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of Chamber Music*

***A Guide  
To  
Piano Quartets  
Part II***

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# A Guide to Piano Quartets Part II M to Z



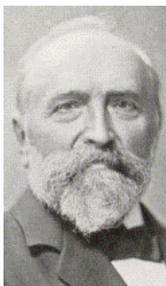
**Alexander MacKenzie** (1847-1935) along with Charles Villiers Stanford and Hubert Parry, was responsible for restoring the reputation of British music in the 19th century and is one of the most important figures from this period. Born in Edinburgh, MacKenzie first studied the violin with his father, 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.



**Gustav Mahler** (1860-1911) is, of course, famous as a symphonist, conductor and important musical personality of the late 19th and early 20th century. What is little known, however, is that Mahler wrote chamber music when he was young. While at the Vienna Conservatory, while a student of Robert Fuchs, he twice won prizes for movements for Piano Quintet. Unfortunately for

posterity, he destroyed these works along with others he was known to have written. The only piece of chamber music of his which is known to have survived is a movement from a **Piano Quartet in a minor** also composed while he was at the Conservatory in 1876. It shows the influence of Schubert and to a lesser degree Brahms without actually sounding a great deal like either of those composers. It is an interesting and important work because it is virtually the only example of his early writing which provides us with a view of his early compositional technique, which as one can hear, was quite developed at this early date. It remained unpublished until the late 1970's.



**Otto Malling** (1848-1915) was born in Copenhagen. Studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with Niels Gade and Johan (J.P.E.) Hartmann. He worked as a teacher and composer and eventually became a professor and then director at the Royal Danish Academy. Among his many students was the composer Knudage Riisager. Most of his compositions were for voice and organ—he also served as chief organist of the Copenhagen Cathedral many years. However, he

also composed orchestral and instrumental music, including a piano trio, piano quartet, piano quintet and a string octet. His **Piano**

**Quartet in c minor, Op.80** dates from 1904. Squarely in the German Romantic tradition, to a certain extent, it shows the influence of Friedrich Kiel. Malling had a gift for melody and this work is full of appealing tunes in all four of the movements, the opening Allegro, the Scherzo allegro and contrasting trio which follow, a particularly fine Andante and a exciting finale, Allegro con fuoco, which is full of forward motion. This quartet can be recommended for concert performance and should not be missed by amateurs as it is a work which presents no technical hurdles and allows experience groups to sound like pros.



Today, **Heinrich Marschner** (1795-1861), rival of Weber and friend of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, is remembered mainly for his many romantic operas. He was widely regarded as one of the most important composers in Europe from about 1830 until the end of the 19th century and is still generally acknowledged as the leading composer of German opera between Weber's death and Wagner.

Though he considered himself primarily a composer of opera, he did write 7 piano trios and 2 piano quartets. The piano trios did not escape the notice of Schumann who praised them lavishly and or good reason. Marschner did not just toss off these works as an afterthought but clearly devoted considerable time and effort writing them. It seems he had somewhat more trouble when it came to the piano quartet. His **Piano Quartet No.1 in B flat Major, Op.36** was completed in 1826. Here, the piano plays a rather bigger role than one might expect, sort of a throw back to the time of Mozart. Better use could be made of the strings which are often asked to play the same line in octaves. A Largo introduction, which builds suspense leads to the main section, Allegro. The charming second movement, Andante con espressione has a striking pizzicato accompaniment section for the strings. An entertaining Scherzo, allegro ma non troppo with contrasting trio follows. In the finale, we find the piano given so prominent a part, at times he almost dispenses with the strings, a la Weber. This is not a candidate for the concert hall, but amateurs with a good pianist may still enjoy it. **Piano Quartet No.2 in G Major, Op.158** was completed nearly 30 years on in 1853. The work begins with a Mendelssohnian Allegro risoluto. The lyrical second subject is particularly appealing. A deeply felt, but perhaps somewhat cloying Andante follows. But the Scherzo, allegro molto, with a contrasting, lyrical trio is superbly done. In the finale, while the thematic material is fetching, once again, we find a very demanding piano part which overshadows the material given to the strings.



**Bohuslav Martinu** (1891-1959) was born in the town of Policka in the Austrian kingdom of Bohemia. In 1906, he entered the Prague Conservatory to study violin, but was soon sent down for lack of attention and effort. He continued his studies on his own and subsequently became a violinist in the Czech Philharmonic. In 1923, Martinu left Czechoslovakia for Paris, and deliberately withdrew from the Romantic style in which he had been

trained. In the 1930s he experimented with expressionism and, like Stravinsky and Milhaud, also added jazz idioms to his music. Considered by many to be a neo-classicist, he nonetheless contin-

ued to use Czech folk melodies throughout his life. In 1941, he left Paris for New York to avoid the invading Germans. Although he enjoyed success in America, he missed the European outlook on life. Unable to return to Czechoslovakia, which was at that time Communist, he lived in Switzerland for the rest of his life. His **Piano Quartet** was composed in 1942 as the result of an invitation by the League of American Composers. The opening Poco adagio begins with a spiky rhythm and the whole melody might be something out of one of Astor Piazzola's nuevo tangos. It is nervous, full of forward motion and makes superb use of chromaticism in riveting long runs in each of the parts. The middle movement, Adagio, has for its main theme a bitter and reflective melody. The second theme is more lyrical, in which the cello leads the other strings. The silence of the piano, after having been in the forefront of things in the first movement, heightens the contrast. It does not enter until mid-movement. In the finale, Allegretto poco moderato, the piano introduces the cheerful and mostly affirmative main theme. Its development does have some hectic and rather frantic moments but it all ends joyfully. A very fine work, recommended for concert performance and within the range of good amateur players.



**Joseph Marx** (1882-1964) was born in Austrian provincial capital of Graz. He studied violin, cello and piano at Graz's Buwa's Music School and then attended Graz University where he took degrees in philosophy and art history, all the while composing music. In the realm of composition, he was largely self-taught. Most of his compositions at this time were art songs, or Lieder, and gained him a

wide audience, so much so, that he was hailed the successor to Schubert, and Hugo Wolf as a song composer. On the strength of these works, he obtained the position of professor of theory at the Vienna Music Academy (Hochschule für Musik) and later served as its rector. He also was an adviser to the Turkish government in laying the foundations of a conservatory in Ankara. Marx's music drew from many sources. He could be called a late romantic impressionist. Although one can hear certain affinities with the music of Debussy, Scriabin, Delius, Ravel, Respighi, Jongen, Richard Strauss, Reger, Korngold, Brahms, Mahler and Bruckner, his sound is nonetheless his own. In 1911, at the age of 29, just about the time he finished writing most of his Lieder, he composed three substantial works for Piano Quartet: Rhapsodie, Scherzo and Ballade. Although one might conclude from the titles that these works would be on a modest scale, this is not the case. They are full blown and equal in length to any so-called standard three or four movement work. The largest of these works is the **Rhapsodie in A Major** which draws together four inextricably bonded movements to create a magnificent edifice that flows organically from one movement to the next seamlessly. There are seemingly never ending lyrical episodes that constantly are straining at the boundaries of chamber music and threaten to become symphonic. The **Scherzo in d minor** is also written on a large scale, comparable in length and breadth to a symphonic scherzo by Bruckner or Mahler and in many ways related to those. Some critics have called the Rhapsodie and Scherzo symphonic works pared down to the size of a piano quartet. Almost from the opening measures, the music strains at the boundaries of chamber music and sports a very symphonic quality. This a highly original and imaginative work with powerful contrasts and moving dramatic episodes. While the Rhapsodie and Scherzo approach the symphonic, the

**Ballade in a minor** is more intimate and does not strain at the limits of chamber music. The main theme was derived from Marx's studied of Bachian counterpoint, but the thematic material shows all of the longing of post romantic tonalities. All three are magnificent works of the first order. The Rhapsody can serve as a full length program work, while the Scherzo and Ballade where shorter works are needed. These are really works for professionals and perhaps amateurs of the very highest accomplishments.

Unfortunately, when it comes to hearing piano quartets in concert or on the radio, there are only those of four composers that one is likely to hear: those of **Mozart, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Brahms**. There is no question that these are among the very best works for this ensemble. But there are many other works which are their equal, but which do not get a hearing because their authors are no longer famous. As it not the purpose of this Guide to discuss or make the reader aware of famous works, they will not be treated except to note they exist. Much has been written about them, and I can only say that if the reader is unaware of these works, they can find out all they need to know in the many books and articles which have been written about them.

**Felix Mendelssohn** (1809-1847) wrote three piano quartets. They are not heard as often as those of Schumann and Brahms but they are entertaining and full of fine melodies, but the division of material between the piano and strings could often be better and needless to say, the piano part often approaches the virtuosic.



**Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel** (1805-1847) was Felix's older sister, the family's first born child. She enjoyed the same musical education and upbringing as her brother, including studying with such teachers as Ignaz Moscheles. Like Felix, Fanny showed prodigious musical ability as a child both as a pianist and also as a budding composer. However, the prevailing attitudes of the time toward women limited her opportunities. Her father warned her that while Felix could become a professional musician if he chose, she could not do so herself. Except for Felix, her entire family opposed her dreams of a career as a concert pianist or even as a composer. Ironically, Felix, as well as many others, considered her an even better pianist than he. In 1829, after a courtship of several years, Fanny married the painter Wilhelm Hensel who, unlike her parents, encouraged her to compose. A few of her songs and small piano pieces began to receive public performances. Some believe that she composed as many as 450 works. Her **Piano Quartet in A flat Major** is an early work composed in 1822. It remained in manuscript form at the Prussian State Library in Berlin until the end of the 20th century, hence few, if any, knew of it. It opens with a buoyant, lively Allegro. The piano part clearly shows that it was intended for a virtuoso pianist, which from all accounts the 16 year old Fanny was. It is pleasant and sounds much like Carl Maria von Weber. In the middle movement begins in dainty fashion but suddenly the piano loses several stormy outbursts which could only be handled by a professional concert pianist and which are totally unsuited to chamber music. It might as well be a concerto. Again, in the charming finale, the strings are kept in the background and the whole thing resembles a piano concerto with small orchestral accompaniment. This is a work is, in my opinion, only of historical interest in that

it shows what Fanny was doing at this time. It is not up to the standard of her trio written in 1846, the year before she died.

**Wolfgang Mozart's** two piano quartets are often heard in concert and he has been called the creator of the piano quartet, but there are, in fact, several earlier examples. Suffice it to say that everything that can or needs to be way has been and can be found elsewhere.



**Eduard Nápravník** (1839-1916) was born in Bohemian town of Beischt (now Býšť), in what was then the Habsburg Empire. He learned to play the organ at his local church and then entered the Prague Organ School after which he obtained an appointment to serve as conductor of the famous private orchestra of Prince Yusupov in St. Petersburg. Thereafter he served as conductor of the Mariinsky Theatre and later several Imperial

Theaters. He became an influential figure in Russian musical life and was even mentioned in Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* as a famous conductor. He premiered several of Tchaikovsky's works and assisted the composer in tightening up certain scores. He wrote in most genres but today is remembered for his most successful opera, *Dubrovsky*. He did not neglect chamber music writing three string quartets, a string quintet, a piano quartet and several instrumental works. His 1883 **Piano Quartet in a minor, Op.42** consists of four big movements of true musical spirit, the outer movements being somewhat orchestral in style in which the composer sometimes groups the strings together against the piano playing unisono. This work can be warmly recommended to experienced players who will always get considerable pleasure from playing this work. The powerful main theme of the first movement, *Allegro con spirito*, is quite Russian. The second subject is more lyrical and he knows how to cleverly build up to a transition. The *Scherzo presto*, which comes next features an unusual rhythm which gives the music piquancy while the trio section has a very Russian flavor in part created by the use of repetitive passages. The very fine third movement, *Molto moderato quasi Marcia funebre*, brings an original sounding funeral march, both themes making a strong impression. The quartet concludes with a *Allegro risoluto* characterized by bright Russian dance rhythms.



**Zygmunt Noskowski** (1846-1909) was born in Warsaw and was originally trained at the Warsaw Conservatory studying violin and composition. A scholarship enabled him to travel to Berlin where between 1864 and 1867, he studied with Friedrich Kiel, one of Europe's leading teachers of composition. After holding several positions abroad, Noskowski returned to Warsaw in 1880 where he remained for the rest

of his life. He worked not only as a composer, but also became a famous teacher, a prominent conductor and a journalist. He was one of the most important figures in Polish music during the late 19th century and the first decade of the 20th. He taught virtually of all the important Polish composers of the next generation, and is considered today to be the first Polish symphonic composer. He served as head of the Warsaw Music Society from 1880 to 1902 and was considered Poland's leading composer during the last decade of his life. Noskowski's **Piano Quartet in d minor,**

**Op.8** dates from 1879 and clearly shows that he had assimilated all of the recent developments of Central European music. Beyond clearly sounding that it was written during the romantic period by a Central European composer, the Piano Quartet owes nothing, by way of influence, to any of the major composers, such as Brahms or Liszt, who were then dominating the scene. As such, it brings a special freshness despite the familiar tonal territory it covers. The opening *Allegro con brio* begins with a powerful, full-blooded theme that conveys a mood of struggle. The second movement, *Molto andante cantabile*, has for its main theme an extraordinarily beautiful song-like melody. The very striking third movement, *Moderato assai energico*, begins with a straight forward, thrusting main theme and then gives way to a sparkling and quicker middle section of great originality and freshness. The finale, *Adagio quasi recitativo--Allegro*, as the movement's marking indicates, begins with a lengthy, dramatic and moody recitative section played by the violin and piano. But the main part of the movement, *Allegro*, features a joyous and rambunctious first subject followed by a lyrical and yearning. This work is of the first rank and unquestionably belongs in the concert-hall repertoire and yet, it is in no way beyond the ability of competent amateurs whom we feel will derive immense enjoyment from it.



It seemed unlikely that **Vítězslav Novák** (1870-1949) would become a musician having begun by hating music as a result of being brutally forced to study the violin and the piano as a young child. But a fascination for composition, which he discovered in his teens, led to his decision to enter the Prague Conservatory, where he studied with Dvorak among others. Dvorak's example of using Czech folk melody

in his music to foster the nationalist cause at a time when the Czech and Slovak peoples were seeking statehood from Austria encouraged the young composer to follow this path. After graduating from the Conservatory in 1896, he traveled to eastern Moravia and Slovakia where the local folk melodies he found served as a source of inspiration for him. He was to become a leading proponent of the Czech nationalism in music in the generation after Dvorak and Smetana. His **Piano Quartet in c minor, Op.7** originally dates from 1894. However, despite the fact that it won a state prize with a stipendium upon its premiere, Novak was dissatisfied with it and reworked it extensively only finishing his revisions in 1899. In fact, only the middle movement remains from the original work. The opening *Andante* has a very melancholy quality to it. The opening theme stated by the piano recalls the mediaeval plainsong, *Dies irae*. The second theme, first heard in the cello, is gentler. The rest of the movement involves a struggle between the two themes with their different moods. The second movement, *Scherzino, allegretto comodo*, as noted, is the only part of the original quartet that survives. Charming, bright and cheerful, it removes the aura of gloom from the preceding movement. The finale, *Allegro*, is a rondo. After a very short high-spirited introduction, reference is made to the solemn opening theme of the first movement and signals a dramatic competition between dark drama and stirring affirmation. This is an important work, sitting as it does, on the edge of modernism, but still rooted in the ground of romanticism. An obvious candidate concert hall, it presents no unusual difficulties for amateurs who will enjoy it.



**Charles Hubert Hastings Parry** (1848-1918) was born in Bournemouth, England. As far as music went, he received some lessons on the piano as a youth but did not formally study music. He was educated Eton and Oxford and though he showed an extraordinary aptitude for music, he took a degree in law and modern history as his father wanted him to have a career in commerce. From 1870 to 1877 he worked in the insurance industry, but at the same

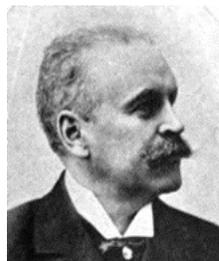
time studied with William Sterndale Bennett, and later with the pianist Edward Dannreuther when Brahms proved to be unavailable. After leaving the insurance industry, Parry became a full-time musician and during the last decades of the 19th century was widely regarded as one of England's finest composers. In the 1890s he became director of the Royal College of Music and was appointed Professor of Music at Oxford. Among his many students were Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge and John Ireland. It has been noted that Parry, in his fine Piano Quartet in a minor of 1879 anticipated the cyclical use of thematic material for which Cesar Franck was later given credit. Parry's Piano Quartet must be considered one of the best and most important piano quartets written by a 19th century English composer. And it certainly would have received more attention outside of Britain had Parry been say German rather than English. The opening movement, Lento ma non troppo--Allegro molto, begins with an imposing, slow introduction which hints that this is to be a work of epic proportions. And, indeed, it is. The main theme is has a decisive march rhythm which quickly leads to a dramatic climax. The development is handled with a real sense of exuberance. Coles called the Presto which follows one of the most original scherzos written since the time of Beethoven. The slow movement, Andante, which comes next showcases Parry's instinctive gift for melody, which he is able to develop in a leisurely manner until he is ready to meticulously create an impassioned climax. The finale, Allegro, begins with a theme full of elan while the secondary subject, first heard in the strings has choral quality sometimes used by Wagner. It is here, that we find references to all of the preceding themes in a manner which superbly sums up the entire work. This first class work is a real candidate for the concert hall, though amateurs will certainly enjoy it as well.



**Dora Pejačević** (1885-1923 until recently spelled Pejacsevich) was born in Budapest, the daughter of an important Croatian aristocrat. Her mother had been a pianist. She studied piano and violin locally before attending various conservatories. At the Munich Conservatory she studied composition with Walter Courvoisier and violin with Henri Petri, although it has been said that she was mostly self-taught.

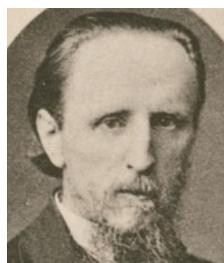
Today, she is considered one Croatia's most important 20th century composers and many of her works, during her lifetime, enjoyed considerable success and were performed throughout Germany, Austria, Hungary and the rest of the Habsburg Empire. The **Piano Quartet in d minor, Op.25** was completed in 1908. Though she was only 23, the Quartet is clearly the work of a mature composer. It is primarily written in the late Romantic style

although there are a few adventurous tonal episodes. The Quartet begins with a very appealing Allegro, at times quite chromatic. It is followed by a lyrical Adagio, the main theme to which, though simple, is quite warm and winning. The third movement is marked Menuetto, allegretto, and is an interesting blend of the Romantic and classic, a cross between a romantic intermezzo and a playful modern and updated minuet. The finale, Rondo, is a spirited, carefree dance with highly effective use of pizzicato. This is a rather good late romantic work which is certain to be a success in the concert hall but can also be recommended to amateurs.



**Richard von Perger** (1854-1911) was born in the Austrian city of Graz. He studied composition in Vienna with several teachers, including Brahms, whose influence can often be felt in his music. His career was divided between composing, conducting and teaching. He served as director of the Rotterdam Conservatory and later the Vienna Conservatory as well as the Wiener

Singverein (Vienna Choral Society) and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. He wrote in most genres and his chamber music, in particular, was held in high regard. His **Piano Quartet in A Major, Op.14** was composed in 1883. The work has more than a few tinges of Schumann and Brahms, while in no way sounding imitative. The work begins with a pregnant and atmospheric Andante sostenuto introduction which leads to main section Poco con moto. Perger uses the introduction to great effect as the coda. A scherzo, Vivace non troppo, with a clever original rhythm follows. The lovely trio sections provides excellent contrast. A highly romantic and superb Largo, deeply felt is full of attractive melodic writing. An energetic, march-like Allegro moderato concludes what is a noteworthy and excellent written work. Like Brahms, it does not automatically play itself but requires a bit of ensemble work to bring it off, still it is not to be missed.



**Ebenezer Prout** (1839-1909) was born in the English town of Oundle. He studied piano under Charles Salaman, but was otherwise self-taught. He attended the University of London intended for a career as a scholar, but chose to follow one in music through his love of it. He worked as an organist music critic, composer eventually became a Professor of Composition at the

Royal Academy of Music in London as well as several other schools. Several of his chamber music works were awarded first prizes, including an early his early **Piano Quartet No.1 in C Major, Op.2** from 1865 by the Society of British Musicians. Several of his works on music theory became classics and were translated into many languages. Among Prout's many students were Eugen d'Albert and Edward German. After his death, Prout was criticized for lack of originality in that his works showed the heavy influence of Mendelssohn, Schumann and several other of the mid 19th century German composers. While this is true, it would not have harmed his reputation had he been German and it cannot take away from the fact that some of his music is very attractive, fun to play and good to hear. Falling into that category is his **Piano Quartet No.2 in F Major, Op.18** which dates from 1883. While I am not advocating that this is a work which should be presented in the concert hall by professional ensembles, nonethe-

less, it has many fine qualities—appealing melodies, technical ease of performance, and is very well written—which should win it friends in amateur circles. The opening movement, Allegro moderato, easily captures the listener's attention. The second movement, Andante con moto, is a warm folk-like theme followed by four short variations, the last which is a well executed fugue. A genial Tempo di Menuetto with a charming, contrasting trio comes next. The fleet finale, Allegro vivace, is highly effective and makes for an entirely satisfying conclusion.

**Wilhelm Maria Puchter** (1848-1881) was born in the lower Franconia village of Remlingen. He studied composition with Immanuel Feisst at the Royal Badisch Conservatory of Stuttgart. He worked as a music teacher in Göttingen. His Notturmo for **Piano Quartet in f minor, Op.9** dates from 1876. It is in one long lengthy movement of three sections: Lento, Piu lent and lento. As you can tell from the section tempi indications, it is not an exciting barnburner. To the contrary, it is a leisurely, gorgeous and highly romantic odyssey which makes superb use of all of the instruments. It has tinges of Bruckner and Wagner. This is high art of extraordinary beauty which would make a very deep impression upon all of those who are fortunate enough to hear or play it. It is not at all difficult to play and can be handled with ease by amateurs.



**Walter Rabl** (1873-1940) was born in Vienna. After giving up the study of law, he set out to be a composer, but his composing career turned out to be rather short and most of what he wrote was either for voice or the opera. He made his name as a conductor and only has two chamber works to his credit, a set of fantasy pieces for piano trio and this Quartet for Piano, Clarinet, Violin and Cello. Normally, I would

not discuss a work which was not originally for piano quartet here, however, read on. He entered the work in the 1896 competition held by the Wiener Tonkünstlerverein (Vienna Musicians Association). Brahms, who was the head judge, selected the work for the first prize and recommended it to his publisher Simrock, who published it the following year in two versions. Simrock, always with an eye for sales, insisted that Rabl also write a version for standard piano quartet, which he did, substituting the viola for the clarinet. And, it must be said, that it works and is every bit as effective, albeit with a slightly different feeling as a viola is not a clarinet, as the original. Rabl dedicated the Quartet to Brahms and any listener will hear that composer's influence upon the music, but it would be very wrong to regard it as a mere imitation. If it were, Brahms would never have selected it. Beginning composers do not spring forth fully formed and are almost always influenced by someone who has come before them, be it their teacher or a famous composer. Brahms, when he was beginning, was influenced greatly by Mendelssohn and Schumann. The **Piano Quartet in E flat Major** bears the opus number of one. But do not let the Opus designation mislead you, this is an extraordinarily mature work which could well have come from the pen of someone who had been practicing their art for 25 years rather than two or three. The opening Allegro moderato begins with a rather languid, melody, reminiscent of Brahms' Op.114 trio for piano, clarinet and cello. Slowly the music builds to a joyous climax. The second subject, evocative of forest murmurs is not at all Brahmsian. The second movement, Adagio molto, is a theme and set of variations. The theme is a somber, funereal

march. The variations are superb in the way they change the mood and tonal color. The following Andantino un poco mosso begins in a relaxed Brahmsian fashion but changes mood in a rather original fashion. The buoyant finale, Allegro con brio, brings this excellent piece to a satisfying close.



During the last ten years of his life and for the three decades following it, **Joachim Raff** (1822-1882) was regularly mentioned in the same breath as Wagner, Liszt, and Brahms as one of Germany's leading composers. The experts and the public judged him to be the equal to such past masters as Mendelssohn, Schumann and Tchaikovsky. Incredibly, by the 1920's his music had all but disappeared from the concert stage. It seems virtually unimaginable that a composer whose talent was recognized and whose music was admired by Mendelssohn and Liszt, could become a mere footnote, yet this is what became of Raff and his music for most of the 20th century. In part, this can be explained by the fact that for several years, Raff lived on the verge of starvation and was forced to crank out compositions for the commercial market, works that would sell but were of little intrinsic or artistic merit, one after another as fast as he could. Sadly, this was later to tarnish his legacy. After his reputation had faded, he was regarded merely as a composer of parlor pieces, despite the magnificent symphonic and chamber works he left behind. Anyone who has had the time to hear these great works quickly realizes that Raff could be an impeccable craftsman when he had the luxury of time and was not forced to write for the home music-making marketplace. His **Piano Quartet No.1 in G Major Op.202 No.1** dates from 1876 and is Raff's penultimate piece of chamber music. It is a substantial work in four movements. The huge opening Allegro has for its main subject a joyous, rhythmic dance full of energy. It is followed by a gentler and more lyrical second melody, full of yearning. Raff places a scherzo, Allegro molto, next. It begins with the piano growling through a rushing theme in its lower registers. The strings join in and take part in an extended moto perpetuo section. It is sometime before a longer-lined melody finally is introduced by the lower strings. This serves as the trio section though it is hardly distinguishable from the main section, so seamlessly is it woven together. The slow movement, Andante quasi adagio, arguably is the quartet's center of gravity. Though not so marked, it is in essence a theme and set of variations. It begins with a very lengthy piano solo in which the dignified main theme is stated in full and actually developed. When the strings enter, many measures later, the piano falls silent. After the strings elaborate on the theme in a highly romantic setting, the piano rejoins them as the music slowly builds to a dramatic climax. The celebratory finale, a triumphant Allegro, is full of good spirits. This is a solid work.. **Piano Quartet No.2 in c minor Op.202 No.2** dates from 1877 and is Raff's last major piece of chamber music. It is a substantial work in four movements. The huge opening Allegro begins somberly with an ominous short motif on the piano. The mood is one of foreboding which is hardly relieved by a second and more lyrical, but no less anxious, melody which has little time to establish itself before a final forceful and more confident idea, a series of stepwise descending jumps, asserts itself. The hard-driving second movement, also an Allegro, is much shorter than the preceding one. Strongly rhythmic, Raff squeezes five delightful melodies into this tiny gem. Next comes a slow movement, Larghetto. It is the emotional center of the work. The piano begins it with a haunting melody played

straightforwardly. Later the violin takes up this melody which is now revealed in all its wistful beauty. The pace speeds up as the piano introduces a second subject. The finale, a third Allegro, is a happy affair beginning in C Major. The piano begins in declamatory fashion, answered by violin and cello before they launch straight into the first of three joyous themes upon which the movement is based. Here is a piano quartet which must be considered a major addition to the standard literature for piano quartet. That it has fallen into oblivion is truly a shame.



**Max Reger** (1873-1916) was born in the small Bavarian town of Brand. He began his musical studies at a young age and his talent for composition became clear early on. His family expected him to become a school teacher like his father and to this end passed the necessary examinations for certification. However, before he landed his first teaching job, he met the eminent musicologist Hugo Riemann, who was so impressed by Reger's talent that he urged him to devote himself entirely to music. Reger studied with him for nearly five years. By 1907 Reger was appointed to the prestigious position of Professor of composition at the Leipzig Conservatory. In addition to this he was widely regarded as one of the best living conductors and organists. In a career that only lasted 20 years, Reger wrote a prodigious amount of music in virtually every genre except opera and the symphony. Chamber music figures prominently within his oeuvre. The **Piano Quartet in d minor, Op.113** dates from 1910. Reger called the work his own solution to finding new paths and a thorough adherence to an expanded tonality. The massive *Allegro moderato ma con passione* which opens the work is both rugged and yet at times gentle and filled with yearning. The ideas are spread upon a huge tonal canvas and are extraordinarily effective. The second movement, *Vivace-Adagio-Vivace*, is what Reger himself described as a "crazy scherzo." At once forceful and ponderous, there are some very clever, surprising and original ideas to be found in this ingenious movement. To say that the slow trio section provides a fine contrast is a big understatement. A substantial *Larghetto* follows and is clearly closely related to the slow section of the scherzo. The finale, *Allegro energico*, is a theme with an ever shifting, restless tonality. Again there are many fine ideas along the way to the powerful coda. This is an important work deserving concert performance. *Piano Quartet No.2* in a minor, Op.133 came four years later in 1914. It is somewhat easier to navigate this quartet than the first which is best left to the professionals. Like much of his work from this period, it is highly chromatic. Somewhat disappointingly, he often bundles the three strings into a homogeneous group, doubling up in pairs or playing in unison. The opening *Allegro con passione* melancholic and muted in effect. A light-weight *Scherzo* comes next with a mysterious trio section. The third movement, *Largo con gran espressione*, has a solemn, religious feel to it. The finale, though sprinkled with a few lighter episodes, mostly conveys a mood of resignation and an uneasy sense of impending unhappiness. Again, an important work, in which Reger attempts to follow a path he thinks Brahms might have traveled if he had lived longer.

**Carl Reinecke** (1810-1924) was born near Hamburg in the town of Altona, then in the possession of Denmark. Most of his musical training was obtained from his father, a respected teacher and author. Mendelssohn, Schumann and Liszt all were favorably



impressed by him. Unlike many of his contemporaries, or even some of those composers who were younger such as Bruch, Reinecke was able to move beyond the music of Mendelssohn and Schumann, the musical idols of the mid 19 Century. Nowadays, Reinecke has been all but forgotten, an unjust fate for a man who excelled in virtually every musical field with which he was involved. Widely considered one of the finest concert pianists before the public for more than 30 years, his contemporaries also held him high regard as a composer. If this were not enough, he was a stellar conductor, who turned the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra into the leading orchestra of its day. Director of the famed Leipzig Conservatory, as a teacher of composition and of piano, he was considered to have few if any equals. Among his many students were Grieg, Bruch, Janacek, Albeniz, Sinding, Svendsen, Reznicek, Delius, Arthur Sullivan, George Chadwick, Ethel Smyth, Felix Weingartner, Karl Muck and Hugo Riemann. In his time, Reinecke and his music were unquestionably regarded as first rate. Reinecke's **Piano Quartet No.1 in E flat Major** dates from 1853. The outer movements in particular are especially pleasing. The opening movement, *Allegro molto e con brio* is fresh and by virtue of its rhythm quite effective. It is followed by a warmer and more lyrical second subject. Next comes an impressive *Andante*, full of excellent touches, it paints poignant, atmospheric pictures. Then there is a very charming and piquant *Intermezzo*, *Allegretto grazioso*. The finale, *Molto vivace*, is also quite appealing, with its original syncopated episodes. Its overall excellence, its appealing melodies and ease of performance, allow it to still be recommended for the concert hall, not to mention the fact that it will be warmly welcomed by amateur players. **Piano Quartet No.2 in D Major, Op.272** dates from 1904. Much of Reinecke's late chamber music, written while he was in his 80's, is truly extraordinary in its power and vision not to mention the energy and buoyancy of youth one hears. Reinecke, who was 80 years old when he penned his Op.272 set himself a specific goal, subtitled the work "in the lighter style". His goal was to produce a concise work which did not require virtuoso players and could be handled comfortably by amateurs, but which above all would hold its own as music. The full-blooded and romantic opening *Allegro* harks back to a post-Schumann style that nonetheless predates late Brahms. The following *Scherzo moderato* with its very lyrical trio is quite original. A gorgeous, reflective and pastoral *Adagio* comes next. The genial finale, *Rondo allegretto*, while not full of passion, is nonetheless charming and effective. Reinecke succeeds entirely in achieving his goal. A perfect little gem. And though it is 'in the lighter style, nonetheless it can be recommended for concert, and, of course, for the stands of home music makers.



**Carl Gottlieb Reissiger** (1798-1859) was born in the Prussian town of Belzig. He originally attended the famous Thomasschule in Leipzig as his father intended him to be a priest, however, his extraordinary musical talent was recognized and he was encouraged to pursue a musical career. His initial studies were with Johann Schlicht, Bach's fifth successor as Cantor of the Thomasschule. Subsequently, he went to

Vienna and studied with Salieri. An early opera attracted Carl Maria von Weber's attention and Reissiger went to Dresden,

eventually succeeding Weber as Music Director of the Dresden Court Orchestra, a post he held until his death. A leading conductor of German opera, Wagner worked under Reissiger for nearly a decade. Reissiger premiered Wagner's first opera. A prolific composer, as most composers of that time were, he penned works in virtually every genre. His works show the influence of the Viennese masters, in particular Schubert and Beethoven. His piano trios, during his lifetime, were extraordinarily popular, so much so that he composed no less than 25. And his fecundity, made many of his contemporaries jealous and critical. They often would unfairly call him names such as "the poor man's Schubert." However, the public adored his music for its appealing melodies, excitement, and drama. Amateur chamber music players never ceased to enjoy playing his works and professionals performed them in concert often to great success. It is a pity, the jeers of those who could not produce such ingratiating works and who were especially peeved that Reissiger could produce one after another, almost effortlessly, led to his music falling into oblivion. He wrote seven piano quartets. Opp.29, 70, 108, 138, 141, 173 and 199. They, too, became quite popular, but perhaps not to the level of his piano trios. I am only familiar with his **Piano Quartet No.3 in D Major, Op.108** which was completed in 1834. It is, like all of his trios with which I am familiar, entertaining, graceful, full of very appealing melodies and easy to perform. The opening movement is in turns exciting and poetic, at times recalling Mozart's Jupiter Symphony. There is a fleet footed Scherzo with lovely trio reminiscent of his mentor Weber. A lyrical Andante follows and the finale is a bright and light hearted Rondo which dances along effortlessly. Reissiger was not one to plumb the depths of sorrow, nor did he try to climb the heights of profundity. Yet, I find it hard to understand how the lovely, uplifting jewels he created cannot be considered just as valuable. It would be different if the music was poorly written or trivial, but it is not. To the contrary, his works with piano are invariably well put together and overflowing with memorable and highly appealing themes.



**Josef Rheinberger** (1839-1901) was born in Vaduz, the capital of Liechtenstein. His talent for music was immediately discovered and was of such a substantial nature that with the help of a scholarship he was sent to the Royal Conservatory in Munich where he studied with Franz Lachner, one of Schubert's close friends and an important composer in his own right. Rheinberger, who remained in Munich

for the rest of his life and eventually became conductor of the important Munich Choral Society and served as voice coach at the Royal Opera where he got to know Wagner. He also taught at the Royal Conservatory where he held the position of Professor of Composition for nearly 40 years. During his lifetime, he was generally ranked after Brahms and Wagner as the most important living German composer. Furthermore, he was also widely regarded, along with Carl Reinecke and Friedrich Kiel, as one of the best teachers of composition in the world. Many students who later became famous composers in their own right studied with him, including such men as Humperdinck, Wolf-Ferrari, George Chadwick and Robert Kahn. His **Piano Quartet in E flat Major, Op.38**, which was completed in 1870, is one of his earliest published chamber works and was certainly one of the most popular piano quartets from the time of its publication until the start of the First World War, after which, like many other fine composi-

tions, it inexplicably disappeared from the concert stage. The big, marvelous opening *Allegro non troppo* begins with a brooding theme in the strings. Tension builds and it seems a storm is on the way, but instead a joyful melody, which makes you want to kick up your heels, breaks forth. The third theme is altogether different, gentler and more lyrical. The second movement, a beautiful *Adagio*, is at once both highly romantic and profound. Rheinberger calls the third movement a *Menuetto*, but this is a mid-romantic version, not the classical type. With its swinging rhythm and tuneful main theme, it makes an indelible impression. The opening theme of the *Allegro finale* is a care-free, almost capricious tune that is full of surprises. The contrasting second subject is darker and leads to a marvelous fugue by the composer who was universally acknowledged as the finest fugue writer after Bach. Here is a work that truly deserves to be brought back and heard on the concert stage. And amateurs will wish they had known about this piano quartet sooner.



Today, **Ferdinand Ries** (1784-1837) is primarily remembered as a friend and student of Beethoven, as well as his first biographer. However, during his lifetime and for much of the 19 century Ries was remembered as a fine composer and virtuoso pianist. He showed musical promise from an early age, studying both violin and piano with his father, and the cello with Bernhard Romberg. In 1801, he

went to Vienna to study with Beethoven. He studied piano and composition with him for nearly 5 years. Thereafter Ries concertized throughout Europe for a number of years before settling in London and then finally retiring in Frankfurt. He wrote a considerable amount of music including several piano concertos and a large quantity of chamber music which was many years often performed and well thought of. He composed three piano quartets. **Piano Quartet No.1 in f minor, Op.13** was completed in 1808. It begins with an *Adagio* introduction in which several loud chords punctuate the proceedings. The main section, *Allegro*, has the aura of early Beethoven. The string writing is effective, but the piano part is rather virtuosic. The middle movement, *Andantino*, begins with a long solo in the piano, then the strings as a choir repeat the main subject, again we hear early Beethoven. The finale, *Rondo, allegretto moderato*, Of the three movements, the thematic material of this movement is the most compelling and memorable. Overall, if someone had told you that Beethoven had written this work in 1801, you would have believed them.

**Piano Trio No.2 in E flat Major, Op.17**, dates from 1809, and once again, Ries invokes the spirit of his famous teacher without actually quoting. After hearing this quartet, one might conclude that Ries was familiar with and influenced by Beethoven's Archduke Piano Trio and Triple Concerto. The Triple Concerto yes, since it was composed in 1803. The Archduke Trio no, because Beethoven did not finish it until 1811. It is not beyond the realm of imagination to think Beethoven could have been influenced by Ries who may well have shown him his second piano quartet. The opening movement, *Allegro*, begins calmly enough with a lovely lyrical theme but soon the music is ratcheted up to a *bravura* temperature almost reaching that of a concerto. The piano introduces the second movement, *Adagio mesto*, with a Bach-like prelude, which introduces a rather sad reflective melody brought forth by the strings individually. The Quartet concludes with an exuberant, lively *Rondeau, allegro moderato*. Here is a Piano Quartet which combines the styles of the late Vienna classics

with the newly emerging early romantic. An occasional airing in the concert hall would not be amiss and amateurs, as long as they have a first rate pianist, should give it a try. **Piano Trio No.3 in e minor, Op.129** dates from 1820. The opening Allegro begins with a kind of short introduction promising much and several stormy sections follow. We find better use of the strings and the piano, though still requiring a pianist with nimble fingers, does not require a virtuoso. The thematic material is lyrical and dramatic but really is not much further advanced than the earlier quartets. The middle movement, a stately Andante, is very fine. The part-writing stands out. The third movement, Scherzo allegro vivace, dances along merrily and is only interrupted by a lovely, slow trio section. A dramatic and exciting Presto concludes the quartet. Of the three, this to my mind is the finest and most deserving of concert performance. Amateurs will find it ingratiating.



**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. 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, 2 piano quintets, a string quintet 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. While the date of composition cannot be ascertained with any certainty, **Piano Quartet No.1 in F Major, Op.55bis** was published in 1860. Rubinstein made two versions of it, the Op.55 is a Quintet for Piano and Winds. Beethoven did the same thing with his Op.16. In any event, it works equally well in both version. The first movement, Allegro non troppo begins as if it were a concerto for piano and strings. Yet as the fine melodies are developed, the ensemble writing improves tremendously and by the time the coda appears, there is no doubt one is hearing a first class piece of chamber music. In the following Scherzo, allegro assai, the piano is given a

somehow virtuosic role, but once past the opening measures, one is able to see that it is an integral part of the overall ensemble. There are several original touches, including an excellent contrasting trio. The third movement, Andante con moto, is a theme and set of variations given a Schumannesque treatment. In the engaging finale, Allegro appassionato, Rubinstein shows he has taken the measure of the group for which he is writing and the integration of the parts is excellent. Rubinstein dedicated his **Piano Quartet No.2 in C Major, Op.66** which dates from 1864. He dedicated it to the famous Spanish singer Pauline Viardot-Garcia, whom he was introduced to by her lover the writer Ivan Turgenev. The work was premiered with Rubinstein at the piano and Ferdinand David as first violinist. It was a huge success and was published two years later. Despite its considerably popularity up until the First World War, it was never reprinted. The big, spacious opening movement, Allegro moderato, has an attractive main theme which is developed in a highly original and interesting way. The second movement, Allegro vivace, is nothing less than a jolly Russian folk dance with several surprising twists and turns. A dark-hued Andante assai comes next. Here there dramatic climaxes in phrases Rubinstein alternately marks 'pathetico' and 'appassionato', and indeed, the music veers from the funereal to the passionate, full of pathos. The pleasing finale, Allegro non troppo, is at times pastoral in mood and at others lively and full of vigor. Both of these works must be number among Rubinstein's best compositions. They are first rate, Op.66 in particular deserves concert performance. Both are suitable for amateurs who have an excellent pianist at their disposal.

**Johann Rufinasha** (1812-1893) in the Austrian town of Mals in the South Tirol, which since the First World War became part of Italy. He studied in Innsbruck with Martin Goller and Johann Gäsbacher. At the age of 16, he moved to Vienna where he furthered his studies with the famous composition teacher Simon Sechter. For several decades he was one of Vienna's leading piano and harmony teachers. While predicted by contemporaries to become a major composer of his day, this did not turn out to be the case perhaps because he did not push hard to promote his compositions. He knew most of the prominent musical personalities of his time who resided in Vienna, including Brahms with whom he was on friendly terms and to whom he dedicated his second piano quartet. Musically, he can be seen a bridge between Schubert and Bruckner. Though friendly with Brahms, he was not influenced by him. **Piano Quartet No.1 in c minor** dates from 1836, by which time, he had completed his studies with Sechter and had taken up permanent residence in Vienna. It is a powerful and compelling work, which in many ways was considerably ahead of its time. It is very hard to understand how a work of this quality did not become part of the repertoire. The opening movement, Allegro con fuoco, is just that, full of fire, drama and youthful energy from start to finish, Rufinasha was 24 when he composed. The lyrical second movement, a big Adagio, is full of warm feelings and beautifully written. A riveting Scherzo comes next. Absolutely first rate. A clever, playful trio section provides fine contrast. In the finale, Allegro vivace, we find the same power and drive that we heard in the opening movement. If there were awards for the best unknown piano quartet from the first part of the 19th century, this work would win. It is as fine as anything composed by anyone from this period. Finely written for all



four instruments. Especially commendable is Rufinatscha's integration into the entire ensemble. Any professional group which brings this work to the concert hall will enjoy a real triumph. Amateurs should not miss the chance to play it as well. In 1844 came his Piano Quartet No.2 in A flat Major. The fury and unremitting power of the first quartet is not to be found in the genial opening movement *Allegro energico*. It has a certain dignity and stateliness. The writing is very fine. One might say, "Hey, this sounds like Brahms". Yes, it does, but keep in mind the 11 year old Brahms was living in Hamburg playing the piano in a bordello and had written nothing. If anything, he may well have been influenced by Rufinatscha. A gorgeous very vocal *Adagio molto* follows. It approaches in style a song without words. There is much yearning and beauty within. The third movement, *Scherzo, allegro vivace*. This is a heavy scherzo, again the kind of thing that Brahms himself would pen many years later. There follows a magnificent, rich trio section, the height of beauty. The finale, a big shouldered *Allegro moderato* begins in laid back fashion and while it does reach some climaxes, and despite the very fine writing, lacks a certain excitement one expects from a finale. Make no mistake, both of these works are superb but very different. The first has a sense of urgency which is palpable while the second is deeper and richer and perhaps more mature.



**Louis Saar** (1888-1937) was born in Rotterdam but his education was entirely in Germany. After taking a liberal arts degree Strasburg University, at that time part of Germany. He then went to Royal Bavarian Conservatory in Munich where he studied composition with Josef Rheinberger. From there he went on to Vienna where he spent several months studying with Brahms. His compositions earned him the Mendelssohn prize in

Berlin and the Tonkünstlerpreis in Vienna. In 1894 he emigrated to the United States where he worked as an accompanist at the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York. Dvorák, who at the time was Director of the National Conservatory (which became Juilliard) engaged Saar. Subsequently, he taught at a number of music conservatories in the States. His **Piano Quartet in E Major, Op.39** dates from 1904. It is firmly in the German Romantic tradition showing the influence of Schumann and, not surprisingly, even more so by Brahms. The mostly serious opening movement, *Allegro non troppo*, is full-blooded and well written. The agitated middle section is particularly striking. A warm and tonally pretty *Adagio* follows. The third movement is a *Scherzo, allegro vivace* with trio. The effective, fiery finale, *Allegro con brio*, has a gypsy flavor. The main themes from the preceding movements are briefly reprised before the rousing coda. A candidate for the concert hall and not beyond good amateur players.



**Camille Saint Saëns** (1835-1921), who today is known only as an orchestral composer devoted a great deal of time and effort to writing chamber music, including two piano quartets. The **Piano Quartet No.1 in E Major** (without opus number) was composed in 1853 but it was not published until 1992. It is not clear why Saint Saëns chose never to have it published although

the fact that Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann served as inspiration may well explain it. As Bizet noted, that in France in order to get one's music played, the composer had either to be German or dead. This comment expresses French musical

opinion around the mid-19th Century at the time when Saint Saëns composed this work. French composers simply could not get their chamber music works published in France. For a long time George Onslow, a chamber music composer par excellence, though famous in England and Germany was virtually unknown in France. Later when Saint Saëns had become better known, French musical taste had changed and tended to abhor anything German or German-sounding. The quartet opens with a brief early-Beethoven-sounding introduction, *Poco andante*, which leads to an *Allegro vivace* which is quite attractive and lyrical. In no way does the piano dominate the music. Excellent use is made of the singing qualities of the strings, particularly the viola and cello. In the Schumannesque *Andante*, the balance between piano and strings is again masterful. At one point each instrument is given a brief mini-sonata with the piano while the second theme features a string duet with the voices changing and replacing one another. An *pizzicato* episode toward the end, tonally brings to mind Beethoven's *Op.74, The Harp*. The finale to this three movement work, *Allegro con fuoco*, opens with a unison passage which then leads to a fiery theme full of furious scale passages and broken chords reminiscent again of Schumann. This is a good work, certainly strong enough for the concert hall, yet it makes no undue demands on the players and should be able to be played with little difficulty by capable amateurs. **Piano Quartet No.2 in B flat, Op.41** was composed in 1875 and performed with great acclaim at its premiere with Sarasate on violin and the Saint Saëns on piano. It is, in my opinion, a masterwork for piano quartet. The opening *Allegretto* shows that Saint Saëns had assimilated the progress Brahms had made, but one also hears a dreamy French lyricism. The *Andante Maestoso, ma con moto* is a tour de force. It begins as a powerful march more *allegretto* than *andante* in tempo. A marvelous fugal development follows in which every aspect of theme is explored, Bach-like in conception and feel. Upon playing this music, I ask myself how it could be the Fauré quartets, which to be sure are wonderful, could be so much better known than this fine music. In the next movement marked, *Poco Allegro piu tosto moderato*, Saint Saëns changes the mood with a whirlwind scherzo. The syncopated rhythm to the first subject gives the music its macabre atmosphere. In the finale, *Allegro*, one does not hear the influence of any of the better known German composers, yet there is an undeniable relationship with German romantic music of that time. The movement does all that a finale should do and its rousing ending suitably brings this fine work to a close. Saint Saëns demonstrates excellent understanding of the balance problem between piano and strings, in many ways far better than Brahms ever did. The writing is such that the strings never have to be slung together and pitted against the piano to offset the larger instrument's volume. It goes without saying that this work belongs in the concert hall and can be played by good amateurs



**Xaver Scharwenka** (1850-1924) was born in the small town of Samter near what is now the Polish city of Poznan (German Posen) in what was then part of Prussia. He learned to play the piano at an early age and his extraordinary talent was clear to all. At 15, he moved with his family to Berlin, where he studied with Theodore Kullak, one of the most renowned piano teachers of his day. He also received instruction

in composition. Subsequently, he began touring as a concert pianist and was widely regarded as one of the best then performing.

He founded two conservatories, one in Berlin and another in New York. He composed in nearly every genre with his four piano concertos being regarded by him as well as nearly everyone else as his most important works. It has been "reported" that Scharwenka regarded his own chamber music of lesser importance. However, this seems difficult to posit, given the fact that he often performed his piano trios and quartet in concert. While it is true that all of Scharwenka's chamber music includes the piano, the parts given to the strings are in no way of lesser importance than that of the piano. A good example of this is his **Piano Quartet in F, Op.37** which dates from 1876. It was premiered with great success in Berlin and then in London a few months later. In four movements, the opening theme to the dramatic, powerful and big Allegro moderato is one of great promise and destiny. The following, Adagio, begins in a somber, almost funereal mood and retains the aura of an elegy throughout. Next comes a wild, frenetic scherzo, Allegro vivace, truly superb. The robust finale, Allegro con fuoco, is a fiery bacchanal, suffused with catchy melodies and driving energy. The quartet is first rate and deserves to be heard in concert.



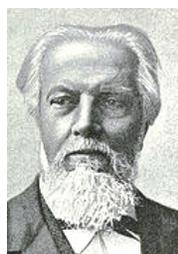
**Paul Scheinflug** (1875-1937) was born in the town of Loschwitz not far from the German city of Dresden. He studied composition at the Dresden Conservatory with Felix Draeseke and thereafter pursued a career as a conductor, holding positions in Bremen, Königsberg and finally Dresden. He was not a prolific composer but his works were highly praised and respected, especially his chamber music. His style was

that of the late romantic movement. His **Piano Quartet in E Major, Op.4** dates from 1903. The work resembles a mini symphonic tone poem in its power and scope chaffing at the boundaries of chamber music. In the introduction, the composer quotes lines from the German poet Richard Dehmel which begin with the words "Room, room, breaking bounds in my wild breast." In a way, the opening movement, Allegro con fuoco und passione, recalls Strauss' Ein Heldenleben. One can almost hear the life of the hero portrayed. The development is particularly clever and the coda is magnificent. The second movement, Andante quasi adagio, is gloomy but after a bit the mood lightens somewhat and becomes more hopeful, even enthusiastic. This leads to a section where one hears a kind of internal struggle going on between hope and despair. A wild and angular, Scherzo fantastique, Presto comes next. This is a very original movement. The finale, Allegro, begins with a dark introduction. It leads to a monumental struggle between the gloomy dark and the brighter joy of life. This is an impressive and amazing work. A real stunner, but it requires experienced professional players to bring it off in the concert hall. Amateurs of the very highest technical accomplishments should also be able to get pleasure from it.



**Leander Schlegel** (1844-1913) was born in the Dutch town Oegstgeest near Leiden where he began his music studies. He showed an early talent, especially on the violin and drew the interest of the virtuoso Ferdinand Laub. Eventually, however, he concentrated on piano and composition and continued his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory where he studied piano with Ignaz Moscheles and composition

with Ernst Richter. For several years thereafter, he pursued a career as a solo pianist before settling in Haarlem where he taught and then served as director of the music school there for the rest of his life. His **Piano Quartet in C Major, Op.14** dates from 1909. It is written on a large scale and it must be said is not going to play itself without considerable study. It is a work requiring professionals or amateur players of a high standard. Brahms serves as Schlegel's ideal and one can hear the influence. The big opening movement, Allegro moderato, is surprising calm and contemplative for an opening movement. The second movement, Allegro piacevole con moto, is a cross between an intermezzo and a scherzo. The Andante, ma molto sostenuto is subtitled Sarabande. It is introverted with deep feelings. The finale, Allegro brioso, piu tosto moderato, ma risoluto, is the most lively of the four movements. Although there is much that is admirable in this quartet, it must be acknowledged that it is not going to be an immediate crowd pleaser since it really requires more than one hearing to make an impact and as such, given the fact that it is unknown, is not a great candidate for the concert hall.



**Bernhard Scholz** (1835-1916) was born in the German city of Mainz>studied piano with Ernst Pauer in Mainz and composition with Siegfried Dehn (counterpoint) in Berlin. He enjoyed a peripatetic career as a teacher, conductor and composer. He held positions in Munich, Zurich, Hanover, Nurnberg, Florence, Breslau, Berlin and Frankfurt where he served as director of the conservatory. He was, along with Brahms and

Joachim, one of four signatories to a manifesto published in the important Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo on May 6, 1860, opposing the so-called New School of German Music championed by Liszt and Wagner. He was widely respected as a music critic and scholar but his own compositions never gained any traction. Much of his output was tarred as dry and dull. His **Piano Quartet in f minor, Op.79** which came out in 1899, does not deserve that description. It is suitable both for the concert hall and for amateurs. Schumann and Brahms are the godfathers to this quartet. However, though influenced by them, it is not imitative. It is well-constructed and without any padding. His rhythmic ideas are often quite original and striking. And this is not a work in which the piano dominates. The strings are particularly well handled. The opening movement, in the minor, creates a somber, elegaic mood. The main theme is quite compelling. The second movement, Allegretto molto moderato e cantabile, though lively, has the feel more of an intermezzo than a scherzo. This is followed by a warm and lyrical Andante con moto ed appassionato with a powerful and passionate middle section which provides an excellent contrast. The finale, Vivace assai, achieves its effect by virtue of its rhythm but the thematic material is also quite appealing. This is an example of a work which did not receive the attention it deserved because of the rather ordinary quality of much of this composers other works.



**Florent Schmitt** (1870-1958) was born in the French town of Meurthe-et-Moselle, He studied with Gabriel Fauré, Jules Massenet, and Théodore Dubois at the Paris Conservatory and in 1900 won the prestigious Prix de Rome. He worked as a composer and also as a music critic. His **Hasards, Op. 96** is a suite for piano quartet was composed around 1940. The title

of this four-movement suite, which Schmitt described as a “petit concert” for piano, violin, viola and cello, translates roughly to mean “Chances” in English. And the “chances” Schmitt takes gives are in his use of rhythm and tonal color. He dedicated the work to French composer Guy Ropartz. The four movements of the suite each bear highly descriptive titles. The first, Exorde – D’une allure rapide. It is quick with an upbeat rhythm. Next, Zélie-au-pied-leger in 6/8 time without key signature, The third movement is called Demi-soupir – Un peu lent is slow and mysterious with a clear stylistic debt to Gabriel Fauré. The finale, Bourrée-bourrasque, Impétueux, a brusque bourree, has rhythms punctuated by hard chords on the piano. It is an engaging modern work. Interesting for both the audience and players.

The only work that **Franz Schubert** wrote for piano quartet was his **Adagio and Rondo Concertant** which dates from 1816. Unlike the efforts of Mozart, Mendelssohn or Schumann, it is a relatively unknown work so I will briefly discuss it. I would note that it was published with the words “For piano with violin, viola and cello accompaniment. Hence, the strings are not given a lot to do. Both movements are charming and filled with Schubert’s usual melodic gifts. The piano part is not a problem and the work can be recommended to amateurs.



**Georg Schumann** (1866-1952) was born in the German town of Konigstein into a musical family. His father was the town Music Director and he initially studied piano and violin with him. He studied organ in Dresden and then entered the Leipzig conservatory where he studied piano with Reinecke and composition with Salomon Jadassohn. He became a brilliant pianist and started off on a solo career

but later branched off and enjoyed a conducting career in Bremen and later Berlin where he also taught. He composed throughout his life and he was especially fond of chamber music and composed two piano trios, two piano quintets, a piano quartet and some instrumental sonatas. Schumann's superb **Piano Quartet in f minor, Op.29** dates from 1901. It can be recommended for the concert hall, but it can also be played by experienced amateur players of good ability. It is a work which is grateful to play for both the piano and the strings. As the composer himself has said, although the structure is in sonata form, this form must on occasion be abandoned in a large scale work such as this where the music so requires it. There is a sense of impending destiny with which the music is infused. The two main subjects of the opening Allegro molto espressivo are filled with defiance and lament. They reappear in altered form in the second movement, Molto Andante con espressione where at last a sense of peace is achieved. But then, in the very original Quasi presto con fuoco which comes next, there is a stormy return to defiance and unrest, although it is not without happier interludes. In the finale, Allegro con passione, the main theme is characterized by a sense of determination to overcome the despair which had permeated the preceding movements.

**Robert Schumann's** Piano Quartet in E flat Major, Op.47 is probably, today, the most frequently performed quartet, keeping in mind that piano quartets are no longer heard much in concert. In any event, everything that can be said about it has been many times elsewhere. There is a little known earlier work, a Piano Quartet in c minor, dating from 1829. Schumann was 19 when he

finished it and there are some obvious flaws. However, there are also some very fine moments within.



**Eduard Schütt** (1856-1933) was born in St Petersburg, Russia. A talented pianist, Schütt graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, having studied piano with Theodor Stein and Anton Rubinstein. He then continued his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory where he took further piano lessons from Carl Reinecke and studied composition with Salomon Jadassohn and

Ernst Richter. He then moved to Vienna and took additional lessons from Theodor Leschetizky after which he pursued a career as a concert pianist for a few years. He then devoted himself to composing and conducting. Most of Schütt’s works involve the piano. As far as chamber music is concerned, he composed two piano trios, several instrumental sonatas and this Piano Quartet. Schütt's **Piano Quartet in F Major, Op.12** dates from 1882. It is full of elegant, gracious music which pleases. It plays well and is pleasant to hear. In the opening movement, Allegro moderato, both themes are particularly appealing. The main subject of the Scherzo which comes next show considerable character and is followed by a charming middle section. One can also say that both themes of the Andantino which follows are quite pleasing. Especially effective is a Hungarian dance-like episode in the middle of the movement. The finale, Allegro vivo, a la Russe, features a brisk dance rhythm coupled with an intervening, sweeping, lyrical melody. To sum up, this is a very effective work, which is not only very appealing but also one which does not present any unusual technical difficulties which makes it just as suitable for the concert hall as the stands of amateur players.



**Cyril Scott** (1879-1970) was born in Oxton, England not far from Liverpool. He showed a talent for music from an early age and was sent to the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt where he studied with Ivan Knorr. He worked primarily as a pianist and composer and was regarded as a late romantic composer, whose style was at the same time strongly influenced by impressionism. Some called him the English Debussy.

Scott wrote around four hundred works and kept composing until three weeks before his death at age 91. Though he was considered one of England’s leading composers during the first two decades of the twentieth century, by the 1930’s he was all but forgotten. By the time of his death, he was only remembered for a few popular pieces that he had composed over sixty years before. His **Piano Quartet in e minor, Op.16** dates from 1903. It relatively short work, consisting of four concise movements. There is little or no evidence of his infatuation with Impressionism, but rather he is still under the influence of the German romantics. One feature of the work is the doubling and even tripling of the melodic line, especially in the strings so that there are several unisono episodes The first movement, Allegro maestoso e con spirito is fresh and lilting. An expressive Andante molto espressivo makes a good impression. The third movement, Allegro amabile, muted in the strings, though not so marked, is an updated, quite striking intermezzo. The lively finale, Allegro non troppo, brings the quartet to an end. It is pleasant both to hear and to play as it presents nothing out of the ordinary as to technical problems.



▼ **August Söderman** (1832-1876) was born in Stockholm and studied composition, violin and oboe at the conservatory there. A scholarship enabled him to study at the Leipzig Conservatory with Hans Richter after graduating from Swedish conservatory. The teachers at the Leipzig Conservatory during this period were heavily influenced by its founder Felix Mendelssohn and also Robert Schumann and Söderman's music show this

influence. He is generally regarded as one of Sweden's leading composers from the Romantic period. He pursued a career as an opera conductor and composer in his home town. Virtually all of his music is either for orchestra or for voice in one form or another. His **Piano Quartet in e minor** is his only chamber work. Söderman's Piano Quartet dates from 1856 during his time at Leipzig. It is a highly accomplished work, the equal of the best of other piano quartets from this era. The writing for and integration of the instruments is masterly and the melodies quite fetching. The opening *Allegro moderato* begins with an evocative piano solo. When the strings join in the mood changes with a series of lovely themes full of charm Söderman subtitled it 'fantasy.' The second movement, *Scherzo vivo*, starts off movement not anything like a scherzo and does not in the least sound *vivo*. But then almost imperceptibly the music gradually gains tempo and liveliness and becomes just that. The third movement is a very romantic *Andante*. The work concludes with a vibrant *Allegro*. Virtually unavailable since its initial publication it disappeared, We are pleased to make it available once again. It is a highly effective work suitable both for the concert hall and the stands of amateurs



**Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852-1924) 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 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 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. We are pleased to make it available after more than a century of being out of print. It belongs in the concert hall and will be a joy to amateurs. Stanford completed his **Piano Quartet No.2 in c minor, Op.133** in 1913. It received one public performance and was not published until 2010. One has to wonder why, for it is a superb work. The opening *Andante-Allegro moderato*, is full of appealing melodies, excellent writing and rich tonal effects. The piano is blended in perfectly. There is the aura of Brahms hovering over it. The *Adagio* which comes next is quiet and deeply felt. A frenetic and restless *Scherzo allegro* serves as the third movement. The finale, *Allegro molto moderato*, starts off rather subdued and devoid of any excitement takes rather a long time for the whole thing to get up and get going. To be honest, it really never gets going but is punctuated by frequent halting phrases. It has a Brahmsian heaviness, in part because of the density of the writing. In what is otherwise a magnificent work, this finale, though not a bad movement, is a let down.



**Wilhelm Stenhammar** (1871-1927) was born in Stockholm and studied locally. He took piano lessons from by Richard Anderson, a student of Clara Schumann, and composition from Emil Sjogren, eventually becoming a virtuoso who was considered the finest Swedish pianist of his time. But Stenhammar was more interested in chamber music and aligned himself with the Aulin String Quartet with whom he regularly

performed piano quintets in concert. This relationship gave him a deeper appreciation and understanding of string instruments and was no doubt responsible for the very fine works he was able to

write for them. The *Allegro brillante*, composed in 1891, was most likely intended as a performance vehicle for Stenhammar and a group of string players. It was designed as a one movement concert piece and not as the first movement to some larger work. Although it is an early work, already Stenhammar's mastery and sureness of touch are apparent. From the opening notes, we hear a rich romantic theme, shared equally by all. The piano is perfectly integrated into the strings and one does not feel it is at all alien. The second theme is as lush as the first. Clearly, Stenhammar lavished considerable care on this work.



**Richard Stöhr** (1874-1967) was born in Vienna. His father insisted that he study medicine and Stöhr only formally studied music after receiving an M.D. He entered the Vienna Academy of Music and studied composition with Robert Fuchs receiving a doctorate in 1903. He immediately obtained a teaching position at the Academy and was appointed a professor of composition in 1915, a position he held until 1938. Although Stöhr steadily

composed throughout these years, he was better known as an expert on music theory, having written a well received text on the subject. In 1938, he was forced to flee Austria because of the Nazi takeover. He emigrated to the United States. There, he obtained a similar position at the Curtiss Institute of Music. Among his many students were Leonard Bernstein, Erich Leinsdorf, Herbert von Karajan, Erich Zeisl, and Samuel Barber. His **Piano Quartet in d minor, Op.63** dates from 1921. The opening movement, *Allegro maestoso*, is broad and majestic. Next comes an appealing Scherzo, *allegro con brio*. Both the thematic material and use of rhythm makes this movement a standout. There is a short contrasting, effective trio. The *Andante sostenuto* which follows is nicely put together. In it, we hear some modern, for the time, tonalities. The fleet finale, *Allegro molto*, makes good use of chromaticism. This work can be recommended both to amateurs and professionals.



**Petar Stojanović** (1877-1957) was born in Budapest into an ethnic Serbian family. In Budapest, he studied violinist with famous virtuoso Jenő Hubay. He then attended the Vienna Conservatory, where he continued his violin studies with Jakob Grün and composition with Robert Fuchs and Richard Heuberger. In 1925, he became professor of violin in Belgrade, where he lived until his death. He composed in most genres.

His **Piano Quartet in D Major, Op.15** was completed in 1912. It is a work full of power and energy. The thematic material of the opening *Allegro* is particularly impressive. There are unmistakable tinges of Slavic melody. An fresh and original Scherzo *allegro* comes next with a contrasting trio section. Next comes a well put together *Adagio*. The work is topped off with a lively and dramatic *Allegro*. This is a good work, well worth playing and deserves an outing in the concert hall.

**Richard Strauss** (1864-1949), of course, needs no introduction. His orchestral compositions and operas have made him one of the best known composers of the late 19th and 20th century. While Strauss did not, in later life, devote much time to chamber music, in his earlier years he tried his hands at several different types of chamber works composing a string quartet, two piano trios, a pi-



ano quartet and several instrumental sonatas. During his early years, Strauss took Schumann and Mendelssohn as his models, but in the case of the **Piano Quartet in c minor, Op.13**, there is also evidence that Brahms was influential. The Piano Quartet, which must count as one of Strauss' most important works from this period, was completed in 1885 and is in four movements. The massive opening *Allegro* begins in turbulent fashion

virtually exploding out of the gate but the second theme is both more lyrical and reflective. It is followed by a light, playful Scherzo, *presto*, which is from time to time interrupted by powerful rhythmic bursts. The romantic and lyrical trio section presents a stark contrast. A quiet, somewhat reflective *Andante* serves as the slow movement. It creates an "after the party" mood, soft and gentle although as the movement develops it reaches several very romantic climaxes. The turbulence we experienced in the opening movement returns in the finale, *Vivace*. But again a sweet, highly romantic and very lyrical second theme changes the mood altogether. Though an early work, it is nonetheless a fully formed and mature work. Concert performance would not be amiss and amateurs players are sure to have fun with it.



**Josef Suk** (1874-1935) was born in Krecovice in southern Bohemia, then part of Austria. He studied piano, violin and organ with his father who served as village choirmaster. His exceptional talent led to his being enrolled at the Prague Conservatory in 1885 at the age of 11 where he first studied violin. Eventually, he became a composition student of Antonin Dvorak. He graduated in 1891, and kept up a friendship with Dvorak, whose daughter he married in

1898. He formed what became the world famous Bohemian Quartet with three of his fellow students. Suk played second violin with the Quartet for most of his life. From 1922, he taught at the Prague Conservatory. Among his many students were the composer Bohuslav Martinu and the pianist Rudolf Firkusny. Suk served as the Conservatory's director after 1924, on and off, until the end of his life. Suk's **Piano Quartet in a minor, Op.1** was the result of an assignment from his teacher, Anton Dvorak. Dvorak was so taken with the finished product that he selected it for the graduation awards concert. Suk promptly numbered it his Op.1, though he had written many other works, signaling that he was now a mature composer. The work was published immediately and was for many years a staple of the repertoire. It dates from 1891. The opening movement, *Allegro appassionato*, from the powerful opening chord soars forward with its energetic and at times highly dramatic theme. When the dust finally settles and things calm down, a very lovely, lyrical second theme is brought forth. The middle movement, *Adagio*, begins quietly with a wonderful, valedictory, melody which bears a slight resemblance to the lovely theme from Borodin Second String Quartet. The finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, as the first movement, is exciting from the very first measure. A march-like theme starts off the proceedings. Echoes of Dvorak can be briefly be heard in passing. Again for a second theme, Suk chooses a wonderful, lyrical melody, quite romantic and beautiful. The fact that this fine work as disappeared from the standard repertoire can only be due to the fact that it has been out of print for more than half a century. A good work for both professionals and amateurs.



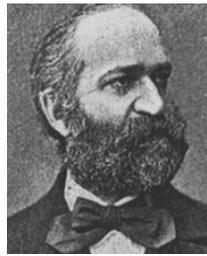
**Sergei Taneyev** (1856-1915) is one of the most important Russian composers from the last half of the 19th and early 20th centuries and probably, from this group, the one whose music is the least known in the West. Taneyev came from an aristocratic family that patronized the arts and when Sergei's talent became apparent, his father sent him to the newly opened Moscow Conservatory at the age of 10. His main teachers there were Nicolai Rubinstein for piano and Tchaikovsky for composition. Although he became a brilliant pianist, Taneyev opted for a career as a composer and teacher and soon became a professor at the Conservatory. His fame both as a teacher and as a composer quickly spread. Among his many students were Gliere, Rachmaninov, Gretchaninov, Scriabin and Medtner. In Russian concert halls, one always finds a bust of Taneyev alongside those of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Tchaikovsky. Sadly, the fame of this outstanding composer has not spread beyond his homeland. The **Piano Quartet in E Major, Op.20** dates from 1906 and is written on a huge scale. It was and is frequently performed inside of Russia and is generally held to be the equal of any other work written for this ensemble. The opening movement, *Allegro brillante*, begins with a bold, dashing melody. One passionate theme after another is introduced as the movement proceeds, each changing the mood in its own way. It ends with a rousing coda. The second movement, *Adagio, piu tosto largo*, provides an excellent example of Taneyev's melodic gifts. The middle section adds contrast with its agitation. The finale, *Allegro molto*, might be a textbook lesson in the art of counterpoint, of which Taneyev was an undisputed master. Canonic and fugal episodes are among the many treasures to be found in this mammoth and extraordinary movement. This is a massive work of great variety and emotion. It certainly belongs on the concert stage and should not be missed either by professionals or amateurs



**Ernst Eduard Taubert** (1838-1934) was born in the Prussian town of Regenwalde. He began his education in Bonn where he studied with the Brahms acolyte Albert Dietrich after which he moved to Berlin and continued his studies with Friedrich Kiel. He remained in Berlin for the rest of his life where he worked as a music critic and a professor at the Stern Conservatory. His **Piano Quartet in E flat Major,**

**Op.38** dates from 1882. The thematic material of the opening movement, *Allegro commodo*, though well handled is rather ordinary and not particularly memorable. Were the other movements not of any higher quality, it would not be worth including here. However, the *Adagio cantabile*, subtitled *Romanze*, which follows is quite appealing, full of deep feeling and the viola in particular is given a big role to play. The bustling *Vivace, intermezzo* which follows, holds one's attention is entirely with its fine lyrical melody. The only mark against the excellent finale, *Molto vivace*, is the fact that it could have been written by Robert Schumann. Nonetheless, it must be admitted, this aside, it is a very effective movement, excellently executed with good sounding themes. It is a work good to play and except for the first movement, good to hear.

**Ferdinand Thieriot** (1838-1919), five years younger than Brahms, was not only born in Hamburg, but also studied with the



same teacher, Eduard Marxer. The two knew each other from their Hamburg days and remained on friendly terms. After Hamburg, Thieriot, continued his studies with Carl Gottlieb Reissiger in Dresden and then finished in Munich with Joseph Rheinberger after which he moved to Vienna where his friend Brahms was instrumental in helping him obtain the position of Styrian Music Director in the provincial capital of Graz where he worked between 1870-85. Later, Thieriot held important positions in Leipzig and Hamburg where he remained from 1902 until his death. For the most part, Thieriot, like Brahms, remained true to the classical traditions which preceded him and took Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann as his models. Only toward the end of his life did his work show some of the influence of the "New German Music" of Wagner and Liszt. He wrote two piano quartets. The **Piano Quartet No.1 in e minor, Op.9** dates from 1863. It seems to have disappeared shortly after its publication and in any event, I am unfamiliar with it. The **Piano Quartet No.2 in E flat Major, Op.30** is a worthwhile work, solidly put together which is strong enough to be recommended for concert performance and certainly to amateurs as it is not difficult to play. The opening movement, *Allegro*, is particularly good with its broad and powerful main theme. The lyrical second subject provides an excellent contrast. Even more impressive, by virtue of its melody, is a third theme. Next comes a Scherzo with an appealing and deeply felt trio. The third movement, a warm *Adagio*, has a particularly memorable middle section. The spirit of Schumann envelops the lively finale, an *Allegro*, but in no way is the music imitative. Of particular note is his fine handling of the string parts.



**Pedro Tintorer** (1814-1891) Pere Tintorer in Catalan) was born in Palma de Mallorca to Catalan parents but grew up in Barcelona where he studied with Ramon Vilanova music director of the cathedral. At the age of 16 he entered the Madrid Conservatory where he studied piano with Pedro Albeniz and composition with Ramon Canicer after which he attended the Paris Conservatory where he studied with Pierre Zimmerman. He remained in Paris until 1836 during which time he is thought to have studied privately with Franz Liszt. He served as a professor for many years at the Lyon Conservatory before returning to Barcelona where he served as a professor and then director of the Conservatori del Liceu in Barcelona. He composed in most genres. The charming *Quartetino*, which Tintorer subtitled **Un souvenir de L. van Beethoven**, was composed during his time as a professor in Lyon during the 1840's. It is in two movements, and begins with a very romantic *Andante mosso* full of yearning and drama. A substantial and exciting *Allegro ma non tanto* follows. The style recalls very early Beethoven, perhaps from the era of around 1800. While not a great work, it is nonetheless fun to play, attractive to hear and important as it comes from a little known but worthy Catalan composer.

**Donald Tovey** (1875-1940) was born in the English town of Eton. He studied piano privately and subsequently attended Oxford and the Royal Academy of Music in London where he studied composition with Hubert Parry. He enjoyed a career as a concert performer as well as a composer and served as a Professor of



Music for more than 25 years at Edinburgh University. Today he is best remembered for his essays on music, but he regarded himself first and foremost as a composer. Tovey wrote in most genres and his compositions were not only respected but regularly performed in such important venues as London, Vienna and Berlin. But like the works of so many others, it has inexplicably disappeared from the concert stage. He wrote several

chamber music works, most dating from the last decade of the 19th century up to the First World War. **The Piano Quartet in e minor, Op.12** was composed in 1900 but was not published until 12 years later. It is dedicated one of his tutors at Oxford, Henry Joachim, a nephew of the famous violinist. It is only in two movements, but these are of considerable size and breadth. The opening movement begins as an *Allegro moderato e sostenuto*, softly. It undergoes many tempo and mood changes. The finale is a theme and set of variations. Again there are wide mood swings, high drama and powerful climaxes are interspersed with quiet, calmer and more reflective episodes. This is a powerful work of considerable originality which deserves to be heard once again. Good amateurs should also enjoy it.



**Joaquín Turina** (1882-1949) was born in the Spanish city of Seville. At the age of four he was given as a gift an accordion and surprised everyone with the speed and facility he learned to play. In 1894 he began his formal studies of harmony theory and counterpoint. Almost immediately he began to compose small pieces. In 1905 he, as most other Spanish composers of the time, went to Paris where he studied piano

with Moszkowsky and composition under Vincent d'Indy in the Schola Cantorum. He became good friends with Isaac Albeniz and Manuel de Falla. It was Albeniz who encouraged to find inspiration in the popular music of Spain and Andalusia. After finishing his studies, Turina moved to Madrid where he spent the rest of his life composing and teaching. Turina's first works were entirely influenced by the French impressionist school, not surprisingly, since he had studied in Paris with impressionist composers. His **Piano Quartet in a, Op.67** composed in 1931, Turina structurally departs from traditional classical structures. The three movements (*Lento-Vivo-Andante*) not only share a relationship to each other but also each have characteristic tempo changes within the movements. The *Lento* opens moodily with a theme first uttered by the unison strings followed respectively by the piano and the cello. The main section, *Andante mosso*, is somewhat faster and impassioned with more than hints of Spanish melody. The *Scherzo* is even more pronounced in its Spanish flavor. A contemplative, contrasting trio is included. The concluding *Andante—Allegretto* opens by briefly recalling the opening moment, with instrumental solos but then devolves into Spanish romance, not without impressionist episodes with echoes of Debussy. Certainly a candidate for concert performance, especially few piano quartets sound anything like it. It is not beyond accomplished and experienced amateurs.

**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 *Allegretto*. 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 musical reputation of **Carl Maria von Weber** (1786-1826) rests almost entirely on his famous operas *Die Freischutz* and *Oberon* and a few other works such as his clarinet concertos. But Weber's music by and large is unknown to present day players and listeners, which is a pity since it is uniformly well-written, particularly for wind instruments. Chamber music, however, comprises only a very small part of his oeuvre.

There are only three works which qualify as chamber music—his Piano Quartet, his Clarinet Quintet and this work for Flute (or Violin), Cello and Piano. Weber studied with Michael Haydn in Salzburg the Abbe Vogler in Vienna, two of the leading teachers of their day. He pursued a career as a conductor and music director holding posts in Breslau, Prague, Berlin and Dresden. His **Piano Quartet in B flat Major, Op.8** dates from 1809. As such, it must be considered one of the earlier works of this genre. While there were others, truly only Mozart's were of first quality and it seems quite likely that they served as models for the young Weber. The work is unmistakably classical but here and there we can early Romanticism. It would be no understatement to call the beautiful opening *Allegro* Mozartean. In fact, from its open bars, one might well conclude that this was a work by Wolfgang. The treatment of the instruments, especially the piano as well as the thematic material is strongly influenced by Mozart. The *Adagio ma non troppo* begins with soft double stops in the violin. The theme is somewhat heavy and veiled in the ornamentation of the classical era. The third movement is marked *Minuetto* but it is closer to a *Scherzo*. In the middle section, Weber makes excellent use of the cello. The finale, *Presto*, once again the ghost of Mozart hovers over the music which is lively and energetic. This quartet is important for historical reasons but can by virtue of the fine writing and thematic material can stand on its own as a work worthy of the concert hall or the stands of amateur players.



**Charles-Marie Widor** (1844-1937) today is primarily remembered for his organ compositions and as one of the greatest organists of all time. Widor was born in Lyons and studied first studied with his father, also an organist, and then at the Brussels Conservatory. In 1870, upon the recommendation of Charles Gounod and Camille Saint-

Saens, he was appointed to the most important position an organist could hold in France, the position of organist at Saint Sulpice Church in Paris. In 1890, he succeeded Cesar Franck as Professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatory and many important composers, including, Darius Milhaud, Louis Vierne, Marcel Dupre, and Edgar Varese, studied with him. He composed throughout his life in virtually every genre and left a considerable amount of chamber music. The fact that his chamber music along with his other non-organ compositions have been ignored is because of his tower contribution to the organ literature. But Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music states that his chamber music is of the first rank and as good as that of Saint-Saens. His **Piano Quartet in a minor**, Op.66 dates from 1891. The opening Allegro moderato makes a strong impression by virtue of the two main themes and his rather original use of rhythm, especially in the piano. The second movement, Adagio poco piu mosso, begins rather sedately with a very romantic lyrical theme. But this is followed by several different tempo sections—Agitato, then Tranquillo, then Piu lento, then Poco a poco agitato, and then Poco piu vivo. As you can imagine from the constant tempo changes the whole effect is rather unsettling. It is a kind of rhapsody, but a very restless one. The third movement, Vivace, for all intents and purposes is a bright and fleet scherzo. Again, the rhythm is very pronounced and quite effective. The finale, Allegro ma non troppo, bursts forth in a very dramatic fashion with the piano giving out the powerful theme over the strings quick 16th notes. When they take up the melody it becomes apparent that it is quite lyrical. It is a hard driving piece, riveting most of the time. All in all, a superb work which belongs in the concert hall. Very good amateurs should also make its acquaintance.



**Alexander Winkler** (1865-1935) was born in the then Russian city of Kharkov (today Kharkiv in the Ukraine) He studied piano and composition locally and then in Moscow and St. Petersburg. He continued his studies in Paris and in Vienna Theodor Leschetitzky before returning to Kharkov where he taught piano for a number of years before being appointed to a professorship at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Sergei Prokoviev was among his many students. In 1924, he emigrated to France and served as director of the Conservatory in Besancon. His **Piano Quartet in g minor**, Op.8 dates from 1899. The opening movement, Allegro appassionato, despite its promising title does not make as strong an impression as one might hope, the thematic material being somewhat pedestrian. However, the impressive second movement, a very Russian sounding scherzo, makes up for this. Adding to its quality is the beautiful trio section marked alla serenata, Next comes a charming Andante elegico. The use of the strings who are given a song-like melody is very well done and a more agitated middle section only adds to the excellence of this movement. The work is topped by an impressive Presto, a tarantella, which holds one's interest from start to finish. Good enough for concert, it is especially suitable for amateurs.

**Wladyslaw (Ladislav) Zelenski** (1837-1921) was born in Grodkowice not far from the city of Cracow. After studying piano locally with several teachers, including the well-known concert pianist Alexander Dreyschock, he went to Prague University where he took a doctorate in philosophy. He also took composition les-



sons from Josef Krejči after which he enrolled in the Paris Conservatory where he continued his composition lessons with Henri Reber. Upon his return to Poland he enjoyed a long career as a concert pianist, teacher and composer. He held several important teaching posts including Director of the Cracow Conservatory which he helped to found. He wrote in most genres and left a number of chamber

music works which have received considerable praise from the well-known critic, His **Piano Quartet in c minor**, Op.61 was composed around 1907 and published in 1910. The big, restless opening movement, Allegro con brio, starts somewhat hesitantly but quickly builds to a dramatic climax which releases the lovely second theme. The movement is simply brimming with gorgeous material which is crowned by exquisite part-writing. The cello brings forth the long-lined main theme to second movement, Romanza, andante sostenuto. One barely notices as the other voices join in this highly romantic song without words. The third movement, Intermezzo allegretto, is a dance, full of exotic perfume, first there are wafts of French and then Spanish melody. After a few powerful measures of piano introductions, the strings bring forth main theme to the finale, Allegro appassionato. It is powerful and thrusting, yet full of yearning. This fine work should have entered the repertoire, although one must remember that by the beginning of the 20th century piano quartets were being eclipsed by piano quintets in the concert hall. There is no question but that it belongs in the concert hall and will interest professional groups, but at the same time, amateur groups will get a lot of pleasure from such a lovely work.



**Vasily Zolotarev** (1872-1964) was born in the Russian city of Taganrog. He studied at the St Petersburg Conservatory with Rimsky-Korsakov and Mily Balakirev. He taught at the Moscow Conservatory for a number of years and then in Belarusian Academy of Music in Minsk. He composed in most genres and was especially fond of chamber music. Through

Rimsky Korsakov, Zolotarev became part of the so-called Belaiev Circle, named for those composers, mostly Korsakov's students, whose music Belaiev published. All of Zolotarev's early chamber music was published by Belaiev. His **Piano Quartet in D Major**, Op.13 dates from 1905. Over all, this is a very Russian sounding work and Zolotarev clearly made considerable use of Russian folk melody therein. The rhythms of the opening movement, Allegro risoluto, recall Russian folk dance. The second movement, Andante sostenuto, is quite atmospheric. Once again, the third movement, Allegretto grazioso, which serves as a scherzo, Russian melody and rhythm come to the fore. The finale, also an Allegro risoluto, is a stormy, dramatic affair and though perhaps somewhat long-winded is still quite effective. All of the instruments are well handled and the work makes a good impression. It can be recommended especially to amateur players.