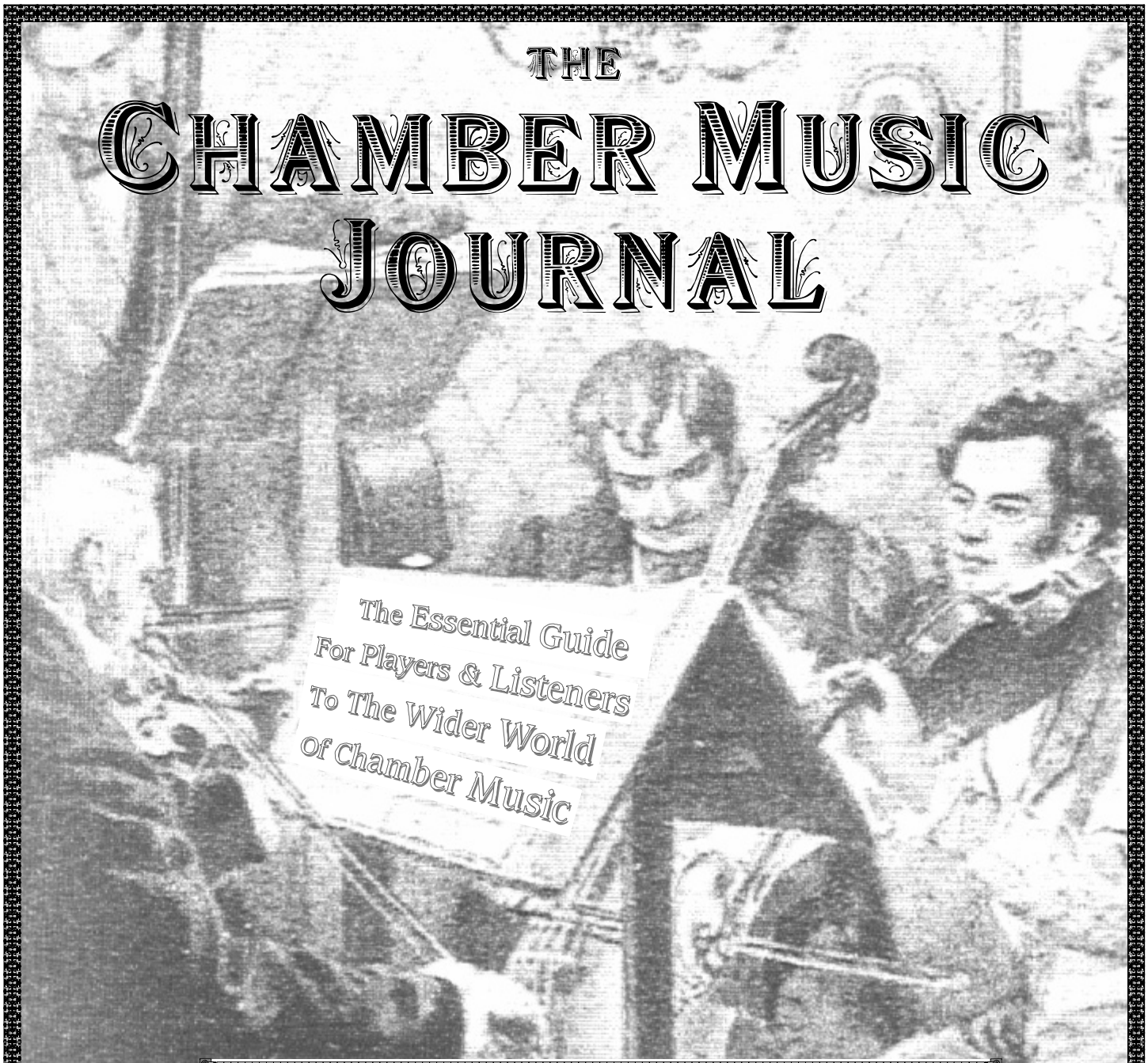
THE
CHAMBER MUSIC JOURNAL



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

Robert Fuchs:
The Works for Piano Trio

The String Quartets
Of Peter Tchaikovsky

Paul Juon's Divertimento
For Piano and Winds

Volume XXI No.3 Autumn 2010 ISSN 1535 1726

The Chamber Music Journal

Published by The Cobbett Association

R.H.R. SILVERTRUST, *Editor*

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

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

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.

ISSN 1535-1726

The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor

An Evening of Piano Sextets

I recently was invited to take part in an evening of piano sextets—a first for me. I knew about the existence of the Mendelssohn as I have a recording but the other two works we played—the Glinka and a piano sextet by a composer by the name of William Sterndale Bennett—I did not know of. Of course, I had heard of Glinka from his operas but I did not know he wrote any chamber music. What else did he write? And as for William Sterndale Bennett, I have never come across the name. I found his sextet to sound a lot like Mendelssohn. What can you tell me about him.
Michael Stokes
Sydney, Australia

Well, first to the chamber music of Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) Glinka, as you noted, is best known for his operas such as Ruslan and Ludmilla and a Life for the Tsar. He did not write a great deal of chamber music, however, he does have 2 string quartets to his credit which date from 1824 and 1830. The first, though workman like, is a rather uninspired effort. The second, on the other hand, is not at all bad and incorporates themes which he later used in Ruslan. The Piano Sextet which you played was composed around the same time as the second string quartet, 1830, while Glinka was residing in Milan. Perhaps his best known chamber work is his Trio Pathetique for Clarinet, Bassoon and Piano (also in a version for standard piano trio).

Certainly during his lifetime William Sterndale Bennett (1816-1875) was fairly well-known, not only in England but also in Germany. Mendelssohn was said to have remarked after hearing Bennett play one of his own piano concertos that Bennett was one of the most promising musicians he knew of. Bennett was born in the English city of Sheffield, the son of an organist. He studied piano and composition at the Royal Academy of Music. He met and befriended Mendelssohn, who first heard him perform in London when Bennett was 17. His piano technique was such that during concert tours in Germany, he quickly gained the reputation as one of the finest pianists in Europe. Robert Schumann praised his playing and musicality, and considered him the equal of Mendelssohn as a pianist. Bennett settled in London, devoting himself chiefly to teaching, eventually becoming a Professor of Music at Cambridge University. He also served as chief conductor of the London Philharmonic and later as Director of the Royal Academy of Music. Owing to his professional duties, his latter years were not creatively fertile, and what he then wrote was scarcely equal to the productions of his youth. The principal charm of Bennett's compositions consists in their lyrical intensity a la Mendelssohn. Except for opera, Bennett tried his hand at almost all the different forms of vocal and instrumental writing. The Sextet was completed in 1838 after a lengthy visit to Germany and much time spent with his friend Mendelssohn, then generally considered Europe's greatest living composer. It is hardly surprising that Mendelssohn's influence can clearly be heard in the music, however, Bennett's treatment is original and the ideas are fresh. He also composed a piano trio.

Trios for 2 Violins and Cello

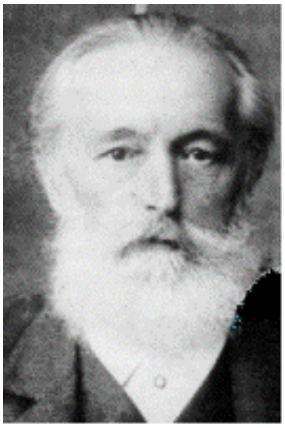
Our violist has moved away and we are having difficulty finding a replacement. In the meantime we have been playing Boccherini trios for two violins and cello. There must be others, can you help.
Peter Fischer
Knoxville, Tennessee

Keep in mind that while trios for 2 Violins and Cello were popular up until the end of the 18th century, few composed for this combination after 1800. Here is a short list of such trios: the Moravian-American composer John Antes (1740-1811) wrote three trios, his Op.3. Borodin wrote a short work on a Russian folksong, Corelli wrote six sonatas a tre, Op.4, Pierre Cremont (1784-1846) wrote three his Op.13, Leopold Dancla (1822-95) wrote one Op.25, Ladislav Gabrielli (1851—??) wrote two, Franz Anton Hoffmeister (1754-1812) wrote six Trios Progressive, Jacques Mazas (1782-1849) wrote three his Op.18, Mozart's K.229 consists of 5 Serenades, Ignaz Pleyel (1757-1831) wrote at least six Op.41, Hubert Ries (1802-1886) wrote six Op.24 & 25, Johan Roman (1694-1758) wrote six trio sonatas, Aloys Schmidt (1788-1866) wrote at least three Op.135, Shostakovich wrote a pieces called Preludes, Otto Siegl (1896-1978) wrote Kleine Kammermusik, Karl Stamitz (1746-1801) Sonata in F, Luigi Tomassini (1741-1808) wrote at least three, Jan Vanhal (1739-1813) wrote 15 Trio Faciles, Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755-1824) wrote at least six including his Opp.18 & 19. Most, though perhaps not all, are currently in print from various publishers.

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.

Robert Fuchs: The Works for Piano Trio

by Peter Udo Schmidt



Robert Fuchs (1847-1927) was born in the Austrian village of Frauental not far from the Styrian capital of Graz. He was the 13th child of his school teacher parents and as a boy received training toward this career. His initial musical studies were instrumental: the flute, the violin, the piano and the organ. Eventually, he attended the University of Vienna Conservatory studying, composition with Otto Dessoff and violin with Joseph Hellmesberger. Ultimately, he followed in his parents footsteps becoming a teacher, albeit a music teacher. By 1875, he himself was teaching at the Conservatory, eventually rising to the rank of Professor of Composition. He was one of the most famous and revered teachers of his time. Mahler, Sibelius, Hugo Wolf, Franz Schmidt, Alexander Zemlinsky, Franz Schrecker and Richard Heuberger were among his many students. That his compositions did not become better known outside of Vienna was largely due to the fact that he did little to promote them, living a quiet life in Vienna and refusing to arrange concerts, even when the opportunity arose, in other cities. He certainly had his admirers, including many famous conductors such as Arthur Nikisch, Felix Weingartner and Hans Richter, who championed his works when they had the opportunity. In Vienna, his works were considered of the highest order. For example, critics, when praising Mahler's Second Symphony, wrote that it was as fine as Fuchs' orchestral music. The works which gained Fuchs the greatest fame and which enjoyed considerable popularity, even outside of Vienna, were his Serenades—he wrote four in all—and they eventually won him the nickname "Serenade Fuchs" (Serenade Fox). Brahms, who rarely was heard to utter anything complimentary about a fellow composer, said of Fuchs, *"He is a splendid musician, everything is so fine, so skilful, so charmingly invented that one cannot fail to be pleased."*

(Continued on page 4)

The String Quartets of Peter Tchaikovsky

By R.H.R. Silvertrust

Chamber music is hardly the genre with which one ordinarily associates the name Peter Tchaikovsky. (1840-1893) Yet, like most of the 19th Century's important composers, he made contributions to the chamber music repertory that are not only substantial but also highly distinctive. And while he is without doubt best known nowadays for his symphonies and orchestral works, his chamber works were held in high regard both inside of Russia and abroad. In fact, they were more responsible for establishing his reputation in Western Europe than were his concertos, tone poems and symphonies which on first hearing were frequently assailed by conservative critics as being "barbaric" and unduly daring.

Today, Tchaikovsky's chamber music is rarely featured in concert, and if per chance a work is scheduled, invariably, it is the First Quartet with its *Andante cantabile*, which has become known to the public through its numerous transcriptions. Ironically, even the First Quartet remains largely unknown to the concert-going public. Upon hearing his chamber music, the listener is immediately struck by two things. One is the assured craftsmanship which, right from the first, marks his works. The other is the revelation of the affinity for string instruments, an affinity rare among composers who were principally pianists. And finally, there is the inexhaustible flood of musical ideas and of memorable melodies.

Upon hearing Tchaikovsky's "First" String Quartet, the unexpected assurance and deft skillfulness of this so-called First Quartet can be explained by the fact that it was not really his first at all. Tchaikovsky had been sent by his father to study law at the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in St. Petersburg. After graduating, he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory where, from 1862-1865, he studied composition with the Conservatory's founder and director, Anton Rubinstein. It was during this time, he had tried his hand at several chamber works including the **String**

(Continued on page 8)

Paul Juon

Divertimento for Piano & Winds

by Michael Greenfield

Paul Juon (1872-1940) truly led a cosmopolitan life. Paul Juon was the son of a Swiss father and German mother who emigrated to Moscow where he was born. Educated at the Moscow German High School, he entered the Moscow Conservatory where he studied violin with Jan Hrimaly and composition with Anton Arensky and Sergei Taneyev. After graduating, he went to Berlin for further composition instruction from Woldemar Bargiel. In 1906, after holding various posts in Russia, Juon was invited by Joseph Joachim, head of the prestigious Berlin Hochschule für Musik, to be a Professor of Composition. It was a post he held until 1934 at which time he moved to Switzerland, where lived for the rest of his life.

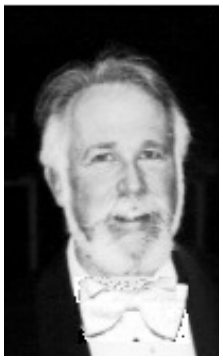
Juon is widely regarded as the link between Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky. In his early music, one can hear the influence of his Russian homeland and schooling. Of course, Juon recognized that though he had been born in Russia and schooled there, he was still a foreigner liv-

(Continued on page 11)

IN THIS ISSUE

Letters to the Editor..... 2
Robert Fuchs' Works for Piano Trios..... 3
The String Quartets of Peter Tchaikovsky..... 3
Paul Juon's Divertimento for Piano and Winds..... 3
At the Double Bar..... 4
New Recordings.....12
Diskology: Berkeley, Bonis, Bainton, Clifford et.al.... ..14

At The Doublebar



We have been fortunate over the past year or so to have had articles submitted by people who are not members of the Association. This is not always the case, however, and we cannot always expect that we will be the beneficiaries of such good luck. So, it is time for me to remind our membership that we count on our members to contribute articles. Often the response I hear when I make this pitch goes something like this *"Yes, I would like to write an article, but I am not a scholar or an academic or a professional player."* While at first blush, this might seem like a good answer, upon reflection none of those points are really valid reasons not to write an article.

In the first place, very few professional groups and players are familiar with the wider chamber music literature as our membership is. The pros are trapped by the demands of box office and the requests of unadventurous concert series programmers. Those of you who regularly attend chamber music concerts know very well that the music of composers such as Robert Fuchs, Sergei Taneyev, Friedrich Gernsheim or Vitezslav Novak, to name but a few recently discussed on these pages, ever appears on the concert program. Even a composer like Tchaikovsky rarely gets an outing. Most pros are either uninterested in exploring or simply do not have the time, the interest or the incentive to learn more than the most famous repertoire works.

As for not being an academic or a scholar, again I do not think this is a valid reason. Our Journal is aimed at players and listeners and not at musicologists who wish to analyze the printed page. So I encourage you to consider articles about the music of your favorite lesser known composers you feel we could profit from meeting.

I wish to thank Messrs Greenfield and Schmidt for the fine articles about Juon's Divertimento and Fuchs' Piano Trios and hope you also find my article on Tchaikovsky's quartets of interest.—*Ray Silvertrust, Editor*

Robert Fuchs: The Works for Piano Trio

(Continued from page 3)

Fuchs wrote four substantial trios for piano and strings. Two are for the standard piano trio——violin, cello and piano and the other two are for violin, viola and piano.

The first of these works is his **Piano Trio No.1 in C Major, Op.22**. It dates from 1879 and was dedicated to Brahms, perhaps because of the kind words he had received. It is said that Brahms was so impressed by it that he decided to try his hand at writing another piano trio after a hiatus of nearly 30 years. Fuchs' trio is the epitome of mid-late Romanticism: full of noble themes, heroic and written on a large scale.

The opening *Allegro moderato* exhibits all of these traits. Its gorgeous main theme flows forth as calmly as a majestic river.

Fuchs surprises with the wealth of development he is able to coax from this theme and takes it through many mood changes, including a dark and brooding section followed by a recitative episode. Even in the coda, one finds that he has not exhausted his trove of ideas for this theme.

The somewhat funereal second movement, *Adagio con moto espressione*, with its long-lined phrases recalls Schubert.

A rhythmic scherzo, *Allegro presto*, is an odd mix between a somewhat shadowy and

ominous opening but the immediate restatement of the main theme is already brighter. Fuchs seems intent on mixing the two renditions together in such a way that it is virtually impossible to say what the mood of the movement is. The first beat though not explicitly accented becomes so with the trill (see example on left) and leads to a bumptious ride. The trio section provides a good contrast with the scherzo in that its main subject is another long-lined melody which is quite lyrical.

The opening bars of the finale, *Allegro risoluto*, are perhaps the most Brahmsian of the entire work. (see example on right) Although they bring no particular work to mind, there is the unmistakable style encapsulated in the music. Nonetheless, the music is really in no way imitative. As befits such a powerful and dramatic beginning it is written on a huge scale.

To my mind, this is an outstand work of the first order. And while it is not at all hard to understand why there is no reference to it in Maurice Hinson's *The Piano in Chamber Ensemble* (for all he did was copy what he found in other sources, there is virtually nothing original to be found in his book), it seems inexplicable that Wilhelm Altmann makes no mention of Fuchs' trios in his *Handbuch für Klaviertriospieler* (Handbook for Piano Trio Players). This is an amazing oversight, which is also repeated in the short entry on Fuchs in *Cobbett's Cyclopedia*, and, of course explains why Hinson repeats this oversight. Fuchs' music, held in such high esteem by Brahms, was later marginalized by critics who, though they admitted was delightful and well-crafted, denigrated it because it took Schubert and Brahms for its models.

Fuchs' next work for piano and two strings was his seven Fantasy Pieces or as they appeared in German, **Phantasiestücke for Violin, Viola and Piano, Op.57.** The genre of Phantasiestücke was more or less pioneered by Robert Schumann in the 1830's. These were generally a set of shorter pieces meant to be performed together, each, colorful and with a different mood or character. The opening piece, *Mässig bewegt, leidenschaftlich*, starts things off in a vein that is more melancholy than passionate, with the dark tones of the viola used to create the mood. The, *Langsam, getragen*, is solemn and subdued. Again, the viola is given the lead. Of interest is the somewhat choral use of the two strings. Third is a slightly more lively moderato, *Mässig bewegt*. Again the viola leads and the writing for its lower registers keeps the music achieving a bright or sprightly nature, however, it does rise to several compelling climaxes. The fourth piece, *Sehr gemütvoll*, is akin to a passionate lovers duet between the violin and viola. Finally, in the fifth piece, *Anmütig bewegt*, the violin initially takes the lead before a good session of give and take between all three instruments. This and the following piece, *Lebhaft zart*, are the brightest of the seven. Here the writing for both instruments is on their upper strings and trills play a prominent part of the thematic material. The last piece, *Etwas bewegt*, begins in canonic form and has for its theme a gypsy-like plaint. The piano is given the role of bagpipe. (Example, above left). The genre of the Fantasy

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Piece is a more intimate one than the more formal piano trio. There is something about Fantasy Pieces which seems to qualify them as works for a recital rather than a concert. While any one might be played without its fellows, say as an encore, together they are long enough to serve as a full-fledged work on a recital program, and would be especially effective if placed between two trios.

Next came Fuchs' **Piano Trio No.2 in B flat Major, Op.72** .It was composed in 1903, nearly a quarter of a century after his first effort. Much had changed during that time. His earlier works, while clearly retaining their own individuality, often reveal the influence of Brahms. Not so his later works, such as this trio. By the 1890's he had begun to move in a different direction from Brahms. One might say, his goal had become to make more from less. Fuchs demonstrates an uncanny ability to create very effective tonalities and, when he needs to, richness, with far fewer notes than most of the late Romantics. The evocative opening notes to the first movement, *Allegro molto moderato ma energico*, begin with a tinkling tremolo, high in the piano before the strings present the winning main theme. (example on left) After a short development, a more energetic second theme appears.

The wonderful second movement, *Allegro scherzando*, begins with the strings playing soft double stops which create a bagpipe background. After two measures, the piano introduces an exotic theme, which, however, quickly lightens even before the end of the first strain. (see example on right). In the trio section, the exotic reappears, this time more prominently.

The *Andante sostenuto* which follows is calm and has for its main theme a very romantic but melancholy melody. The middle section features a pleading tune, which at times becomes quite dramatic.

So often composers use the term giocoso, which should mean jocular, joking, or with good humor, when the music in question is none of these things. But in this finale, the *Allegro giocoso* is all of these things: playful, joking, and teasing. I must admit, however, that there is something about the first theme in particular which has what one might call a "circus" melody quality. In some ways, it almost approaches salon music, although it is certainly gay, cheerful and, genial. Happily the romantic second theme, more lyrical in mood, dispenses with this mood and is more "trio like."

Yet another quarter century was to pass before Fuchs returned to composing a trio for piano and strings. This time, once again, it was composed for violin, viola and piano. The **Trio in f sharp minor, Op.115**——or as it sometimes is called, Piano Trio No.3— was

composed in 1926, the year before his death. It is interesting that Fuchs, who was then 79, turned to the use of the viola to replace the cello. This replacement creates an unusual challenge for a composer: Gone is the normal soprano—bass opposition of the violin and cello. In its place comes the viola which is almost in the same register as the violin. The chief difficulty in a long work of four movements—rather than say a short fantasy piece—is maintaining tonal variety and individuality of the string parts and, of course, tonal interest. The ear tires more quickly of the soprano and alto interchange. This choice on Fuchs' part no doubt further indicats his fondness for the viola and he shows, surprisingly, that even at this late age, he was completely at ease and in control of his technical resources. The result is a masterwork not only for this ensemble, but by any standard. Perhaps one might find it surprising or even disappointing that the trio is in the late romantic style and could just as easily have been written in 1903 or 1926. Yes, Fuchs showed little interest in writing in the atonal style of the Second Vienna School. But why should he have been expected to change his style in his 70's when much younger composers like Karl Weigl and Ernst von Dohnanyi to name but two, also rejected atonalism, though perhaps writing in an updated style.

The opening movement, *Allegro molto moderato*, recalls late Brahms in its tonalities. The overall mood is one of melancholy and unrest. But the *Andante grazioso* which follows is bright and upbeat, however a stormy and dramatic middle section totally changes things until the main section returns. Next comes an *Allegretto scherzando*, a dance rhythm tinged with sadness but in the middle section, an upbeat lively *Vivace* chases the clouds away. See example above)

The finale, *Allegro giusto*, (example on right) has a pressing, determined quality to its main theme. Once again, the music has a somewhat dark mood. It is the quality of which, in his viola writing, Fuchs makes the most use. Still, one cannot say this is overall a brooding or pessimistic work, which it could well have been in view of Fuchs' advanced age and also the fact that Austria, after the First World War, had been brutally torn apart and his beloved Vienna had fallen on very difficult times.

To sum up, each of these four works is really well-crafted and has strong claims to being called first class. To my mind, however, Opp. 22 and 115 are true masterworks. All of these works have been recorded. The parts to Op.57 Fantasy Pieces are available from Lienau, Wollenweber & Silvertrust. The Op.115 Trio can be had from either Wollenweber or Silvertrust and the two piano trios, Opp.22 and 72 are available from Edition Silvertrust.

The String Quartets of Peter Tchaikovsky *continued from page 3*

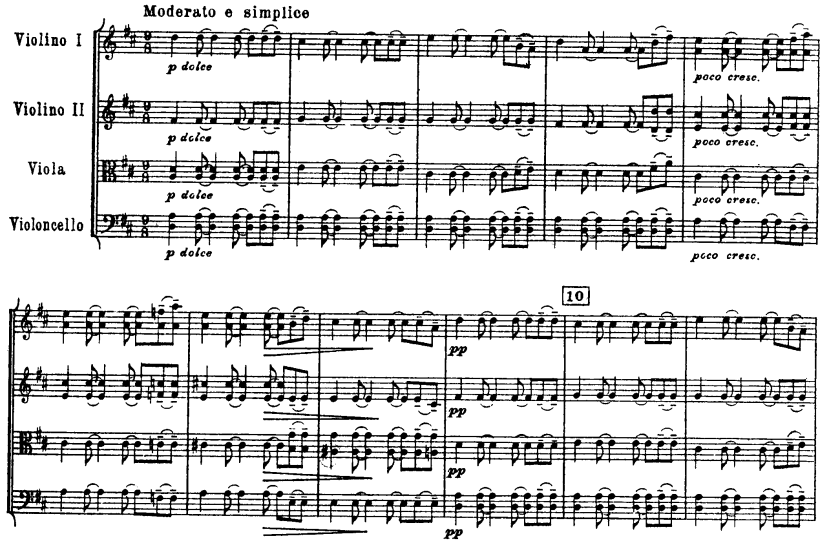
Quartet in in B flat, Op. Post. composed in 1865. This work, which features the imaginative use of Ukrainian folk melodies, remained unpublished until well into the 20th century.

The Quartet is in one movement and two theories have been advanced as to why that may have been. The first theory postulates that it was intended as the first movement of a string quartet which the composer never completed. The argument which best supports this theory is that there are few if any instances of one movement string quartets which might have served as an example for the composer. The second theory postulates that it could not have been intended as only the first movement as each part is 10 pages in length. Had it only been the first movement of a projected work, that work would have would have been of mammoth proportions. It may well have been that as the movement took shape, Tchaikovsky realized that it could not be more than one movement because of its length. It might also be argued that it is not simply in one movement but three movements or, if one movement, a movement with three distinct sections.

It opens *Adagio misterioso*. The music is quiet and tonally dark, partially recalling the music of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the end of the section, each instrument is given a cadenza, the last of which heralds in the main section, *Allegro con moto.* It has a lovely main theme, Russian in character. The second subject is more lyrical, The development of these themes is painstaking and involves several different treatments, including a fugue. Slowly, the music becomes calmer. Finally, the introductory section reappears and brings the work to a close in quiet, valedictory mood.

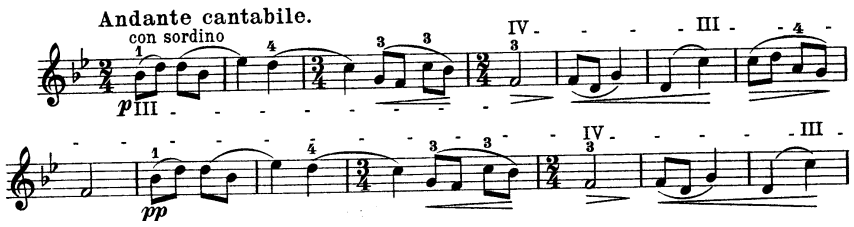
The occasion, in 1871, which led Tchaikovsky to compose **String Quartet No.1 in D Major, Op.11** was the proposal of an all-Tchaikovsky concert by Nikolai Rubinstein, brother of the famous Anton, head of the Moscow Conservatory and the most important and influential musical personage then in Moscow.. By contrast, Tchaikovsky was a meagerly paid professor in his fifth year at the Conservatory, and was by no means well-known either in Russia or abroad. To the contrary, he was a virtual unknown in a culturally backward country which had, until then, counted for little on the European musical scene. To make matters worse, though Moscow was the larger city, it was a very small "second fiddle" to the Russian imperial and musical capital, St. Petersburg.

Hence, Tchaikovsky recognized that such a concert would bring him to the attention of the general musical public, at least in Moscow, and, perhaps equally as important, if well attended, would supplement his negligible professor's salary. His economic distress made it impossible for him to engage an orchestra which ruled out any orchestral works and the necessity for programmatic variety meant that he had to put on something more than just piano solos, or violin and piano sonatas. The offer by his friend Ferdinand Laub, first violinist of the Russian Musical Society Quartet, to play without fee made writing a quartet for the concert an obvious choice. If the newspaper reviews are to be believed, the concert apparently was a success as critics and audience alike seemed to have been favorably impressed by all of the music, The First Quartet received high praise and in particular the lovely second movement *Andante cantabile*. Interestingly, four years later in 1875 when Tchaikovsky's publisher Jurgenson went to bring out a new edition of the quartet, it was discovered that only eleven copies of the first edition had been sold in Russia; all the other copies had been sold abroad.



The first movement to the D Major Quartet is marked *Moderato e semplice*, yet it is anything but simple rhythmically. It begins in 9/8 time, (example above) the syncopated rhythm being more striking than the unexceptional melody.

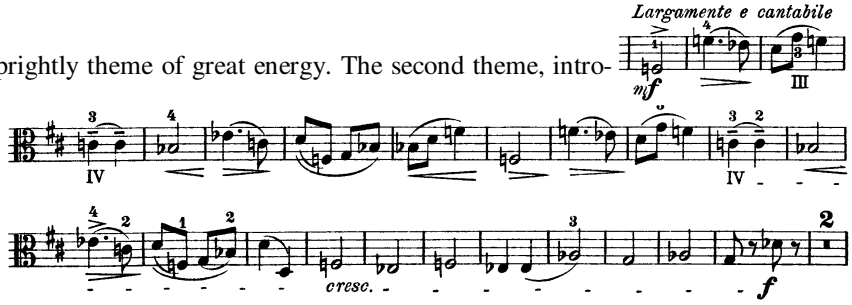
The second theme, played by the viola, is more convincing but is more complicated rhythmically adding a 12/8 bar in the third measure of the theme. Near the movement's end, the players are instructed to pick up the tempo gradually and to "play with fire" which gives an exciting flourish to the ending.



The quartet's second movement, *Andante Cantabile*, is certainly one of the most famous pieces Tchaikovsky ever wrote. The introductory melody (see left) is itself quite poignant but second theme, which begins at letter B, became an "international hit" and has become known through various transcriptions to millions the world over, few of whom ever heard it performed in its original scoring. Tolstoy, however, was one of those who did and is said to have been reduced to tears afterwards. The movement is based on a folksong which Tchaikovsky said he had heard from a carpenter. The words to this marvelous melody, however, are somewhat less than enthralling: "Vanya sat on the couch and smoked his pipe" or, according to other translators, sat drinking vodka. The melody, as Tchaikovsky set it, begins quietly with muted strings. He makes no attempt to develop the subject or even to create much of a contrast when he introduces the famous theme of the midsection which is sung by the first violin to the cello's seemingly interminable pizzicato accompaniment. After repetition of the opening theme, the whole thing slowly dies away.

The scherzo, *Allegro non tanto e con fuoco*, dispels the dreamlike mood with rhythmic drive and syncopation, which show the influence of Schumann, especially the scherzo of the latter's piano quintet, Opus 44. The main section is in d minor. The trio which follows is in B flat and obtains its contrast by the low, slurred, alternating two note growl in the cello played opposite the very staccato notes of the first violin.

The finale, *Allegro giusto,* opens with a simple but sprightly theme of great energy. The second theme, introduced by the viola, is Russian in character, slower and more noble. (example on right) It reappears several times, often stated by the cello, each occasion seemingly more beautiful than the last. As the movement comes to a close, there is a fast and brilliant finish where fragments of the main theme are whirled madly about.



Although the First Quartet has always eclipsed his two later quartets, thanks in no small part to the famous *Andante cantabile,* these, too, were also widely performed and admired and did much to establish Tchaikovsky's reputation as a composer of major stature, especially outside of Russia.. Tchaikovsky considered his **String Quartet No.2 in F Major, Op.22** one of his best works and was particularly fond of it, remembering how easy it had been to write, *"...not a single one of my works poured out of me so easily and simply. I wrote it practically at one sitting."* This was in the winter of 1874. Its performance in the spring was a public success and the first published edition quickly sold out.

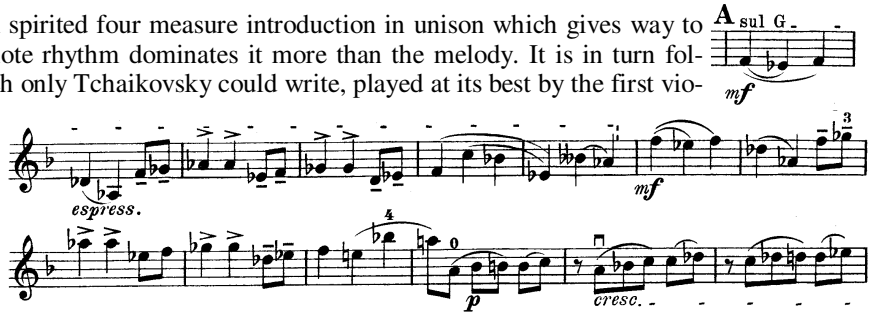
The first movement, pervaded throughout by a dark mood, opens with an eighteen measure reverie, *Adagio*, a poetically charming cadenza for the first violin. The *Moderato* that follows features a very Russian melody. (example on left) The second theme is characterized by a march-like syncopation while the development section has a clever canon between the cello and the first violin. The movement ends with a dreamy first violin solo which is, in reality, a slightly altered form of the opening melody found in the *Adagio.*

The scherzo, *Allegro giusto*, which follows lopes along in what is actually 7/4 time, a tempo frequently found in Russian folk dances. However, to accomplish this effect, Tchaikovsky first writes two bars of 6/8 followed by one of 9/8. The trio section is to be played at the same tempo as the scherzo. It is a waltz of great beauty in standard 3/4 time but made particularly effective by the placement of the accent on the second beat. The scherzo is then repeated galloping furiously to its energetic and thundering finish, *con fuoco.*

(Continued on page 10)

The third movement, *Andante ma non tanto*, is one of the most exquisite of its kind written for quartet. A piece of autumnal feeling, it is simple in conception with very little working out. The distinctive use of dynamics which rise to an orchestra triple forte in the development section to an hushed triple piano with which the movement closes are perhaps the most memorable effect he achieves in it.

The finale, *Allegro con moto*, begins with a short high spirited four measure introduction in unison which gives way to the first theme whose repeated eighth-two sixteenth note rhythm dominates it more than the melody. It is in turn followed by one of those many memorable melodies which only Tchaikovsky could write, played at its best by the first violin low on its G string. (See example on right) Two fugal interludes follow and then lead to the triumphant and flying coda which bring the quartet to a close.



Ferdinand Laub, was a Austrian-born violin virtuoso who traveled widely, winding up in 1866 as chief violin professor at the Moscow Conservatory, where he became a friend as well as colleague of Tchaikovsky and was the leader of the string quartet that gave the premieres of the composer's first two works in this medium. His death in March of 1875 was almost the last straw on the burden of depression under which Tchaikovsky was laboring at the time—much of it the result of his friend Nicholas Rubinstein's devastating criticism, a couple of months earlier, of the First Piano Concerto in its original version. The notion of composing an elegiac tribute to Laub probably occurred immediately, but it wasn't until nearly a year later that Tchaikovsky began work on it during a stay in Paris. Back in Moscow, he completed his **String Quartet No.3 in e flat minor, Op.30**, dedicated to the memory of Ferdinand Laub, in March 1876, and shortly afterward it was privately performed in Nicholas Rubinstein's home. Extravagantly praised by those who heard it then, it did not satisfy the composer, and he did considerable revising both before and after it was publicly performed again.

It begins with a slow introduction, *Andante sostenuto*. The main theme, marked *Allegro moderato*, is distinctive more for its rhythmic complexity than for its melodic interest. (example on left) A delicate second theme is more lyrical. The development is elaborate and the recapitulation is unusual because it introduces an entirely new cantabile theme, heard first in the cello and then in the first violin part. The coda is a return to the *Andante sostenuto* introduction.

The second movement, *Allegro vivo e scherznado,* contrasts with the others but it cannot be said to be gay, rather it is more in the nature of an airy and gracious intermezzo. (example on right) The short and somewhat slower trio section provides an excellent contrast

The third movement, *Andante funebre a doloroso ma con moto,* is the one that most explicitly commemorates Laub. The first subject is for muted strings, with a sobbing motif in block chords. (example on the left)

Against this accompaniment, the first violin brings forth a contrasting and declamatory melody. (example on the right)

The eloquently elegiac second subject, *piangendo a molto espressivo*, is quintessential Tchaikovsky. (see left)

After so emotional a movement, the extraverted energy of the finale provides a great contrast of mood. It is marked *Allegro non troppo a risoluto* and both its main themes are strongly accented. This energetic music only flags momentarily during a few measures marked *Quasi Andante,* which precede a bravura and a whirlwind ending.

At the beginning of this article, I wrote that Tchaikovsky's string quartets are rarely heard in concert, but when I come to think of the Russians or the even the Soviets, only the quartets of Shostakovich and Prokofiev are played with any regularity. Though the those of Tchkovsky very occasionally get an outing, these of the great Russian romanticcomposers——Gliere, Glazunov and Taneyev to name but three, have been left to languish. This is really a shame. Would it be so awful if programmers occasionally substituted, for example, one of the superb Gliere's in place of the inevitable Brahms or Dvorak? Although I have heard all three of Tchaikovsky's quartets in concert, it has been no more than twice. I hope you have had better luck than I.

Divertimento for Piano & Winds by Paul Juon *(continued from page 3)*

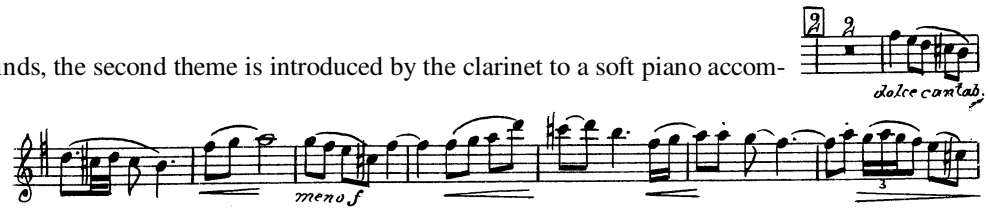
ing among Russians. His second period is more cosmopolitan and is in tune with the contemporary Central European trends of the early 20th century. Ultimately, it is hard to characterize his music as Russian or German, Romantic, Modern or Folkloric, because one can find all of these elements in his music. With the exception of opera, Juon wrote in virtually every genre with chamber music perhaps representing the most important and numerous of his compositions.

The **Divertimento for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon and Piano, Op.51** dates from 1912. Although works for piano and winds are few and far between, Juon must have been familiar with the quintets for piano and winds by Rimsky-Korsakov and Anton Rubinstein. Both of these are very effective works with a striking richness of instrumental combination.

Juon's Divertimento, as the title suggests, is a work light in character, however, it is full of surprises in its use of harmony, instrumental color and its rhythms. The winds are employed both on their own in extended solo passages and together to form a block of sound. The piano is used both as a solo instrument and an accompanist. The Divertimento comprises three longer movements interspersed by two short intermezzi.

The opening movement, *Allegretto*, begins as a dainty overture with the flute and the bassoon presenting the chirpy main theme (example on right) in its entirety before the others join in.

After an extended dialogue between the winds, the second theme is introduced by the clarinet to a soft piano accompaniment. It is exotic and wayward with an oriental aroma to it. (example on the right) Then, two contrasting themes are presented in the form of a conversation between the instruments.



The, lumbering second movement, titled Intermezzo No.1, is in the nature of a chorale, and truth be told, it sounds nothing like your typical light-footed intermezzo. (example on left) Here the horn and bassoon lead the way while the other winds dances about with fluffy ornaments. Finally, the piano enters somewhat discordantly, almost stumbling about.

The center of gravity for the work is the third movement, *Fantasia,* with its magnificent clarinet solo. The mood is elegiac and very free. (example on left) One is reminded a bit of Rachmaninov, perhaps because of the use of the minor and the elegiac mood found mostly in the piano accompaniment. Finally, the horn enters and after a short solo passage, the clarinet rejoins and a duet ensues as the piano raises the temperature and dynamics so that its part can no longer be ignored. The other winds provide an unobtrusive wall of sound.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

A second *Intermezzo* follows. It consists of a minuet and a trio and performs the function of a sorbet between the fish and meat dishes, in this case the Fantasia and the Russian-sounding finale, *Rondino*, which is a bit like a mini-piano concerto with orchestral accompaniment. The flute presents the theme of the minuet along with the oboe. (example above)

The finale is somewhat misleadingly entitled *Rondino*, suggestive of a short, light rondo. Although light, bright and playful, it is a virtuosic display for the piano. The winds enter first, en bloc, and then the piano takes off. (example on left)

This is a wonderful work which would do well in the concert hall, but should not be missed by amateurs. Parts are available.

New Recordings

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

String Quartets

Volkmar ANDREAE (1879-1962) Nos. 1 & 2, Genuin 10167 / Carl ARNOLD (1794-1868) Op.19, EigenArt 10210 / Ignaz von BEECKE (1733-1803) Qt in G, EigenArt 10210 / Alexandre BOËLY (1786-1858) No.1, Laborie 05 / Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-76) Qt in F, Cobra 0032 / Anton BRUCKNER (1824-96) Rondo & Qt in c, Cobra 0032 / Edvard GRIEG (1843-1907) Fugue in f, Cobra 0032 / Charles KOECHLIN (1867-1950) No.3, Ar-re-se 2009 / Joseph Martin KRAUS (1756-1792) No.4, EigenArt 10210 / Laszlo LAJTHA (1892-1963) Nos. 4, 6, 8 & 10, Hungaroton 32544 / Zygmunt NOSKOWSKI (1846-1909) Nos. 1 & 2, Acte Prealable 234 / George ONSLOW (1784-1853) String Quartet Nos. 28-30, Naïve V 5200 / Opera Guise transcribed by composer, Ligia Lidi 0302-198-09 / Giacomo PUCCINI (1858-1924) Qt in D, Cobra 0032 / Sergei RACHMANINOV (1873-1943) No.1, Cobra 0032 / Arnold SCHOENBERG (1874-1951) Presto in C, Cobra 0032 / Anton Webern (1883-1945) Langsamersatz, Cobra 0032

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743-1805) 3 Quintets Op.39, Brilliant Classics 94002 / Alexandre BOËLY (1786-1858) String Trio Op.5 No.2 & Sextet in D, Laborie 05 / Ferdinand THIERIOT (1838-1919) Sextet, Toccata 0080

Piano Trios

Arno BABAJANIAN (1921-1982) Trio, Alma 2609 / Benjamin GODARD (1849-1895) Nos. 1 & 2, MD&G 303 1615 / Enrique GRANADOS (1867-1916) Op. 50, Naxos 8.572262 / Ludwig THUILLE (1861-1907) Trio for Vln, Vla & Pno, Champs Hill 001-2

Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

Friedrich GERNSHEIM (1839-1916) Qt Nos. 1 & 3, Brilliant Classics 93997 / Enrique GRANADOS (1867-1916) Qnt, Op. 49, Naxos 8.572262 / Charles KOECHLIN (1867-1950) Qnt Op.80, Ar-re-se 2009 / Josef NOWAKOWSKI (1800-1865): Qnt, Op.17, Camerata 28174 / Antoni STOLPE (1851-1872) Sextet in e, Camerata 28174 / Ferdinand THIERIOT (1838-1919) Qnt, Op. 20, Toccata 0080 / LUDWIG THUILLE (1861-1907) Qnt Nos. 1 & 2, Champs Hill 001-2

Winds & Strings

None this issue

Winds, Strings & Piano

Alexander ARUTIUJNIAN (1920-) Suite for Cln, Vla & Pno, Alma 2609 / Parsegh GANATCHIAN (1885-1967) Elegie for Cln, Vln, Vc & Pno, Alma 2609-/ LUDWIG THUILLE (1861-1907) Sextet for Pno & Winds, Champs Hill 001-2

Piano & Winds

None this issue

Lennox Berkeley: Trio for Hn, Vln & Pno & a Quintet for Pno & Winds
Mel (Melanie) Bonis: Two Piano Quartet

Lennox Berkeley (1903-89) was born in Oxford, England, and educated at its university. After wards, he went to Paris where he took composition lessons from Nadia Boulanger. While there, he became acquainted with most of the leading composers then living in Paris, including Francis Poulenc, Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud, Arthur Honegger and Albert Roussel. Berkeley also studied with Maurice Ravel, whom he credited with helping his technical development. Not surprisingly after such studies, his music shows the influence of the then modern French school. After working for the BBC, he was appointed Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music. Among his students were Richard Rodney Bennett, David Bedford and John Tavener. His style changed in his later years. His adoption of serialism marked a darker and more brooding style.

The first work on **Naxos CD 8.572288** is his **Trio for Violin, Horn and Piano, Op.44** which dates from 1944 and is an attractive piece. Though not tonal in the traditional sense, it certainly is not atonal. In the first theme to the opening movement, *Allegro*, the horn and the violin engage in a dialogue over a lively piano accompaniment. The second theme is quieter. The second movement, *Lento*, begins in a subdued, though not funereal mood. However, the music certainly is pensive and dark. This is all heightened by a very sparse piano part. The finale, *Tema and Variations*, is almost as long as the two preceding movements combined. The author of the jewel box notes styles the theme as "insouciantly Mozartean" but this is a bit of a stretch. In fact, the theme is none too discernable. The variations, even given the fact that few will recognize the theme, are extremely well done, varying in mood and tempo etc. Not even taking into account that the repertoire for this combination is small, I would say this is a work which belongs in the front rank.

The second work is the **Quintet for Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon and Piano, Op.90.** It was composed in 1975 and is from his later period. It uses serialism, but is not exclusively a serial work. The first movement, *Andante-Allegro*, begins slowly. The mood very subdued. The Allegro brings some elements of neoclassicism and is altogether brighter. The following *Scherzo-Allegro vivace* has a certain lilt to it, but does not provide much of a contrast to the preceding Allegro. The *Intermezzo-Andante* is slower and bears no relationship to a traditional sounding intermezzo. All one can say is that it comes between two faster movements. The finale, *Allegretto*, has a completely tonal subject for its main theme and provides a welcome relief to what has come before. It begins in a rather slow and lumbering fashion, but eventually picks up speed. I would recommend the CD for the Trio alone, although the Quintet does have its merits and is interesting.

Mel Bonis (Melanie Helene Bonis 1858-1937), born in Paris, was a gifted but long underrated composer. She used the pseudonym Mel because she felt, as it turned out rightly, that women composers weren't taken seriously as artists. Her music represents a link between the Romantic and Impressionist movements in France. Bonis' parents discouraged her early interest in music and she taught herself to play piano until age 12, when she was finally given private lessons. A friend introduced her to Cesar Franck, who was so impressed with her abilities, he made special arrangements for her to be admitted to the then all-male Paris Conservatory in 1876. She won prizes in harmony and accompaniment and showed great promise in composition, but a romance with a fellow student, Amedee Hettich, caused her parents to withdraw her from the institution in 1881. Two years later she married and raised a family. Then in 1893, she again encountered Hettich, now a famous critic. He urged her to continue composing and helped launch a career in fashionable Parisian salons, where her music made a considerable stir. Saint Saens highly praised her chamber music and could not believe that it had been composed by a woman. Although her music was much played and praised, Bonis never entered the first rank of her contemporaries as she probably would have because she lacked the necessary vanity for self-promotion. It did not help that she was a woman. As a result, by the time of her death, she and her music had fallen into obscurity. She composed over 300 works in most genres. Finally, in the 1960s, historians began to re-examine the contributions of women composers and this set the stage for Bonis' posthumous reputation.

MD&G CD# 643-1424 presents her two piano quartets. **Piano Quartet No.1 in B flat Major, Op.69** was completed in 1905. Its premiere, which had Bonis on the piano and three famous string players, was a great success. Nonetheless, the work was forgotten shortly after the First World War. The opening movement, *Moderato*, begins gently but its main theme also shows a marked intensity of feeling. The music has a certain diffidence. The second theme is used to slowly build tension. The second movement, *Intermezzo, allegretto tranquillo*, also begins quietly but momentum picks up almost immediately, while still keeping the laid back mood of an intermezzo. The lovely *Andante* which follows is the work's center of gravity. The first part of the main theme has a sad, searching quality while the second half is surprisingly optimistic. From this, she branches out, building beautiful tonal episodes. In the finale, *Allegro ma non troppo*, the relaxed geniality is substituted for passion, drama and excitement.

Piano Quartet No.2 in D Major, Op.124 dates from 1927. The opening moderato begins in a quiet and reflective fashion and remains so for several minutes. The main theme seems to consist of a long, slowly rising scale passage. At brief moments, Bonis

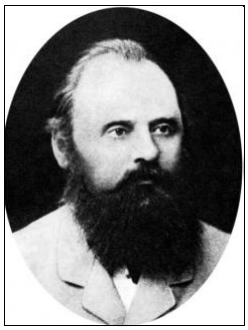
String Qt by Edgar Bainton and Hubert Clifford / String Trios by William Shield
An Octet for Winds, Strings and Piano by Mily Balakirev

tries to expand the limits of tonality. The second theme is more attractive and easily discernable. In the second movement, *Allegretto*, we hear the definite influence of the Impressionists. It is worth remembering that Bonis was a generation older than the impressionists and only adopted their style partially. The mood of the movement barely changes, but sparklingly exotic touches create good interest. The slow movement, *Lent*, has a lovely long-lined, lazy melody for its main theme. It is the piano part, not only here, but throughout the quartet, which creates the greatest interest. While the music up until this point has been rather limp-wristed, the finale, *Allegro*, pushes forth with power and a real sense of drama. The music bears a certain affinity to that of Gabriel Fauré. Both of these piano quartets are quite worthwhile and this is a highly recommended CD.

String Quartets by **Edgar Bainton** and **Hubert Clifford**, two composers I had never encountered, are presented on **Dutton CD 7163**. Edgar Bainton (1880-1956) was born in London and trained as a pianist. He attended the Royal College of Music and studied composition with Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. Only 21, Bainton became piano professor at the Newcastle upon Tyne Conservatory of Music and was its director by 1912. While attending the Bayreuth Festival in 1914, war broke out and he was interned near Berlin for the next four years. After returning to England, in 1934, he relocated to Australia to become director of the New South Wales Conservatory. His **String Quartet in A Majo**r was composed in 1915, while he was interned in Germany, and revised in 1920. The opening movement *Poco moderato con grazia* is pastoral and optimistic in nature, perhapss representing reflections on the English countryside. The opening theme makes appearances in both the third and fourth movements as well. The second movement, *Scherzo poco vivace*, is relatively short, upbeat and gently playful. In the third movement *Non troppo lento,* the muting of the strings heightens the pastoral and lyrical nature of the music. A scherzando middle section, played without mutes, is in the form of a country dance. The finale was composed in 1920 and sounds rather more modern than the preceding movements. Still tonal, it exhibits all of the trends Bainton must have found when he returned to England. Thought this could not be called a great work, it is solid, appealing and well-written. The notes do not make clear if it was ever published.

Hubert Clifford (1904-59) was born near Melbourne and took a degree in chemistry at the university before entering the Melbourne Conservatory of Music. By the end of the 1920's he had already made a name for himself as an operatic conductor before he moved to England where he continued his studies with Ralph Vaughan Williams. He worked for the BBC while composing both for the cinema and the concert hall. The **String Quartet in D Major** dates from 1935. Though performed several times in the UK, it apparently was never published. The opening movement *Adagio-Allegro con brio*, to me at least, sounds like a lot of other English music from that time, including that of Vaughan Williams. I cannot say it made much of an impression. It's well-written, has melody, but not of the sort that is very memorable. The same could be said of the remaining three movements *Adagio non troppo, Scherzo* and *Lento-Rondo vivace*. Although there is nothing wrong with this quartet, with so much else from this era which sounds like it, I can see no reason to publish it although I can recommend the CD to those interested in typical English-sounding works from the 1915-40 period, though they are hardly exemplars.

William Shield (1748-1829) was born near Stalwell, county Durham, and trained as a violinist. Later, he studied composition with Charles Avison in Newcastle upon Tyne. In 1772, he was employed as principle violist at the Covent Garden Opera. He knew most of the important composers resident in or passing through London, including Haydn. Shield's works include a large number of operas and other stage works. He was known for his light operas. His Op.3 string quartets, composed in the 1780s, were considered the finest written by a native English composer in the 18th century. On **Hungaroton CD#32669,** we find six of his **String Trios for Violin, Viola and Cello.** He wrote two sets (which appeared without opus numbers), the first in 1792, the second in 1796. Seven trios are recorded on this CD, four of the trios are numbered 1-3 & 5, three have no numbers. The numbered trios are mostly written in concertante style which leads me to believe they may be from the first set. The melodies, however, from this set are more memorable and make a more lasting impression than the three without numbers. All seven trios are all relatively short works, but are well-written with a string player's understanding. No one would mistake these works for Mozart's K.563 Divertimento, but they are certainly as good as Haydn's Op.53 trios and the lower voices are given better parts. Altogether pleasant works, well worth hearing and I would think playing. This is a recommended CD



I looked forward to hearing the **Octet for Flute, Oboe, Horn, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Piano, Op.3** by **Mily Balakirev** (1837-1910) which appears on **Orchid-Classics CD#100009,** only to discover that it is a one movement piece. Balakirev enjoyed a career as pianist, conductor and composer, but today is remembered only for promoting Russian nationalism in music. He, along with Alexander Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov formed a group known as the Might Five. For several years, Balakirev was the only professional musician of the group; the others were amateurs limited in musical education, but possessing enormous potential. He imparted to them his musical beliefs, which continued to underlie their thinking long

Armenian Chamber Music: A Piano Trio by Arno Babajanian & Works for Clarinet, Violin & Piano by Aram Khachaturian, Seroui Kradjian & Alexander Artunian

after he left the group. As a composer, Balakirev had considerable trouble finishing works. It turns out that only one movement of the Octet, the first, an *Allegro*, has survived. It is interesting on several counts. First, I can think of no precedents of such a combination. The Octet dates from 1856. The Allegro is a big movement and is indicative of the scale Balakirev must have had in mind for his Octet. The writing often resembles a mini-piano concerto, of the sort one also finds in the Mendelssohn and Glinka Piano Sextets, both of which probably served as models for Balakirev. I say this based on the fact that one can hear the influence of both these composers in the music. Although it is not the piano which has most of the melody, the other instruments are often handled en bloc, as a quasi orchestral unit. Interestingly, one of Balakirev's themes from this work appears to have been borrowed by Borodin at a later date. This is an altogether attractive work, making one regret the other movements were lost. It has been published, and is available. Whether or not to purchase the CD depends on whether you also want Shostakovich's Piano Trio No.1, Glinka's Trio Pathetique and Glazunov's String Quintet Op.39.

AtmaClassique CD#2609 is entitled *Armenian Chamber Music*. The first work on disk is the **Piano Trio in f# minor** by **Arno Babajanian** (1921-1983) Babajanian was born in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. By age 5, his extraordinary musical talent was clearly apparent, and the composer Aram Khachaturian suggested that the boy be given proper music training. Two years later, in 1928 at the age of 7, Babajanian entered the Yerevan Conservatory. He continued his studies in Moscow with Vissarion Shebalin. He later returned to Yerevan, where from 1950-1956 he taught at the conservatory. It was during this period (1952) that he wrote the Piano Trio in f# sharp minor. It received immediate acclaim and was regarded as a masterpiece from the time of its premiere. In three substantial movements, it is passionate and full of memorable melodies with wonderful writing for all three instruments. The first movement, an *Allegro*, begins in dramatic fashion with the strings playing the main theme in unison. Like a leitmotif, this theme reappears in each of the following movements. The second movement, *Andante*, begins very softly with the violin introducing the lovely main theme, high on its e-string. Eventually the cello joins in and the theme is intertwined between them in a very original fashion. The Finale, *Allegro vivace*, is rhythmically quite interesting. Mostly in 5/8 time, it features two themes which present a stark contrast. The first is rather rough and aggressive while the second is softer and more song-like. The trio ends with appearance of the opening theme and leads to a short stormy coda.

Aram Khachaturian (1903-78) needs no introduction, he is probably Armenia's best known composer. His **Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano** dates from 1932 and is an early work composed while he was still at the Moscow Conservatory. It provides an object lesson of his original approach to the problem of combining modernism with folk melodies, a lesson one finds repeated in *Gayane* and the *Masquerade Suite*. The opening movement, *Andante con dolore, molto espressione*, shows an incredible freedom and flexibility. The lyrical duets between the clarinet and the violin are meant to approximate the Ashugh, the art of improvisation practiced by Armenian musicians and poets, while the piano's rhythms provide a sense of tension and conflict. The second movement, *Allegro*, mostly explores tonal color created by the clarinet and the violin, however, in the middle section the piano ignites a wild and ferocious circle dance. The finale, *Moderato*, is a theme and set of variations. The theme is clearly a folk melody and is given out by the clarinet. Here, a true Armenian flavor permeates the music but is ingeniously presented in modern garb. This is a wonderful work.

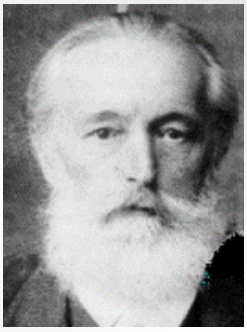
An **Elegy for Restive Souls for Clarinet, Violin, Cello and Piano** by **Serouj Kradjian** (1973-) is the next work on disk. Kradjian was born in Canada to Armenian parents. He has enjoyed a career as a concert pianist and composer. The Elegy is a one movement work lasting about 15 minutes. It commemorates a terrible earthquake which decimated Armenia on December 7, 1988, just before midnight. It begins with a constant violin pizzicato, meant to be the ticking of a clock. The piano strikes the same chord 11 times, signifying the hour, but not a 12th because the earthquake came. Silence, then a somber requiem follows. It in turn is interrupted by terrible crashing chords, representing the aftermath and chaos of the quake. Various episodes follow signifying destiny and hope. This is a tonal work, though not in a singable sense. Very engaging and captivating.

Alexander Artunian (1920-) is, like Babajanian, quite well-known within the former Soviet Union. Abroad, it is his trumpet concerto which made his name. Born in Yerevan, he studied and then subsequently taught at its Conservatory. His **Suite for Clarinet, Violin and Piano**, which dates from 1991, is in four short movements, the longest being the first, entitled *Introduction.* Each movement has a different mood, but Armenian folk melody can be heard in all. The Introduction is dark, but sadly emotional, clearly sounding Armenian. Next comes a light-hearted *Scherzo*, syncopated and playful with a lopsided dance. The third movement, entitled *Dialog*, is just that, a somber and melancholy conversation between the violin and clarinet. It is played attacca into the brilliant finale, entitled simply *Finale*. Its 3+3+2 theme, played at a frenetic pace, is mesmerizing. In the middle, a slower, luscious melody intervenes before the exciting coda. Completely tonal, this is an outstanding work, a little masterpiece. If more modern classical music sounded like this, rather than like Stockhausen, perhaps it would be a healthier art form.

Each of the works on this disk is first rate and I highly recommend this CD not only to clarinetists, but also to string players, pianists and listeners in general.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

Peter Tchaikovsky

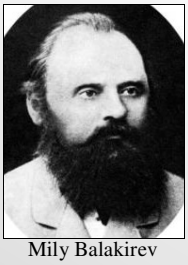


Robert Fuchs

Paul Juon

Lennox Berkeley

Mel Bonis



Mily Balakirev

Arno Babajanian

Aram Khachaturian

Alexander Artunian

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV

ONSLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL

HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANEYEV, REINECKE