THE

CHAMBER MUSIC JOURNAL

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

Franz Krommer's Clarinet Quintets

The 20th Century Piano Quintet

The String Quartets of Stanislav Moniuszko

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The Chamber Music Journal

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

The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor

Mazer Society's October Play-In

The Mazer String Quartet Society is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, continuing chamber music organizations in Europe. Johann Mazer, a Swedish chamber music enthusiast, as early as the 1820's was busy arranging chamber music concerts and was, among other things, instrumental in introducing some of Beethoven's quartets to Sweden. After his death in 1847, through the terms of his will, he laid the ground work for the establishment of the Society which is dedicated to the performance of string quartets among enthusiasts. The Society has had a great influence over the years on the development of the Swedish string quartet. Its members (as those of The Cobbett Association) are both amateurs and professionals, many of whom are among Sweden's leading chamber musicians. They happily play side by side with amateurs. Informal gatherings are held Monday evenings from September to May. Three works are usually played, preferably with different groups. The program committee strive after variation between string quartets, trios, duos and larger ensembles. The majority of performances are given by groups put together for the occasion. These groups are often built by individual initiative, while in some cases the music director and program council help in the organization. The purpose of these informal concert-evenings is to perform chamber music in an intimate environment, with a limited audience and without restrictive quality demands. The Society also organizes chamber music courses and play-ins for its members and a small number of guests. In January, a weekend course is held in Sigtuna from Friday to Sunday where about 12 groups study their works under the guidance of four prominent teaching chamber musicians. During a Saturday in March and a weekend in October, a chamber music meeting or play-in is organized where members can make music during sessions of 2½ hours in ten rooms simultaneously at a fine mansion at Riddersvik on the edge of Stockholm. David William-Olsson, a Cobbett member, and president of the Mazer Society sent me a list of what was played at the October 2004 play-in. Space only permits me to list some of the things played—eat your hearts out!—–ed.

Abel:	String Quartet, Op.8
Bazzini:	Cello Quintet
V. Aulin:	String Quartet. in F
Berwald:	Piano Quintet
Borodin:	String Quartet Nos. 1 & 2
Bruch:	Viola Quintet
Bruckner:	Viola Quintet
Crussell:	Clarinet Quintet Op.4
Dessoff:	Cello Quintet
Dvorak:	Cypresses et.al
Gade:	Novelettes for Sextet
Glazunov	String Quartet No.3
Hindemith:	Variations for Clarinet Quartet
Jansa:	String Quartet Op.51, No.3
Kozeluch:	String Quartet No.3, Op.32 No.3
F. Lachner:	Nonet
Mica:	Quartet in D
C. Nielsen:	String Quartet, Op.13
Norman:	String Quartet, Op.30
Onslow:	Quintet No.5
Puccini:	Chrysanthemums (for Str Qt)
Reicha:	Clarinet Quintet
H. Ries:	String Quartet, Op.20 No.1
Rossini:	String Sonata Nos. 1 & 2
E. Smyth:	Cello Quintet
Stanford:	Nonet
Stenhammar:	String Quartet in f minor
Webern:	Langsamersatz (for Str Qt)
Wikmanson:	String Quartet No.3

Added to this musical banquet, the lucky participants dined on veal in cucumber sauce with mashed potatoes, grilled beef with potato salad, Salmon with saffron potatoes, tiramisu with chocolate cream, cappuccino pannacotta—no doubt there was ample wine and coffee, although this was not reported. Oh, you happy Mazers! Their next play-in is March 5, 2005. Contact the Mazer Society on the web.

Cobbett Association Play Ins?

You have written in the past about some workshops, such as the San Diego, where the players often explore the wider repertoire. Why hasn't the Cobbett Association organized any?
Peter Smith
Boston, Massachusetts

Good question. The Board of Advisors has talked about organizing just such a workshop or play-in and would like to gauge interest in such a project before going forward. We would appreciate it if those of you who might be interested in attending such an affair would either e-mail or write us so that we can get some idea of the interest which exists among members.

Harry Edlund

I am sorry to have to tell you that Harry Edlund passed away at age 62 after suffering a heart attack. It was he that interested me in The Cobbett Association.

David William-Olsson
Stockholm, Sweden

We are, of course, sorry to learn of Mr. Edlund's passing. An avid chamber music enthusiast, Mr. Edlung was a long-time member of The Cobbett Association.

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

The Piano Quintet in the 20th Century—An overview, Part I

by Dr. Ralf Brueckmann

The full range of the piano quintet literature includes music of an intimate, introverted chamber music character right through to that of almost symphonic dimension. Who has not heard the marvellous piano quintets of Brahms, Schumann or Dvorak, which exist in many recordings? In the 19th century these composers took the genre of the piano quintet to heights which many thought could not be maintained by future composers. Perhaps the symphonic sound of that world evokes the piano concerto. The intention of this overview is to draw the reader's attention to many works within this genre and to create an awareness of what we in the 21st century can discover in these works. All compositions described in the following are available on recordings. A comparison of different interpretations of a work is not attempted; most of the works have, in any case, only been recorded once. But let's praise those artists, who put courage and effort into recording unknown works. They make it possible for us to discover a wide range of wonderful music.

Could the listener imagine a better introduction to the 20th century than the piano quintet from **Anton Stepanovic Arensky?** (1861–1906) The expressive and virtuoso piano part to this quintet (1900) was surely inspired by Robert Schumann. There is the influence of the baroque in the introduction to the last movement, a fugue. However, it concludes in the language of the late romantic period. (Arensky's contemporaries hearing this music would not have expected what was going to happen over the next 100 years. Recording: Marco Polo 8.223811)

Dirk Schäfer (1873–1931) was born in the Netherlands and had an exceptional career as a pianist. From the 40th year of his life he considered himself primarily a composer. He was very productive but also very critical which led him to reject all but 19 of his compositions. His piano quintet Op. 5 (composed 1901) in D Flat Major with its

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Stanislaw Moniuszko The String Quartets

by R.H.R. Silvertrust

Stanisław Moniuszko (1819-1872) was born into a family of Polish landowners in Ubiel, not far from Minsk in what was then Russian Poland, now Belarus. When he was 9, his family moved to Warsaw where he began piano lessons. Both his talent and interest justified sending him to Berlin to continue his studies when he reached 18. There he studied composition with Carl Rungenhagen. While in Berlin and still a student, he had an unexpected early success when he set three songs to the words of the Polish national poet, Adam Mickiewicz. These were published by Bote & Bock and were favorably received especially in the Prussian and Russian parts of Congress Poland. After completing his studies, Moniuszko obtained a post as an organist in Vilnius. During that time he became acquainted with the novelist Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and playwright-satirist Aleksander Fredro. These contacts stimulated his interest in dramatic music. He began composing intensively writing his first operas, other stage works, sacred music as well as secular cantatas.

At about this time he began work on the collection of songs entitled *Songbook for Home Use* (*Śpiewnik Domowy).* The songbook became immensely popular and established his reputation with the Polish public as a patriotic composer. The first volume of this collection appeared in 1842. Over the years the collection grew larger

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Franz Krommer: The Quartets For Clarinet & String Trio

By Larius J. Ussi

The entry on Franz Krommer (1759-1831) that one finds in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* is short, uninformative and in good part devoted to what is probably a spurious slur on a Krommer symphony purportedly made by Franz Schubert. Anyone who has had the privilege to either play or hear Krommer's chamber music realizes what a travesty this entry amounts to.

While there is a fair amount of Krommer's music in print and on disk, what there is remains only the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. Krommer, like so many of his contemporaries, was a very productive composer writing for virtually every genre (excepting opera, lieder and solo piano) but more than half of his compositions were chamber music. He is thought to have written as many as 76 string quartets and 25 viola quintets not to mention dozens of other pieces for various combinations.

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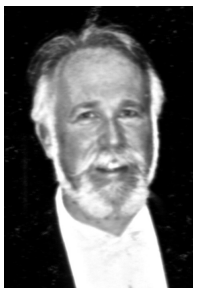
At The Doublebar



First, I wish to apologize for the photograph which appeared in the body of the article on Louise Farrenc on page three of the last issue. It was not her but Amy Beach. I had been very keen to find another picture or perhaps a photograph of Louise Farrenc (beyond the rather stylized pencil sketch from her youth) for the last part of my series on her chamber music and after searching on Google for sometime, I found a photo which was listed as that of Farrenc in middle age. Not knowing what Beach looked like as a middle-aged woman and in rather a hurry, I did not double check to see if it was in fact Farrenc. We corrected the error toward the end of our run and reinserted the pencil drawing since I could find nothing else.

We are very pleased to offer in this issue the first part of Dr Ralf Brueckmann's excellent survey on the 20th century piano quintet. It is sure to be a handy reference for readers interested in this genre.

Thanks also to Larius Ussi for his interesting article on Franz Krommer's clarinet quartets, the first detailed discussion in *The Journal* of any of Krommer's works for winds and strings.

I trust my article on Stanislaw Moniuszko's tuneful and ingratiating quartets will be of interest to string players as there are so few by Polish composers from the first part of the 19th century.

As the holiday season approaches consider offering a gift of *The Journal* (Cobbett membership) to a chamber music friend. We continue to need new members. Along these lines, I wish to thank Theo Wyatt for his efforts on our behalf which have resulted in many new members from the UK.

I would like to remind readers that we depend on your contributions to keep operating. We have no other means of financial support. Prompt payment saves us the expense of printing second and third renewal notices and the additional postage this requires. So if this issue arrives with a renewal form, please mail it back to us promptly.—*Ray Silvertrust, Editor*

The Clarinet Quartets of Franz Krommer

(Continued from page 3)

Franz Krommer (Frantisek Vincenc Kramár) was born in Kamenitz near the neighborhood of Trebíc in South Western Moravia. His father was an innkeeper and sent Franz at age 15 to live with his uncle, Antonín Matyás Kramár, a choirmaster and a composer at Turany near Pressburg (Brno). Franz was educated with a view toward him following in his uncle's profession and he received music lessons on the organ and the violin from his uncle. But as regards composition, for the most part, Krommer was self-taught, having immersed himself in the works from the 1760's and 1770's of Haydn and Mozart. In 1785, Krommer migrated to Vienna where a number of Czech composers had already settled. He gained employment from a series of Habsburg noblemen who like Prince Esterhazy had musical pretensions. It is often wondered how a violinist could and did write so much fine music for winds. The answer can be found in the positions he held on aristocratic estates during this time. As Kapellmeister, first to Count Karólyi in Hungary and later to Prince Grassalkowitz, both lovers of wind music, Krommer was given ample opportunity to compose for winds as well as the time to experiment and even to learn to play the oboe.

Following the death of Prince Grassalkowitz and the subsequent dissolution of his court orchestra, Krommer returned to Vienna in 1795. His most interesting compositions for wind instruments begin with this period onwards. The large number of compositions he wrote indicates employment by someone, perhaps by one of the many minor Princes. These were hard years for Krommer as he struggled to gain recognition within the Imperial capital. He applied unsuccessfully on several occasions for the position of violinist in the Viennese court orchestra. Certainly his rejection was not due to any lack of skill. Contemporary reports list him in the front rank of Vienna's violinists along with Dittersdorf, the brothers Wranitzky and Gyrowetz. In addition, we know that when in Vienna, Paganini sought out Krommer and played quartets with him. Most likely his failure to gain the position had to do with the uncertainty created by the Napoleonic invasions and occupation of Vienna during which time the Court was loath to expand its expenditures on such things as the arts and music. But in the summer of 1815, his situation improved considerably with his appointment to a sinecure that gave him the security and freedom to devote himself to composition.

In the autumn of 1818, Krommer was appointed Royal Court and Chamber Composer to the emperor, succeeding Leopold Kozeluch. Krommer was the last person to hold this position, and he held it until his death. His main responsibility was to compose for the imperial wind ensemble. It was as Royal Composer that Krommer traveled to Italy and France where his music met with considerable acclaim. Krommer died in Vienna in January of 1831. Contemporary reports state that his death was not due to a serious illness but to the lethal care of his physician.

Krommer's life spanned three musical periods: the so-called high period of the Vienna Classics when Mozart and Haydn were at their peak, the transitional period from the classical to the romantic era and lastly the early romantic era. He was neither a revolutionary in spirit nor a pioneer of new ideas; however, he did follow the progressive trends of his time and soon occupied an important position among Vienna's composers. Although his orchestral and instrumental compositions show the influence of Haydn and Mozart, nonetheless Krommer's music has its own sound and individuality.

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His works are remarkable for their masterly technique, especially their counterpoint. His melodies are attractive, memorable and mostly cheerful in nature, based on logical harmonic construction with rich tonal colors. His modulations are often to unrelated keys, something in advance of his time. Krommer's compositions pay strict attention to correctness of form and always have ideas which are well worked out. In the dramatic and intense sections of his slow movements, the excellence of his writing comes close to that of Beethoven.

Krommer became a master of instrumentation in the same way that Haydn had—through years of practical experience of leading orchestras and performing in small ensembles himself. Originally taught the violin and organ, he later became proficient at the viola, cello, piano, and oboe. In his musical style, one finds many elements of Czech folk music. Several of his themes are clearly based on the furiant, a Czech dance in quick triple time with syncopation. Among his works, the chamber compositions and concertos for wind instruments are extremely important. The literature of wind instruments, especially that for the clarinet, has been unquestionably enriched by them, and they rival the works of Mozart and Weber for the same combinations. Although Krommer's music has from his own time right up to the present always received the occasional performance, and despite the fact that his concertos, especially for wind instruments, have received consistent acclaim by performers and critics, by and large, he has unfortunately been ignored by the general public. It was not really until the last 25 years that any serious attention was paid to his music. During this time, several recordings have appeared and have made clear why his contemporaries praised his music so highly, especially its wealth of ideas, innovative harmonic progressions and striking modulations, as well as its wit, fervor and depth. Upon hearing Krommer's music, one can now easily understand how it was that so many of his compositions were published and known throughout Europe during his lifetime.

That Krommer loved the clarinet is beyond dispute. He wrote three fine concerti for it, this before either Spohr or Weber wrote theirs, and many fine chamber music compositions. In the last decade of the 18th century the clarinet greatly increased in popularity in part due to the technical advances made to the instrument. More virtuosi appeared on the scene and flocked to Vienna, the musical mecca, in search of new compositions for their instrument. Krommer was only too happy to oblige.

Although there is some disagreement among Krommer scholars, it is generally believed Krommer wrote six quartets for clarinet and string trio. At the outset, I should tell readers I am not a clarinetist, but a string player, primarily a violinist. Therefore I am in no position to personally comment on the technical aspects of the clarinet writing other than what I have been told by my clarinetist friends. Krommer's **First Clarinet Quartet**, **Op.21 No.1 in E Flat Major** is thought to have been written during the middle of the last decade of the 18th century. Though first published in 1801, there is record of it circulating in manuscript form throughout the Habsburg Empire. It is in four movements and opens with an *Allegro moderato.* Here the clarinet is given a soloist's role immediately bringing forth a lovely melody much like something out of Weber. The strings are completely in the background. The second subject is comprised of a series of running passages which could just as easily be in a concerto as a clarinet quartet. The strings for the most part are pure accompanying voices but each are given very short (one or two measure) fragmentary bridge phrases, the cello seeming to receive the most. On occasion they receive an introductory passage to the next section. The writing in this big movement is superbly tailored for the clarinet. In the second movement, an elegant and tuneful *Minuetto, Allegretto,* the strings are given the opening eight measure phrase alone while the clarinet completes the second half of it. It has an archaic sound and is old fashioned for the time (late 1790's) but tuneful. Toward the trio, the violin takes over the role the clarinet previously had. In the trio, the clarinet alone is given a ländler theme which morphs into an technical etude-like second section. Next comes a *Romanza.* The main theme is given out by the clarinet. Variations follow. The violin and clarinet share the first one with the clarinet being given an intricate filigree role as the violin sings the long melodic line. In the third part we hear from the cello and viola with very brief running lines. Next is an aria-like variation in the minor is sung by the clarinet. The movement concludes with an athletic chromatic series primarily in the clarinet but also handed off to the cello. The finale, *Rondo, Allegro,* in 6/8 has a typically bouncy Krommeresque melody, lovely and singable, which the clarinet alone has. There is an original but short interplay between the cello and clarinet. The strings, beginning with the cello, open a turbulent middle section. Here the part-writing is the best of the entire quartet and a real conversation is had by all with the clarinet being an equal member rather than a soloist. The coda has a short virtuoso passage before it politely dies away. This last movement is of very high quality indeed. As for the rest of the trio, the writing for strings is really secondary but the melodies and craftsmanship are so fine that no one should mind playing this lovely work.

Clarinet Quartet No.2, Op.21 No.2 in B Flat major was no doubt written shortly after the first, at least, one would assume this given that they are published together. It too was quite popular and had circulated in manuscript form for some years before formal publication. The layout is virtually identical to the First Quartet except that here the Romanza comes second and the Minuetto third. The opening movement again begins with an orchestral type introduction before the clarinet enters with a dramatic theme as the soloist while the strings quickly fade into the background. In the middle section the clarinetist is given some finger gymnastics before moving along to the second theme, also tuneful and well-written. During the first half, the strings make occasional entrances, en mass, in accompaniment formation. There is one first rate tune after another, some so fine you want to jump up and dance or tap your toes. Again, this is the longest movement, more than twice the length of the others but full of so many melodies. Just when we resign ourselves to the fact that this is a work for clarinet with string accompaniment, Krommer surprises us with a cello solo and some decent string writing and interplay. The writing in the second half is a cut above that of the first movement of the First Quartet and is nearly as good as that in the finale of that work. It has much to recommend it. The *Romanza* in the Second Quartet is much quicker in tempo, a short Allegretto rather than a Poco adagio. The clarinet alone has the first section, then the cello and clarinet enter into an effective dialogue. Again it is a series of variations. Of course, there is the virtuoso one for the clarinet, very well done indeed and showing complete knowledge of the instrument's capabilities. In the fol-

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The Clarinet Quartets of Franz Krommer *(continued from page 5)*

lowing *Minuetto, allegretto,* a lively affair, the clarinet is not slung to the forefront but shares a more or less equal role with the other voices. The trio section has a fine ländler given to the clarinet alone. The finale, *Rondo,* begins with a lively descending theme in the clarinet. While the clarinet leads, the other voices are not always mere accompaniment and there are several sections where the strings hold their own and even take the lead. A slightly doleful minor section features the clarinet with the cello in a supporting role. Again, the string writing gets stronger in the second half of the movement. The energetic coda finishes more traditionally i.e. with a flourish. As a violinist playing chamber music, I am not overly enthused to having to play works with a lot of um-pah-pah-pah accompaniment (a motion vigorously seconded by my cellist and violist) and there is no denying that there are several such sections in the Op.21 quartets of Krommer. Having said this, the melodies are so delightful, the interplay so cleverly done and the fact that eventually all do join in (though not as much as one might wish), makes me a fan of this music. Krommer's gift for attractive melody is truly astonishing. Lest the wrong impression be given—namely that Krommer knew no better than to write such weak parts for the strings—it should be noted that these two quartets were really designed for traveling virtuosi who needed works that could easily be handled by the average string player at a moment's notice. (Spohr was later to do the same with his Quatuors Brillant.

Clarinet Quartet No.3, *(it shouldt be noted that these works, when they are mentioned at all, have not been referred to as No.1 or No. 2 etc., but by their opus numbers alone, e.g. Op.21 No.2. But it seems logical to give them numbers and I have referred to them as such here)* **Op.69 in E Flat Major** dates from around 1810. (There is a wind octet of Krommer's which is also listed as Op.69, but this is an entirely different work) Here Krommer has switched to a three movement format. Imagine my surprise playing the opening bars only to realize that I had played this work many times before. Lo and behold, it was none other than my old friend Op.5 No.1 in E Flat Major for string quartet! Presumably being opus 5, this work dates from the late 1780's or early 1790's. Krommer had merely recycled Op.5 No.1, replacing the first violin and substituting the clarinet. Voila, Op.69—which some ignorant critics have pointed to as an example of how Krommer's style had advanced over the Op.21. But the fact is, as I have already noted, the Op.21 were not true concertante works, the Op.5 string quartets (there are three) were. And Op.5 No.1 is about as fine a concertante style quartet as you will find. It's no accident that for most of the 20th century it was the only string quartet of Krommer's that remained in print. While the first violin/clarinet has more than the other voices—it is not a lot more. The opening movement *Allegro moderato* begins with a seemingly syncopated melody, beginning on beat four. The lovely lead theme is pure Krommer with all of the clever flourishes and small touches which add to the work's originality. Here we find the viola and cello are given long sections of grateful solo work. The second theme is every bit as good. This is a great movement. The middle movement is an *Allegretto.* It is a theme and set of variations. The theme is, as always, a pretty melody. No instrumental solos are given out in these variations, nor are they written in concertante style. Rather, the instruments interact as they do in the later quarters of Haydn and Mozart with all four voices taking part together. Each variation is simply different from what has come before. The differences are not great except for a Hungarian episode in the minor. The final variation consisting of lengthy triplet passages is exceptionally nice. The finale is a Hungarian *Rondo.* The tempo is *moderato,* and for good reason, as difficult 16th note triplet passages abound. In this movement, the style reverts to concertante and each of the voices has long solo passages. The opening melody is notable for its grace notes which create the effect of a lopsided dance. The cello, as in the second movement, is charged with inserting the most Hungarian of the themes. The exciting coda is almost orchestral. A delightful work, which belongs in the concert hall. Amateurs, who enjoy music from this period, will love this work.

Clarinet Quartet No.4, Op.82 in D Major for an A clarinet was published in 1816. Again upon playing the captivating theme of the opening bars to the first movement, *Allegro moderato,* I felt I had either heard or played this piece, and I had—it is Krommer's Op.46, a quartet for Bassoon, two violas and cello recycled. The writing is no longer in concertante style exclusively. The voices are better integrated. The clarinet is given some virtuosic passages along the way which I suppose is the point if you are going to have a clarinet along for the ride. Still it does not approach anything like the Op.21. The strings *are* involved from start to finish. In typical Krommer style, the movement goes from long vocal lines to rapid passage work, which raises the excitement level. Like all of the clarinet quartets, the first movement is more or less twice as big as the others. However, it is not too long but perfectly worked out, full of catchy tunes and well-written for all. This rousing opening movement leads to an *Adagio.* Here Krommer seems to have intended this to be a solo movement for clarinet as the other voices do not even have little flourishes to add. Strange after the give and take of the first movement. A *Minuetto, Allegretto* follows. The clarinet is given the jumpy first theme and then the bouncy second as well. In the trio section, again the clarinet has the solo to the pizzicato accompaniment of the cello and the soft harmonic support of the violin and viola. It is as if we were back to the writing style of the Op.21. In the finale *Rondo,* the clarinet states the attractive opening theme, the other voices, with the occasional exception of the violin, hang back. The second theme, also attractive, is exclusively found in the clarinet. It is only in a brief bridge section that running triplets are spread about. As we enter the second half of the movement, the strings are briefly used *en mass* as a choir, but for the most part the thematic material is entrusted solely to the clarinet. Though disap-

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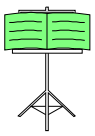
pointing from a string player's standpoint, the sheer beauty of the themes makes up for this shortcoming.

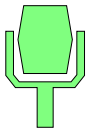
Clarinet Quartet No.5, Op.83 in B Flat Major is thought to have been written around the same time as No.4. The opening *Allegro* starts with a brief string introduction. While the clarinet has the magnetic opening theme, the string accompaniment is fairly prominent. The strings are also given some thematic material and are interestingly used *with* the clarinet to simultaneously sing the theme. The writing here sounds more advanced, especially in the development sections, than even the first movement to Op.82. Even the viola is briefly brought to the fore for a short solo. There are also episodes in which the strings appear as a string trio while the clarinet briefly sits out. Despite this, the clarinet is given plenty of chance to shine with telling solo passages. The second movement, *Andante,* begins with the clarinet, supported by the cello playing a long and languid, and for Krommer, a melancholy melody. Again, a movement for solo clarinet with string accompaniment, which is, however, better than that of Op.82 as the strings are allowed to add piquant little Krommeresque touches. Of all the movements in the quartets, this one stands out alone as the only one which cannot be called happy or pleasant. Though certainly not tragic, it is, nonetheless, clearly a lament, and given the setting, extremely effective. The *Minuetto, moderato* which follows, though hardly jolly, dispels the elegiac aura of the *Andante.* The strings, with the violin in the lead, are given the lion's share of the tuneful thematic material of the traditional-sounding minuet with the clarinet only being allowed to finish phrases. In the trio the clarinet is at last allowed to break loose. The short finale, *Rondo,* is a lively dance which the clarinet has to itself while the strings are saddled with a uninteresting accompaniment. This writing is not an advance over Op.21.

While most scholars now believe that **Clarinet Quartet No.6 Op. Post. In E Flat Major** is by Krommer, it was long thought Peter Hänsel wrote it. But playing it along side the others removes any doubt. It had to come from Krommer's pen. It may well pre-date all or several of the other quartets as it is unknown when it was composed. In three movements, the big opening *Allegro moderato* has a 2 measure string introduction before the clarinet states the gracious main theme and then immediately takes off into flights of fast virtuosic passage work. The violin is allowed, on several occasions to come to the fore and give out thematic material but always after the clarinet and for nowhere near as long. It is "second fiddle" here but has a far bigger role than in the Op.21. For the most part, when the strings are allowed any fast passage work, it is really in the form of an orchestral tutti section. The middle movement, *Adagio sostenuto,* begins with a string introduction to a long heavenly theme in the clarinet alone. It has an undeniable Schubertian quality to it—one is reminded of the lovely slow movement to his Octet. This is wonderful music, regardless of who is allowed to sing the melody. There is a fine episode toward the end between the cello and clarinet which further heightens this Schubertian effect. The lively opening theme to finale, *Rondo, allegro* is full of energy. The strings are better used and things proceed smoothly to a satisfying coda.

Although the clarinet dominates in these works, few if any of Krommer's contemporaries, save Mozart and Beethoven, proceeded differently. The clarinet was, after all, the featured instrument and my clarinetist friends tell me the writing lies very well and shows an excellent knowledge of the instrument. When all is said and done, it is the outstanding quality and great quantity of the lovely melodies in these works which makes them absolutely delightful to play. Audiences will surely find them attractive. It goes without saying that you need a fine clarinetist. Parts to Opp.69, 82 and 83 were reprinted by Musica Rara. The rest have been reprinted by Pizka of Munich. There are several recordings of these works available.



New Recordings



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

String Quartets

Anton ARENSKY (1861-1906) Op.35, Koch 7551 / Rutland BOUGHTON (1878-1960) 2 Qts *On Greek Folk Songs & From the Welsh Hills,* Helios 55174 / Hanns EISLER (1898-1962) Op.73, Nimbus 5729 / Hermann Goetz (1840-76) Qt in B, Jecklin 703 / Alexander GRETCHANINOV (1864-1956) No.3, Dutton 6880 / Karl HARTMANN (1905-63) Nos.1-2, Nimbus 5729 / John HARBISON (1938-) No.4, Koch 7551 / Joseph Martin KRAUS (1756-92) Op.1, Nos.3 & 4, Capriccio 67 066 / Guillaume LEKEU (1870-94) Qt, MD&G 644 1266 / Elizabeth MACONCHY (1907-94) Nos.1-13, Forum 9301 / Georg RAUCHENECKER (1844-1906) No.1, Jecklin 703 / Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828) Wks for 2Vln, Vla & Kb, D.89, 90, 734, 735 776, 925, 969, VMS 113 / Heitor VILLA LOBOS (1887-1959) Nos.1-17, Brilliant Classics 6634 / Jan VORISEK (1791-1825) Rondo Op.11, Praga 250 204 / Werner WEHRLI (1892-1944) Nos.2-3, Jecklin 301

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Peter HANSEL (1770-1831) Qnt in G, Jecklin 608 / Ludwig SPOHR (1784-1859) Sextet Op.140, MD&G 304 1263

Piano Trios

Richard DANIELPOUR (1956-) *A Child's Reliquary,* Arabesque Z6767 / Adolph FOERSTER (1854-1927) Op.61, Troy 692 / Henry HUSS (1862-1953) Op.23, Troy 962 / Lowell LIEBERMANN (1961-) Nos.1-2, Albany Troy 684 / Franz MITTLER (1893-1980) Op.3, Preiser 90567 / Mortimer WILSON (1876-1932) Op.5, Troy 692

Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

Carl CZERNY (1791-1857) Op.73 Qnt, Jecklin 608 / Roland DAHINDEN (1962-) Qnt, Mode 138 / Guillaume LEKEU (1870-94) Qt, MD&G 644 1266 / Lowell LIEBERMANN (1961-) Qnt Op.28, Albany Troy 684 / Sergei LYAPUNOV (1859-1924) Sextet for Str Qt, Kb & Pno, Dutton 6880 / Ludwig SPOHR (1784-1859) Qnt, Op.130, MD&G 304 1263

Winds & Strings

Rutland BOUGHTON (1878-1960) 2 Qts for Ob & Str Trio, Helios 55174 / Samuel COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875-1912, Cln Qnt Op.10, Centaur 2691 / Joseph Martin KRAUS (1756-92) Quintet for Fl & Str Qt, Capriccio 67 066 / Ferdinand RIES (1784-1828) Qnt for Fl & Str Qt Op.107, Jecklin 633 / Andreas ROMBERG (1767-1821) Op.21 Nos.4 & 5, 2 Qnts for Fl & Str Qt, Jecklin 633

Winds, Strings & Piano

Samuel COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875-1912) Nonet for Ob, Cln, Hn, Bsn, Str Trio, Kb & Pno, Op.2, Centaur 2691 / Ludwig SPOHR (1784-1859) Op.147, Septet for Pno, Fl, Cln, Hn, Bsn, Vln & Vc, MD&G 304 1263 / Werner WEHRLI (1892-1944) Trio for Vln, Hn & Pno, Jecklin 301

Piano & Winds

Ludwig SPOHR (1784-1859) Op.52 Qnt, , MD&G 304 1263

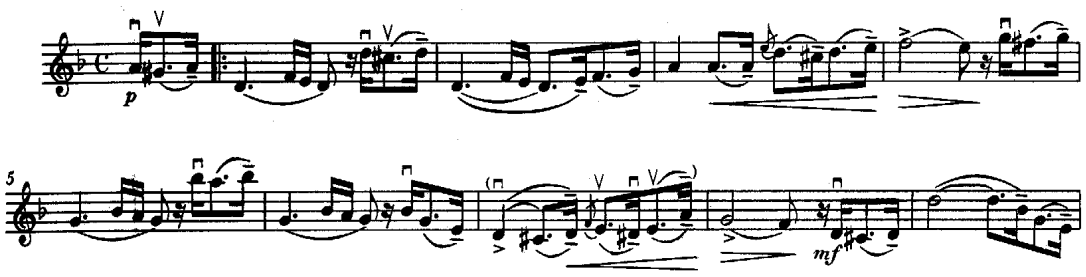
Winds Only

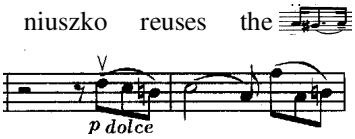
None this Issue

Stanislaw Moniuszko's String Quartets (*continued from page 3)*

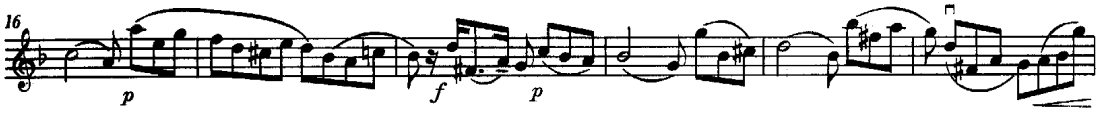
eventually numbering nearly 270 songs and filling 12 volumes. Among the songs are ballads and dialogues filled with originality and melodic inventiveness. The source of Moniuszko's melodies and rhythmic patterns can usually be found in Polish folkdances such as the polonaise, mazurka, krakowiak, kujawiak and oberek. Ultimately becoming the foremost 19th century composer of Polish song, Moniuszko was drawn to this form largely because the economic and political conditions of Congress Poland often made large-scale concerts next to impossible outside of Warsaw. Drawn to the opera as well, Moniuszko was also to become the most prominent 19th century Polish composer in that genre as well with such works as *Halka*, *The Haunted Manor* (Straszny dwor) and *The Raftsman* (Flis) gaining audiences throughout central and Eastern Europe. Often in St. Petersberg to conduct, he befriended Glinka, Mussorgsky, and Balakirev, all of whom admired and, along with his former student Cui, championed his works. Outside of Russia, he was on friendly terms with, among others, Smetana and Liszt who greatly admired his works. It was the success Halka, his first opera which "put him on the map", so to speak, and on the strength of its success, he was engaged as opera conductor of the Grand Theater of Warsaw.

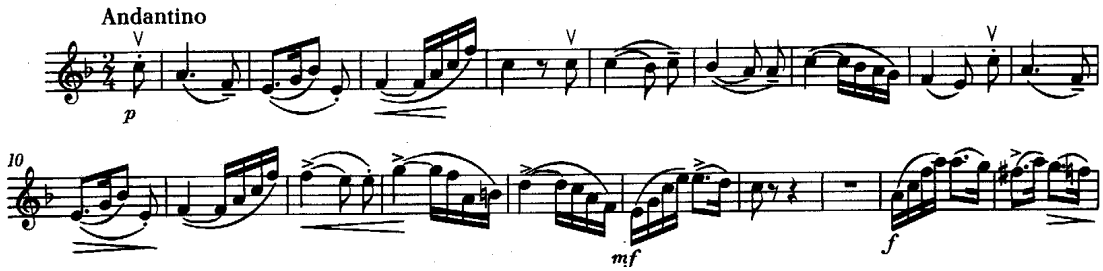
The bulk of his oeuvre consists of operas, operettas, and secular and sacred songs. Among his instrumental works are two string quartets which date from 1840 toward the end of his time in Berlin. While neither can be styled a big or ground-breaking work, they are nevertheless interesting and of importance because they are, with the exception of those of the unjustly ignored Dobrzynski, really the only works in this genre during the first part of the 19th century of any substance. As such they deserve to be better known. The opening theme to the first movement, *Allegro agitato,* of **String Quartet No.1 in d minor** is a mildly agitated and syncopated theme stated by the first violin. (see left)) A gracious second theme (example below) sounding a bit like Schubert, is introduced before the first theme is fully developed. The last part of it shows a close rhythmic resemblance to the first theme because Moniuszko reuses the



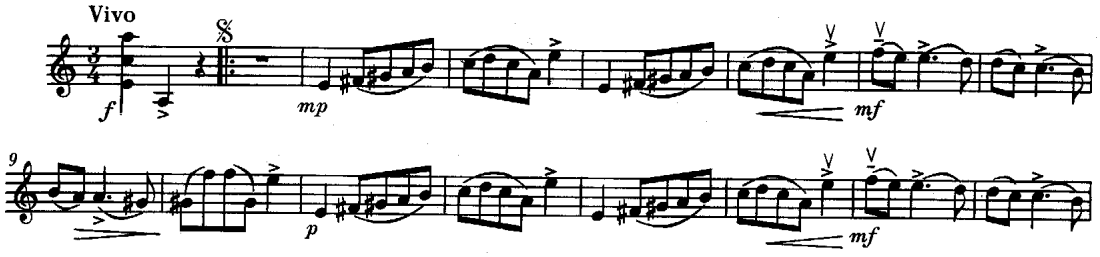


(16th—dotted 8th—16th) figure here as well. The development of the first theme is only returned to after the second theme has been completely stated. At the end of the movement in the coda section there is a brief but dramatic exchange, operatic in nature, between the first violin and the cello. One might think that Moniuszko's extensive use of the 16th—dotted 8th—16th figure would lead to rhythmic monotony but somehow the strength of the melodies and the relative shortness of the movement prevent this from occurring.





The second movement, *Andantino*, has a lovely, naïve melody as its main theme, (example on left) again reminiscent of early Schubert. Some dramatic tension is added in the development section which involves another operatic dialogue between the first violin and cello. The middle voices provide the harmonic glue. There is a certain effortlessness one often hears in the melodies of both Mozart and Schubert that one finds here. This is a very fine movement.



In the original-sounding *Scherzo*, the main theme is a lilting and very danceable, attractive Polish mazurka. (right) In the short trio section that is played without repeats, the cello begins a fugal episode that contains the kernel of the theme that eventually shows itself in full midway through.

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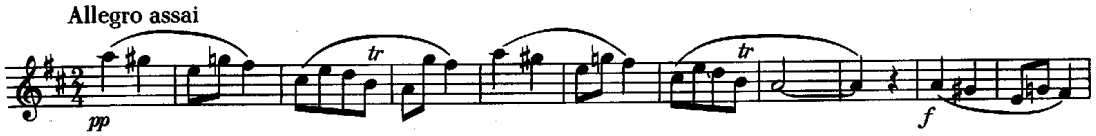
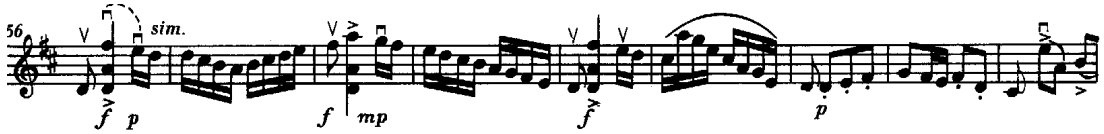
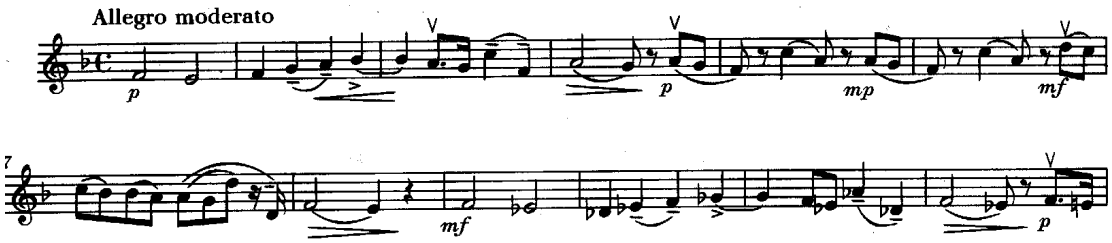
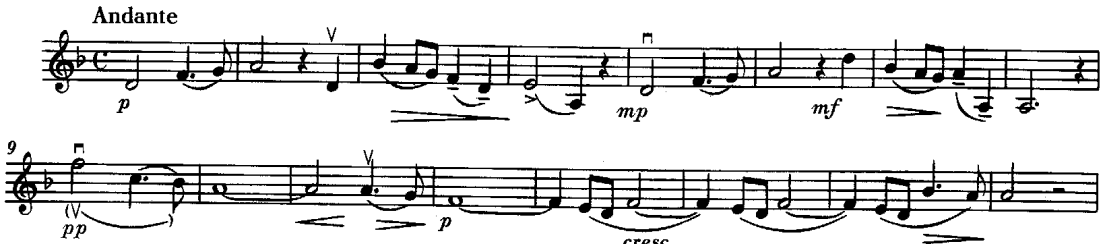


In the finale, *Allegro assai*, subtitled, *Un ballo compestre e sue consequenze,* the main theme (on right) is a Polish dance, a Hajduk or Haiduk. Although the Hajduks of Polish history were rather rough and romantic characters with shaved heads and long pigtails *a la Genghis Khan,* what we hear at first is not the rustic revelry of rude mercenary brigands but rather a kind of formal French musette from the classical period of Louis Quinze. (see above) The musette effect comes from the bagpipe drone in the viola and cello. However, the middle section is a rousing theme which begins with a short dance rhythm more in keeping with the title. (example left). This, in turn, leads to a restatement of the main theme, but this time in a foot-stomping, thigh-slapping rendition—perhaps as if the soldiers had broken into the ballroom and were staging a mock version of what they had come upon. Toward the end of the movement, several modulations lead to an exciting orchestral like finish. Though certainly not a major masterwork, this quartet, nonetheless is very original in conception and sounds unlike the music of other composers. Its melodies are fresh and attractive and for professional groups requiring a shorter work—perhaps a substitute for Mozart or Haydn, something fresh-sounding with a Polish flavor—it would surely make a excellent alternative. Amateurs will certainly enjoy playing it. Both of Moniuszko's quartets have been published by Polska Mazyka Kameralna and by Merton Music.



Moniuszko's **String Quartet No.2 in F Major** while not sporting the use of Polish folk tunes, nonetheless, is also an interesting, if more traditional work. The opening *Allegro moderato* is clearly based on the Viennese classics. One hears the influence of early Beethoven or of Haydn (see above) in the structure but not the thematic material which is more vocal and perhaps is closer to Schubert. Here, one does not find the operatic quality of the First Quartet as Moniuszko does not resort to the dramatic interplay of the violin in a high register answered by the cello in its lower registers. Instead, all of the voices are used in a more conventional way. Sonata form is abandoned and there is experimentation with a long fugue in the middle. Nearly twice as long as any of the short movements in the First Quartet, but by no means overly long, the *Allegro moderato* is pregnant with many excellent ideas, perhaps too many; the mood rarely stays the same for very long and the conclusion, though satisfactory, is a little disappointing and sounds as if he was not sure how to bring all these loose ends together.





A funereal *Andante* comes next. This is lovely music. All of the voices are intertwined. The melodies begins as an elegy but slowly builds to a dramatic climax of great pathos which is only released by four unison 16th notes in all of the voices. It is like a drumbeat. The middle section is gentler and happier though hardly gay and the drum beat figure keeps reappearing, softly, as a harbinger of impending doom. The movement ends softly. A stunning and absolutely first rate movement. One important comment: Although the tempo marking is andante, if played at a traditional andante tempo much is lost, particularly the wonderful sense of heavy grief and doom. This music should therefore be played adagio.

The Scherzo is subtitled *Baccanale monacale.* Marked *Allegretto* the music begins in the mode of an old-fashioned gay minuet, however, one of considerable vigor. There are no repeats whatsoever. The excellent short trio section begins with a low unison passage but suddenly gives way to a brief Polish hornpipe in the first violin and then the cello.

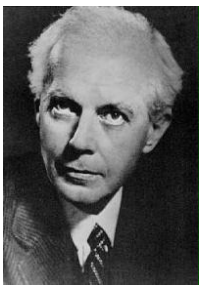
The finale, *Allegro,* begins with an upward slow scale passage which develops into a half fugue that tonally sounds like the fugues of Haydn's Op.20 quartets. However, unlike those of the Op.20, this fugue is only a kind of prelude, left incomplete shortly after it is begun. Suddenly Moniuszko unleashes torrents of downward plunging and lightning fast 16th notes which are handed from voice to voice, by no means easy to play and perhaps a little unviolinistic in style, but it must be admitted quite flashy. After this terrific outburst of energy, surprisingly the movement ends softly, almost as an afterthought—a charming but not a rousing finish. Again amateurs will enjoy this work. Professionals may be less attracted to it because it lacks the Polish flavor of No.1.

(Continued from page 3)

virtuoso treatment of the instruments has again much in common with the quintets by Brahms and Schumann. Schäfer's music has a clarity and lightness, distinguishing it particularly from the weightier Brahms style. (Recording: NM Classics 92046)

The Italian composer **Ottorino Respighi** (1879–1936) composed his piano quintet (see: *The Chamber Music Journal*, Volume XIV, No.4) in f minor at the age of 23 in 1902 (first published in 1986). Respighi's eclectic style in his youth—derived from two sources: his German and Russian teachers—would later disappear completely, when he developed his own personal style. (Recordings: Ermitage 410; Chandos 9962)

Chamber music at the start of the century was the field of the traditionalists and **Max Reger** (1873-1916) was not in this camp. The publisher Henri Hinrichsen (C. F. Peters) was unfortunate in that his first published chamber work of Reger's, the piano quintet Op. 64, was sold only occasionally. After the controversial premiere, no further performances were planned. Grieg called the quintet a "plum pudding". The reason for the critical reaction might be seen in the fact that Reger mixed textures and styles from various epochs. Classical thematic work, baroque continuo techniques of continuation and rhapsodic variations were combined with a wealth of ideas. The themes are treated differently compared with classical models. Although they also serve as a store of material to be combined with great verve, it is their overall sweep that makes the further development of the movement amount to an enlarged representation of the first complex of themes. The functional interplay of the music seems to be suspended and traditional logic denied. Reger has here produced expressive art with dramatic effect. (Recording: Troubadisc 01414)

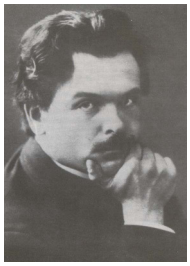


The composer, ethnomusicologist and pianist, **Béla Bartók** (1881–1945), was one of Hungary's greatest composers and responsible for the awakening of interest in Hungarian folk music. Besides his studies into Hungarian folk music, he immersed himself in the trends of contemporary European music and, as a result, his works is among the most important of the 20th century. Bartok studied piano and composition from 1899 until 1903 at the Budapest Academy of Music. In those years, he wrote the symphonic poem Kossuth, a violin sonata, a rhapsody for piano and orchestra and in 1903/1904, when 22 years old, the piano quintet, of which the premiere was given in Vienna. The characteristically terse manner of the mature Bartok, inherent in the folk-influenced motifs that permeate so much of his music, is totally absent from the piano quintet. But even in this early work, aspects of the later composer such as his handling of thematic material occasionally are discernible. (Recording: Chandos 8660)

Although born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1861, **Wilhelm Berger** was taken to Bremen in 1862 where he grew up. He died in

Berlin in 1911. On his death, he was succeeded as court Kapellmeister at Meiningen by Max Reger. Between 1878 and 1911 he published 105 works but these compositions have remained relatively unknown. Gustav Ernest offered the following explanation: *"Berger died before he could make a name for himself. If he had lived longer and attracted attention to himself through the composition of a continuing series of new works, he would be a solid public favourite today"*. Berger composed his piano quintet Op. 95 in 1904 and dedicated it to the Bohemian String Quartet, one of the best known quartets of the time. The idea for the composition came to him during his Meiningen years and was inspired by the example of Brahms under whose influence Berger was. This influence is particularly apparent in the fourth movement of the quintet where Berger chose the passacaglia as the form for his concluding movement, just as Brahms had in his Fourth Symphony. The judgment of Berger's contemporaries offers a valid summary of the quintet for today's listeners: "*Berger has not only a masterful command of the form and always keeps in mind the conditions of chamber music style...but also knows how to employ vivid thoughts and contrasts of mood for the enduring enthrallment of the listener"*. (Recording: MD&G 3080506-2)

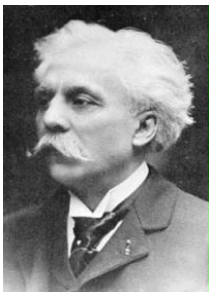
The following two piano quintets described are works from English composers: **Joseph Holbrooke** (1878–1958 right) and **Cyril Scott** (1879–1970 below). Both compositions, the Symphonic Quintet No. 1 in g minor, Op 44, from Holbrooke as well as the piano quintet from Scott are dated 1904. Scott's quintet won a competition in 1924 and Vaughan Williams, who was a member of the panel, wrote after reading the manuscript score: "*This is very long and rhapsodic and has no particular tune; still it has power and passion and ought to rank high"*. It is modern in style, but there is nothing tentative in its method. The first movement of Holbrooke's Symphonic Quintet has about it all the romanticism of Rachmaninov. The quintet is often known as *The Diabolique* from the third movement, the Valse diabolique, which is marked *Valse grazioso*, a direction that seems to belie its title. The quintet ends with a rapid finale that has a marked fugal element. (Recordings: Marco Polo 8.223736 [Holbrooke], Dutton CDLX 7116 [Scott])



The Scherzo in F major, composed in 1905 by the Finn **Toivo Kuula** (1883–1918), was his first important work. Kuula was a representative of the national romantic movement influenced by Sibelius. This becomes quite apparent after hearing his eight minute marvelous Scherzo. The works he produced showed that he was one of the most talented Finnish composers of his generation. Unfortunately he became a victim of the civil war and was shot during the rebellion in 1918. His talent can be seen in this early Scherzo, where he combined seemingly familiar melodies with adventurous harmony. (Recording: EDA, 003-2)

(Continued on page 11)

The English composer **Frank Bridge** (1879–1941) was also an excellent violist (he studied at the Royal College of Music). He played in the Joachim Quartet and later joined the English String Quartet playing with it until 1915. He wrote a large quantity of chamber music during the first decade of the century. The Piano Quintet in d minor was composed in 1905 and revised in 1912 when the Scherzo was compressed and relocated as a contrasting middle section in the slow movement. The music is full of bold dramatic gestures, with a Brahmsian weight in the handling of both material and texture. (Recording: ASV CD DCA, 678)



Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) was one of the most advanced French composers of his time. His harmonic and melodic innovations influenced many composers in the early 20th century. Both of his piano quintets (1906 and 1921) are far less known than the two piano quartets. His first piano quintet in d minor Op. 89, was dedicated to the violinist Ysaye, who called the work "absolute music in the purest sense of the word". Describing the character of the quintet one could agree with the statement: "The whole work breathes serene clarity, untroubled freshness and infinite radiating abundance". Fauré's second piano quintet in c minor Op. 115 was dedicated to Paul Dukas. Often rated as the 'summum opus' of his chamber music, the following report of the premiere gives a perfect impression: *"As the quintet was played for the first time in the old hall of the conservatoire, performed by artists who were carried away with incredible enthusiasm, the audience was thrilled right from the beginning. We had expected a beautiful work, but not one as beautiful as this. We knew that Gabriel Fauré's music was significant, yet we had not realized that it had reached such heights—without being noticed by the world. The more we heard of the work, the greater became the enthusiasm, an enthusiasm, however, that seemed combined with remorse, because one might have misjudged the old man who held such a gift in his hands"*. (Recording: Claves, 50-8603)

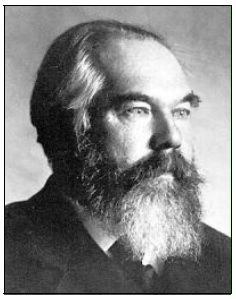
The Spanish composer **Joaquin Turina** (1882–1949) was a student of Vincent d'Indy in Paris (1905–1913) and decided during this period to follow a specifically Spanish way of composition as had Isacc Albeniz and Manuel de Falla. His piano quintet in g-minor Op. 1 (1907) is a key work within his traditional style. Both Albeniz and de Falla attended the premiere in Paris and suggested creating musical ideas from the characteristics of the Andalusian folk music. Turina later named his piano quartet Op. 67 *"Scène Andalouse"*. (Recording: Claves, 50-9403)

The Austrian composer **Anton von Webern** (1883–1945) was one of the earliest students of Arnold Schoenberg. He followed his teacher in using atonality and later serialism. His perfectionism on the smallest scale led him to compose music of immense concentration. His one-movement piano quintet from 1907 was first performed with success at a concert of Schoenberg's students in Vienna. Traditional in form and tonality, it leads towards his atonal concision and shows a young composer on the way to his future independence. The quintet was published posthumously in 1953. (Recording: MD&G 307 0589-2)

Hans Pfitzner (1869–1949) came from a family of musicians. When he left the conservatory in 1890, he had already written several works. His Op.23 Quintet in C Major was composed in 1908 during his activities as a director of the Strassburg Conservatory. He always considered this period of his life as anti-musical and hence he regarded the composition of the quintet as nothing more than a recreational activity to pass the time. The second theme of the *Adagio*—a funeral march—has a deeply melancholic and depressing mood. After a short rhythmic dance-like section, the final *allegretto commodo* presents quotations and thoughts from the earlier movements in a cantabile fashion before ending pianissimo. The quintet shows that Pfitzner was a musician of inspiration, as he considered himself. (Recording: Preiser Records, 93111)

The American composer and pianist **Amy Marcy Cheney Beach** (1867–1944) was a leading representative of the late 19th century romantic style cultivated by Paine, Chadwick, Foote and others of the so-called "Second New England School of Composers" or the "Boston Classicists". Despite a close relationship with her country and being trained solely in the United States, Beach did not believe in an "American" school of composition, but in a universal style which drew freely on the musical traditions of all European countries. About her profession, Beach said: "*Music means my inner soul"*. The Op. 67 piano quintet was first performed in 1908 with Beach playing the piano. The quintet is, along with her piano trio and her piano concerto one of her most popular instrumental works. It combines the expressive and virtuoso manner of playing the piano. Of note is the intensely romantic second movement, *Adagio espressivo*, with its wide-ranging melodic lines and clear development, formal shaping and treatment of the thematic material. (Recordings: EDA, 003-2; Vox/Turnabout 7196)

The works of the Russian **Sergey Ivanovich Taneyev** (1856–1915) reveal a cosmopolitan outlook. Taneyev was a man of marked integrity and openness. In 1905, when the revolutionary movement in Russia sparked off disturbances at the Moscow Conservatory, his principles led him to resign from the staff in protest at the director's repressive disciplining of some students. His Piano Quintet in g minor, Op 30 was composed between 1908–1910, dedicated to Georges Catoire, and first performed in 1912. Taneyev's treatment of the composition is individual. The themes are rich, many exploited exhaustively, some returning cyclically. The Scherzo glitters with quicksilvery interplays, the rondo-like Finale, an *Allegro vivace*,



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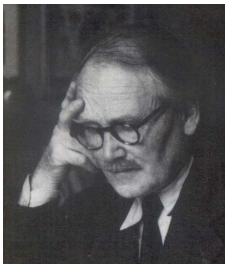
leads to a triumphantly decisive end. (Recording: Arabesque, Z6539)



Paul Le Flem (1881–1984), who died at the age of 103, is considered the last survivor of the musical generation in France, who were related to the grand tradition of César Franck and of the ideals of the Schola Cantorum. The Quintette pour quatuor a cordes et piano in e minor was composed in 1909 and first performed at the Société Nationale de Musique in 1910. The skillfulness of the composition is shown in the tonal structure and its passionate lyricism. The atmosphere and the character of the quintet show different aspects of Le Flem's aesthetic sensibility.

Ernö Dohnányi (1877–1960) was one of the chief architects of Hungary's musical culture in the 20th century. The coming generation—Bartók and Kodály—assembled behind him and he championed their music and their cause above all. Next to Liszt he was the most versatile Hungarian musician, whose influence reached generations in all spheres of musical life. The première of his Op. 1, the piano quintet in c minor (composed 1895) was arranged by Brahms himself. The four minute long wedding march for piano quintet was composed in 1910. The work might be considered as an occasional piece and Dohnányi might have used the musical elements to symbolize the period of thoughtfulness prior to the marriage. The second piano quintet in e flat minor was composed in 1914 and first performed in the same year in Berlin. The soft but definite incipient theme of the first movement reminds us of the heroic opening ideas of Brahms again. The inspiration of Brahms is clearly seen, especially in Dohnányi's chamber music. The quintet has broadly phrased gestures in the melodies, variations on a waltz theme in the second movement, interchanging fugue and chorale elements in the slow movement. The last brilliant movement summarizes the organic unity of the whole. (Recordings: Hungaroton HCD 32148; Hungaroton HCD 11624)

The Polish-German composer and teacher **Philipp Scharwenka** (1847– 1917), who was nine years younger than Bruch and seventeen years older than Richard Strauss, belonged to that generation of composers who essentially oriented their musical language on older models. The career of Scharwenka was overshadowed by that of his younger, forceful and energetic brother Xaver (1850–1924). Scharwenka's Piano Quintet in b minor Op. 18, composed in 1910 was dedicated to Reger. It is an example from one of those composers, whose names today are familiar only to a few specialists, but whose work is on a compositional and musical level that leaves us with astonishment when we rediscover them. (Recording: MDG, 3360889-2).

The Slovak composer **Alexander Albrecht** (1885–1958) studied at the Budapest Academy with Bartók and Koessler. Aesthetically he was strongly influenced by movements in pictorial art in the early part of the century. Chamber music was always a matter of deep concern for Albrecht. His Piano Quintet composed in 1913 is in many respects indebted to the romantic tradition, although it shows signs of a development towards modern musical thinking, for example the theme of the last movement. The youthful character of the work is based on thematic song-like elements whose spontaneously imaginative counterpoint has an exceptional attraction for listeners. (Recording: Musica 790025-2)

The Belgian **Adolphe Biarent** (1871–1916) became one of the main protagonists of that post-romantic generation (like Guillaume Lekeu or Joseph Jongen) that was predominant in his time. All their genuine talents were soon rendered out-of-date by the music of Debussy, Schoenberg or Stravinsky. Biarent composed his Piano Quintet in b minor in 1913 and slightly revised it in 1914. Everything in the quintet from the ambitious first movement gives expression to an agitated nature and suggests an inner fire. Secondary figures enrich the textures and the great variety of tempos evokes life. (Recording: Cypress, CYP 4611)

Mikhail Fabianovich Gnesin (1883–1957) studied composition with Rimsky-Korsakov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He was a professor of composition at the Moscow Conservatory as well as the Leningrad Conservatory. Khachaturian was one of his famous students. Gnesin was one of the first to take the revolution as a programmatic theme. His twelve minute Requiem Op. 11 for Piano Quintet was composed in 1914, an early work with its subtle lyricism was linked–as were other early works–with the Russian symbolist movement, conscious of tradition and sentimental in tone. (Recording: Arte Nova, 74321 48722 2)

Sir Arnold Bax was born in England in 1883 and died in Ireland in 1953. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music between 1900 and 1905. Talented as both a pianist and composer, it took him quite a long time to establish himself as a composer. He wrote several novels which indicate that he also had considerable literary talent. As with many composers, Bax's first works included instrumental and chamber music. The music of his first period contains music of epic proportions, characterized by luxuriant chromatic harmony and by broad songlike themes. This is also reflected in his Piano Quintet in g minor, completed in 1915. Its scale looked forward to the Symphonies. The quintet marked the climax of his early impressionistic period and fully established his mature style. (Recording: Chandos, 8795)

The Swedish composer **Sigurd von Koch** (1879–1919) came from a highly talented family. Besides studying piano and composition in Stockholm, Berlin and Dresden, he also worked hard as a painter, an author of short stories and as a music reviewer.

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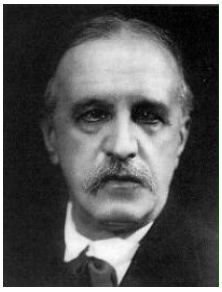
Koch's Piano Quintet in F was written in 1916 and employs a wide range of textures and a wealth of color. The four grandly conceived movements, although basically traditional in form, give the impression of being more in the nature of fantasies, with their many changes of key and time signatures and their constant use of contrasts. (Recording: Phono suecia, PSCD 708)

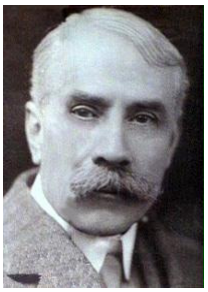
Guido Albert Fano (1875–1961) had a considerable career in Italy as composer, pianist, conductor and teacher. He took his composition diploma at the Bologna Liceo Musicale under the supervision of Martucci and therefore turned towards the European instrumental tradition. Fano's Piano Quintet in C major, dated 1917, shows a beautiful melodiousness and dense writing, in which each single part maintains its own independence and vitality. Again the late romantic dimension of the Brahms quintet was the reference for the composition. (Recording: Phoenix Classics, 2400026-9)

The French composer and organist **Louis Vierne** (1870–1937) came into the world almost blind. His musical gifts attracted the attention of César Franck, who allowed him to attend his organ classes and later Charles-Marie Widor, whom he succeeded at the Conservatoire. The works of Vierne reflect the events of his life. His Quintette pour piano et cordes Op. 42 was completed in 1918 (see *The Chamber Music Journal*, Volume XIII, No. 3). Vierne worked on the quintet while still in deep mourning for the death of his son Jacques at the front. He wrote to a friend: *"I am composing as a votive offering a quintet of immense proportions which will express the depth of my tenderness as well as the tragic fate of my child"*. In some parts of the quintet, Vierne seems closer to Schoenberg than to his teacher Franck. The first performance in Paris in 1921 with Nadia Boulanger at the piano was a great success. (Recording: Timpani, 2C2019)



The German **Hermann Zilcher** (1881–1948) was active as a composer, conductor and pianist. He played a influential part in German musical life as a faculty member of the Munich Academy of Music and later as principal of the Würzburg Conservatory. Most important in Zilcher's musical life were the strength of the spirit, of the inner soul and of the imagination served by a natural talent. Zilcher composed the Piano Quintet Op. 2 in c sharp minor in 1918 (see *The Chamber Music Journal*, Volume XII, No. 3) during his time in Munich and played the piano himself at the première with the Berber String Quartet. The movements are remarkable in the canonic writing for the strings, which stands as a homogeneous feature against the piano writing. The quintet is among the finest of Zilcher's works with its melodic content and sensitive sonorities. (Recording: Largo 5144)

The singularity of musical character placed **Sir Edward Elgar** (1857–1934) high among European Romantic artists. His highly esteemed personality in the world of arts could be said to personify an epoch of the musical history of his home country, taking inspiration from the culture and landscape. Elgar began to compose the Piano Quintet in a minor in 1918 completing it in 1919. Besides the quintet he worked simultaneously during 1918 on a violin sonata and a string quartet. All three works were written in an isolated Sussex cottage in the woods, which Elgar loved. The premiere of the quintet took place in the Wigmore Hall in London in 1919. Ernest Newman, to whom the quintet was dedicated, said: *"It is strange music I think, and I like it – but it's ghostly stuff"*. There are all kinds of stories told about the origin of the quintet. W. H. Reed, the first biographer, mentioned: *"Upon the plateau, it is said, was once a settlement of Spanish monks, who, while carrying out some impious rites, were struck dead; and the trees are their dead forms"*. The Spanish element is, indeed, apparent in the dance-measure of the first movement. The choice of the Phrygian mode in some themes might also refer to Christian chants. The importance of the Piano Quintet is in its splendor and magnificence. (Recordings: Meridian, ECD 84082; ASV, CD DCA 678; Edition Abseits 004-2)



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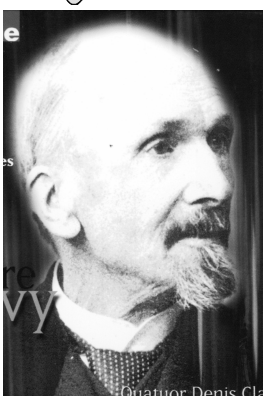
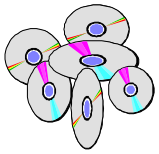
Diskology: Théodore Gouvy—A String Quartet & Cello Quintet
Rick Sowash: Trios for Winds, Strings & Piano



Theodore Gouvy (1819-98) was one of those rare Frenchmen who preferred living in Germany and things German to those of his native France. Actually, it was somewhat more complicated. Born in Sarrelouis (Saarbrucken) in Lorraine, this French territory was ceded to Prussia at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Hence Gouvy was a Prussian citizen. But by culture and education (Paris law faculty & Conservatory), Gouvy was French. He decided early on he wanted to be a composer and not a performer or music professor. But Gouvy was to encounter the problem that all French symphonists and composers of chamber music did in mid 19th century France: disinterest. The French public loved opera and opera alone. In later life, he spent nearly all his winters in Germany. Why? He answered: *1)Because my room is heated, 2) Because here I can hear something whereas there (in France) there is nothing, 3) Because I have contacts with true artists and because there is nobody over there and 4) Because I can find publishers.* The first work on **K617 CD 105** is his **String Quartet in G** without opus. It apparently dates from the 1880's which would make it his last. A beautiful, highly romantic *Andante* introduction precedes the opening *Allegro moderato,* which expresses a mood of pastoral contentment more than anything else. Although the writing is first rate and the melodies attractive, for such a large movement, it lacks a the dramatic interest one usually expects in a first movement. Its gentleness makes it more suitable for an intermezzo. A very interesting *Larghetto* follows. It is a throwback to the baroque era as seen through the eyes of the romantics. Over the cello's ostinato, the violins sing a lovely kind of Bach aria—an air really. This is a very striking movement, quite original, with sophisticated counterpoint and gorgeous long melodic lines. The third movement, *Scherzo, allegro con brio,* is a racing, frenzied affair full of lengthy 16th notes passages handed from voice to voice. Tension is only released on two brief occasions on which a slightly more genial melody is interposed but not developed. This is a tour d'force, exciting and perfectly executed. The quartet concludes *Allegro non troppo.* Again, the beautiful themes are genial, along the lines of those of the opening movement. At times delicate, jovial, but never jocular, this is good-humored music (even when it briefly shifts into minor) and, for what it is, perfectly written. Again my only criticism—perhaps an unjust one—is that the music lacks any real sense of the dramatic which seem indispensable for works of this kind. Nonetheless, this is music of a very high caliber. The second work presented is his **Cello Quintet in G Major, Op.55** composed during the autumn of 1870. The opening *Allegro* sounds as if were part of the preceding quartet. Both the quality of the writing and the geniality of the themes are the reason for this. The addition of the extra cello allows Gouvy to offer the lower voices some wonderful tonal opportunities. Strikingly, the music is bright and not darkened by the additional lower voice. There is nothing particularly French-sounding here. It is definitely a child of mid-late German romanticism, much closer to the music of Brahms than to Gouvy's French contemporaries. Next comes an *Andante con moto.* Here, we have a lament coupled with a kind of exotic funeral march. There is a certain formality to it, a public ceremonial expression rather than personal expression of grief and as such it seems to me to lack a true depth of feeling or real pathos. Tonally though, the writing is gorgeous. The third movement, *Scherzo, allegro con brio,* opens with an exciting flourish but the main theme immediately releases the excitement created and lapses into geniality. Gouvy seems to make an effort to restore this lost excitement as he goes along but he is continuously drawn to the bizarre and exotic, which though extraordinary and quite original, relax rather than increase the excitement. The finale, *Rondo allegro,* begins with a pleasant, light theme that moves along with catchy spontaneity. For once there is no lapse into laxness. The pace and interest generated by the opening theme is maintained throughout the development and up to the strongly contrasting middle section in which the viola brings forth a theme sounding a bit like a subdued march by Elgar. A return to the main theme is made through a series of dramatic modulations with echoes of late Beethoven. The march briefly reappears, this time with the faintest echo of Schubert, before the concluding coda. A worthy addition to the cello quintet literature. A very interesting CD—recommended.

Rick Sowash (1950-), whose works, in my opinion, deserve to be as well-known as any of those of his contemporaries, is alive and composing in Ohio. His most recent CD **Sanctuary at 3 am** (Rick Sowash Publishing Company—www.sowash.com) appeared earlier this year and features two very attractive chamber works. The first is **Impressionist Suite No.2 for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon.** (readers may recall that we reviewed Impressionist Suite No.1 for this same combination in Vol.XIV No.4) This work was composed in 2000 for the French woodwind trio Le Trio d'anches Ozi. Originally it was in six movements but Sowash felt it was too long and decided to make two three movement suites out of it. The first movement of the second suite is entitled *Cassatt: A Lullabye.* But the mood is not really that of a traditional lullabye. Rather, it comes closer to what one might experience on a slow but pleasant, sunny afternoon's walk through a park or meadow with no particular destination in mind. All three instruments seamlessly weave the fabric of a pastoral theme. A brief section in the middle is a bit more sprightly. Then comes a lovely woodwind chorale. In the end, the music simply wafts away into thin air. In the second movement, *Caillebotte: Precision,* the oboe slowly begins alone repeating a diffident motif. As the others join in, the tempo picks up a little but the music wanders on dreamlike, floating here and there. I am not sure I felt any sense of precision so much as a careful working out of ideas slowly being built block by logical block. At the very end, four chords are slowly sounded, the second in minor. The third and fourth chords begin the resolution which a fifth chord would finish. But it never comes, leaving the movement to end up in the air, provocatively unresolved. The concluding *Sisley & Bazille: Joyful Skies, Lament for the Fallen* begins with a jaunty dance



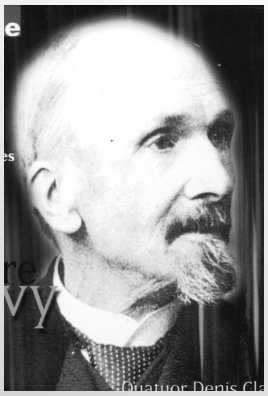
Pavel Haas: The String Quartets
Franz Krommer: A Clarinet Quartet & Quintet

which is quite fetching, no doubt the joyful skies. A kind of syncopated, almost jazzy, theme is then followed by one which I assume is the lament. It cannot really be called sad so much as nostalgic, perhaps like *Auld Lang Syne*, but not so boisterous. The jaunty dance returns and the work ends in a playful fashion. As a measure of just how much Mr. Sowash has succeeded in creating a French work, I would hazard that 99% of all listeners hearing this music would guess it was by a French composer. Another little gem. The second work of interest to us is **The View From Carew for Clarinet, Cello & Piano.** This one movement work also dates from 2000 and was written for a clarinetist who wanted a piece that was "very romantic...even operatic." The title refers to the view from Cincinnati's tallest skyscraper. Sowash tells us, *"The clarinet represents a lonely man mourning the end of a love affair. He views the city and remembers the happy hours he passed there with his love."* The trio begins with a moving theme deep on the cello's lowest register with the piano playing soft chords. When the clarinet enters, it is with an entirely different theme, dream-like and happy while the piano strikes up a very romantic accompaniment. This is the love theme. It is gentle and beautiful. After the clarinet takes a brief cadenza to its heights, the cello and piano join in putting the finishing touches on this highly evocative theme. After the emotional pinnacle is reached, there is a moment of silence before the melody representative of the man's loss begins. It has a wistful, brooding quality to it, but it is not harsh or bitter. Though not operatic, Mr. Sowash has written a first rate piece of music which certainly well depicts what he set out to, and, it can stand on its own without any program. The parts to this work as well as the *Impressionist Suites* are available from Sowash Publishing. Also on this highly recommended CD are works for clarinet and piano, cello and piano and piano solo. Mr. Sowash's music cannot be pigeon-holed. At times neo-classical, romantic, neo-romantic, or impressionist, the music is always original and never hackneyed or low-brow. Mr. Sowash's attractive music is always tonal although he does not, on occasion, hesitate to challenge his listeners by pushing tonality to its limits.

Dr. Horne in his fine article (Vol.IX No.3, Autumn 1998) about Pavel Haas' chamber music discussed his string quartets (primarily Nos.2-3) I wish to draw readers attention to this **Praga CD 250 118** which presents all of the quartets and came out after Dr. Horne's article. **String Quartet No.1, Op.3 in c# minor** dates from 1920 while he was studying with Leos Janacek. It is in one movement which is entitled *Lente grave misterioso, Largemente e appassionato.* The opening bars are quiet, almost funereal. The mystery is definitely a sad one. The impassioned sections begins with the cello and viola presenting a dark theme. The atmosphere grows more frenzied as the theme climbs into the upper strings. The music then proceeds through many different moods seemingly unrelated to each other. One can hear the influence of Karl Weigl at times, but even more the influence of Hindemith's new way. The work has much polytonality in it and on occasion barely sounds tonal. It ends as it began, softly with the cello singing the dark passionate theme but this time in a subdued fashion. An interesting work. **String Quartet No.2, Op.7** ***"From the Mountains of the Monkey"*** dates from 1925. Though not in a key, it is largely tonal. One clearly hears the influence of Janacek. The music represents a series of memories from Haas' summer vacations as a child in the Moravian mountains around Brno. The whole piece is filled with motion, as a travelogue might be. The movements have names like *Landscapes / Horse, cart & driver / The moon and I / A Wild Night.* Particularly striking are the glissandi in *Horse, cart & driver* and a the use of a jazz band (bass, drums, cymbals, drumsticks and metal blocks) throughout *A Wild Night.* Criticisms after the premiere led Haas to do away with the jazz band. However in this recording, the original version with jazz band is presented and it certainly creates a memorable affect. This is an extraordinarily attractive modern work by a composer who is a master of his medium. **String Quartet No.3, Op.15** dates from 1938. It is largely tonal but not in the traditional sense—perhaps it is simply more accurate to say it is not atonal. The first movement, *Allegro moderato,* uses two Czech folk themes for its subject. The music is edgy. In the following *Lento, ma non troppo e poco rubato* the St. Wenceslas chorale is combined with decorative touches borrowed from synogogue music—hard to hear it though. Overall, the *Lento* is lugubrious and plodding, though toward the end it seems to come to life with the insertion of Janacek's spirit. The theme of the finale, *Thema con variazioni e fuga,* sounds somewhat Hebraic. Each of the variations are quite interesting, varying tempo, emotion and tonality. The coda is a fugue which morphs into a chorale to conclude what is another excellent modern work. This is an essential CD for anyone interested in Czech chamber music during the first part of the 20th century.

Tudor CD 7089 presents three works by Franz Krommer. **Clarinet Quartet No.3, Op.69 in E Flat** is discussed in Mr. Ussi's article on page six. The second work, **Quintet for Clarinet & Strings, Op.95 in B Flat** was published around 1820. Here, we definitely have a work which was not intended as a solo piece for clarinet with simple string accompaniment. Though still the leading voice, the clarinet is much better integrated into the ensemble. Originally for clarinet, violin, two violas and cello, a version for standard string quartet and clarinet appeared during Krommer's lifetime. The opening *Allegro moderato* is exciting, tuneful and full of the little original flourishes that are Krommer's alone. In the *Adagio* which follows, the clarinet presents a theme as attractive as any of Schubert's. It is rather like a dramatic aria—a gorgeous movement. The quick *Minuetto, Allegretto,* is almost, but not quite, a scherzo. The vigorous finale, *Allegro,* is, as one would expect with Krommer, tuneful and filled with little surprises—fresh and original. A fine period work, well worth hearing. Also on disk are **13 Pieces for 2 Clarinets & Viola, Op.47**. These short and charming works are mostly minuets and rondos with the odd romanza and polonaise. Another recommended CD.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Theodore Gouvy

Franz Krommer

Stanislaw Moniuszko

Rick Sowash

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV

ONSLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL

HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANEYEV, REINECKE