



THE
CHAMBER MUSIC
JOURNAL

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

***Giovanni Battista Viotti
3 Concertante String Quartets***

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***Brief Survey of Lesser Known
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The Piano Trios of Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari

Alessandro Brunetti



Hermann Friedrich Wolf, known to the world as Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876-1948) was born in Venice. His father August Wolf was originally from Bavaria and a fairly successful painter, who married a girl from the Venetian nobility, Emilia Ferrari. This confluence of two cultures was to play a pivotal role in his life. He felt himself to be neither fish nor fowl. One might say he had a cultural split personality. At times he felt himself German and, in fact, lived most

of his adult life either in Germany or Austria. Yet, his attachment to Italy was also strong. In 1895, he not only Italianized his first name, but also added his mother's maiden-name Ferrari to Wolf. This dichotomy can be heard in his music. Some of his compositions reflect the sunny and cheerful personality of the Italian, his operas, an example of which is the charming *Secrets of Susanna* (*Il segreto di Susanna*), are filled with bright, catchy bel canto Italian melody. However, other compositions, primarily, his

chamber music, show a Germanic seriousness of intent.

Emilia Ferrari, though not a professional musician, was however an avid amateur. She saw to it that Ermanno received piano lesson from an early age and from the start his tremendous musical ability was apparent. But he also was gifted with an ability to draw and his father wanted to make a painter of him. Torn between music and art, his father's powerful personality in no small part led to his enrolling at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Rome. Eventually, his father suggested he continue his studies in Munich, where he too had studied. But upon arriving in Munich, Ermanno changed directions, deciding that a painter's life was not what he wanted. Instead he enrolled at the Akademie der Tonkunst where his principal composition teacher was Josef Rheinberger. His prodigious musical talent was quickly recognized and he stood poised to win the school's gold medal when he came to his sit final examinations. However, he refused to sit the history of music paper on the grounds that he had learned

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Three Sketches on Hebrew Themes for Clarinet Quintet by Alexander Krein

By Moise Shevitovsky



Alexander Krein (1883-1951) was born the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod. His family had moved there from Vilnius in Lithuania around 1870. His father, a well-known violinist who had one of the leading Klezmer bands of the time, saw to it that all of his children received musical training, initially from him. The result was that three of his sons made names for themselves as musicians. Alexander and his brother Grigori became composers, while a younger brother David was for a while a prominent violinist. The tradition continued for yet another generation as Grigori's son Julian also became a fairly well-known composer during the mid-late Soviet era. Of the lot, it was Alexander who became the best known both in his homeland and abroad where several of his works gained traction.

It may well have been that Krein's father hoped to keep the business in the family. Of his 10 children, 7 became musicians, and all of them, including Alexander, spent their formative years playing gigs in the old man's Klezmer band. To his credit, Krein's father recognized that his talented children deserved more and better training than he could provide. So it was that in 1896, he sent Alexander to study at the Moscow Conservatory. Much has been made of the fact that the boy was only 14 years old, but you must remember that times were different, and this was fairly common. There he studied the cello with Alexander von Glehn and composition with Sergei Taneyev. Both of them looked after Krein and saw to it that he was taken care of properly. This was not so unusual. Rimsky-Korsakov did the same for Alexander Gretchaninov, whose father disowned him when he decided to study music. It was Taneyev who arranged for his young student's first works to be published by Jurgenson, his own publisher. After graduating, Klein was able to obtain a position teaching at one of Moscow's smaller music academies, the People's Conservatory. He also played a major role in the emerging school of Jewish national music as a composer and active member of the Society for Jewish Folk Music. Af-

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3 Concertante String Quartets by G.B. Viotti

by R.H.R. Silvertrust

When one hears the name of Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755-1824), the words "string quartet" are not among the first which come to mind. While most violinists know his name from the twenty plus violin concertos he wrote, a few of which are still occasionally performed and perhaps more frequently assigned to students, the general public has not heard of him. Viotti was perhaps the greatest technical player before the appearance of Paganini, whom he greatly influenced. But although he was a virtuoso violinist, he wrote a lot of music, as did most contemporary musicians, and not just for the violin.

Viotti was born at Fontanetto Po in what is today known as the Italian province of Piedmont. His talent showed itself at an early age and he was taken to Turin where he studied with Gaetano Pugnani, one of the leading violinists of his day. At the age of 18, he obtained a position in that city with the ruling House of Savoy. A few years later, we find him touring with Pugnani. Then in 1782, he made his debut as a

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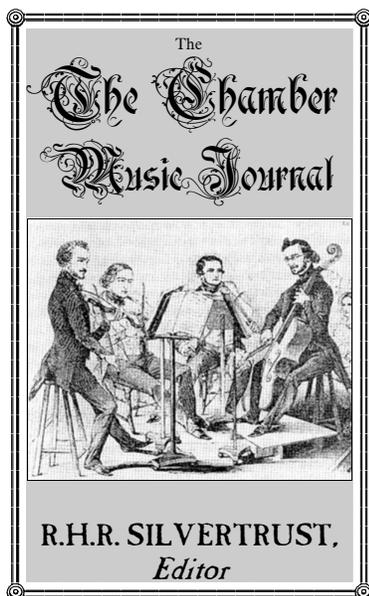
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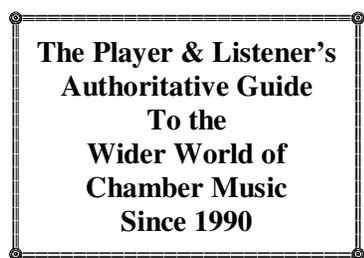
Survey of Lesser Known String Quintets



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The mission of the Chamber Music Journal is to disseminate information about non-standard, rare or unknown chamber music of merit.

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soloist in Paris. The Parisian musical public, consisting almost entirely of aristocrats as did most musical publics of the time, were amazed by his technical prowess. As a result of his performances, he was able to obtain a position at Versailles and then through the support of the king's brother, as director of a new opera house. But the French Revolution made his connections with the royal family quite dangerous and he wisely decided to leave France for England, arriving in London in 1792.

The success he enjoyed in Paris was repeated in London, where his concerts were universally praised. He became a leading soloist and obtained the position of director of the Royal Opera House. He met Haydn during his London visits and performed as a soloist at the concerts given for the Austrian's benefit. However, despite his great popularity, when Britain went to war with France, Viotti was accused of being a French spy and was in 1798 eventually forced to leave England, settling in Hamburg. But by 1800, he was able to return, although he had to 'lay low' and as such was not able to resuscitate his solo career and gave up giving public concerts altogether to escape from the public eye. Instead he became a wine merchant. In 1811, through the efforts of members of the royal family, he was allowed to become a naturalized British subject which allowed him to reenter public life. Thus it was that he helped to found the London Philharmonic Society in 1813, serving for a while as the orchestra's concertmaster. Eventually, toward the end of 1818, his wine business began to fail and with no visible means of support, he was forced to accept a position which was offered to him as director of the Parisian Académie Royale de Musique, where he served from 1819 to 1821. Shortly before his death, he was able to return to London, where a few months later he died.

Viotti's influence as a violinist cannot be over estimated and it is not just because of his musical compositions. Among his students were Pierre Rode, Pierre Baillot and Johann Pixis. And though he never taught Rodolphe Kreutzer, he greatly influenced him. Rode, Baillot and Kreutzer were the three most important French violinists as well as teachers of the first half of the 19th century and were together said to have created what was later dubbed the French School of Violin Playing. So Viotti is often regarded as the so-called founder of this method. Beyond this, his style of playing as well as his use of the Italian cantilena style of bowing, had a huge influence of Nicolo Paganini, who many felt modeled his playing on that of Viotti.

As already noted, Viotti's best known compositions are his violin concertos, generally thought to be some 29 in number. However, he wrote a fair amount of chamber music, perhaps because throughout most of his life, he was an active chamber music player and performer. But as might be expected, in almost all of his string quartets, the first violin part has virtually all of the melody and interest. And though he was conversant with the works of Haydn and Mozart, he largely ignored their developments in favor of writing 'mini-concertos' for the first violin, with the other voices performing an accompaniment role as would an orchestra. As such, these works are Quatuors Brillants, a format made better known and used quite often by the virtuoso violinist Louis Spohr.

However, his Tre Quartetti Concertanti, G.112, 113 and 114 (after Remo Giazotto who catalogued Viotti's works doing for Viotti what Koechel did for Mozart), composed in 1815 and then published in Paris in 1817, are true concertante works offering extensive solos for each instrument and not just the first violin. In addition to string quartets, Viotti also often wrote chamber music for more traditional combinations such as two violins and cello. The Op.18 and 19 are perhaps the best known of these and are still in print today. He also wrote sonatas, songs, and other works.

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Brief Survey of Lesser Known String Quintets

Part I Quintets of Two Violins, Two Violas and Violoncello

By Renz Opolis

As I embark upon this brief survey of string quintets, I again make the disclaimer which preceded earlier articles such as my survey of string sextets. To wit: You may know of a quintet which I do not mention in this article. You may know of several, especially if string quintets are your thing. However, this is a "brief" and opinionated, but not an exhaustive survey. I have no idea as to how many string quintets have been written, perhaps a thousand, perhaps more. People like Boccherini, Krommer, the brothers Wranitzky and Onslow (to name but a few) contributed dozens of such works. But I ask, as I did in my earlier articles on sextets and octets, how often does one play string quintets. Most likely more often than you will play sextets, not to mention septets, octets and nonets, if only because the more people required, the harder it is to arrange for such a session. Of course, there may be those among you who have a quintet which meets regularly. But, to be sure, you are in the minority as most standing groups are either string quartets or piano trios. In any event, it goes without saying that before you seek out the so-called lesser known quintets, among which there are certainly many treasures, you should begin with the tried and true famous works, which are deservedly famous because they are first rate works. And which works are these? Well, most people would agree that Mozart's K.515 and 516 qualify. Some might add K.593 and 614. Brahms' Opp.88 and 111 are on everyone's list. Then there is the Dvorak Op.97, which many regard as finer than the Op.96 American String Quartet. Perhaps a more controversial addition to this list, but one which I fully support, is Brucker's Quintet in F Major, without opus, from 1879. All of the above mentioned are for two violins, two violas and cello, the so-called viola quintet. (I omit mention of Schubert's quintet in this part of my survey because it is not for 2 violins, 2 violas and cello but for 2 cellos)

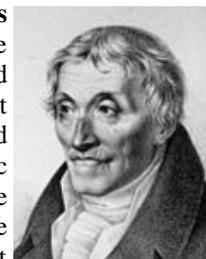
Beyond the above, there are works which are well-known, and considered by some to be first rate. These works, however, had they been composed by someone whose last name was Smith or Schmidt, would have been consigned to the category of lesser known if one is being entirely objective. The first of these is the Op.29 by Beethoven. It is an acceptable, decent work, but not one of Ludwig's best and certainly not worth the attention it has received. Then we have two entries by Felix Mendelssohn, the Opp.18 and 87. These are harder to categorize. Unlike the Beethoven, there are many moments of brilliance and beautiful writing. Of the two, the Op.87 is by far the stronger work. The First, Op.18, though only two opus numbers away from his famous Op.16 Octet, with the exception of the very fine Scherzo, is fairly ordinary and somewhat disappointing. The Op.87 is altogether finer, especially the wonderful Adagio, one of Mendelssohn's most exquisite creations, which alone justifies playing the quintet. The other movements are appealing, although the quintet does, at times, suffer from a surfeit of sawing.

Now that you have familiarized yourself with the famous, you are ready to jump in and see what else there is. And, there is plenty. I shall deal with the works based roughly on when they were composed. In addition to those works I shall recommend to you, I also will issue warnings as to works I believe are not worth your time, unless you are on some record breaking project to play every

quintet ever written. (I expect someone out there will strenuously disagree with some of my warnings, but then, that's life.)

To begin with, we have **Josef Myslivecek** (1737-1781) whose six Op.2 String Quintets, dating from 1767, may qualify as the earliest such works ever written. That, I think, is the only possible reason for ever wanting to play any of them. **Michael Haydn** (1737-1806), younger brother of Franz Josef, wrote at least two—two more than Franz Josef, who when asked why he never wrote a string quintet is said to have answered that no one ever asked him to. Anyway, other than the fact that these works were written by *the* Haydn's brother, they may be safely ignored. **Luigi Boccherini** (1743-1805) wrote a number of viola quintets, but the best of his quintets are for two cellos and as such I do not think the others are worth your time. Moving right along, we have the Austro-Czech **Georg Druschetzky** (1745-1814) and the German **Johann Friedrich Peter** (1746-1813). As for them, it is enough to merely mention their names.

The Quintets of the Austrian **Emmanuel Alois Forster** (1748-1823) are worth investigating. He is said to have been admired by Beethoven and knew both Haydn and Mozart. I am not sure just how many he composed, but his Opp.19, 20 and 26 show originality and some good thematic writing as well as accomplished handling of the instruments. The problem is getting a hold of the works. There are no modern editions to the best of my knowledge although there has been a recent recording so perhaps someone has brought them out.



We have already mentioned the four best quintets by **Mozart**, nonetheless, you may wish to have a look at K.174 and 406.

Paul Wranitzky (1756-1812), friend to Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, wrote at least nine, his Opp.18, 29 and 39, each a set of three. I am only familiar with the Op.29. There are no modern editions and, judging from the Op.29, I do not think any are justified.



Franz Krommer (1760-1831) is said to have written some 20 string quintets. How many of these were for the standard viola quintet, I do not know. Krommer is problematic in that his work is uneven. Some of it is very good but there is much which is only ordinary and deserves to be forgotten. I have played a few from his six Op.25 quintets off old editions and recall liking them. Altmann, in his Handbook, singles out the Op.80 but says it will only appeal to those who are fans of the classical era. In any event, there are no modern editions and no recordings of which I am aware. This is too bad.

Just to let you know, Beethoven wrote one other quintet, his Op.4, which had it been composed by anyone else would deservedly be forgotten.

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Moderato (♩ = 112)

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The first of this set of three, is the String Quartet in F Major, G.112, The quartet opens Moderato with a gentle Italian vocal melody in the first violin. (see above example) Soon the others join in and gradually momentum picks up. Later on, Viotti creates some very original tonal touches in the dialogue between the cello and first violin.

A somewhat dark Minuetto comes next. The pace is brisk--Piu tosto presto--is what Viotti asks for. The trio is a simple but lovely Ländler type theme. (see the example below)

There is no slow movement, for the following Andante, while not fast, certainly does not lag. The theme is straight forward, but the embellishments give it piquancy. The finale, Allegretto, begins with a jaunty little melody which becomes more lively as it restated and again anticipates Paganini. (example below)

The middle work of the set, String Quartet in B flat Major, G.113, is also in four movements. It quartet begins with an introductory Larghetto, which is quite unusual for featuring three short cadenzas, one after another (first the 1st Violin, then the 2nd Violin, then the cello) before the main part of the movement Tempo giusto gets under way. The lovely melody reminds one that it was Viotti upon whom Paganini built. (example below)

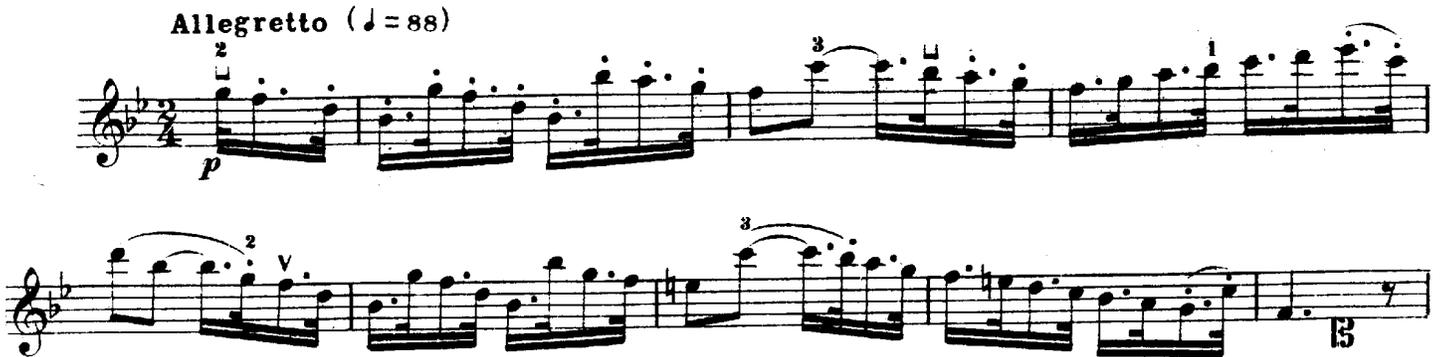
Tempo giusto (Piuttosto vivo) (♩ = 112)

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The second movement, Andante, is the least concertante in style of the four movements and more in the harmonic style pioneered by the Vienna Classical Composers. It is a theme with a lovely set of variations. The third movement, a Minuetto, begins with an interesting stutter-step rhythm and has a somewhat sad quality to it. The finale, Allegretto, once again, gives us an example of the kind writing we associate with Paganini--but, of course, it was Paganini who learned from Viotti and not the other way around. The First Violin presents the opening theme with the Viola giving a jaunty rejoinder. (see example below)

Allegretto (♩ = 88)



Later, we hear the cello bring forth the lovely second theme high in its tenor register. (below example)

Poco meno *Dolce espress.*



The finale work, the String Quartet in G Major, G.114, is, like the two preceding quartets, also in four movements. It begins with an introductory Larghetto. This is followed by the main part of the movement, Allegro comodo which has a coy and charming theme that suddenly explodes with energy. (see below)

Allegro comodo (♩ = 108)



The somewhat sad, lyrical second theme is first heard high in the cello tenor register. (below example)

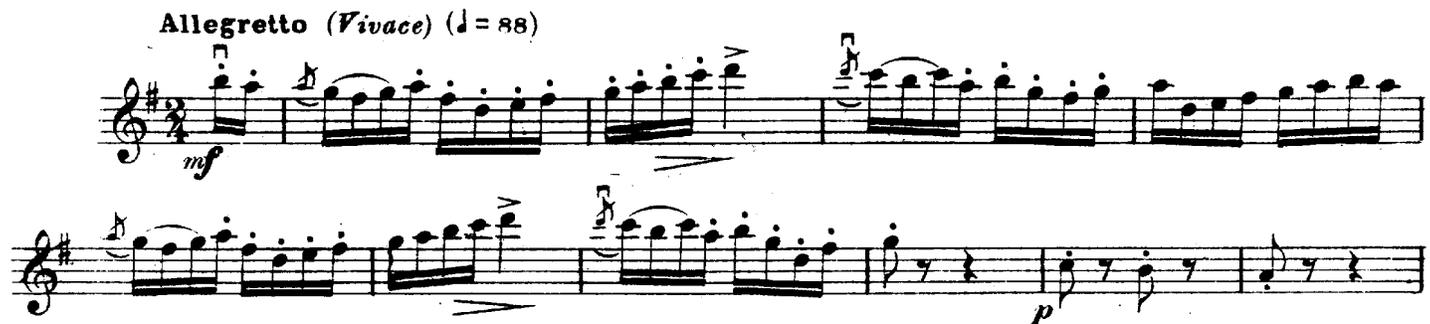
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A Minuetto comodo is placed second which, for the time, was unusual. The fetching themes are models of lovely Italian vocal melody.



A languid Andantino follow. Here, Viotti combines the concertante style with the more forward technique found in the Vienna classical composers. In the lively finale, Allegretto vivace, we can see how Viotti's music provided an example which Paganini was to follow.



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Brief Survey of Lesser Known Viola Quintets

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Peter Hänsel (1770-1831), a student of Haydn's, composed four quintets, Opp.9, 13, 15 and 28. I am only familiar with the first, Op.9, which enjoyed more than one printing. Again, I played it off a very old edition (there is no new ones, although I have heard Edition Silvertrust is planning to bring one out sometime in the future.) It was a good, though not great work. Probably not worth your effort unless you enjoy playing off of hard to read music. Altmann apparently was not familiar with any of them and simply reprinted what Hugo Riemann wrote in his *Musiklexikon*.



The peripatetic **Sigismund Neukomm** (1778-1858), another student of Haydn's who got as far as Brazil, wrote over 1000 works. Despite the fact that he and his music were held in high regard, especially during the classical era, the fact that he outlived it by 50 years probably is why all but a few of his works have disappeared. I do not know how many viola quintets he wrote, (Edition Silvertrust on their website says three), but recently there has been a recording of two programmatic works: *L'amante abandonnee* and *Une fete de village en Suisse* I have heard both and thanks to Edition Silvertrust have played the first. It is an interesting work. Composed in 1813, the quintet tells, as the title suggests, the story of an abandoned lover. Each

of its three movements represents a different state—Being in love, Unfaithfulness and finally of Despair at finding one's lover has been unfaithful. The first movement, entitled *Amour*, tonally describes all of the highs and lows of being in love—flirting, desire, arousal and the threat of disappointment. The music is graceful and elegant. The second movement, entitled *Infidélité*, is a theme and set of variations based on the French folksong, *I can hear the flute of my fickle shepherd*. (the music was composed while he was in Paris) Neukomm uses some very creative harmonies. In the finale, *Désespoir*, the desperation of one who has been jilted is well characterized by the allegro agitato.

Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838), one of Beethoven's best known students and his first biographer, wrote four viola quintets, Opp.37, 68, 167 and 171. I am familiar with none of them although Altmann devotes some space to the last. None have been recorded and there are no modern editions. It is generally agreed that his chamber music with piano is his best, although some of his string quartets are noteworthy.



George Onslow (1784-1853), no stranger to these pages, wrote some 34 string quintets. All but the first three and last three were originally for 2 cellos, although in the interest of sales he also created a second viola part as a replacement for the first cello and a bass part as a replacement for the second cello so that many of his quintets

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can be played in three or four combinations. I will confine myself to the six dedicated, that is to say, original viola quintets. The first three are his Op.1 composed around 1800 before he had taken any formal composition lessons. They are surprisingly good. In the late classical mode, they do not, however, sound like Haydn or Mozart or Beethoven, but rather have a fresh sound all of their own. As this is a brief survey, and given the fact that his last three viola quintets are masterworks, I shall discuss the Op.1 no further except to say that they are worthwhile, but have not been reprinted or recorded. **String Quintet No.32 in d minor, Op.78** is the first of his three masterworks for string quintet. It was completed in 1849 and upon its publication in 1851 became immensely popular. The opening movement, Allegro pathetico e moderato, is full of foreboding and tension leading to several episodes of telling pathos. The second movement, a Beethovenian Scherzo, is one of the most exciting scherzos Onslow, or anyone else for that matter, ever wrote. A peaceful Andante affettuoso, follows. The exciting finale, Allegro molto vivace, brings the work to a rousing conclusion. **String Quintet No.33 in c minor, Op.80** was completed in 1850 and was, upon its publication in 1852, also an immediate success. The opening movement, Allegro Grandioso, full of effective chromaticism, is quite dramatic. The second movement, Scherzo molto vivace, has a hard-driving main theme which leaves neither listener nor player a chance to catch their breaths. The military march of the trio section seamlessly changes the tempo from 3/4 to 2/4. The third movement, Andante sostenuto, is a quiet pastorale of great beauty. The incredible finale, Molto vivace, is a true "moto perpetuo", brilliantly executed from start to finish. This is, without doubt, one of the most exciting and one of the very best string quintets in the literature. **String Quintet No.34 in E Major, Op.82**, is Onslow's last work for strings. It was completed in 1850 shortly after his thirty third quintet. It is different in character from the preceding two works, no doubt in part because of its key. Its mood is primarily bright and there are no great dramatic outbursts or storms. The opening Allegro grazioso, is graceful and elegant. The second movement, a Scherzo molto vivace, bursts forth, driving forward with great impulsiveness. The trio section not only provides a fine contrast but is quite unusual in that the melody consists of very short notes played against a guitar-like pizzicato accompaniment in the cello. Next comes a stately Andantino, The finale, Allegro molto vivace, is upbeat and genial. These three quintets enjoyed several editions and reprints throughout the 19th century, but languished and were impossible to obtain, except through antiquarian dealers, until each was reprinted by Edition Silvertrust within the past few years. Every string quintet party should add these three quintets to their library.

Louis (originally Ludwig) **Spohr** (1784-1859) wrote seven viola quintets, Opp. 33 Nos 1 & 2, 69, 91, 106, 129 and 144. Altmann, rather surprisingly I think, devotes quite a lot of space to them, while glossing over the Onslow's. Anyway, some of these works have been reprinted by SJ Music and other publishers. Most have been recorded. They are uneven and to a great extent suffer from what I call Spohritis, the excessive use of chromaticism coupled with the excessive use of trills and mordents, requiring a special kind of technical ability which many violinists find bothersome and difficult, but of which Spohr himself was a past-master. Dr. Jacobs in his article on Spohr (see Volume IX No.4) also thinks these works are worthwhile and singles out No.5, the Op.106, for especial praise, while at the same time owning up to the defects

that one finds in many of the others. For my part, I find that Spohr did have a gift for melody and that several of his works, such as the double quartets and nonet, pretty much escape from the crippling defects of Spohritis, but not his quintets.

The four viola quintets, Opp.8, 9, 15 and 20 of **Friedrich Fesca** (1789-1826) are panned by Altmann, who says that the first violin has all of the thematic material and that the other parts are boring. Yet despite this, he reproduces a two and one half page tribute to Fesca by Carl Maria von Weber. Doesn't make sense to me. Anyway, although I have played a few of Fesca's string quartets which I rather liked and have a recording of his septets which I also found appealing, I am unfamiliar with any of his string quintets and have neither seen any modern edition nor heard any recording.

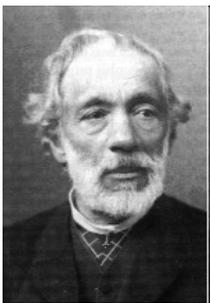


Anselm Hüttenbrenner (1794-1868), a very close friend of Franz Schubert, wrote some interesting music, including a string quartet which gave Schubert the idea for his Death and the Maiden string quartet. Hüttenbrenner's chamber music undeniably bears a resemblance to that of Schubert, perhaps because a 'cross-pollination' of ideas was taking place. The two were school fellows and close friends who spent hour upon hour with each other, talking

and carousing, showing and performing their new works to each other. Hüttenbrenner's String Quintet in c minor dates from 1819. The first movement, Andante con moto, has a diffident melody delivered in part by the first violin and in part by the cello. For much of the movement, these 2 voices are involved in a constant conversation, which because of the difference in pitch creates a continual sense of drama, a technique also employed by Schubert during this period. A delightful Allegro con spirito which follows is an early Viennese scherzo, very Schubertian. Hüttenbrenner, uses two trios, each of them quite lyrical and providing fine contrast. A reflective Andante comes next. Again, we find a technique, the tremolo, which Hüttenbrenner uses to create drama employed by Schubert in a similar fashion, but only later. The exciting finale, Allegretto moderato, with its dotted rhythm and its no less impressive, dramatic subjects make a good conclusion. This is an excellent work from the early romantic era. Very Viennese, one could even say that this is a quintet very much like what Schubert would have written had he chosen to write one during this time. At least two publishers, Akkord and Edition Silvertrust, have brought out modern editions.

Wenzel Heinrich (Vaclav Jindrich) **Veit** (1806-1864) has at least one viola quintet to his credit, Op.29. It was also available in a version for two cellos although Altmann says it was originally for 2 violas. Veit's chamber music received high praise from Schumann. I have played this Op.29 and it is a decent work but there is no modern edition, though I think it good enough to justify one. The part writing is good and there are many appealing melodies. There is no recording.

Eduard Franck (1817-1893), a student of Mendelssohn, wrote two viola quintets. Both works have their moments. His String Quintet No.1 in e minor, Op.15 was published in 1850. The first two movements are very Mendelssohnian, this is especially true of the scherzo which comes second. The third movement, Andante, is in the form of a sarabande and the most original of the



work. The main subject to the finale, Prestissimo, is rather ordinary. There are no modern reprints or editions although it has recently been recorded along with String Quintet No.2 in C Major, Op.51. Although the Op.51 was composed in the 1870's, it was not published until 1897, four years after Franck's death. It is, in my opinion, the better of the two works. The opening Allegro is by turns both lyrical and passionate. An excellent, elegiac Andante

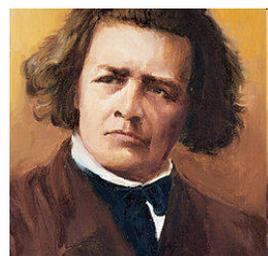
follows. A charming scherzo, marked Menuetto allegretto, comes next. The finale is a theme and set of variations. It is rare that such a plan works for a finale, but here it does. Though it, too, is Mendelssohnian (not so much as Quintet No.1) I think it deserves your consideration and an occasional performance in the concert hall. The parts and score are available from Edition Silvertrust.



Niels Gade (1817-1890), Mendelssohn's handpicked successor as director of the Leipzig Conservatory, wrote a viola quintet early in his career, the Op.8 in e minor, which appeared in 1846. Like Franck, Gade seemed unable to escape Mendelssohn's influence which we hear from time to time. The opening Allegro espressivo resembles a Legend. A slow Allegretto is a Mendelssohnian song without words. A restless, syncopated Presto, comes next. It is full of passion. In the finale, more than elsewhere, we hear the influence of Mendelssohn, nonetheless it is a relatively effective movement. I would rate this work on the level of the Franck No.2, a good but not great work though certainly worth a look-see.

Adolphe Blanc, (1828-1888) according to Altmann, wrote three viola quintets, Opp.15, 19 and 99. He singles out No.2 for praise. I am familiar with none of them although most of the chamber music of Blanc's which I have played or heard such as his string trios and septet, I rather like. The thing is that you will only find these works, if at all, in antiquarian shops.

Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) composed his Quintet in F Major, Op.59 in 1862. I played it once many years ago and recall thinking it was a good work. Altmann has many good things to say about it. Here is a composer, whose chamber music has, in my opinion, unfamilarly received rather short shrift. Many of his quartets and sonatas are excellent and his piano trios are first rate. Fortunately, some of these works have been recorded and reprinted. No so, the viola quintet. Based on what Altmann writes, I would hope things change.



Ernst Naumann (1832-1910) wrote 2 viola quintets. His first, the Op.6 in C Major dates from 1862. I am not familiar with it, but Altmann rates it as a decent work which would interest amateur players. I have played the second, String Quintet in E flat Major, Op.13, composed in 1880. The opening Allegro con brio, is full of forward motion and quite effective. The lyrical second theme is especially fine. Next comes a Moderato which in style is close to an intermezzo. The lovely and lyrical third movement, Andante cantabile, spreads the thematic material nicely between the instru-

ments. A bright finale, Presto con fuoco, closes the quintet. This finale, though decent, is not, in my opinion, as strong as the preceding three movements and for this reason I cannot call the quintet a masterwork, but it is certainly first rate and well-worth your attention. Currently out of print, I have heard that Edition Silvertrust will be making it available sometime next year.

In the mid 1880's, the Danish composer, a student of Gade, composed his String Quintet in D Major, Op.23. The work is in five movements and begins with a lovely, lyrical and at times dramatic Allegro grazioso. Next comes a Mendelssohnian Intermezzo with a nicely contrasting canonic middle section. The stately, somber middle movement, Andante Largo, is based on a folk tune. A somewhat stormy middle section with Hungarian overtones interrupts the calm of the main part. Then comes a fleet and elegant Scherzo. The finale, Allegro con fuoco, is an energetic, jovial romp. This is a strong work, though not a masterpiece, it is first rate and very well worth your time. Parts may be had from Edition Silvertrust..



Max Bruch (1838-1920) wrote a viola quintet. The question is when was his Quintet in a minor composed. The work was discovered in the 1990's. Some scholars date it as 1918 others as an early work composed in the 1860's but perhaps touched up or completed towards the end of Bruch's life. A first edition was made by Kunzelmann, on very nice paper q.v. Brahms, around 1995. Despite some appealing melodies, I cannot say I found it any better than ordinary. Most of the thematic material is vouchsafed the first violin and Bruch does not seem to make much use of the violas. I think had not been composed by Bruch, it might never have seen the light of day. Of course, you can decide for yourself since the work is in print and has been recorded on CD.

The 1874 String Quintet in A major of **Josef Rheinberger** (1839-1901) in my opinion is a masterwork which can stand alongside the quintets of Brahms. The opening movement, Allegro, begins with a fleet but hard-driving main theme. The second movement is a highly romantic and very broad Adagio molto with a powerful and passionate middle section, A highly rhythmic and fiery Scherzo vivace comes next. The superb finale, Rhapsodie non troppo mosso, is in the Hungarian style. Here is a work not to be missed by either amateurs or pros. Parts and score can be had from Edition Silvertrust.

Friedrich Gernsheim (1839-1916) wrote his String Quintet in D Major, Op.9 in 1868. Altmann praises it without reservation to both professionals and amateurs. Surprisingly, there is no recording although it was brought out in a new edition by Amadeus about a decade ago. It is indeed a very good work. It begins with a warm, lyrical Allegro and is followed by an Allegretto moderato which is in the form of an updated minuet. A deeply felt slow movement, Andante es-



(Continued on page 10)



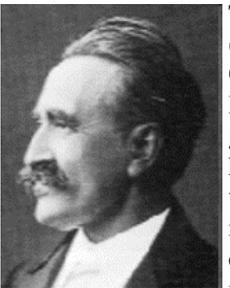
(Continued from page 9)

pressivo, complete with a fine, stormy middle section, comes next. The effective finale, *Allegro molto vivace e con fuoco* is akin to a Mendelssohnian *moto perpetuo*. Here again is a work which in quality is right up there with the better known works and well worth your time.



Johan Svendsen (1840-1911), a Carl Reinecke student at the Leipzig Conservatory, wrote all of his chamber music at the very beginning of his career. Unlike Gade's quintet which will disappoint those looking for Nordic flavor, Svendsen's String Quintet in C Major, Op.5 is brimming over with it. Dating from 1867, the work begins with a substantial *Andante* introduction which builds tension and introduces the main theme. Almost imperceptibly, the *Andante*

changes into an *Allegro*. A lighter second theme has a Nordic sea flavor. The big second movement, *Tema con Variazione*, is the Quintet's center of gravity. The theme is a pretty, somewhat melancholy folk tune. It is the magnificent treatment of this theme given in the several superb variations which follow that has always attracted attention and high praise. The finale, *Allegro*, is built around a dance theme, perhaps a Norwegian folk dance. It becomes faster and faster while building in tension. The lyrical and more gentle second subject also has Nordic tinges about it. This is a very good work, perhaps not a masterwork, but pretty close. The parts are available from a number of publishers and it has been recorded more than once.



The Swedish composer **Johan Lindegren** (1842-1908) composed his massive String Quintet in F Major in 1870. It was not published until 1907. I have played it. It is a good work, well-written. The problem I have with it is that while the whole thing is workmanlike, the thematic material, which is generally handled very well and cannot be called threadbare or weak, nonetheless, in my opinion, is simply not memorable. One

says, ah, that's nice but it leaves no real impression. Perhaps you will decide otherwise. Parts can be had from Edition Silvertrust.



Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1843-1900) wrote his String Quintet in c minor, Op.77 in 1892. The broad, opening *Allegro appassionato*, though not particularly passionate, is at times dark, at times genial. The second movement, *Poco adagio*, is a set of variations which has a folksong for its theme. The ghostly Scherzo which comes next is the most original and memorable of the movements. The excellent finale begins with a Brucknerian

Adagio introduction that leads to an *Allegro tranquillo* which sounds very similar to Brahms' *Academic Overture*. That the finale sounds so much like Brahms could not have been an accident, given that Herzogenberg was a huge admirer of Brahms' music. Not quite a masterpiece, but certainly a very good work which you are sure to enjoy. The work has been recorded and parts can be had from a number of publishers



The String Quintet in c minor by Austro-Slovak **Jan Levoslav Bella** (1843-1936), was composed in 1868. The fine, big opening *Allegro appassionato*, begins softly with a yearning theme played over a tremolo which creates considerable drama. The lovely second theme, with its echoes of Schubert and Bruckner, quickly rises to an intense dramatic climax. A light and delicate Scherzo is full of fetching melodies and framed by a nicely contrasting

trio section. The wonderful third movement, *Adagietto*, begins in canonic fashion. The heavy and deliberate main subject moves forward slowly and as it is developed we hear distant echoes of Schubert's *Death & the Maiden* Quartet, also in d minor. The powerful climax is approached in, what was for the time, a very modern fashion, anticipating Richard Strauss by more than 2 decades. The finale, *Presto*, begins somewhat pensively before the first violin breaks loose in a Hungarian flurry. I cannot make up my mind as to whether to rate this as a masterwork, but if it is not, then it is as close as you can come without being one. Parts are available from a couple of different publishers and it was recorded on CD.



Franz Ries (1846-1932) was a nephew of the more famous Ferdinand. He studied with Friedrich Kiel in Berlin and then entered and graduated from the Paris Conservatory. There is, however, nothing French to be heard in his fine String Quintet in c minor of 1876. The cello is given the lead in introducing the attractive main theme of the opening, somewhat Beethovenian *Allegro poco agitato*. A piquant *Intermezzo* in the

tradition of Mendelssohn follows. A set of variations based on a funereal theme comes next. Though in no way imitative, the aura of Schubert's d minor quartet hovers over the music. A hard-driving and stormy finale rounds out a very good work and one which I have enjoyed playing more than once. No recordings and not currently in print, Edition Silvertrust plans to make it available in late 2012 or early 2013.



The Anglo-Irishman, **Charles Villiers Stanford**, a student of Reinecke and Friedrich Kiel and friend Brahms, must be considered the most important figure in late 19th century British chamber music which he single-handedly resuscitated, teaching such later stars as Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, Frank Bridge, Ernst Moeran, Arthur Bliss, and Percy Grainger.

His own chamber music is first rate and the three movement String Quintet in F Major, Op.85 from 1903 is a prime example of this. The buoyant opening *Allegro* is richly written and followed by an effective and lovely *Andante* where the first viola is given a chance to shine. The finale is actually two movements in one. It begins with an *Allegretto* which serves as a scherzo and then is linked to the finale, a set of variations based on an Irish folk song. It is a very good work, perhaps not a masterpiece, but close and certainly worth playing. It has been recorded and is available from more than one publisher.



Hans Koessler (1853-1926), student of Josef Rheinberger and teacher of Dohnanyi, Bartok, Kodaly and Leo Weiner, wrote his masterly String Quintet in d minor in 1913. It is a Brahmsian work, but, reflecting developments, slightly more modern in some of its tonalities and effects. The powerful main theme of the opening Allegro appassionato expresses a sense of urgency while a second lyrical and contrasting second theme has a dance-like folk melody. A solemn Adagio comes next and begins in an atmosphere of pious devotion, but soon doubt and anxiety gain the upper hand. The third movement, a Scherzo, features a rustic, and at times, coarse Bavarian melody. Here, the use of tonality is original-sounding and highly effective. An exciting finale, complete with a brief Hungarian quote from his friend Brahms', tops off this masterwork. It was recorded not too long ago and parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.



Major, Op.16 was dedicated to the memory of the famous Russian chamber music publisher and benefactor M.P. Belaiev. It is a work of almost symphonic proportions. The first movement, Allegro sostenuto is predominantly serious. The magnificent first theme is rhythmically unique, the lyrical second theme is full of pain. The third theme tries to strike a somewhat more friendly mood. Next comes a noble Adagio espressivo which is followed by an Allegretto scherzando, full of many different tempi and is very close at points to a mazurka. The finale, Vivace e con fuoco, is thematically related to the opening movement. Spirited and full of superb writing topped off by an outstanding fugue at the end. Many rank this quintet as a masterwork. I have never quiet felt that way though it is undeniably very, very fine. Parts are available from M.P. Belaiev, Peters and others.



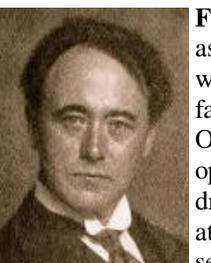
The Austrian **Richard Perger** (1854-1911) wrote his String Quintet in D Major, Op.10 in 1887. Like Herzogenberg, he was a Brahms admirer, some say he studied with him. Altmann has good things to say about the work, noting that it plays well, sounds good and has good part writing though at times is somewhat orchestral. I own a beautiful first and only edition and have played it. I would agree with Altmann but must admit that like much of Perger's chamber music, this Quintet takes a bit of work to make it all hang together. Though I would rate it worthwhile, since it is not in print and there is no recording, I will leave it at that.



Victor Ewald (1860-1935) was a professor of civil engineering at the university in St Petersburg but played cello in Belaiev's string quartet. Like Borodin, he received help from Rimsky-Korsakov and others. He is known for his Brass Quintets. But in 1895 he penned his Op.4 String Quintet in A Major. It sounds like the music of the Belaiev Circle, like the pieces from Les Vendredis. Light, bright with lovely melodies. No great passion, pathos or drama are to be found, but it is a very nicely conceived work which I can recommend as a sorbet-like palate cleanser between two heavier works. Unfortunately, there are no recordings and the music is not currently in print.



From **Prince Heinrich XXIV Reuss** (1855-1910), yet another Brahms acolyte, comes a very appealing string quintet. Reuss and his music have never really been taken as seriously as they should have been because he was not a "professional" composer but a prince who composed. This, in fact, is false. He formally studied with Carl Reissiger and Herzogenberg, and informally with Brahms. He composed a fair amount of music, including six symphonies, five string quartets, two string sextets, a piano trio and a piano quartet. His String Quintet in F Major dates from 1887. The quintet begins with a massive, jovial and bustling Allegro moderato. In the Scherzo which comes next we hear echoes of Mendelssohnian elves' dances as well as tinges of Hungarian folk music. It is followed by a fine Romance, Andante con moto, and a somewhat Beethovenian finale. While the thematic material, for the most part is quite good and memorable, it must be admitted that Reuss, while in no way being merely imitative, is a kind of amalgam of Mendelssohn, Dvorak, Herzogenberg and Brahms. It is this almost deja vu quality which, in my opinion, prevents this work from qualifying as a masterwork. There is no recording but parts can be had from Edition Silvertrust.



Felix Weingartner (1863-1942), better known as a conductor than as a composer, nonetheless wrote some very fine music which has been unfairly ignored. His String Quintet in C Major, Op.40, dates from 1906. The highly effective opening Allegro con brio, is full of energetic and dramatic thematic material which keeps one's attention riveted the whole time. The charming second movement, Allegretto grazioso is in the form of an updated rococo dainty minuet. The lively and fleet trio, which is repeated twice, is a two step dance and provides superb contrast. The following movement, Molto agitato e passionato, is a recitative, in which the first violin is given the lead. It is succeeded by a simple, naïve air, which is skillfully and ingeniously varied. A big, magnificent finale, Allegro e marcato deciso in c minor, is full of passion and brilliant climaxes. Make no mistake, this work requires experienced players but I believe it qualifies for the sobriquet of masterwork. It was recently recorded and parts are available form Edition Silvertrust.

Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915), a student of Tchaikovsky and one of the major figures in late 19th and early 20th century Russian music wrote a massive viola quintet in 1903. The String Quintet in C

Alexander Winkler (1865-1935), one of Russia's ethnic Germans, studied in Moscow, St. Petersburg and then Vienna and Paris. On the outer parameters of the Belaiev Circle, his music, though sharing some of the same characteristics, is not quite as Russian-sounding. His String Quintet in e minor, Op.11 was published by Belaiev in 1906. The beautiful, somewhat elegiac opening movement, Molto moderato ed espressivo, begins with a lovely cello solo. The second theme is more in line with the Belaiev Circle and somewhat quicker. A very effective, fleet

Scherzo follows with some rather tricky handoffs between the voices. Next comes a melancholy Poco tranquillo in which the viola is given the lead in presenting the warm thematic material. The Finale, Allegro con brio, opens unusually with a fugue. But this is no academic exercise but a rousing example of what can be done with this form. A very good work which is first rate all the way. Parts available from Belaiev, Peters & Silvertrust.



after his death. This, too, is a pretty good work, although by the time he wrote it, it was fairly antiquated as to style. Compared to several of the aforementioned works, composed in the 1880's or even earlier, it sounds old. It could easily have been composed around 1855. Anyway, there is still there is much to like as regards its lovely melodies, especially in the opening



The Danish composer **Carl Nielsen** (1865-1931) wrote a String Quintet in G Major in 1888, but it had to wait until 1977 to see the light of day when it was finally published by Samfundet Til Udgivelse af Dansk Music. I don't why this was so. It's a rather good work and I don't think there is any evidence Nielsen did not want it published. Good as it is, it does not play itself, not because of any extreme rhythmic problems

but simple because it is at times difficult to put together. The substantial first movement, Allegro pastorale, takes a while to get going but the main theme when it fully reveals itself is of a heroic nature and memorable. A warmly felt Adagio is straight forward and is followed by a playful and original Allegretto scherzando. The music is sharp, angular and full of surprising twists and turns. One who is familiar with Nielsen's string quartets would immediately recognize this as Nielsen. The angularity of the preceding movement is carried over into the Allegro molto finale. The work is surprisingly ahead of its time and it sounds like no one else giving it an attractive freshness. I believe the parts are still in print and recordings are available.

Allegro moderato, although the piquant Scherzo which follows is also quite effective. Next comes a dramatic Adagio which is followed by a Vivace finale in which there is too much thrashing about to too little effect. I have played the work once and would recommend it if you can find parts as it is not in print and there are no recordings.



Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) wrote his Phantasy Quintet in 1912 for the annual Cobbett Competition, designed to encourage the younger generation of British composers to write chamber music. The lovely, opening Prelude uses pentatonic melody. The second movement, a Scherzo, is quite unusual with its asymmetrical rhythm and ostinato. Perhaps there is a vague aura of Ravel. Next comes a muted Alla

Sarabanda sans cello which rejoins the proceedings in the finale, Burlesca, based on a folk song, An interesting but not a great work. Parts are available from several publishers



Max Schillings (1868-1933) wrote only a few pieces of chamber music. His String Quintet in e minor was his last. Schillings was a Wagnerian and the first movement, *Mäßig bewegt*, to some extent sounds like that composer although Schillings' tonal language is far in advance showing he was well aware of the new developments being made by those still choosing to write tonal music. As a result, while the heroic main theme clearly shows the influence of Wagner, the music

itself is no longer of that period and bears all the hallmarks of those pushing tonality to its limits. The same can be said of the highly charged and romantic second movement, *Sehr getragen*. It is the longest of the four movements and serves as the center of gravity for the quintet. Slow, and occasionally with a vague aura of *Tristan*, the music is melancholy and introspective. An appealing, vigorous scherzo, *Schnell un lebendig*, is, on the whole, upbeat and tonally more conservative than the preceding two movements. One even hears some of the traits of the French impressionists. The gentler trio section has an undercurrent of resignation. The finale, *Kräftig bewegt und fest*, begins by flaunting a series of strident chords. It proceeds fitfully, with each section seemingly unrelated. Of the four movements, I found this the least successful, with much thrashing about that did not seem particularly necessary. Nonetheless, this quintet should not be dismissed out of hand, especially by those seeking a post-romantic, still tonal work. It has been recently recorded and parts can be had from Edition Silvertrust.



In 1942, **Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari** composed his String Quintet in D Major, Op.24. Given that Wolf-Ferrari was never interested in writing atonal music or even pushing the limits of tonality, there is no point in stressing that this is a work that could well have been composed 50 years earlier. However, the style and treatment of the thematic material, one might say, are idiomatic to the composer and as such the music does not in any way sound derivative as does the Mielck. Each of the four movements—Allegro assai quasi presto, Larghetto, Prestissimo and Molto mosso—is so well done that I must call this a masterwork, despite its late date. As to the availability of parts, there is good news and there is bad news. The good news is the parts are available from Thomi-Berg. The bad news is apparently they do no care if they ever sell any since, as of this writing it is going online for \$112.

I shall, in passing, mention a few works you may wish to check out if more modern works are your thing.. There is a 1917 String Quintet by **Heinrich Kaminski**, very difficult and only just tonal. Much better, in my opinion is **Egon Kornauth's** Op.30 Quintet which dates from 1923. Written in post-romantic tonalities that are attractive but difficult to get in tune. **Philipp Jarnach**, a Busoni student, in 1920 wrote his Op.10 Quintet. It is also traditionally tonal but full of challenges. Both **Bohuslav Martinu's** 1927 Quintet and **Arnold Bax's** from 1931 are in their own way, quality works. Lastly, I can mention **Benjamin Britten's** 1932 Phantasie in f minor for String Quintet.

The short-lived Germano-Finnish composer **Ernst Mielck** (1877-1899) a Max Bruch pupil, wrote a viola quintet in 1896 but his Op.3 String Quintet in F Major was not published until two years

In the second part of this article, which will appear in the next issue of The Journal, I shall survey the quintets for two violins, viola and two violoncellos.

The Piano Trios of Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari

(Continued from page 2)

nothing from his teacher, Max Zenger. The result was his not only losing the gold medal as the schools best student but also his failure to graduate and obtain a degree. So, at age 19, Wolf-Ferrari left the conservatory and traveled home to Venice. He was fortunate in being able, through the influence of family friends, to obtain a position as a choral conductor. Attracted to opera, his first, Cenerentola, based on the story of Cinderella, was one of his earlier works. The opera was a failure in Italy, and the humiliation convinced him to return to Munich. To his great delight, the opera's German production in 1902 was a huge success. Thus encouraged, Wolf-Ferrari now began transforming the farces of Carlo Goldoni, the 18th century Venetian playwright, into comic operas. Each was a tremendous international success and during the decade before the First World War, his operas were among the most performed in the world. His musical style was light, melodious, resembling a kind amalgam of a modern day Mozart and Rossini. However, after the War, his style changed and became more serious, critics say because of his sadness over the fact that his two homelands had fought against each other. Despite the fact that he is generally recognized as the finest writer of Italian comic opera during the first half of the 20th century, not much of his music gets aired today with the exception of several of his overtures.

Though opera had been his first love, like his ideal Mozart, Wolf-Ferrari was also attracted to and fond of chamber music. Interestingly, most of it was written during the first part and the last part of his life. From the time he left the Conservatory up to WWI, he composed two violin sonatas, a string trio, his two piano trios Opp.5 and 7 dating from 1898 and 1900, and a piano quintet.

Allegro molto moderato

Piano Trio No.1 comes from his first surge of creativity. It is brimming with original ideas and is full of youthful exuberance. The opening movement, Allegro molto moderato, begins in a rather relaxed fashion with the violin giving

ing out a stately theme. But gradually the music rises to a feverish pitch of dramatic tension before the introduction of the energetic second theme.

The second movement, *Presto*, is an unusual kind of scherzo. The main section is characterized by long-lined lyricism. A dance-like theme, based on rising and falling scale motifs, (see example on right starting with Tempo I) is juxtaposed between the faster outer parts.

Tempo I

Larghetto (Grazioso, molto tranquillo)

Adagio

A superb Larghetto follows. The main theme is a lovely, sad plaint, powerfully framed by a strong repeated rhythm. A quicker middle section, Andante mosso, provides a charming contrast.

In the finale, Allegro vivace assai, one fine theme follows another. There is enough thematic material here for an entire work. The first section opens quietly but the promise of the upbeat theme in the first bars is quickly realized. But almost immediately, a second theme, a Slavic dance folk-tune, is introduced. Then comes an exciting chromatic interlude which in turn is followed by a fairy-land dance of the elves out of which a powerful and dramatic melody makes its entry-and this is only part of what is in this magnificent finale!

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The Second Piano Trio is only in three movements. It opens with theme given out by the piano that has an other-world atmosphere.

Sostenuto.
Pianoforte.
pp
due Pedali espr. mezza voce
accel.
riten.
dim.

The score shows a piano introduction in 6/8 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The right hand plays a series of chords, while the left hand has a more active melodic line. Performance instructions include 'due Pedali' (two pedals) and 'espr. mezza voce' (expressive, half-voice). The piece concludes with 'accel.' (accelerando) and 'riten.' (ritardando) markings.

But then, without warning this charming, ethereal and pastoral mood is blown apart in an highly dramatic fashion, again with the piano taking the lead.

Più sostenuto, appassionato
rit. **3**
ff
ff
cresc.
sf
sf

The score is in 3/8 time with a key signature of three sharps. It features a dramatic piano introduction with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking. The right hand has a melodic line with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a fermata over a triplet of notes. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The piece ends with a 'sf' (sforzando) marking.

From here on out the movement oscillates between these two states of very sharp mood contrasts.

Largo.
mf
f
p
rit.
a tempo
rit.
cresc.
f
dim.

The score is in 6/8 time with a key signature of three sharps. It begins with a 'Largo' tempo marking and a 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a fermata. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. The piece concludes with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a fermata over a triplet of notes.

In the lovely second movement, *Largo*, Wolf-Ferrari's gift for melody and his cantilena writing come to the fore as the cello is given one of the great solo arias. One can well imagine a tenor singing it on the opera stage. When the violin joins in, it is not to make a lovers duet but also to raise the dramatic tension to a higher pitch.

The finale, *Lievemente mosso e tranquillo sempre*, is noteworthy for the clever and interestingly written theme presented in canonic fashion.

Lievemente mosso, e tranquillo sempre.

Lievemente mosso, e tranquillo sempre.

Of the two piano trios, the Second is overall gentler and more genial, and yet, it does have some surprisingly powerful dramatic outbursts which due to the nature of the preceding thematic material make a very strong impression. It is perhaps farther away from Rheinberger than the first with its tinges of Hungarian rhythms and melody.

But both of these works are unquestionably first rate and deserving of concert performance. I would encourage professional trio ensembles looking for a new late romantic work to perform to investigate both works, which I believe will be welcomed by concert audiences for their freshness and lovely melodic writing. The part-writing and handling of the instruments could not be better. Neither work is beyond the scope of competent amateur players whom I think will derive considerable pleasure from these trios.

The trios were recorded by the Munich Piano Trio (Münchner Klaviertrio) a few years back on an MD&G CD. The parts to both works have been republished and are available, as of this writing from Edition Silvertrust. (www.editionsilvertrust.com)

Alexander Krein's 3 Hebrew Sketches for Clarinet Quintet *continued from page 2*

(Continued from page 2)

ter the formation of the Soviet Union, he held a variety of official and semi-official music administration posts.

Krein's style can be summarized as the amalgamation of both the intonation and the rhythms of both sacred and secular Jewish music into a relatively advanced idiom that was influenced by French impressionism. Some scholars believe that it was Alexander Scriabin, a close friend of Krein's, who was responsible for introducing Krein to the idiom. Krein's own Jewish heritage was a constant source of inspiration and there are a number of compositions which bear witness to this such as his Kaddish for voice and orchestra, his Caprice Hebraique for violin and piano and his Three Hebrew Sketches for Clarinet Quintet. For many years he composed music for the plays given by Moscow's Jewish Drama Theater. After Stalin's ascent to power, we find more works which are purely classical in nature and fitting in with the Soviet ethos as things Jewish were less desired by the official authorities. These works, such as his opera Zagnuk about the Jewish uprising in ancient Babylon as a stand in for the Russian Revolution or his the Threnody in Memory of Lenin are not on a par with the earlier ones although it led to him being awarded the title of Honored Artist of the Soviet Union..

Lento.

Andante con anima.

rhythms into the rather sophisticated language of late French impressionism. Scholars have traced the thematic material he used to melodies from his own father's klezmer repertoire. At its premiere, the work received immediate acclaim which led Jurgenson to publish the work not only in Moscow but also at its Leipzig branch for dissemination throughout western Europe and beyond. It resulted in Krein being hailed as a major new voice in both Russian and Jewish music. Critics were particularly impressed by the use of the classical string quartet with a clarinet line that evoked the melodies and rhythms of klezmer music. Jewish scholars noted that the music, in part, resembled a Jewish prayer chant.

The Three Sketches on Hebrew Themes for Clarinet Quintet, Op.12 is the first of a set of two, both from 1914. In three movements, the opening *Lento*, has an elegiac quality and takes familiar, almost stereotypical, Hebraic material as its subject matter. (See example above right)

The very impressive second movement, *Andante*, begins with the cello (see example above left) and then the clarinet playing over the tremolo of the other strings. Suddenly, a klezmer melody thrusts its way forward. Krein's treatment is imaginative. (See example on the right)

The final movement, *Allegro moderato*, begins like something out of Fiddler on the Roof, with a fidgety dancing melody sung by the first violin and then the clarinet.

Certainly this is a work which deserves concert performance. It has been recorded on CD and the parts are available from Edition Silvertrust

The Three Sketches On Hebrew Themes for Clarinet and String Quartet were composed between 1909 and 1910 just after he graduated from the Moscow Conservatory. They are an example of the above mentioned amalgamation of Hebrew or Jewish melodies and dance

Allegretto grazioso.