

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

***Gabriel Faure's  
Piano Quartets***

***The String Trios of  
Alexandre Boely***

***Thomas Dunhill Quintet for Piano  
Violin, Cello, Clarinet & Horn***

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# Gabriel faurÉ's Piano quartets

Claude-Maurice Jendreaux



As a young boy, Gabriel Fauré (1845-1921) learned to play the harmonium that was in the chapel of École Normale at Montgauzy where his father served as director. After his talent became apparent, in 1854, his father sent him to Paris and the École de Musique Classique et Religieuse, generally known as the École Niedermeyer after its founder, Louis Nied

Initially, Fauré studied with him until his death in 1861. Camille Saint-Saëns then took his place and became Gabriel's piano teacher. A friendship between the two arose and lasted their lifetimes. Fauré was one of the school's top students and won many prizes before graduating in 1865.

With Saint-Saëns' help, Fauré obtained the position of organist at the Church of Saint-Sauveur, at Rennes. In 1869, he moved to

Paris and became assistant organist at a the Church of Notre Dame in north Paris. But with the outbreak of the 1870 Franco-Prussian War, he enlisted and saw action in several battles including the attempt to raise the Siege of Paris. The war was short and followed by considerable violence within Paris, which led Fauré to take a teaching position at the École Niedermeyer, which had temporarily relocated there to avoid the violence. in Paris. When he returned to Paris in 1871, he was appointed choirmaster at the Église Saint-Sulpice under the composer and organist Charles-Marie Widor. He was an early member of the Société Nationale de Musique formed in February 1871 to promote new French instrumental music. Among its members were Saint-Saëns. Its founder, Bizet, Chabrier, Duparc, d'Indy, Franck, Lalo and Massenet. In 1874, Fauré moved from Saint-Sulpice to the Église de la Madeleine, deputizing for Saint-Saëns, while the latter made frequent concert tours throughout Europe. In 1877, a few of his works his works were publicly premiered and for a while, he was briefly noticed and enjoyed some success as a composer.

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## Thomas Dunhill's Quintet for Piano, Violin, Cello, Clarinet & Horn

By John Peregrine Fitzmaurice



Thomas Dunhill (1877-1946) 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 obtained a position as a music master at Eton College. Five years later he was also appointed to the staff of the Royal College of Music, to teach harmony, counterpoint, analysis, composition and orchestration.

In 1907 he founded the "Thomas Dunhill Chamber Concerts", with the object of producing new works by British composers and giving second performances to works already produced elsewhere.

Chamber Music was of special interest to Dunhill and although he wrote in most genres, he produced a very highly respected book on the subject, *Chamber Music a Treatise for Students*. As might be expected, chamber music features prominently among his compositions and includes the Quintet in E flat Major for violin, violoncello, clarinet, horn and pianoforte. Op.3, another Quintet for horn and strings from his student days, a Piano Quartet, a Phantasy Trio for Violin, Viola and Piano and a string quartet. In addition, he composed several very fine instrumental sonatas.

The Quintet was composed in 1898 as the result of a competition which offered a cash prize for a work written for an ensemble consisting of piano, violin, cello, clarinet and horn. Some long forgotten composer and not Dunhill was the winner of the competition but Dunhill's Quintet was premiered to considerable acclaim the following year. It is dedicated to Stanford.

(Continued on page 10)

## The String Trios of Alexandre Boëly

by R.H.R. Silvertrust

Alexandre Pierre François Boëly (1785-1858) came from of a family of musicians. His father, Jean-François Boëly (1739-1814) was a composer, a professor of harp and a member of the Chapelle Royale in Versailles where he was born. Boëly began music lessons when he was five years old, first studying with various musicians in the king's band. In 1796, at the age of eleven, he was sent to Paris to study at the Conservatory. He started on the violin with Henri Guérillot where he made only average progress, but he showed exceptional ability on the piano and the organ. His teacher was a Tyrolean, Ignaz Ladurner. It was Ladurner who introduced him to the music of Bach, Handel, Clementi, Haydn and Mozart, none of whom were particularly held in high regard at that time in France where musical taste ran almost exclusively to the Italian operas of Rossini and others like him. To put it mildly, Boëly became a huge fan of these composers. He regularly programmed their works on his concerts and they served as a model for his own compositions, which in no small part explains why he

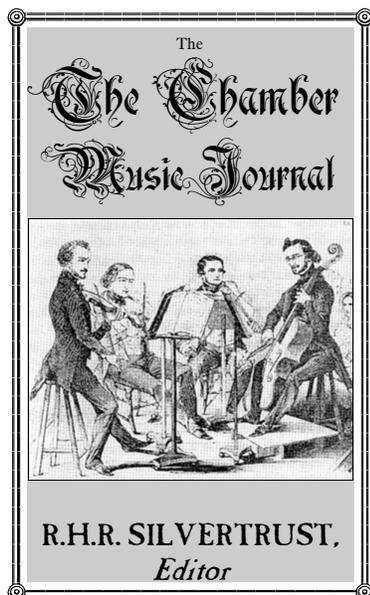
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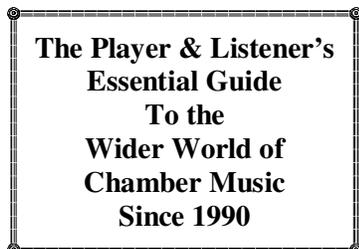
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and his works were ignored within France. Some of his earliest works, including his Op.5 String Trios, were modeled on early Beethoven, whose music, what little was known of it in France, was considered cacophony. To their credit, and unlike the French musical public in general, composers then active in Paris, such as Cherubini, Rossini, Bellini, Meyerbeer and Paganini did come to appreciate Boëly's music but this was not of much help to his reputation.

Within France, Boëly's reputation came to rest almost entirely on his talent as an organist. In 1840, he was appointed to the prestigious position of organist at the church of Saint Germain-l'Auxerrois. Yet to the disgust of many, he continued to champion and perform the works of Bach. But even his programs of the music of the Frenchman Couperin met with little success amongst French concertgoers. The general dislike of these works was so strong that he was ultimately relieved of his post of organist at Saint Germain in 1851. He had been warned to stop playing Bach, but he refused. Still, his concerts had an important impact because composers such as Alkan, Franck, Saint-Saëns and Ambroise Thomas came to hear them and were introduced to the music of these composers and were, of course, influenced by what they heard. Saint-Saëns, in the preface to a new 1902 edition of Boëly's works, which he edited, wrote, "*An impeccable musical writer, a theoretician of the first order, Boëly possessed the bizarre originality of seeking to live in the past by going back to Bach and Scarlatti, who were still ignored by everyone in France. This applied to his organ works, which admittedly are the bulk of his compositions. In his chamber works, he returned to Mozart and Haydn, who were still largely distained in France, and also to Beethoven, whose very name provoked a sense of horror.*"

Boëly wrote five string trios for violin, viola and cello. The first three were composed in 1808 and published in 1829 as his Op.5. (The last two, Opp.23 and 24 were composed in 1854 and 1857 toward the very end of his life. The opus numbers assigned to Boëly's works are totally meaningless. He wrote hundreds of work, many without opus numbers. It is hard to know why it was that Boëly chose to write string trios. It is unlikely that he had plans to play them himself, nor is it likely that he received a commission to write such works. With the exception of Hyacinthe Jadin's string trios, composed and published in the late 1790's, there appear to be no other instances of French composers writing trios. Jadin's trios seem to indicate that he was familiar with the music of Haydn if not Mozart. And while it cannot be said that his music sounds anything like those composers, it does show the influence of C.P.E. Bach with whom he is said to have studied.

So what do Boëly's string trios sound like? In a word—Beethoven. In fact, it is probably no exaggeration to say that in all probability Boëly had before him copies of Beethoven's three Op.9 of 1799 and the Op.18 quartets of the following year at the time he sat down to write his three Op.5 trios. Why am I so certain about this? Read on.

Beginning with Op.5 No.1 in D Major, the first of the set, we find that the first movement is structured identically with Beethoven's Op.9 No.1 although it is written on a much larger scale, so much so that it would not have been unfair to have styled to work as "Grande Trio". Boëly begins the first movement, as does Beethoven, with an Adagio introduction. But here it must be said that the size and scope of this Adagio is truly extraordinary. Highly dramatic and in d minor, it creates a sense of unease which is only dispelled in the main movement, an Allegro. (continued on page 4)



**Allegro**

The Allegro comes as a bit of surprise in that one is expecting some sort of storm but instead the music is light and gay. (see example on the left)

The Allegretto grazioso which follows begins inauspiciously (example on the right)

But very quickly turns into both an exciting and lyrical piece of music. Later Boëly makes very telling use of pizzicato and lengthy double stops to create an bagpipe effect.

There is no slow movement, and for the third movement, we are given a first rate Scherzo allegro with a finely contrasting lyrical trio.

The exciting finale, Allegro assai, with which Boëly tops off this trio, quotes a theme from Beethoven's Op.9 No.2, but he gives it an entirely different treatment. All in all, and despite some rather obvious references to Beethoven's Op.9, this is a rather good trio. It plays well and it makes a good impression with audiences.

There is no reason to assume otherwise but that **String Trio No.2 in C Major, Op.5 No.2** was composed immediately after the first trio given that these were works were released as a set. And though it was still common practice to release sets of similar works in sets of three or six, given the references to Beethoven, it is clear that these were meant as a complimentary set.

The opening bars of the first movement, Allegro, have a formal quality to them which brings the opening of Beethoven's Op.18 No.2 to mind, however, by the fourth bar, Boëly departs onto his own melodic path.

The lovely second theme is lyrical while driven forward by the pulsing accompaniment in the cello.

The slow movement, *Adagio*, which follows, is leisurely but has an air of mystery to it. Played quite slowly, its great breadth, but not its thematic material, brings the big slow movement to Beethoven's Op.9 No.1 Trio to mind. (example above)



The theme of the third movement, Minuetto, Allegretto, depends more on rhythm than its melodic line and is presented in canonic form. Although there is not direct thematic quote from Beethoven, the

music nonetheless is very Beethovenian. In fact, it is hard to come away without the impression that Beethoven did right it. Yet, where others might well have spoiled it, Boëly brings it off quite effectively.

The opening bars of the finale, a Presto, bring the finale movement of Beethoven's Op.18 No.3 to mind, but again Boëly gives the material a different treatment. Again one must concede that the movement is very well carried. This trio, while perhaps less striking than the first, still is extremely effective and arguably a stronger work than the middle trio to the Op.9.



In passing, it interesting to note that while the first two trios of this set are in the major, the final trio of the set, **String Trio No.2 in g minor, Op.5 No.3**, is in the minor. Thought the keys are different (in Beethoven's case G Major, D Major and c minor and in Boëly's case D Major, C Major and g minor) the pattern of two trios in the major followed by a third in the minor does not, in view of the other similarities, seem like a coincidence.



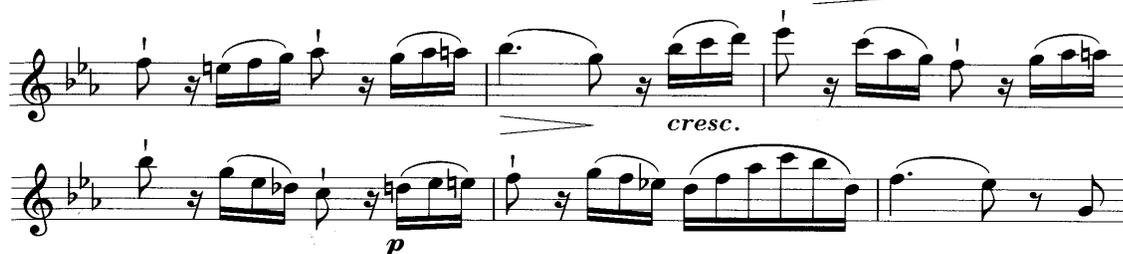
The opening movement, *Allegro agitato*, dispenses with any introduction and immediately plunges into the downward-plunging turbulent theme much in the way Beethoven did in his Op.9 No.3 c minor

trio. The second theme is more lyrical and has a serenade-like quality to it.

The trio dispenses with a true slow movement and instead opts for an, *Andante con moto*



The gorgeous main theme to which requires that brisk pace be kept. (See example on immediate right)



(continued on page 6)

The third movement, a Scherzo to played at great speed, really in one and not three, again recalls Beethoven in its exciting treatment of its main theme. The more one plays or hears these trios, one is struck by Boëly's uncanny ability to produce music which surely

sounds as if Beethoven had written it, yet, one it is not a case of mere imitation.

The lilting rhythm of the finale, *Allegro ma non troppo*, gives the music a vaguely Spanish effect. The violin begins with the main theme, which is reprised later as shown on the example on the left. As before, the music is Beethovenian, yet here, the thematic material seems less related to anything Beethoven wrote.

Immediately after the violin, which has had a long stretch of singing theme alone, the cello takes it up, quite dramatically and for an almost equal length of time. While I would not argue that Boëly's use of

the cello is more advanced than Beethoven's, I would say that on a few occasions, Boëly gives the cello a chance to more prominently lead than Beethoven does. Beethoven's typical method is to have the violin sing a passage, followed by the viola and then the cello who sing it, but generally not for as long a time. On the other hand, all things considered, Beethoven treatment of all three instruments is more equal than Boëly's. Boëly gives considerably more of the melodies and thematic material to the violin than the other voices, which is perhaps why when they are brought to the forefront, it is all the more striking. Beethoven integrates the three voices somewhat better than does Boëly, but one cannot really fault him as these are real three voice trios and way ahead of virtually anything else from this era. (Mozart's K.563 Divertimento, of course, excepted)

Critics have been widely divided as to the quality and value of these trios. After ignoring Boëly's chamber music, not only during his lifetime but for 130 years thereafter, the French have suddenly woken up and rediscovered what many are calling original masterworks. This is a bit of a stretch, for without Beethoven's example, it is unlikely that Boëly could have produced works of this nature. On the other hand, Wilhelm Altmann, in his Chamber Music Handbook, writing of the First Trio, the only one with which he was familiar, while offering considerable praise, also says that many times the accompaniment is little more than a left hand piano part. Having played and performed the work, I do not agree with this assessment.

Overall, I think these are very worthwhile and a valuable addition to the scanty repertoire, at least from this era, of trios which treat the voices so well. I am not as troubled as some, as to the quotes from Beethoven's Op.9 and 18. There is no real imitation and the quotes are never more than a few measures before an entirely original treatment begins. To the contrary, I am rather impressed by how Beethoven-like Boëly is able to make the music sound. The first two trios have recently been recorded and parts to all three are currently in print.

# Gabriel faurÉ's piano Quartets

(Continued from page 2)

Also at this time, Saint-Saëns retired his post as organist. Théodore Dubois, his choirmaster, succeeded him and Fauré took over Dubois's position. Toward the end of 1877, Fauré's fiancée broke off their engagement. To distract Fauré, Saint-Saëns took him to Weimar and introduced him to Franz Liszt. The next year he returned to Germany and visited Bayreuth in order to see several of Wagner's operas. Although Fauré admired Wagner's music, unlike d'Indy and several other of his contemporaries, his own music was not in anyway influenced by him. For the next fifteen years or so, Fauré had little professional success. Just one example took place in 1892 when a position as Professorship of Composition opened up at the Paris Conservatory, Saint-Saëns encouraged Fauré to apply for it and recommended him. But the members of the Conservatory, led by their director Ambroise Thomas, regarded Fauré as much too modern. Thomas was heard to say, "If Fauré comes, I go." The result was foreordained and he was not appointed. When Thomas died in 1896, two candidates for his position vied for the directorship: Théodore Dubois and Jules Massenet, who at the time was the Conservatory's leading Professor of Composition. When Dubois was appointed, Massenet, who had expected to win, resigned his professorship. Dubois supported his Fauré was then appointed to take Massenet's place. Among his many students were Maurice Ravel, Florent Schmitt, Charles Koechlin, George Enescu, Alfredo Casella and Nadia Boulanger. In 1905, Fauré's succeeded Dubois as director of the Conservatory where he made many important changes to the curriculum, such as making it possible to play the music of late romantic German composers and modern French composers such as Debussy.

The great bulk of Fauré's work was for voice and piano, however, he wrote a fair amount of chamber music. Unlike many French composers, Fauré, as did Beethoven, composed chamber music throughout his life. He has two piano quintets, a piano trio, a string quartet, and a number of pieces for violin and piano as well as cello and piano to his credit. And, of course, there are the two piano quartets which are the subject of this article. They are arguably the best known of his chamber works and the First **Piano Quartet in c minor, Op.15** is one of the best known of all of his works. It was composed in 1879 and while one rarely hears piano quartet in concert any more, it is among the most frequently performed when one is programmed. It is in four movements, quite classical in form, but passionate thematic material clearly belongs to the romantic era.

The first movement, *Allegro molto moderato*, starts right with the main theme without any introduction. It is announced by the strings, treated as a choir against the piano. (example on right) Fauré recognized and accepted the basic difference in sound and character between the piano and stringed instruments, and never tried to make the piano sing long sustained melodies. Instead, the piano is given arpeggios, chords, broken chords and runs against the singing lines of either a single stringed instrument or of a choir. There is much tumult and passion in the first theme, something one expects from the key of c minor, whether the composition is by Mozart, Beethoven, or Brahms. Through a surprising series of modulations the music finally arrives at the major key of E flat, which heralds the entrance of the lyrical second theme. After a coda in which the first theme reappears in the same key, there follows an ingenious and interesting development section leading to the recapitulation, in which the themes appear in their classically predetermined keys. The movement ends in a pianissimo in which only the pulse of the syncopated chords of the opening measures are heard.

*Allegro molto moderato. ♩ = 84.*

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system shows the Violin, Alto, and Violoncello parts. The second system shows the piano accompaniment for all three instruments. The third system shows the piano accompaniment for the Violin, Alto, and Violoncello parts. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* and *cresc.*, and the word *sempre* indicating a constant texture.

The second movement is a *Scherzo, Allegro vivo* is in 6/8. The tempo is established by a series of pizzicato chords of the strings, after which, the piano brings forth a twisting, twirling dancy melody. (example on right) The mood is almost feverish in its intensity. The movement is in E flat and the six-measure pizzicato introduction leads to a quasi ostinato modified subsequently in fascinating sequences of chords.

The meter changes back and forth between 6/8 and 2/4, adding the sensation of panting to the rapid movement of the rhythm. This movement is not classically concise, although it is in form. Like Beethoven's scherzos, it approaches a rondo on its expansion and

has a lovely trio with a sweet melody sung by the muted strings.

Adagio. ♩ = 72.

Violon.

Alto.

Violoncelle.

The third movement, *Adagio*, is in the home key of c minor. Structurally, it is built as a three-part song in which the strings are not treated as a choir but as individuals. Each enters separately with a short melody sung over rich chords of the piano.

The furious finale, *Allegro molto*, hurls forward at an almost terrifying pace. Although it is in sonata form, the movement is no longer strictly classical in structure. The first subject is merely a motif, and a

second rhythmic one is later combined with it, achieving a perpetual kind of renewal. The wonderfully singing second theme is yearning and full of lyrical passion. Most astonishing is the development section which takes these themes through all possible keys, mostly without modulation. A strong and masculine coda brings the movement to a fiery ending.

**Piano Quartet No.2 in g minor Op. 45** was composed in 1886. Like the First Piano Quartet, it, too is in four movements, and again the scherzo appears after the first movement. But, while Faure's manner of writing is immediately recognizable in the way he handles the piano and the strings, there are notable differences between the two works. The Second Piano Quartet leaves the classical mould behind, both in form and harmony. These are much bolder. The first movement, *Allegro molto moderato*, changes in the course of the recapitulation and

*Allegro molto moderato.*

quite surprisingly ends in major, another substantial difference from the earlier work and a procedure which was very typical of his later writing style. The movement has three distinct themes. The first has an imperious sweep that shows the development of the composer's individuality. In the opening bars, the piano sets the key, a technique generally used in song composition and perhaps in this case a hangover from a format in which he so often composed. (example on bottom of page 7) The strings enter as a unified body and assert themselves quite powerfully in the presentation of the first theme . Later on Faure attempts to change the imperious character of the energy of first theme by manipulating the tempi.

This same technique is used in the second movement, *Allegro molto*, which is a scherzo though not so marked. The time signature here changes from 6/8 to 2/4 to 3/4, quite rapidly, without having less than six eighths to a measure. This results in a half note, sometimes a dotted half note, two quarters or two dotted quarters between barlines, ritmo di due and di tre battute. (example on right) This is a real scherzo in that it is a play with notes, in which a widely arched melody as well as a rhythmic transformation of the main theme of the first movement is fitted to the perpetuum mobile of the six eighths. If the G major ending of the first movement surprised us, we are no less surprised by the Scherzo being in G major, and the *Adagio non troppo* in E flat major. But this is a minor point compared to the transcendental beauty of its mood and its deeply moving melody. Throughout the first movement there is in the piano part something like the pealing of bells, and above it a fervent, ever renewed phrase, evocative of an Angelus. In French music, where words, a program, are never far below the surface, we have no compunction in assuming that the composer had just that in mind. Intoned at first by the viola,

**Allegro molto.** *J*

**Adagio non troppo.** *espressivo, senza rigor*

Intoned at first by the viola, (example on left) and accompanied by the "bells," the melody is soon taken over by the other instruments, and then confronted by another, related chant in the middle section. This movement is one of Fauré's most moving compositions.

The last movement, *Allegro molto*, returns in G minor, but it again turns to G major, in which key it ends. It is impetuous music, and Faure is again taking liberties with his 3/4 meter, alternating runs in triplets with due battute, two eights against three, and cross-accents. Similarly in the harmony, where we find an endless variety of changing keys and unexpected spicy discords - an evanescent harmony with a strange personal way of progressing. In its own way this piano quartet is as good as the first and also deserves to be heard in concert more than it is.

**Allegro molto. (♩. = 69)**

Violon.

Alto.

Violoncelle.

*f sempre*

# Thomas Dunhill's Quintet for Piano, Violin, Cello, Clarinet & Horn *continued from page 2*



The opening movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, consists of a theme (example on left) and set of very engaging variations. Just placing such a movement as the opening pieces was in and of itself quite unusual. The theme, which is given out by the violin and the cello over a soft piano accompaniment, has a folkloric quality though I have been unable to determine if it is based on an actual English folk tune. The horn and the clarinet are initially silent.

The whole business is quite assuredly handled. Each of the successive seven variations appears to have yet more interest than the one preceding it, quite an accomplishment for a young composer. Dunhill was only 21 at the time he wrote this work.

This said, the variation I personally found the most striking was the second, *Poco piu mosso*, (example on the right. Here the instruments are integrated in an extraordinarily fine way which reminded me of Zdenek Fibich's Op.42 Quintet for this exact instrumental combination. In no way, imitative, nonetheless, one is bound to wonder if Dunhill had heard the Fibich and was alive to the tonal possibilities that such an unusual combination of instruments could produce.

Hearing this movement, it seems truly incredible that Dunhill did not win the prize for this work.



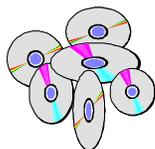
The middle movement, *Allegretto*, begins and continues for sometime in a rather smooth and dreamy vein. It has a lazy, almost pastoral quality. One is surprised and almost taken aback when this gentle genial music finally rises to a passionate and exciting climax later on. He makes superb use of all of the instruments and each of the parts is grateful to play.



The finale, *Prestissimo* is jovial and holds one's interest throughout. Here, the clarinet is given the lead in bring forth the catchy main theme which is bouncy and full of forward motion. (see the example on the left) Of course, all of the others are given their innings and the these are masterfully interspersed.

The only other work I know for this combination of instruments, although I suppose there must be others, is the aforementioned Op.42 Quintet by Fibich, which is an outstanding and highly appealing work. In my opinion, Dunhill has equaled Fibich's effort and the two works deserve to stand side by side as equals. One thing for sure, If you are lucky enough to assemble a group to play the Fibich, don't stop there, you will want to play the Dunhill for sure.

The Quintet was recorded not too long ago on a Dutton CD which to the best of my knowledge is still available as of this writing. Happily, the parts have been reprinted by Edition Silvertrust and are available.



## Diskology: Two String Quartets by Felix Weingartner Anton Rubinstein's Piano Trios



**CPO CD 777 253** is the third and final disk in the series presenting Felix Weingartner's string quartets. Weingartner (1863-1942) was born in Zara, Dalmatia, today's Zadar, Croatia, to Austrian parents. In 1883, he went to the Leipzig Conservatory where he studied composition with Carl Reinecke. He also studied privately with Franz Liszt in Weimar. Weingartner was one of the most famous and successful conductors of his time, holding positions in Hamburg, Mannheim, Danzig, Munich, Berlin and Vienna, where he succeeded Gustav

Mahler as Director of the Imperial Opera. Despite his demanding career as a conductor, Weingartner, like Mahler, thought of himself equally as a composer and devoted considerable time to composition. He wrote several symphonies, numerous operas, some instrumental concertos, and a considerable amount of chamber music, including four string quartets, a piano sextet and a string quintet. Additionally he wrote a great number of vocal works and instrumental sonatas. Though many of his works originally achieved a fair amount acclaim, they quickly disappeared from the concert stage. It is only in the past few years that their excellence has been rediscovered. Weingartner's style shows the influence of Wagner and combines late Romanticism with early Modernism. It can be said to share a great deal in common with the music of such contemporaries as Richard Strauss and Mahler.

**Weingartner's String Quartet No.2 in f minor, Op.26** was published in 1900. It is unquestionably a very powerful work. The outer movements are so animated and dramatic that they all but eclipse the middle movements. The powerful energy of the opening movement, *Allegro deciso*, recalls the opening movement of Beethoven's own quartet in f minor, Op.95. The highly original second movement, *Allegretto quasi scherzando*, creates an otherworldly atmosphere through the use of exotic tonal effects such as ponticello bowing and the interesting use of pizzicato. The very expressive trio section provides a marvelous contrast to the scherzo. Next comes a *Fantasia—Adagio cantabile, non troppo lento*. Lyrical and highly expressive, the first violin is given the lead throughout in what might be styled an instrumental aria. The exciting finale, *Vivace furioso*, is inspiring and original and leaves a deep impression. The parts, as are those of all but the Fifth String Quartet, are available from Edition Silvertrust. However, it must be said that this is a work which will be beyond amateur players except those of the highest technical level.

Weingartner's first three string quartets were composed and published within a few years of each other. The Third was finished in 1903. Fifteen years and a World War separate that work from **String Quartet No.4 in D Major, Op.62**, which appeared in 1918. Nonetheless, this quartet shows many of the same characteristics of the preceding ones and tonally is in no way more advanced than the earlier quartets. However, one major difference between this quartet and his others is that it lacks the explosive power and extraordinary dramatic episodes of the earlier works.

Instead, here we find a charming and elegant work. The main theme of the opening movement, *Allegro grazioso*, is dominated by its rhythmic figures while the charming and playful second theme is quite catchy and reminds one of something that could have been used in a cowboy Western movie. The following *Elegy, Andante con poco moto*, is everything that such a movement should be—emotive, somewhat sad and reflective, the writing is superb. The third movement, *Allegro vivo*, is a playful romp dominated by its offbeat rhythms and his very effective use of both pizzicato and ponticello. A highly chromatic and somewhat wayward trio section provides good contrast., serves as a scherzo. The trio makes a strong impression and contrast with its warm melody. The finale, *Vivace assai*, both in spirit and tonality has a rather classical aura to it. It sounds what Mozart might have written had he been living in the first decade of the 20th century, combining clever playfulness with lovely melody. Of its type, this is a very fine work which is within the technical range of most experience amateur players. Both of these works are first rate and deserve concert performance where they would be sure to make a strong impression. Highly recommended.



Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) was one of the great piano virtuosos of the 19th century with a technique said to rival that of Liszt. He also gained renown as a composer and conductor. Rubinstein was one of those rare concert virtuosos whose contribution to music went far beyond performing. In 1862, he founded the St. Petersburg Conservatory and served as its first director. His efforts in developing Russian musical talent were perhaps the greatest of any single individual. Not only did he introduce European educational methods but he also established standards that were as rigorous as any conservatory in Europe. While Rubinstein's compositions were extremely popular during his lifetime, after his death, they were criticized because they showed "no Russian influence" and were viewed as derivatives of prominent European contemporaries, especially of Mendelssohn. Despite the fact that commentator after commentator has repeated this assertion, almost as if it were a litany, it is nonetheless not entirely accurate. Although he was not part of the so-called emergent Russian national school as led by Rimsky Korsakov, it is not true that there is no Russian influence to be found in his music. This influence is just not as pronounced as in the works of Borodin, Mussorgsky or of Korsakov himself. However, those who take the time listener to Rubinstein's music will not only hear the influence of Mendelssohn, but also hear Russian melody and rhythm of the sort used by Borodin and others 20 years later. In frustration, Rubinstein famously quipped, to the Russians I am a German, to the Germans I am a Russian, to the Christians I am a Jew and to the Jews I am a Christian. (his parents had converted to Christianity before his birth) Rubinstein was a prolific composer writing in nearly every genre. Chamber music figures prominently amongst his works. He wrote 10 string quartets, at least 5 piano trios, a string quintet

# Anton Rubinstein's Five Piano Trios

## A Piano Quintet & String Sextet by Ferdinand Thieriot

and a string sextet as well as several other chamber works. But, it must be admitted that many of these works do not rise above the commonplace. Rubinstein was simply too fluent a writer for his own good and lacked the patience to take pencil and eraser to the manuscript page to improve what he had just dashed off. Few composers could have produced anything at all of merit doing this, but Rubinstein, by the sheer prodigious quality of his talent, was, on occasion, able to create works of astonishing beauty and quite good style. Certainly, his five piano trios fall into this category. Each of these trios deserves a chance to be heard in concert and amateurs will certainly gain considerable enjoyment by making their acquaintance. But things being as they are, it is unlikely you will get to hear these works in concert. However, you can hear these works because they have been recorded on **Metro-nome CD No.1082**, a two disk set. And you can play them because the parts to all five are available from Edition Silvertrust

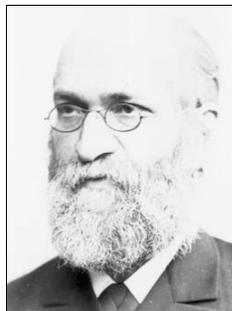
"Worthy of recommendation is Anton Rubinstein's **Piano Trio No.1 in F Major, Op.15 No.1**, published in 1855 but composed a few years earlier. The main theme of the first movement, *Con moto moderato*, is quite attractive. It brings to mind a sea of wave swells. Equally pleasing is the lyrical second subject which has a real swing to it. The second movement, *Moderato*, is a theme and variations. These are not only interesting but tonally beautiful. The theme appears to be a Russian folk melody. The finale, *Moderato con moto*, begins with a very appealing, lilting melody and ends with a very effective coda." So wrote Wilhelm Altmann in his Handbook for Piano Trio Players and I wholeheartedly agree. This is a fine work

**Piano Trio No.2 in G Major, Op.15 No.2** was composed immediately after No.1. The two trios were published simultaneously. The first movement, *Moderato* opens with an effectively with a lilting melody which is quite effective while the development section, which leads to the delightful, lyrical second theme, is very finely done. The magnificent second movement, *Adagio*, is a gorgeous Mendelssohnian Song Without Words. The *Allegro assai scherzo* which follows is in the form of a tarantella. This is a lively, fleet and very effective movement. Both melodies of the finale, *Moderato*, are expressive and well done.

**Piano Trio No.3 in B flat Major, Op.52** was composed in 1857 and premiered with tremendous success that same year in London with Rubinstein at the piano. It was hailed by critics as one of the best of its kind and for next half century held a place in the standard repertoire. It combines a heroic spirit with radiant lyricism. The opening movement, *Moderato assai*, begins quietly but the bustling piano part builds tension and leads to a dramatic climax with outcries in the string parts. The second theme contrasts with its lyricism. The pensive *Adagio* which follows has a Russian flavor as Mendelssohn might have imagined it, while the dialogue in the development anticipates Tchaikovsky elegies. A playful and humorous *Scherzo* comes next. Its trio section features a lilting waltz. The heroic, memorable main theme of the finale, *Allegro appassionato*, is full of passion and forward drive while the second and third subject are full of majesty.

"It is absolutely wrong that Anton Rubinstein's **Piano Trio No.4 in A Major, Op.85**, dating from 1870, has been neglected and is not performed in concert...The big first movement, *Moderato assai*, has a Russian folk melody of an elegiac nature for its main theme. The movement is by turns lyrical and passionate. The very original second movement, *Moderato con moto*, is a real devil's dance with unusual harmony, while the middle section provides good contrast. The third movement, *Andante*, begins in a deeply religious mood but this calm is periodically broken by stormy episodes. This is an effective and very impressive movement. The stunning finale, an *Allegro*, immediately attracts attention through the chromatic turbulence in the piano part juxtaposed against a yearning melody in the strings. This movement will certainly greatly please any concert audience." Again this is Wilhelm Altmann writing in his Handbook for Piano Trio Players. To this I would add that this trio, in my opinion, is not merely good or very good, but a highly original masterpiece. This is an outstanding work in every way. It does make some technical and ensemble demands on the players, particularly in the second movement, but the work does not require virtuosi to be performed and amateurs of reasonable technical accomplishments. A very highly recommended CD set.

**Piano Trio No.5 in c minor, Op.105** Rubinstein's last, dates from 1883. It begins with a short chromatic *Lento assai* introduction which leads to a passionate *Moderato*. This movement features an excellent main theme as well as a very winning, more lyrical second subject. The second movement, *Con moto moderato*, perhaps can best be described as falling somewhere a slow intermezzo tinkling *Andante*. Here the lyrical and effective main theme is followed by a lilting and expressive second melody. Next comes a slow movement, *Moderato assai*, with its lovely, heartfelt writing for the strings. The finale, *Allegro*, follows without a break begins in martial fashion with a staccato fanfare more lyrical music follows which is later interrupted by a fugue, a la Bach before movement is brought to a close in triumphant fashion. This movement, with its considerable originality, is the most striking of the trio. While this trio lacks the breathtaking excitement and drama of No.4 it is in many deeper in much the same way that Beethoven's Late Quartets are over his Middle Quartet. This is certainly a fine work which qualifies for concert performance and should also appeal to amateurs.



Not long ago, the author of the jacket notes to a CD of Thieriot's music wrote, "One no longer knows the name: Ferdinand Thieriot (1838-1919) who emerged from the circle around Johannes Brahms..." If it can be said that Thieriot emerged at all, his emergence was brief and unnoticed, at least by English-speaking musicians and listeners. He is unknown to either the *Groves* or *New Grove*, and not to be found in *Baker's Dictionary*. Cobbett's *Cyclopedic Survey*, while producing a list of his chamber works, has but one sentence about him, which is

## A Piano Quintet and String Sextet by Ferdinand Thieriot Hyacinthe Jadin: Three String Quartets

in part misinformation: “German composer, pupil of Brahms and Rheinberger.” Though he was an admirer and friend of Brahms, he not was a student of the great man. Thieriot did study with the same teacher in Hamburg that Brahms had: Eduard Marxen. Thieriot eventually followed Brahms to Austria where he first gained a reputation as a cellist. It was on Brahms recommendation that Thieriot was appointed Director of Music Society of Steiermark in Graz. Later, he held similar positions in Leipzig and Hamburg. Thieriot wrote a considerable amount of chamber music including an octet for strings and winds, a string octet, thirteen string quartets, a quintet for piano and string quartet, four piano trios, two piano quartets, a quartet for flute and string trio, and a quintet for piano and winds.

A while back a CD of his octet for winds and strings and a quintet for winds and piano appeared. Now **Toccata Classics CD 0080** presents two more. The first work is the **Piano Quintet in D Major, Op.20**. It was first published in 1869 and apparently was popular enough to justify a “new and improved edition” which was put out in 1894. In four movements, the work opens with a big *Allegro con spirito*. The strings, double stopping, create an almost orchestral presentation of the main theme which only after a full statement reenters the realm of chamber music. The thematic material is lush and lyrical. Next comes a somber and stately *Adagio*. A lively *Scherzo* characterized more by its pounding and insistent rhythm than by its melody follows. The trio section with the strings singing in chorale fashion presents a nice contrast. The exciting finale, *Allegro con moto*, begins somewhat darkly with Hungarian tinges but the mood lightens as the movement progresses and the entrance of the second subject. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust

The second work is his **String Sextet in D Major**. It was styled Op. Post. by Amadeus Verlag when they published the parts not too long ago. However, there is no indication that this is a late work but simply one which was discovered after the composer’s death. In Thieriot’s case, a huge amount of music was discovered in 1983 including 11 string quartets, this work and many others. It is in four movements and like every piece of Thieriot’s I have come across, it is very well-written with excellent part writing. But it suffers from a lack of memorable thematic material in my opinion. Judging from other works of his with which I am familiar, I would date the work from roughly 1885-1895, although tonally it could have been composed earlier. In the first movement, *Allegro*, we hear, at times, vague echoes of Mendelssohn. The melodies, however, are rather ordinary and nothing about theme stands out. The second movement, *Intermezzo-Allegro vivace*, again is well-written, there is considerable forward movement, but the melodic material is weak. The main theme to the *Adagio non troppo* which follows is the best of the work, but it cannot be classified as particularly fine. The middle section, however, is effective. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, is no different from the earlier movements—fine part-writing and a nicely constructed movement, tonally attractive but the melodic material is totally bland and unmemorable. A third work, Theme and Variations for 2 Cellos and Piano, does not suffer from these problems as much as the Sextet. I can recommend the CD for the Piano Quintet.



**Hyacinthe Jadin** (1776-1800) was born in Versailles where his father was a musician in the Royal Orchestra. He was one of five musically gifted brothers, the most famous of which was Louis-Emmanuel Jadin. His first lessons were from his father and Louis-Emmanuel who was four years his senior. Later he was sent to Paris where he studied with Hüllmandel,

who had been a student of C.P.E. Bach. The French Revolution put an end to his studies as his teacher fled France. He eked out a living as a pianist and briefly taught at the Paris Conservatory. Because of his early death, he did not achieve the same fame as Louis-Emmanuel but the famous music critic Fétis wrote that his chamber music was of a very high standard and deserved to be better known.

On **Atma CD#2610** Hyacinthe Jadin’s first three string quartet, his Op.1, are presented. The Op.1 string quartets, which were dedicated to Haydn, were composed in 1795 and published shortly thereafter. At that time, and up until 1814, there were no public chamber music concerts in France. Chamber music was exclusively and privately performed at the palaces and homes of the wealthy and the kind of string quartets then in vogue were the so called *quatuors brillants* of Rudolfe Kreuter and Pierre Rode, which were essentially a showcase for the first violin. Jadin’s Op.1 quartets are not *quatuors brillants*, but closer to the style of Haydn to whom they are dedicated. Further, while they represent a French version of the *Sturm und Drang* movement, they also anticipate the stylistic developments of the kind made by Schubert in the early 19th century.

Op.1 No.3, the third quartet of the set, is perhaps the most striking because of its unusual Menuet and its finale, a Polacca and its fine treatment of the cello which was very rare for the time, especially in France. The opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, opens with an brooding theme in the first violin. The second theme is an interesting conversation between the first violin and the cello. The second movement, though marked *Menuet*, is really something else altogether, and certainly not a dance, with its slow, haunting unison melody doubled and played in octaves. It is only in the trio section that we hear a more traditional rendering. A dignified *Adagio* with a long-lined main theme and interesting contrapuntal treatment comes next. The finale, is a brilliantly scored *Polacca* which holds the listener’s attention from start to finish. The other two quartets, while perhaps not as striking as the third, are nonetheless works with many attractive features and well-worth hearing. A worthwhile CD.

We had intended to get to **Albany Troy CD 910/11**, a two disk set, entitled *British Piano Quartets* much sooner and now it perhaps is a stretch to consider it recent. Nonetheless, it is important release and happily still available. Hence we draw your attention to it. The Scottish composer Alexander Mackenzie recalled that on one of his tours in Edinburgh, Anton Rubinstein had remarked to him “Sie haben keine Komponisten.”—you (British) have no

## Piano Quartets by Alexander Mackenzie, Frank Bridge, Herbert Howells Charles Villiers Stanford, Gordon Jacob & William Walton

composers. This was a held view not only in Europe but also in Britain itself during much of the 19th century. This CD, a compilation of piano quartets from the late 19th and 20th centuries, which serves as a refutation of this view.



The first work on disk one is by **Alexander Campbell MacKenzie** (1847-1935) along with Charles Villiers Stanford and Hubert Parry, was responsible for restoring the reputation of British music in the 19th century and is one of the most important figures from this period. Born in Edinburgh, MacKenzie first studied the violin with his father, who was a professional violinist before going to Germany where he spent five years continuing his studies.

While there, he got to know Liszt with whom he remained close until the latter's death. Upon his return to Britain, MacKenzie enjoyed a long career not only as a teacher but also as director of the Royal Academy of Music. In addition to these responsibilities, he also served as the conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra for several years. His **Piano Quartet in E flat Major, Op.11** was finished in 1872 and was published the following year. The amiable first movement, *Allegro moderato e tranquillo*, it opens with the piano stating the theme and the strings joining in one by one. The music becomes more energetic as the entire ensemble finally plays together. It is in the rustic *Scherzo* which follows is that one feels the influence of Schumann. The third movement, *Canzonetta and Variations*, uses a folk tune for its theme. The rhythmic variety of the variations is particularly striking and well-done. The finale, *Allegro molto e con brio*, is based on two subjects, the first is bright and lively while the second is dreamy with an improvisational aura. The development is ingenious and an exciting coda caps off this first rate work.



Next is the **Phantasy Piano Quartet in f# minor** by **Frank Bridge** (1879-1941) Born in Sussex, Frank Bridge learned to play violin from his father, and had much early exposure to practical musicianship, playing in theatre orchestras his father conducted. He studied violin and composition, the latter from Charles Stanford, at the Royal College of Music. He later played viola in prominent quartets and was a re-

spected conductor. When Frank Bridge's chamber music first appeared, it was a revelation to amateurs as well as professional players. Interestingly, the revival in interest in Bridge's music which took place during the last part of the 20th Century has concerned itself exclusively with his more 'radical' works, dating from 1924 onwards. Ironically, these works did nothing to create or further enhance the firm reputation he had established with both professionals and amateurs. Rather, it was works just like the Phantasy for Piano Quartet and several other of his Phantasy works which contributed to his success. The Phantasy for Piano Quartet by Frank Bridge (1879-1941) was, like his other works

bearing this title, composed for the annual and prestigious Cobbett Competition. These competitions were designed to encourage the younger generation of British composers to write chamber music. Its founder and benefactor was the chamber music aficionado William Wilson Cobbett. The rules of the competition provided an alternate format, the old English Fancy for Fantasia from the time of Purcell, to the traditional four movement work which had developed from Haydn onwards. While there was to be only a single movement, there are several sections, each embracing a different mood, tone color and tempi while at the same time retaining an inner unity. It was composed in 1910. The opening *Allegro moderato*, after a boisterous, brief introduction, begins with a march-like subject. The second melody, has an almost Latin American quality to it with the lovely lyrical tune over the cello's quasi arpeggio figure. The main theme of *the Andante moderato*, is reminiscent of the song Londonderry Air which he also arranged for string quartet. Again, the highly romantic second subject has a Latin American mood to it. The final section, *Allegro ma non troppo*, begins in sprightly fashion with a very updated tonality for the time. It leads to a very attractive and more lyrical second subject which alternates with first.



**Herbert Howells** (1892-1983) was born in Gloucester. In 1912 he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music and studied composition with Stanford and Parry. Howells was one of the most brilliant and gifted pupils and Stanford considered him "my son in music". He persuaded young Howells to enter the first Carnegie Trust composition competition in 1916 and his **Piano Quartet in a minor, Op. 21** won an award. From 1936 to 1962 he

taught at St. Paul's Girls School in Hammersmith, where he succeeded Gustav Holst and later became a professor at London University. The opening movement, *Allegro moderato tranquillo*, combines elements of English folk tunes with a kind of French impressionist Ravel-like approach. The middle movement, *Lento*, begins gently but builds to an impassioned climax in which the folk theme of the first movement is recalled. The finale, *Allegro molto energico*, is lighter in mood and full of high spirits.



The first work on the second disk is by **Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852-1924) He was born in Dublin. He had a good all-round education not only studying music but also classics at Cambridge University. Following this, Stanford went to Germany where he studied composition with Carl Reinecke in Leipzig and then with Friedrich Kiel in Berlin. While abroad, Stanford met Brahms and became an admirer. He was a prolific composer who worked in nearly every genre. Stanford was knighted in 1901 for the tremendous contribution he made to British music. The once high reputation that he enjoyed all but disappeared by the end of his life with critics writing him off as

## Piano Quartets by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford Gordon Jacob and William Walton

nothing more than a German “copycat” and another Brahms imitator. This criticism is both unfair and wide of the mark. 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, Ernst Moeran, Arthur Bliss, and Percy Grainger. One only has to listen to the opening measures of his **Piano Quartet No.1 in F Major, Op.15** to immediately realize that Stanford was a gifted composer who was capable of writing compositions of the first rank. Dating from 1879, it is a youthful work, written only a few years after his return from Germany, yet it is unquestionably a superb work. The buoyant opening theme of the first movement, *Allegro con brio*, is truly full of brio. The rich scoring and masterful part-writing show the lessons Stanford received from Kiel and Reinecke were well absorbed. One can hear their influence but not that of Brahms. This is a powerful movement full of luxuriant melodies and excitement. Next there is a *Scherzo*. Not so lively as one might expect, the mood is more of a relaxed but rhythmic intermezzo. The trio section is a soft chorale for the strings alone. The *Poco adagio* which follows, once it gets going, sports some very lovely string writing. Perhaps there is a trace of Brahms, here and there. The *Finale*, also *Allegro con brio*, begins in a triumphal style, its main theme harking back to Schubert and Schumann. A brisk pace is kept up from the start to the exciting finish. If the composer of this work had been German, no one would have hesitated, even today, to proclaim it a masterpiece every bit as good as the best piano quartets of the day. That fact that a Briton had written it led to a different result.

The next work is by **Gordon Jacob** (1895-1984) He was born in London and educated at Dulwich College. After serving in the First World War and briefly studying journalism, he entered the Royal College of Music where he studied composition with Stanford. He taught there from 1924-66. Jacobs composed in virtually



every genre except opera. Jacob refused to adopt atonality and serialism and his works remained tonal because he believed that music was meant to communicate to the listener. When Schoenberg and Stockhausen became the rage, his music was slowly elbowed aside. His *Piano Quartet* was the result of a commission from the Bernard Richards Piano Quartet, one of the few such permanent performing ensembles at the time. The work was composed in 1969. The opening movement, *Andante maestoso—Allegro*, begins in dramatic fashion. The main part of the movement, the *allegro*, alternates between two themes, the first is playful and second calmer. The middle movement, marked *Scherzo*, has a angular main theme full of fast forward motion, while the contrasting middle section is slower. The finale, **Variations and Epilogue**, begins with the viola giving out the theme upon which the variations are based. Most of the variations are light in mood and upbeat, however, the somber Epilogue revisits the dramatic opening *Andante* before dying away softly. This is a very fine work.



The last work on disk is by **William Walton** (1902-1983) was born in the town of Oldham. Walton's parents were both singers and Walton was trained as chorister. He took a few lessons in composition while at Christ Church College, Oxford but was largely self-taught. Mostly known for his larger works, in his early years, he did write a considerable amount of instrumental music. Walton admitted that it was Herbert Howells winning the Carnegie Prize for his **Piano Quartet** that had inspired him to write one of his own. He began work on in 1918. He finished it in 1920 but revised it several times, even after it won the Carnegie Prize of 1924. The last revision took place in 1976. In four movements, the work begins with an *Allegremente*. This is dominated by the interplay between two themes. The music is mostly animated and at times agitated as well. Next comes a restless *Scherzo* which contains an energetic fugue. The third movement, *Andante tranquillo*, is rather like the music of Howells, who in turn was influenced by Ravel. At the same time, this gentle, pastoral music, clearly evokes the English countryside. The main theme of the closing movement, *Allegro molto*, is dominated more by its rhythm than by its melody but the second subject remedies this by its lyricism. The version presented on this CD is the final revision of 1976 but not the one which won the Carnegie Prize of 1924. It is a good work but one wonders what the original was like.

While this CD set leaves out several other deserving candidates (such as the piano quartets of Parry, Hurlstone, Dunhill and Tovey to name a few), it nonetheless is a very important one, especially because of its recording of the McKenzie, Jacob and Walton piano quartets. Highly recommended.

# FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Jacob



Alexandre Boëly



Gabriel Fauré



Paul Gilson



Stanford



Weingartner



Rubinstein



Thieriot



MacKenzie



Bridge



H. Jadin



Walton

# ONSLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL



# HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANAYEV, REINECKE

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV