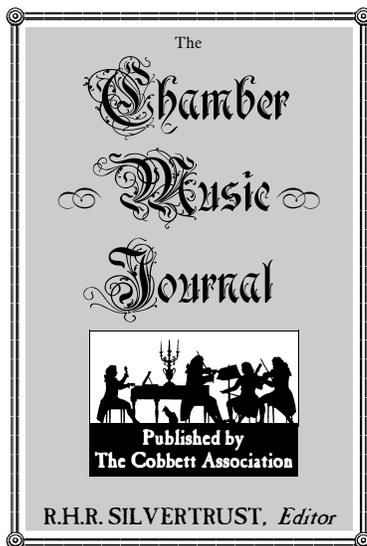
***A Brief Suvey of  
String Octets***

***Waldemar von Baussnern's  
Serenade for Clarinet, Violin Piano***

**Volume XXII No.3**

**Autumn 2011**

**ISSN 1535 1726**



#### Directors

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

#### Board of Advisors

Dr. Nicholas Cunningham, Sally Didrickson, Dr. Ronald Goldman, Dr. William Horne, Dr. Bertrand Jacobs, Veronica Jacobs, Peter Lang, Dr. James Whitby, John Wilcox

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

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

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

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



# The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



## Who was Bernhard Molique?

I have just come off a session in which we played a quartet by composer called Bernhard Molique. The violist who brought it with him could tell us nothing much except what he found on Wikipedia. We played off an old edition which he found at an antiquarian dealer in Germany.

Andy Mason  
Dallas, Texas

Bernhard Molique was born in the German city of Nuremberg. His father was a violinist and is thought to have given Bernhard his first lessons. Molique was fond of saying that he was a student of Louis Spohr and referred to him as "my master", but except for a few lessons that he took while Spohr was passing through Nuremberg during a concert tour, when Molique was about 14, there were no further lessons. His main teacher was Pietro Rovelli a Rodolphe Kreutzer student. By 16, Molique was serving as concertmaster of the Royal Bavarian Orchestra in Munich. After a stop in Vienna, he then settled in Stuttgart where he served as court music director and concertmaster. From this home base, he embarked on several highly successful concert tours in Germany, Austria, Russia, France, Holland and England. While his playing was generally praised, opinions about Molique the man seemed to vary widely. Mendelssohn "a fat wine man who had made himself comfortable." And Schumann complained, "Nothing satisfies him, he grouses about everything and is such a dull fellow". Molique returned the compliment noting that "Schumann is a boring fellow, he sits there and says nothing and dreams." On the other hand, Joseph Joachim who knew Molique in his later years noted that he was "quite fond of this worthy old gentleman." Molique's playing was especially appreciated in England and during the 1840's he settled in London, eventually becoming a professor of composition at the Royal Academy of Music. A fairly prolific composer, Molique did not write opera but confined himself to instrumental music composing numerous concerti and much chamber music. Today, few if any of his works are performed although one occasionally hears his Fifth Violin Concerto in a minor, he wrote eight, and a flute concerto. As far as string quartets go, he is said to have composed some 13 although only 9 are known to have survived. In the past few years, the Mannheim String Quartet appears to have taken on the project of recording all of them, but one can never be sure, as so often these projects start only never to be completed. To date, the first six have been recorded. Perhaps of greater interest is the fact that a modern edition has been produced by the German publisher Strube Verlag, however, I have not seen it any music shop or online. His first two string quartets, Opp.16 and 17 were released in 2010 on

CPO CD 777 336. String Quartet No.1 in G Major, Op.16 is a rather ordinary, Haydnesque affair. String Quartet No.2 in c minor, Op.17 has stronger thematic material and makes a better impression. While the jewel box notes do not say when these works were written, I gather they date from the 1820's. String Quartet Nos 3 & 4, Op.18 Nos. 1 & 2, were released in 2005 on CPO CD 777 149. These quartets were composed in the mid 1830's. String Quartet No.3 in F Major, Op.18 No.1 is workmanlike but unremarkable. No.4 in a minor, has somewhat better melodic material, but is still a fairly ordinary work. The guiding spirit appears to have been Beethoven's Op.18 string quartets. String Quartet Nos. 5 & 6 were recorded on CPO CD 777 276 and released in 2009. String Quartet No.5 in B flat Major, Op.18 No.3 does not rise to the level of Op.18 No.2. String Quartet No.6 in f minor, Op.28 appeared 10 years after the Op.18 in 1846. This is a decent effort though hardly a great work. Eduard Hanslick's comment about Molique's music is one which I feel can be applied to these works: "serious and solid." None of these quartets are bad, but even the best of them does not rise to the level of such contemporaries as Schumann or Mendelssohn.

## How Many String Quartets did Franz Krommer Write?

I have just purchased a volume containing the three string quartets of Franz Krommer's Op.24 which my quartet has found delightful. We are wondering just how many quartets did he write and how many are available in modern editions.

Ann McCleary  
San Diego, California

The short answer to your first question is that nobody knows for sure. One of Krommer's Czech biographers claims he wrote 69, but a Canadian expert puts the figure at 73, while the editors of Edition Kunzelmann state that he wrote 76. Only a few of his quartets, however, have appeared in modern editions. Amadeus has published his Op.18 quartets, a set of three and Edition Kunzelmann, as you know since you own them, have brought out a new edition of the Op.24 string quartets, also a set of 3. Edition Silvertrust has a modern edition of Op.5 No.1 while Akord Verlag has published Op.5 Nos. 2 and 3. Several other quartets have been recorded as of late including his Op.7 (3 Quartets), Op.19 No.2, Op.74 No.3 and Op.103 No.3

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.

# Waldemar von Baussnern's Sernade for Clarinet, Violin & Piano

Hans Peter Schellenberger



As a clarinetist, I am always looking for works to play with my string player friends. One day, while browsing through the dusty bins of a music antiquarian dealer in Frankfurt, I came across a work for Clarinet, Violin and Piano entitled Sernade by the composer Waldemar von Baussnern, generally spelled with a sharfes S as Baußnern. It was a name, obviously German or perhaps Austrian, with which I was unfamiliar. Perhaps I should have been since

he was the author of six first rate chamber works which include the clarinet. But I was not. I had never heard of him. How could this be, one might ask, if these works were so good. But regular readers of *The Chamber Music Journal*, of course, will be quite familiar with how this could be. There are many composers, who at one time were fairly well-known and respected, whose reputa-

tions have since vanished and whose names and music had disappeared from the concert programs of today.

Waldemar von Baussnern (1866-1931) was born in Berlin, the son of a financial official in Hermannstadt, which at the time of Baussnern's birth, was located in what German speakers called the Siebenbürgen region. English speakers know it as Transylvania, which back then was a part of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Today, Hermannstadt is part of Romania and called Sibiu. Although born in Berlin, he spent his childhood in Hermannstadt and Budapest, the administrative capital from which Siebenbürgen was governed/ As a youth Baussnern studied violin, piano and organ with local teachers before being sent to Berlin in 1882, where he studied composition with Friedrich Kiel and Woldemar Bargiel at the Royal Music Academy, that is the Königlichen Hochschule für Musik. After graduating, for several years, he served as music director of various music and choral societies in Mannheim, Cologne, and Dres-

(Continued on page 8)

## The Piano Trios of Salomon Jadassohn-Part 2

By R.H.R. Silvertrust

(The first part of this article appeared in the last issue of *The Journal*—Volume XXII No.2. In it, the author gave a short synopsis of the composer's life and dealt with the question of why his work was not better known. There followed a detailed analysis of Jadassohn's first two piano trios)



Jadassohn's first two piano trios, Opp.16 and 20, discussed in the first part of my article, which appeared in the last issue of *The Journal*, were both composed before he had reached the age of thirty. More than 20 years passed before he returned to the genre again. The earlier trios were both in the Major, bright, and sunny throughout. Unlike Goethe's Werther, there is no sorrow, no drama, no pathos or thoughts of impending death. Rather, the lovely melodies we hear are the work of an optimistic young man with a bright future and his life ahead of him. **Piano Trio No.3 in c minor, Op.59** dates from 1880. Jadassohn was almost 50 and much had occurred during these passing decades. In the

late 1850's, the nation of Germany as we know it today did not exist. Jadassohn was born a Prussian citizen and the years of his youth, both in Breslau and later in Leipzig, coincided with the apogee of the liberal movement and the spirit of tolerance. The Austro-Prussian war of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian war of 1871 led to the creation, engineered by Bismarck, of the state of Germany, or German Empire, in the form of the so-called Second Reich (the first being the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation which had been dissolved by Napoleon in 1805) The 1870's was the decade of the monumental struggle between Liberalism and Conservatism in Germany, the Kulturkampf. The Conservatives won and society began to fragment and to change. Class consciousness arose. The Prussian state, which had largely been Protestant, by swallowing Bavaria and the other south German states, acquired a huge number of Catholics. For the first time since the Thirty Years War, religious antagonisms, though very low-keyed, nonetheless began to surface. In

(Continued on page 10)

## A Brief Survey Of String Octets

by Renz Opolis

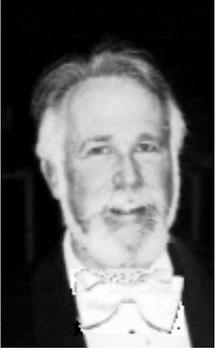
I shall begin this article in the same fashion that I began my *Brief Survey of String Sextets*, which appeared in this publication some years back, i.e., with a disclaimer. You may know of an octet which I do not mention in this article. You may know of several, especially if string octets are your thing. However, this is a "brief" and *opinionated*, but not an exhaustive survey. I have no idea as to how many octets may have been composed, nor have I tried to find out, but you can be sure that there are more than I am going to discuss here. Of course, it is worth keeping in mind the fact that most string players are not going to get the chance to play string octets all that many times in their life. No one that I know does it on a regular basis, like they do string quartets or piano trios. So the question is, will you get to play octets 25 times in your life. I hope so, but one must admit that it is highly unlikely. And even if you do get to play octets several times, should you spend any of these with Niels Gade's Octet? The answer I am afraid is "no" you shouldn't,

(Continued on page 4)

### IN THIS ISSUE

Letters to the Editor.....	2
A Brief Survey of Octets .....	3
Waldemar von Baussnern's Sernade .....	3
The Piano Trios of Salomon Jadassohn-Part II.....	3
At the Double Bar .....	4
New Recordings.....	9
Diskology: et.al.....	12

## At The Doublebar



This is our second digital only issue, the second issue since we stopped printing and mailing hard copy. Those of you who read my column in the last issue know in detail why this has come to pass. For those who do not, in a word, the reasons were primarily financial. But also we are hopeful that by making *The Journal* a free online publication that we will reach more readers and in turn will stimulate more interest in the chamber music about which we write.

So far, it is impossible to say whether or not we are reaching a wider readership. But I would like to ask those of you who are reading *The Journal* for the first time to send us a short email letting us know. Our email address is [cobbettassociation@gmail.com](mailto:cobbettassociation@gmail.com).

I wish to thank our contributors. Professor Opolis is no newcomer to our publication. He has, over the years, contributed several fine articles and his current one on string octets is yet another. Who among us, as he writes, has had the opportunity to play octets more than a few times. Over a period of 40 years, I have perhaps taken part in a dozen or so sessions. And again, just as he has written, the Mendelssohn was always one of the works. I am happy to recount that I have been privileged to play the Bargiel, Enescu, Gade, Gliere, Raff, and Svendsen octets along with the Spohr Double Quartets. I particularly would like to get a chance to play Hermann Grädner's.

Thanks are also in order to Herr Schellenberger for his article on Bausnern's Trio for Violin, Clarinet and Piano. As a cellist, I will, of course, never get a chance to play it, but I certainly enjoyed hearing a recording of it. As for my article on Salomon Jadassohn's Piano Trios, I would say that the last two are especially worthy of your attention. I have enjoyed playing all four and believe that his chamber music is worthy of revival.

Wishing all of our readings a Happy Holiday season and much chamber music—Ray Silvertrust, Editor

## A Brief Survey of String Octets *continued from page 3*

even though it is not a terrible work. The reality is that unless you are going to get a lot of chances to play octets or belong to a group that really wishes to explore the literature, there simply are enough which are considerably stronger and which would be a more worthwhile use of your time than trudging through what is no more than an ordinary effort. And it goes without saying that at almost every octet session in which you take part, the inevitable Mendelssohn will make its appearance. If you detect a note of sarcasm or dismay, it is simply because I feel that although the Mendelssohn is a wonderful work and undoubtedly one of the very best, if not the best, string octets ever written, it nonetheless does not have to be played everytime an octet evening is planned. To my mind, there are a number of other octets which need not fear comparison with the Mendelssohn, and which can replace it on an evening's program. Therefore I will not discuss the Mendelssohn since most readers will already be familiar with it. Nor will this article discuss Double Quartets. Even though they are for the same number and type of instrument, the inventor of the Double Quartet, Louis Spohr, considered it a very different thing from a standard String Octet. So, they will have to wait for a subsequent article.

Before I begin, let me reiterate that the opinions expressed herein are mine and I expect some of you will not agree with them. That is certainly your right just as every gentleman has the right to defend his preference for redheads or blonds or brunettes. For the sake of comparison, I shall include Wilhelm Altmann's opinions, as expressed in his Chamber Music Handbook, along with my own. While Altmann chooses the unusual and somewhat confusing system of ordering works by the date of their authors birth, rather than listing them either in alphabetical order or in the order in which they were composed, I shall discuss the octets which definitely deserve your consideration in alphabetical order of their composer's last name. At the end of the article, there will be a brief list of what we might call "honorable mentions". Let us begin then...



**Woldemar Bargiel (1828-1897)** composed his **Op.15a Octet in c minor** in 1877. Bargiel was Clara Schumann's half brother. Clara was nine years older than Woldemar. Thanks to Clara, Bargiel was introduced to both Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn. Upon the suggestion of the former and the recommendation of the latter, he was sent to study at the famous Leipzig Conservatory with two of the leading men in their fields. With Ignaz Moscheles he studied the piano and with Niels Gade he studied composition. With the help of Schumann and later on Brahms, Bargiel was able to obtain positions at the conservatories in Cologne and Rotterdam before accept-

ing a position at the prestigious Hochschule für Musik in Berlin where he taught for the rest of his life. Among his many students were Paul Juon and Leopold Godowsky. Besides teaching and composing, Bargiel served with Brahms as co-editor of the complete editions (Gesamtausgabe) of Schumann's and Chopin's works. As far as chamber music, Bargiel composed four string quartets, three piano trios, the octet under discussion and several instrumental sonatas. The general critical opinion at the time was that his oeuvre showed solid musical craftsmanship. This is certainly true of the Octet. In three movements, it begins with an excellent slow introduction which masterfully builds suspense. It is clearly Mendelssohnian in conception and sound, but the bulk of the movement, *Allegro appassionato*, is not. Here, there is perhaps too much thrashing about, but at least it is exciting. The middle movement is actually two in one. It begins as *Andante sostenuto* but the middle section serves as a quicker *Scherzo*, which it could be argued was inspired by and similar to those of Mendelssohn. Nonetheless, both are quite well done. The finale, *Allegro*, begins in a rather orchestral fashion. Once again, the spirit of Mendelssohn can be heard, but not as prominently as in the opening introduction to the first movement or the scherzo to the second. While on the one hand, it should not surprise that Mendelssohn's spirit hovers over the work, in view of the fact that Bargiel knew Mendelssohn personally and studied with his handpicked acolyte Gade, and, of course, the fact that Mendelssohn's own octet loomed large, so to speak.

However, by 1877, at which point Bargiel was 49, one might have thought that he had moved on. Yet, an examination of what was being composed at the time shows that only Brahms, and a few other composers in his thrall, had, in fact, moved on. For the great bulk of then active composers, Mendelssohn and Schumann remained their gods. Altmann has this to say:

*"It can certainly be recommended for performance by professionals in concert. Additionally, amateurs, when they have a chance, should not miss the opportunity to play this octet, which not only sounds good but also presents few technical difficulties. Although Bargiel was clearly steeped in the classical masters, nonetheless, this is the work of a composer from the Romantic era and one who possesses a fine tonal palette. The work begins with a lengthy, elegiac Adagio introduction which leads to a magnificent Allegro appassionato full of wonderful writing. The lovely coda, with its cello melody, reminds one of Mendelssohn. The middle movement combines a short, religious-sounding, slow movement, Andante sostenuto, which is bound together with a bustling Mendelssohnian scherzo, Allegro. The main theme to the finale, Allegro, is based on a rustic folk dance. It is by turns stormy and gentle."*

All in all, I agree with Altmann's assessment.



**Georges Enescu** (1881-1955) is one of the better known composers of the 20th century. Today, he is mostly remembered as the composer of his two Romanian Rhapsodies for Orchestra, What is not so well-known is that he was a child prodigy on the violin and also the piano and later on had a great reputation as a violin virtuoso and famous teacher of the violin. (Yehudi Menuhin, among others studied with him). He wrote a fair amount of

chamber music but most of it is little known and rarely, if ever, performed. Georges Enescu's **String Octet in C Major, Op.7** was hailed as an amazing accomplishment for a young man of nineteen, and indeed it is. This epic work combines the musical language of the late romantic era with the emerging new language of polyphony. Enescu wrote that he set out to create a vast work and he admitted it was quite hard for him to achieve what he had set out to do:

*"No engineer putting his first suspension bridge across a river can have agonized more than I did as I gradually filled my manuscript paper with notes. This Octet, cyclic in form, presents the following characteristics: It is divided into four distinct movements in the classic manner, each movement linked to the other to form a single symphonic movement, where the periods, on an enlarged scale, follow one another according to the rules of construction for the first movement of a symphony. Regarding its performance, it is to be noted that too much emphasis should not be given to certain contrapuntal figures in order to permit the presentation of certain essential thematic and melodic elemental values."*

The Octet was completed in 1900. The expansive main theme to the opening movement *Très modéré*, gives a clear indication that composer intends a work on the grand scale. The second subject is presented in canonic form. Enescu combines sophisticated melody with a touch of Romanian folk music. The explosive second movement, as the title clearly suggests, *Très fougueux*, is a mas-

sive fugue. The beautiful slow movement, *Lentement*, which follows is a mysterious nocturne. The finale, *Movt de Valse bien rythmé*, is an extraordinary and wild waltz which combines many of the themes of the earlier movements into a stunning synthesis. This is a masterpiece of the first order and should not be missed, but it must be admitted, it is not an easy work to play and is hard to sight read although it certainly can be managed by experienced amateurs. I highly recommend, however, that the players listen to the work and look at their parts prior to the octet session.



**Niels Gade** (1817-1890) was born in Copenhagen and began his career as a concert violinist. His career as a composer took off when Mendelssohn saw and later premiered his First Symphony. Mendelssohn must have been mightily impressed since he invited Gade to teach at the Leipzig Conservatory which he had founded. After Mendelssohn's death in 1847, Gade was appointed its director and also served as conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra. But in

1848, he returned to Copenhagen where he remained for the rest of his life, conducting and teaching. He taught and influenced several Scandinavian composers, including Edvard Grieg, Carl Nielsen and Otto Malling. Not surprisingly, his own music often shows the influence of Mendelssohn. Gade wrote a fair amount of chamber music, but in my opinion, much of it is uninspired. With regard to his 1849 **Octet in F Major, Op.17** Cobbett, writing in his Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music about Niels Gade's Octet says: *"There is romantic charm on every page. For such an addition to the limited octet repertory, musicians have reason to be grateful. It is the expression of a poetic nature."* I cannot agree and neither did Altmann who wrote:

*"Gade's Octet does not make a particularly strong impression although it is clear, well-written, not particularly hard to play and not without appealing tonalities. However, its content is filled with fluff, the melodies are thin and leave nothing solid to hold onto."*

To say that this is a very Mendelssohnian work is no overstatement, in fact, it might be an understatement. One could say it was written by an ersatz Mendelssohn who clearly did not possess the original's inspiration. Right from the opening notes of the first movement, *Allegro molto e con fuoco*, we hear the aura of Mendelssohn. The chromatically descending first subject is dominated by forward rhythmic drive. But basically there is nothing more than a lot of sawing. Gade substitutes movement for solid thematic material, perhaps in hopes of hiding how threadbare the melody is. The next movement, *Andantino quasi allegretto*, is a kind of slow Mendelssohnian intermezzo based on a sad folk melody. A lively scherzo, *Allegro moderato e tranquillo*, follows. The main theme sounds like a sailor's ditty. The dynamics are kept soft giving the music added charm. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, has the same flaw as the opening movement—very weak thematic material. In its place, Gade resorts to tricks to hide this problem, substituting running scale passages. I cannot in good conscience recommend this as an entry on your octet menu.

Next we have the **Octet in D Major, Op.5** by **Reinhold Gliere**, in my opinion, an unqualified masterpiece. And, I must say, I

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)



have not come across anyone who has either played or heard the work who did not share this opinion. The Russian scholar and music critic Sabaneiev wrote: *"The Octet, a fine work, proves that Gliere was supremely qualified to deal with larger chamber ensembles. The Octet amazes one by the fullness of resonance and the masterly treatment of the instruments. Gliere's melodies are full of feeling and emotion, fine sonority and noble harmony."* Wilhelm Altmann concurred, writing: *I cannot recommend this work for public performance enough. It is shot through and through with magnificent melody, all of the parts are grateful to play, and it sounds very good."* Gliere (1875-1956) is not unknown, but little of his work is heard these days. This is a pity, particularly in the case of his chamber music which is particularly fine. Gliere first began by studying violin Otakar Sevcik, among others. Later, he studied composition with Sergei Taneyev, Anton Arensky and Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov. His outstanding compositional technique and chamber music were quickly recognized by the likes of Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov and Liadov. Gliere, himself, taught at the Moscow and Kiev conservatories for nearly 40 years. Among his many successful students were Khachaturian, Prokofiev and Miaskovsky. The Octet, composed in 1900, opens with a full-blooded *Allegro moderato*. Both the energetic and optimistic main theme and the calm but very melodious second theme are unmistakably Russian. The second movement, also an *Allegro*, is an elegant intermezzo. A soulful Russian melody serves as the middle section. The slow movement, *Andante*, comes third and features a very melodious subject which is first presented in a soft and calm fashion. During the rest of the movement, Gliere slowly builds tension along with the dynamic level, reaching a powerful climax just before the movement's close. The finale, another *Allegro*, sports two tonally rich main themes, each distinguished by a very colorful sound palette. The writing verges on the orchestral at many points, perhaps most notably in the powerful conclusion. Though completely different, in excellence it is on a par with the Mendelssohn and among the very best of octets. It is not particularly difficult, reads well and is grateful to play.

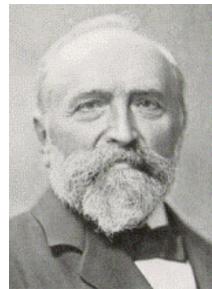


Another very, very good work, if not the equal of the Gliere and the Mendelssohn then very close to them, is the **Op.12 Octet in C Major** by **Hermann Grädener** (1844-1929). Grädener was born in northern German city of Kiel. His father Karl was also a composer and teacher. In 1862, Hermann entered the Vienna Conservatory where he studied composition and violin. He worked for a number of years as a violinist in the Court Orchestra and gained a reputation as a respected composer and teacher, eventually holding a professorship at the Vienna Conservatory. This is Altmann's take Grädener's octet:

*"Those wishing to showcase Hermann Grädener's considerable creative talents should either perform in the concert hall or at home, his Op.12 Octet, dating from 1881. Although it is symphonic in nature, it does not abandon true chamber music style. The magnificent melody of the main theme to the first movement, Allegro moderato, immediately captivates the listener. There is a beautiful tenderness to the lyrical theme which is followed by a very appealing second subject and then a very interesting development. The second movement,*

*Allegro non troppo, is more in the nature of an intermezzo than a scherzo with its harmonic changes and original rhythms. The second theme is particularly fetching. Next comes a theme and set of variations, Lento. The deeply felt theme is based on a sentimental folk melody. Here, the composer makes exceptionally fine and telling use of pizzicato. The tender second variation is extraordinarily well done and is followed by a wonderfully contrasting third variation. The opening theme to the finale, Allegro non troppo, ma con fuoco, is the equal of the magnificent main theme of the first movement. This highly energetic subject is complimented by a choral-like theme which provides a very effective contrast."*

I have included this description in its entirety because I agree with it. The first movement is truly impressive with its tremendous spatial architecture and a theme perfectly suitable to the task of building such a magnificent edifice and the other movements are no less fine. The work is original sounding, well-written and deserves a place on the music stands of amateurs and professionals alike.



**Otto Malling** (1848-1915) was born in Copenhagen. He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with Niels Gade and Johan (J.P.E.) Hartmann. He worked as a teacher and composer and eventually became a professor and then director at the Royal Danish Academy. Among his many students was the composer Knudage Riisager. That he is little known by chamber music players can be attributed to the fact that most of his compositions were for voice and or organ. Malling's **Octet in d minor, Op.50** dates from 1893. Altmann has this to say about it:

*"I can warmly recommend this work to amateurs. It is in no way hard to play, very melodic, well-written and good sounding. It may be called 'Light Music' in the very best sense of the word. It is tinged with Nordic coloring. The main theme of the first movement, Allegro appassionato, conjures the sea with its waves. It is followed by a charming, more lyrical second theme. The Scherzo which follows, with its use of Nordic folk dance melody, is quite original. The energetic and powerful main section is interspersed by a gentle trio section reminiscent of bagpipes. Next comes an Andante which is a cross between an Intermezzo and Legend. The jovial finale is filled with powerful dance melodies and lyricism."*

It is interesting to me that Altmann considered this work "Light Music" (Unterhaltungsmusik). Even saying that it is in the best sense of the word nonetheless leaves the implied conclusion that it is not worthy of the same respect and consideration as a more serious work. In my opinion, the Svendsen Octet, described in a minute, deserves this sobriquet far more than Malling's Octet. However, I would not call either one Unterhaltungsmusik. Make no mistake, this is a good work, fun to play and quite effective, although at times a little challenging for the first violin.



During the last ten years of his life and for the three decades following it, **Joachim Raff** (1822-1882) was regularly mentioned in the same breath as Wagner, Liszt, and Brahms as one of Germany's leading composers. The experts and the public judged him to be the equal to such past masters as Mendelssohn,

(Continued on page 7)

Schumann and Tchaikovsky. Incredibly, by the 1920's his music had all but disappeared from the concert stage. It seems virtually unimaginable that a composer whose talent was recognized and whose music was admired by Mendelssohn and Liszt, could become a mere footnote, yet this is what became of Raff and his music for most of the 20th century. Only now is he being rediscovered to the delight of those fortunate enough to hear his music. Raff, who was born near Zurich, basically was self-taught. When Raff sent some of his early compositions to Mendelssohn, the master immediately recognized Raff's talent and arranged for their publication. Unfortunately, Mendelssohn died before he could help Raff much more. The young composer then approached Liszt who also took an interest in him and took him on as his personal secretary and copyist. Raff's **String Octet in C Major, Op.176** dates from 1872 and is, in my opinion but not Altmann's, one of the better octets in the literature. The triumphant opening theme of the *Allegro*, is rhythmically powerful, while the more lyrical second theme gives off an air of mystery. The second movement, *Allegro molto*, is a short and swift scherzo whose main theme has the propulsion and bounce of a fast horse ride. One is reminded of the scherzo of Schubert's String Quintet D.956. Then comes the exquisite and beautiful *Andante moderato*, which has the quality of a song without words. The finale, *Vivace*, is a tour d'force. No doubt inspired by Mendelssohn, it has an incredible forward momentum which assumes the quality of a moto perpetuo. The syncopated second theme, in the minor, barely slows down this exciting race to the finish line. The Octet has good part-writing and is not difficult to play. In sum, it is a good solid work. Altmann, on the other hand, complains that there are too many common place and hackneyed phrases. In the finale, for example, he feels the thematic material is quite weak, yet he admits that Raff's treatment of his material is highly effective. While he cannot recommend it to professionals for concert performance, he admits that amateurs will enjoy playing it.



"Among those who would play Octets, Johan Svendsen's must always be included. It remains fresh and its inventive creativity never fails to please."---Wilhelm Altmann, writing in his Handbook for Chamber Music Players. While I like Svendsen's Octet, I find it guilty of just those criticisms that Altmann leveled at the Raff. To my mind, Svendsen's **Octet in A Major, Op.3** is a real potboiler—a rip snorting, fire breathing, guns a blazing Nordic saga. I think that there is a somewhat clichéd quality to the thematic material which is overused. Yet, I have always enjoyed playing it, but I don't really think it is on the same level as the Raff. **Johan Svendsen** (1840-1911) gained a reputation as a rising star while he was still a student at the Leipzig Conservatory, where by general consensus he was regarded as one of the most talented students. Svendsen was born in Oslo and learned to play both the violin and clarinet from his father. From 1863 to 1867, he studied at the Leipzig Conservatory, at first violin with Ferdinand David, but problems with his hand forced him to switch to composition, which he studied with Carl Reinecke. Afterwards, Svendsen worked primarily as a theater director and conductor. The Octet dates from his time at Leipzig and was composed in February of 1866. Talk about a work that sounds orchestral, this is it, especially in the opening *Allegro risoluto ben marcato* with its use of unisono scoring and in the closing *Allegro con fuoco*.

But it must be admitted that the use of Nordic melodies is effective and appealing although there is too much repetition of them rather than the introduction of new thematic material. The most effective movement of this three movement octet is the middle movement, a theme and set of very clever variations.



Unlike either Malling or Svendsen, **Ferdinand Thieriot** (1838-1919), wrote a great deal of chamber music, close to 30 works. Five years younger than Brahms, he was not only was born in Hamburg, but also studied with the same teacher, Eduard Marxein. The two knew each other from their Hamburg days and remained on friendly terms. After Hamburg, Thieriot finished his studies in Munich with Joseph Rheinberger and then moved to Vienna where his friend

Brahms was instrumental in helping him obtain the position of Styrian Music Director in the provincial capital of Graz where he worked between 1870-85. Later, Thieriot held important positions in Leipzig and Hamburg where he remained from 1902 until his death. For the most part, Thieriot, like Brahms, remained true to the classical traditions which preceded him and took Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann as his models. Only toward the end of his life did he his work show some of the influence of the "New German Music" of Wagner and Liszt. Thieriot wrote a great deal of chamber music, most of it of very high quality. Wilhelm Altmann wrote that "it was without exception noble and pure. He writes with perfect command of form and expression." I think the words "without exception" is an over statement. Some of Thieriot's thirteen string quartets are rather insipid and uninspired. On the other hand, some of them are quite good. His **Octet in C Major, Op.78** is a relatively late work appearing in 1903 when Thieriot was 65. Altmann has mixed emotions about this Octet saying that it is not worthy of concert performance, nor the work of a fiery spirit who is plumbing the depths of emotion. On the other hand, he finds it noble and charming and commends the composer for his complete command of technique which reminds him of Herzogenberg. In four movements, the opening movement *Allegro* is by turns powerful and lyrical. A religious-sounding *Adagio* follows and provides a fine contrast. Then comes a first rate and highly original *Scherzo*. The finale, after a short sad introduction, *Mesto*, bursts forth into a dramatic and thrusting *Allegro con fuoco*. This is a work which is grateful to play, sounds good, and not particularly difficult technically. In all, though no masterpiece, it is certainly a worthy addition to this scanty repertoire.

#### Honorable Mentions

These works wound up here because they are not as readily available and the editions in which they can be found are equal in quality with those discussed above. **Carl Schuberth** (1811-63) was a virtuoso cellist. His **Octet Op.25 in E Major** was composed in 1848. It has much to recommend it. It is tuneful and in parts original but makes great demands on the first violin and cello. The finale is rather orchestral. **Karl Grädener** (1812-83) father of Hermann. His **Octet in E flat Major, Op.49** dates from 1870. It has its moments with appealing melodies and is well written. It requires ensemble playing on a par with the Mendelssohn. I would say the this is a better work than Gade's but you will find the latter's in a very readable Breitkopf edition. Both of these works are available and can be found on the internet.

# Waldemar von Baussnern's Sernade for Clarinet, Violin & Piano

(Continued from page 3)

den. He obtained his first position of real importance in 1908 when he was appointed director and subsequently a professor at the Ducal Music Academy in Weimar. From 1916 to 1923, he served as director of the Frankfurt Music Conservatory and in 1923 he became a member of the Berlin Academy of Art and later an undersecretary at the Prussian Ministry of Culture.

Although he was a teacher of some distinction, Baussnern mostly considered himself a composer. While he cannot be called a prolific composer, the catalogue of his compositions is extensive and includes almost every musical genre, and while perhaps the majority of his works are orchestral or choral works, he did not ignore chamber music. He has three string quartets, a string sextet, two piano trios, a piano quintet, four suites for violin, flute, clarinet and piano, a quintet for violin, cello, clarinet, horn and piano, three sonatas for two violins and piano, as well as several violin sonatas to his credit. One look at the photo of Baussnern, on page three of *The Journal*, reveals him to be of a romantic bent. He found inspiration from poetry, and in particular that of Goethe.

As a composer, stylistically Baussnern stands apart from his contemporaries and cannot be classified as belonging to one school or another. Certainly, it is fair to say, however, that tonally his music is derived from late 19th century German Romanticism. However, while rejecting atonality, he goes well beyond the limits of conventional Brahmsian tonality. This being neither fish nor fowl may explain why Baussnern, despite the occasional passing success, and despite the fact that he was certainly fairly well-known and respected, never achieved a sustained level of success. The fact that he could not be classified made conductors and music directors wary of programming his works. And worse yet, publishers were also wary of taking the risk of publishing them. None of his symphonies were published during his lifetime. I cannot claim to be familiar with much of his music but certainly his Serenade for Clarinet, Violin and Piano as well as his Quintet for Violin, Cello, Clarinet, Horn and Piano, both composed in 1898, are, in my opinion, absolutely first rate works. The Serenade was one of the works he composed that he was able to get published, although it took him seven years before he found a publisher. It appeared in 1905. I have been unable to determine whether it was publicly performed and have not seen any old reviews of such a concert. A pity if it wasn't because this is really a first rate work by any standard and one of the very best for this underserved combination. Any clarinet, violin and piano ensemble should definitely consider this work.

*Ruhig, graziös.* *sehr ausdrucksvoll.*

Violine  
B Clarinette  
Piano.

*ritard.* *a tempo* *a tempo* *cresc.* *f*

*dim.* *ten.* *ten.* *ten.* *ten.* *pp* *pp* *ppp* *zart* *ritard.* *a tempo* *pp*

The Serenade is in four movements. The first movement is marked *Ruhig grazios* (calm and graceful). It starts off quietly although the back and forth between clarinet and violin is somewhat playful. (See example on page 8) Despite the fact that there is no heightened drama or tension, Baussnern maintains interest throughout by virtue of the excellent part-writing and original ideas.

The second movement, *Möglichst schnell, ausgelassen* (as quick as possible, boisterous), is a rollicking and exciting gallop across an attractive musical canvas. The mood is always bright and upbeat with no clouds on the horizon. Technically, though virtuosos are not required, this is no place for intermediates, let alone beginners. Only amateurs of a high standard or professionals are going to be able to pull this movement off.

Next comes a slower movement, *Sehr ruhig* (very calm). Here the violin is given a gorgeous, long-lined solo (example on left) to a soft broken chord accompaniment in the piano. Eventually the clarinet joins in and the music becomes yet more lovely and rises to an intensely romantic climax.

The finale, *Mit grazie und humor*, is exactly as advertised. The writing is clever and original. The piano is given the dance-like main theme. (example on right) The overall effect is brilliant and exciting as the music bounds along to a triumphant close. It is rare to find a work that is full of good spirits throughout that can hold the listener's attention, but this is one. Usually composers resort to the minor or at the very least create pathos and drama in the major. Baussnern shows his superb mastery of compositional technique as well as his abundant gift for melody throughout. In my opinion, this is a real tour de force. As far as I know, there is no recording of the work but soundbites from each movement can be heard on the Edition Silvertrust website ([www.editionsilvertrust.com](http://www.editionsilvertrust.com)) as they have recently published the work.

© 2011 Hans Peter Schellenberger & The Cobbett Association



## New Recordings



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

### String Quartets

VOLKMAR ANDREAE (1879-1962): String Quartet in E Flat, Guild 7355 / RICHARD ARNELL (1917-2009): Nos. 1-5, Dutton Epoch 7268 / RAFAL AUGUSTYN (b.1951): No. 1, Accord 165-2 / GUSTAVO CAMPO (1863-1934): 3 Miniatures, Sono Luminus 92130 / ALFREDO CARRASCO (1875-1945): String Quartet in E minor, Sono Luminus 92130 / RONALD CORP (b.1951): No. 1 / ALFONSO DE ELÍAS (1902-1984): No. 2, Sono Luminus 92130 / HENRYK GÓRECKI (1933-2010) Nos. 1-3, Hyperion 67812 / HYACINTHE JADIN (1776-1800): Op.1, Nos.1-3, ACD 2 2610 / ANDERS KOPPEL (b.1947) Nos. 1 & 2, Dacapo 6.220566 / DOMINGO LOBATO (b.1920): String Quartet in G, Sono Luminus 92130 / KRZYSZTOF PENDECKI (b.1933): Nos. 1-3, Dux 0770 / WOLFGANG RIHM (b.1952) No. 12, Winter & Winter 910 178 / JOHANN RUFINATSCHA (1812-1893): String

Quartets in e flat & G, Tiroler Landesmuseum 11022 / MÁTYÁS SEIBER (1905-1960) Nos. 1-3, Delphian 34082 / WILHELM STENHAMMAR (1871-1927): String Quartets Nos 1 & 2, Caprice 21337 / SÁNDOR VERESS (1907-1992) Nos.1 & 2, Hungaroton 32691 / CHARLES WUORINEN (b.1938) No. 1, Naxos 8.559654 / JAMES WILLEY (b.1939) Nos. 3, 7 & 8, Albany 1245 / JUDITH ZAIMONT (b.1945) "The Figure", Navona 5846 / WLADYSLAW ZELENSKI (1837-1921): Opp. 28 & 42, Acte Preamble 236

### Strings Only Not Quartets

VOLKMAR ANDREAE (1879-1962): String Trio, Op. 29 Guild 7355 / SÁNDOR VERESS (1907-1992) String Trio.

### Piano Trios

AARRE MERIKANTO (1893-1958): Piano Trio in a minor, Pilfink 69 / IGNAZ PLEYEL (1757-1831): Ben 441, 435, 448 & 442, CPO 777 544 / ANTONÍN REICHA (1770-1836): Piano Trios, Op. 101, Nos. 1-3., Supraphon 4057 / JUDITH

WEIR (b.1954) No. 2, Delphian 34084 / NIGEL OSBORNE JUDITH ZAIMONT (b.1945) No. 2 & Serenade, Navona 5846

### Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

JOHANN RUFINATSCHA (1812-1893): Piano Quartets in c minor and in A, Tiroler Landesmuseum 11020 / FLORENT SCHMITT (1870-1958): Piano Quintet, Op. 51, Naxos 8.570489 / CHARLES WUORINEN (b.1938): Piano Quintet No. 2, Naxos 8.559654

### Winds & Strings

ANTON REICHA (1770-1836): Grand Quintet for Bsn & Str Qt, Ars 38 091 / JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957): En Saga Septet for Fl, Cln, Str Qt & Kb, Pilfind 69

### Winds, Strings & Piano

None this issue

### Piano & Winds

FLORENT SCHMITT (1870-1958) À tour d'anches for Oboe, Cln, Bsn and Pno, Op. 97, Naxos 8.570489

### Winds Only

None this issue

# The Piano Trios of Salomon Jadassohn *continued from page 3*

S. Jadassohn, Op. 59.

1880, Jadassohn had been teaching at the Leipzig Conservatory for a decade and still had not achieved the rank of Professor. He had to wait until 1893 for that honor. When one asks why, the answer cannot be lack of ability. He was already a highly successful and respected teacher. In fact, he had a world-wide reputation and students came to him not only from Europe but also America. One must conclude, that darker forces were involved.

Was this why so many of his later works were in minor keys. Perhaps, but in any event one would expect a different outlook from a man of 50 than from one of 27. After moving from a three movement format in Piano Trio No.1 to a four movement format in Piano Trio No.2, Jadassohn in No.3 returned to what, on the surface, appears to be a three movement layout. The opening movement, *Allegro pathetico*, begins with a downward chromatic theme of considerable vigor. (see left) After a

*Allegro patetico.*

Violino.

Violoncello.

Pianoforte.

*Allegro patetico. (♩ = 120)*

development section which has a somewhat religious tinge to it, a very lyrical second subject is brought forth by the strings. This, in turn, gives way to a hunting theme expressing a sense of destiny. The gorgeous middle movement, *Romanze, andante tranquillo*—*allegro grazioso*, appears to be one long, uninterrupted, cantabile love song. However, after quite sometime and when one least expects it, the *allegro grazioso* suddenly bursts forth and is rather a big surprise. A real gem and very appealing. It is a cross between a playful intermezzo and a scherzo. The tempo is not terribly fast and the mood is bright and upbeat. Surprisingly, the *Andante* does not reappear to end the movement, but rather it is the *allegro* that performs this task. Basically, because the first part is slow and the second half and conclusion is lively, one is left with the unmistakable feeling that Jadassohn intended for this movement to be two in one. Further support for this is the fact that there is a middle section to the *Allegro grazioso* which performs the

## ROMANZE

*Andante tranquillo.*

exact function that a trio would in a typical scherzo. The finale, *Allegro moderato, ma energico*, begins with three measures which

*Allegro grazioso.*

*Allegro grazioso. (♩ = 116 = 120.)*

Pedale

call to mind the finale of Brahms Op. 34 Piano Quintet, a work with which Jadassohn was no doubt familiar. Of course, Jadassohn's treatment is very different. However, these measures serve as a kind of motif. A second theme, vaguely Russian sounding, makes a couple of brief appearances before a presto coda. This is a very concisely written movement, as is, in fact, the entire trio. While I wrote that I did not feel that I could argue that the first two

*Allegro moderato ma energico. (♩ = 126.)*

(Continued from page 10)

trios ought to be included in the standard repertoire for various reasons, I feel strongly that this is a trio which deserves to be performed in concert and in the standard repertoire. While it does not qualify as a masterwork, it is certainly first rate. It is a work which is good to hear and good to play, presenting no technical difficulties.

**Piano Trio No.4 in c minor, Op.85** was composed in 1887. This is a work which clearly stands out from the preceding three trios as to the level of its excellence. I would rate it as a masterpiece, a work which can stand comparison with anything being written during

**Allegro energico.**

*f* patetico un poco largo

*espress.*

the same period. The opening movement, *Allegro energico*, begins with a powerful theme, full of emotion, first given to the cello. (example on the left) The writing is highly imaginative, veering from large scale dramatic episodes to more intimate lyrical moments. Here, Jadassohn expresses a depth of feeling not heard in the earlier trios. This Trio was recorded

on Real Sound CD#051 0036. While Trio No.3 clearly showed that Jadassohn's musical language was evolving, examination of his later works bears out that No.4 was not a shot affair. Also on this disk are his Piano Quartet No.1, Op.77 and his Piano Quintet No.3, Op.126. They both share this new dramatic, deeply felt and powerful approach.

Jadassohn probably recognized that after such an emotional movement as the first, a turbulent second movement would not provide as fine a contrast as something lighter. So instead, we have a playful Scherzo which has the vague aura of Mendelssohn about it, without in anyway being imitative. Fleet and full of good spirits, its mood allows for a more reflective middle section. The emotional content is restrained rising to no more than a sense of wistfulness.

**SCHERZO.**  
**Molto vivace.**

*pp* sempre stacc.

*p* sempre stacc.

*cresc. molto. f e cresc.*      *più f cresc.*      *ff*

And this is for good reason; so that the powerful and deeply felt *Adagio sostenuto* which follows has no competition and to provide a greater contrast. The Adagio is the trio's center of gravity. Jadassohn could very well have added the word 'mesto' after sostenuto. From the opening notes, low on the violin g string, a highly expressive and almost excruciatingly beautiful theme is brought forth. This is clearly the work of a master composer.

**Adagio sostenuto.**  
**sul G.**

patetico e con gran espress.

*p* espress.

*largam.*      *largam.*      *dol.*      *ff*

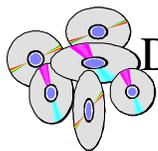
In the finale, the piano dramatically lays the ground work for the big opening theme which is taken over by the strings. Soft charming, lyrical episodes are interspersed with powerful dramatic outbursts. I have already written that I consider

this a masterpiece. It is hard to understand how it was ignored. One final thought, whatever, Jadassohn's faults, lack of a gift of melody is not one of them. All four of these trios, as well as his many other chamber music works with which I am familiar, are filled with appealing and convincing melodies. Soundbites of all of these trios can be heard on the Edition Silvertrust website ([www.editionsilvertrust.com](http://www.editionsilvertrust.com)), and the parts are available from them as well.

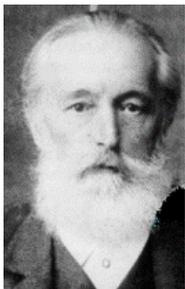
*ff* ma con espress.

*più f*

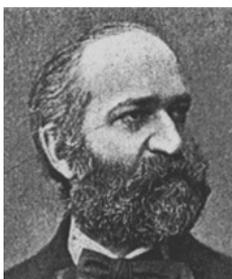
*espr. e patetico*



## Diskology: Clarinet Quintets by Robert Fuchs & Ferdinand Thieriot A String Quartet and String Trio by Manuel Ponce



**Robert Fuchs** (1847-1927) was born near the Styrian capital of Graz and attended the University of Vienna Conservatory studying with Otto Dessoff and Joseph Hellmesberger. By 1875, Fuchs himself was teaching at the Conservatory, eventually rising to the rank of Professor of Composition. He was one of the most famous and revered teachers of his time. Mahler, Sibelius, Hugo Wolf, Franz Schmidt, Alexander Zemlinsky, Franz Schrecker and Richard Heuberger were among his many students. That his compositions did not become better known was largely due to the fact that he did little to promote them, living a quiet life in Vienna and refusing to arrange concerts, even when the opportunity arose in other cities. He certainly had his admirers, among them Brahms, who almost never praised the works of other composers. But with regard to Fuchs, Brahms wrote, "*Fuchs is a splendid musician, everything is so fine and so skillful, so charmingly invented, that one is always pleased.*" Fuchs' **Clarinet Quintet in E flat Major, Op.102** is the first of two such works which are presented on **Sterling CD 1674**. Living in Vienna as a younger contemporary and also friend of Brahms, it would have been amazing if Fuchs had escaped Brahms' influence altogether. Certainly, at various times in his life, he made an effort to do so and produced works which do not remind one of Brahms. His clarinet quintet, however, is not one of these. Composed in 1909 and published, for some reason ten years after this, the work quickly fell into oblivion as 1919 was not a banner year for late Romantic compositions in either Germany or Austria. The New Vienna School of Schönberg and company was on the rise and sweeping all before it. Anyway, the Quintet is a fine work with only one real defect—it often sounds as if Brahms had written it. This is especially true of the last movement, *Allegretto grazioso*, which is a very Brahmsian theme and variations. Of course, Brahms used the same format for his Op.115 clarinet quintet, but then, so did Mozart in K.581. The opening movement, *Allegro molto moderato*, is written on a big tonal canvas. The very plastic opening theme, immediately brings Brahms to mind not only with its melody but also its characteristic accompaniment. The impressive main theme of the second movement, *Allegro scherzando*, is fleet. An excellent contrast is provided by the trio section, an updated musette. An *Andante sostenuto* follows. It breathes in the same wonderful air of Beethoven and is further enhanced by its magical tonalities. Fuchs was too good a composer to have merely imitated Brahms and one must conclude that this quintet was meant as a tribute to his friend. Make no mistake, this is a first class work, all the way, in spite of its close resemblance to the Brahms.



The second work on disk is by **Ferdinand Thieriot** (1838-1919). Thieriot who was five years younger than Brahms, not only was born in Hamburg, but also studied with the same teacher, Eduard Marxein. The two knew each other from their Hamburg days and remained on friendly terms. After Hamburg, Thieriot finished his studies in Munich with Joseph Rheinberger and then

moved to Vienna where his friend Brahms was instrumental in helping him obtain the position of Styrian Music Director in the provincial capital of Graz where he worked between 1870-85. Later, Thieriot held important positions in Leipzig and Hamburg where he remained from 1902 until his death. For the most part, Thieriot, like Brahms, remained true to the classical traditions which preceded him and took Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann as his models. Only toward the end of his life did he his work show some of the influence of the "New German Music" of Wagner and Liszt. Although, I cannot claim to have played or heard all of his massive output, from those chamber works with which I am familiar, surprisingly, one hears little if anything of Brahms' influence. This is certainly true of his **Clarinet Quintet in E flat Major** (no opus) dating from 1897, the year of Brahms' death. The opening *Allegro non tanto*, which perhaps makes the strongest impression, begins by harkening back to Carl Maria von Weber with some striking interchanges between the clarinet and the cello. The second theme is a partial quote from a late Beethoven quartet. The next movement, *Allegro vivace*, is a cleverly written scherzo, also with some smart interchanges between the clarinet and the strings. There is a gentler and contrasting trio. The treatment of the clarinet, clearly shows that Thieriot was familiar with Weber's Op.34 Clarinet Quintet. The clarinet is given the lead in the pastoral *Andante* which follows. In the second section, there are vague tinges of Mozart. In the finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, first the first violin and then the clarinet sing a lyrical theme against an exciting tremolo in the other voices. This is a very good work, not on a par with Mozart, Brahms or Fuchs, but not far behind. A recommended CD.

**Manuel Ponce** (1882-1948) is one of Mexico's best known composers, that said, he is not all that well-known. A piano prodigy, after studying at the Mexican National Conservatory, he studied in Italy at Bologna's Conservatory and in Berlin at the Stern Institute. He returned to Mexico in 1909 and taught at the National Conservatory. In the 1920's, he returned to Europe briefly and studied with Paul Dukas in Paris. His only **String Quartet** dates from 1935. The jacket notes to **Centaur CD 3064** claim that the work was an effort to combine Mexican folk melody with the modern techniques he learned in France. It is in four movements: *Allegro moderato*, *Interludio fugado*, *Andante* and *Vivo*. In my opinion, a lot of the work is atonal. There is not much of Mexican folk melody to be heard. It makes very brief appearances here and there and is most apparent in the composer's use of rhythms. His **Petite Suite Dans le Style Ancien for String Trio** dates from the same year at the quartet. It is unmistakably a modern work, however, the constraints of writing "in the ancient style" results in a far more palatable work with traditional melody and harmony. Each of the four movements—*Prelude*, *allegro*, *Canon*, *Allegro moderato*, *Air*, *andantino* and *Fughetta*, *moderato*—are relatively short, the longest barely three minutes. It has been, and, to the best of my knowledge, still is in print and easy to obtain. It's a good work, certainly worth considering for any string trio planning a concert. While I would not say that the Quartet has no redeeming features, I do not see it entering the repertoire outside of Mexico, if even there. I imagine it gets played because of Ponce's reputation. Recommended for the trio.

## Johann Baptist Cramer's Piano Quintet and The Complete Works for Piano Trio by Paul Graener



**Johann Baptist Cramer** (1771-1858) was born in Mannheim and was brought to London as a child. And where he remained for most of his life. He studied the piano with Muzio Clementi, and subsequently became one of Europe's leading soloists. Wikipedia claims Beethoven considered him the finest pianist of the day. If so, Beethoven was awfully forgetful of the pianist who for several years virtually lived next door—Hummel, who was almost universally considered the greatest living pianist. Anyway, Cramer was a prolific composer who eventually went into the publishing business. It is unknown just how many works he wrote, but there were a lot, virtually all forgotten, except for his very useful piano studies. **Brilliant Classics CD 93771** couples Schubert's Trout Quintet with Cramer's **Piano Quintet in B flat Major, Op.79** for the same combination. It was an unfortunate coupling because Cramer's quintet is unmemorable and in my opinion not deserving of revival. I cannot think why it was recorded. And doing it with period instruments only makes things worse. The strings sound terribly mushy. The performance is uninspired but I doubt any performance could have made this work sound interesting. It is hard to believe that it was composed in 1832. By then Beethoven had been dead 5 years. In this Quintet, Cramer, who published a lot of Beethoven's music, does not seem to indicate that he had heard that the Romantic movement had not only dawned but was well underway. There is nothing which separates this music from what Haydn was writing in the 1760's. With regard to the Schubert, suffice it to say that if this were the only way you could hear his quintet, it would not have become famous. Not a recommended CD.



**Paul Graener** (1872-1944) served as director of the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London from 1898-1906, taught at the New Vienna Conservatory from 1911-1913, was appointed Director of the Mozarteum in Salzburg in 1914, succeeded Max Reger as Professor of Composition at the Leipzig Conservatory and then served as director of the Stern Conservatory in Berlin from 1934. Graener was a prolific composer and during the 1920's and 30's his works, especially his operas, were frequently performed. How is it then that his music all but disappeared after the Second World War. Simple, Graener joined the Nazi Party at the age of 59, eventually rising to the rank of Vice President of the Reichsmusikammer. After the war, no one wanted to touch him or his music, despite the fact that the bulk of his oeuvre had been composed well before. Take for example the first two works on **CPO CD 777 599**—the Suite for Piano Trio and the Kammermusikdichtung for Piano Trio—both were composed and published during his time in London where he enjoyed great success. He loved England and took out British citizenship which he held to his death, though it is unlikely that this was known at the Reichsmusikammer. Anyway, the time has come to divorce the man, or at least the last part of his life, from his music. The first work on disk is the **Suite for Piano Trio, Op.19** which dates from 1905. Consisting of three short movements, the opening *Allegro giocoso* is just that, flowing along in jovial fashion, it is

over all too soon. The middle movement, *Andantino*, is a little too brisk and upbeat to be considered a slow movement, it is more in the vein of an intermezzo. The lively finale, *Con spirito*, is jaunty and energetic, a bit like a sailor's dance. By itself, it would make a fine encore. There is nothing profound or dramatic here, nonetheless, this little suite, less than 10 minutes in length, is perfectly executed and very well done indeed. It reminds me of the lovely Miniatures by Frank Bridge also for Piano Trio. It is great to hear and I am sure are fun to play. In the one movement **Kammermusikdichtung, Op.20** (Chamber Music Poem) written the following year, Graener clearly has a totally different set of creative ideas. The impression it makes from the very powerful opening measures, with its dark and melancholy theme, almost bursting the boundaries of chamber, stands in stark contrast to the Suite. It has been suggested that the death of his young son may well have been the cause for this change of direction. The poem was dedicated to the German poet, Wilhelm Raabe after Graener had read Raabe's 1864 novel, *Der Hungerpastor*. Set in Berlin, the novel compares an upright and respectable German who studies for the ministry with a money and power hungry Jew to whom everything is a means to an end, including the Catholic faith to which he has converted. However, according to Graener scholars, the Kammermusikdichtung is not to be regarded as programmatic music based on Raabe's novel, but rather simply as dedication for the inspiration it gave Graener. This said, there is no escaping it is a very theatrical composition. Much of the thematic material bears the resemblance to themes found in Bruckner's symphonies, although I would not go so far as to call the Poem a Brucknerian work. Lasting some 20 minutes, this is a powerful and emotionally draining trio. Graener regarded it as his first major chamber music work and there is no question that it is first class, deserving of performance. Frankly, I don't think the work benefits by any discussion of the novel which inspired it. The third work on disk is the **Piano Trio, Op.61**. Completed in 1922. From the point of view of its structure, but certainly not its tonality, it is classical in that it is in four distinct movements. This is a tonal work, but surprisingly, the Hofmeister Catalogue of 1924 classified it as an atonal work which it is not. Altmann in a review classified it as polytonal. Again, I do not think this is a very accurate description. What these erroneous classifications do show is that Graener was pushing the limit of traditional tonality, but truth be told, he did not burst the bounds. The powerful and dramatic opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, while certainly wandering about tonally, is easily understood by modern ears. And its ending is very traditional. The second movement, *Adagio*, is dark and ponderous, yet imaginative and profound with moments recalling ideas from the first movement. I found it appealing. Next comes a very short *Intermezzo, un poco allegretto*. Nothing exceeding modern here. Hard to understand the reviewers' classifications, hearing this clever music. The pounding finale, *Allegro energico*, certainly is not much of an advance tonally on the post romantic movement. Fully tonal, though perhaps not traditionally so, no one would mistake this music with that of the Second Vienna School or even that of a Bartok. Again, a first rate work deserving of concert performance. Graener is a case of where the less one knows about his politics the better off it is. A highly recommended CD.

## Two String Quartets by Władysław Żeleński / Piano Quintets by Mario Pilati and Achille Longo and Clarinet Quartets by J.X. Lefevre



**Wladyslaw** (sometimes Ladislav) **Zelenski** (1837-1921) was born in Grodkowice not far from the city of Cracow. After studying piano locally with several teachers, including the well-known concert pianist Alexander Dreyschock, he went to Prague University where he took a doctorate in philosophy. He also took composition lessons from Josef Krejčí after which he enrolled in the Paris Conservatory where he continued his composition lessons with Henri

Reber. Upon his return to Poland he enjoyed a long career as a concert pianist, teacher and composer. He held several important teaching posts including Director of the Cracow Conservatory which he helped to found. He wrote in most genres and left a number of chamber music works, including the two string quartets recorded on **Acte Prealable CD#236**

**String Quartet No.1 in F Major, Op.28** was composed in 1885. The work begins with an unassuming *Allegro*. There is little in the way of passion, drama or excitement. On the other hand, the music is pleasant. One does not quite get the feeling that the themes are threadbare because they are treated very creatively, although there is no question that the music could certainly have benefited from stronger material. As it is, it might have made an acceptable movement for a chamber orchestral suite. As the themes are developed we can hear the influence of late Beethoven, and as I said, this treatment is very accomplished. The second movement is a theme and set of variations. The theme is a somber Polish folk melody. The variations are rather good and original, making this perhaps the best movement of the work. Next comes *Scherzo* that is playful and highly rhythmic. The thematic material, which sounds vaguely Italian, is satisfactory but by no means great. The finale, *Allegro molto e con brio*, is, until the appearance of the second theme, dominated more by its rhythm than the melodic material. The striking, lyrical second theme has a rather Neapolitan tinge, especially because of its rhythm. Not at all a bad movement. This is an okay quartet, the main knock against it being that it is short on drama and excitement. **String Quartet No.2 in A Major, Op.42** was composed six years later in 1891. The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, is reasonably good. It is basically genial, again with an Italian sound to it. An *Intermezzo, Allegro non troppo e scherzando*, follows. Clever and well, written, the thematic material holds one's interest. The third movement is a very lengthy *Molto cantabile*. Nicely crafted, the melodic writing is fine but not particularly memorable and certainly does not justify the length. I found myself losing attention. In the finale, *Allegro molto vivace*, Zelenski resorts to a lot of forward motion but it does not hide the rather pedestrian melodic material he uses. To conclude, these are not bad quartets and I was happy to have the CD so that I could hear them, but they do not, outside of Poland, deserve to be played in concert, although amateurs may find them pleasant.

**Naxos CD 8.572628** brings us two piano quintets by composers with whom I am not familiar. According to the jewel box notes, this is the world premiere of both quintets. The first work on disk

is by **Mario Pilati** (1903-1938) who was born in Naples. Despite the fact that his musical talent became noticeable quite early on, his parents sent him to commercial school and he trained as a bookkeeper before entering the Naples Conservatory at age 15. After working in Milan for a while, he took a professorship at the Naples Conservatory. That his music was not better known was put down to his early death. The **Piano Quintet in D Major** was finished in 1928. It is three movements. I am not sure how relevant the key signature is as it does not sound like it adheres to any particular key. The work is tonal, but certainly on the very outer limits of tonality. However, it is not a polytonal and certainly not an atonal work. This is a very big work lasting more than thirty minutes. The first of three movements, *Mosso e concitato*, is full of excitement, drama and pounding, though it is not without its tender moments. It makes a powerful impression. The middle movement, *Vivacissimo—Andante large e molto cantabile*, sounds like a continuation of the first movement. I don't know if it's the performers, but there is just too much unrelieved pounding, especially in the piano, but also in the string parts. This movement is even more over charged and electric than the *Mosso*. When the *Andante* finally appears after some 10 minutes of unrelieved banging, one is too exhausted to appreciate it. The finale, *Animato*, displays most of the same characteristics as the preceding two movements. The whole work is tonally monochromatic.

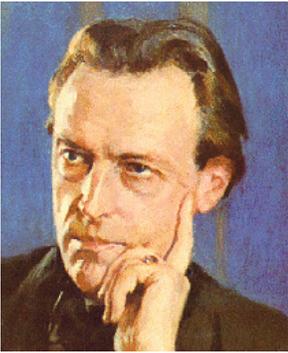
After listening to the Pilate for over an half hour, I nearly had a headache. The second work on disk, the **Piano Quintet of 1934** by **Achille, Longo** (1900-1954) was given the same treatment by the performers. It sounded very much like the Pilati but this may well have been the performers. The pianist was Aldo Ciccolini, the others are probably unknown outside of Italy. It's in four movements, lasting a little less than 25 minutes. In the end, I could not tell how bad or good either work is, because the performances are so very bad, full of banging and very nearly always loud. Maybe this is the music and not the performers, but I rather doubt it. It seemed a very insensitive if committed performance. I don't think it was a good idea to couple these two works on the same disk because they are too similar with the net result that neither leaves a lasting impression. Too bad, but I cannot recommend this CD.

On **Tudor CD#7150** we find **Clarinet Quartet Nos.5-6** by the Swiss-born clarinetist, **Jean Xavier Lefèvre** (1763-1829). He moved to Paris at an early age. By 1791 he was serving as first clarinetist at the Paris opera and not long after became a professor at the Conservatory. He wrote some 9 clarinet quartets not all of which have survived. They rise above the standard of such works being composed at this time—1800 and are not mere vehicles for the clarinet, although the clarinet assumes the role normally taken by the first violin. The quartets indicate that Lefèvre was conversant with the developments made by Haydn and Mozart. He, himself, was clear a master of form and harmony with a fine gift for melody. These are clarinet quartets which string players will also enjoy playing—A recommended CD.



On **Tudor CD#7150** we find **Clarinet Quartet Nos.5-6** by the Swiss-born clarinetist, **Jean Xavier Lefèvre** (1763-1829). He moved to Paris at an early age. By 1791 he was serving as first clarinetist at the Paris opera and not long after became a professor at the Conservatory. He wrote some 9 clarinet quartets not all of which have survived. They rise above the standard of such works being composed at this time—1800 and are not mere vehicles for the clarinet, although the clarinet assumes the role normally taken by the first violin. The quartets indicate that Lefèvre was conversant with the developments made by Haydn and Mozart. He, himself, was clear a master of form and harmony with a fine gift for melody. These are clarinet quartets which string players will also enjoy playing—A recommended CD.

## Three Piano Trios, A Clarinet Trio and Clarinet Quintet by Cyril Scott Three String Quintets by Giuseppe Cambini



**Cyril Scott** (1879-1970) was born in Oxtou, England not far from Liverpool. He showed a talent for music from an early age and was sent to the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt to study piano in 1892. He composed up until the last three weeks of his life, dying at the age of 91. By the time of his death, he was only remembered for a few popular pieces that he had composed over sixty years before. Critics claim he was essentially a late roman-

tic composer, whose style was at the same time strongly influenced by impressionism. His harmony was notably exotic. Scott wrote around four hundred works and was called the English Debussy. Though he was considered one of England's leading composers during the first two decades of the twentieth century, by 1935, his rejection of the developments of the Second Vienna School led to his music being considered passé. On **Chandos CD#10575** we are offered five chamber music works written between 1920 and 1955. The first is the **Piano Trio No.1**, dating from 1920. This is a substantial work, in four movements, lasting over 30 minutes. The opening *Allegretto moderato* is divided into several different tempo markings and sections. It begins in an unconventional way with the strings muted. The strings play in unison, albeit an octave apart, against the piano for great stretches of the work. This lends it a certain monotony. The use of the piano often consists of long, quick ascending and descending passages, as if the pianist had taken his hand and run it up and down the keyboard. I did not find this a very attractive or convincing feature, but it is unusual. One might sum up the effect as saying the music might make a good accompaniment for a scuba diver in a big tank of water with exotic fish. The outstanding feature of the tonally murky second movement, *Sostenuto misterioso*, is the alternating of slow and fast sections. Again, the piano is used in a similar fashion. The strings are given pianissimo tremolos. Basically, I found the whole thing a series of effects rather than music. Perhaps the best part was a vaguely Chinese sounding section. The third movement, *Andante sostenuto*, sounds rather like what came before, only without any fast sections. The finale, *Rondo giocoso*, did not make use of unusual effects as much as the preceding movements. In trying to sum up this work, I am reminded of what the French general Pierre Bosquet said as he watched the Charge of the Light Brigade—*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre*. The word music could be substituted for *guerre*. The second work on disk is the **Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello and Piano**, composed in 1955. It is in three movements—*Moderato*, *Intermezzo* and *Rondo capriccioso*. A prime example of Scott's late style, it is considerably toned down from what one hears in his Piano Trio No.1. The *Moderato* makes no particular impression other than an aimless wandering about. *Intermezzo* seems a misnomer for what is actually an adagio. It is marginally better than what has come before. The finale is the best of the three movements with less waffling or wandering. Next we have the **Quintet for Clarinet and Strings**, dating from 1953. It is in one movement which is divided into six subsec-

tions—*Grave maestoso*, *Moderato amabile*, *Con amore*, *Molto tranquillo*, *Cantabile grazioso* and *Quasi Tempo II*. Not much seems to be going on here. One imagines that this might be suitable background music for *The Lotus Eaters*. The fourth work on disk, is the **Piano Trio No.2** composed in 1951. It, too, is in one movement, but divided into three subsections. Though, once again, not too much is going on, it is an improvement over the works for clarinet. I found this late style of Scott's preferable to the earlier one. He seems less mesmerized by trying to achieve affects and more concerned with writing music. The last work on disk is the **Cornish Boat Song for Piano Trio**. This is the only work in which one can hear a recognizable melody. I certainly do not see why anyone would want to listen to this music in concert. But on the off chance I am wrong, this CD provides a good sampler of what Scott's chamber works sounds like.



**Giuseppe Cambini** (1746-1825) was born in the Italian town of Livorno. It is generally thought he studied violin with Filippo Manfredi. Very little definite information exists about his life. It is known that he moved to Paris around 1773 and not long after his music began to be published. As was common for composers from this era, Cambini wrote a lot of music, including perhaps as many as 170 string quartets and

some 110 string quintets, if so, thus topping Boccherini. Scholars generally credit him with helping the development chamber music in France during the last decades of the 18th century. When a composer writes this many works, one instinctively recognizes many of them will be pedestrian and at most workmanlike. The real question is, how many rise to the level of being really good works. Over the years, I can recall having played a quartet or two by Cambini, but the experience made absolutely no impression on me whatsoever.

Because of this I did not have any great expectations upon breaking open the shrink wrap to **Pan Classics CD#10218** on which are recorded three string quintets for two violins, viola and two violoncellos. Unfortunately, we are not told when these works were composed. One guesses between the late 1770's and 1795. All three are in the fast—slow—fast three movement format. The recording was done on period instruments. I am not a great fan of this fad, and find that it often does more harm than good to the music. I am a firm believer that composers would have opted for the brighter sound of the modern set up, just as Beethoven would have opted for today's piano if he had had the chance. But in this instance, the music is not harmed. The first work is **String Quintet No.1 in E flat Major**. Other than providing a historical record, I can see no reason why this work was recorded. It is pleasant enough, fine for back ground music to a wine and cheese party. **String Quintet No.4 in c minor**, possibly because of the key, makes a stronger impression and is perhaps good enough for the concert hall in a historical context. **String Quintet No.23 in G Major** is better than No.1 but the thematic material is not strong enough to merit concert performance in my opinion.

# FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Bargiel



Enescu



Gade



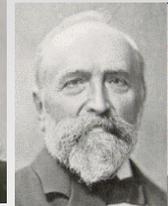
Salomon Jadassohn



Gliere



Grädener



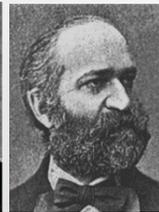
Malling



Raff



Fuchs



Thieriot



Waldemar v Bausnern



Svendsen



Graener



Zelenski

# ONSLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL



# HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANEYEV, REINECKE

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV