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

***A Guide to the Piano Trio***  
***Part IIb***  
***Those for***  
***The Standard Piano Trio***  
***Violin, Violoncello And Piano***

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# A Guide to the Standard Piano Trio, Part II

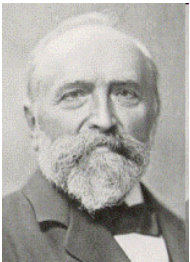
## M to Z

By R.H.R. Silvertrust



**Albéric Magnard** (1865-1914) was born in Paris to wealthy parents. His father François Magnard was a bestselling author and editor of the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*. After military service and graduating from law school, he entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied counterpoint with Théodore Dubois, Jules Massenet and Vincent d'Indy. Magnard's musical output numbered only 22 works with opus numbers.

Larger compositions such as symphonies were his main area of interest, however, he did write a piano trio, this string quartet and some instrumental sonatas. Magnard's musical style is typical of French composers contemporaneous to him, but occasionally, there are passages that foreshadow the music of Gustav Mahler. Magnard's use of cyclical form is more was influenced by Cesar Franck His **Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 18** dates from 1904/05. It is in four movements, densely scored. The opening *Sombre* is restless with frequent tempi and meter changes. The second movement *Chantant* is less astringent than the first. Perhaps the most appealing is the third movement *Vif*, Tempo de valse, a kind of scherzo. The big finale: *Largement - Vif* is both to play and to hear. Not a work for amateurs.



**Otto Malling** (1848-1915) was born in Copenhagen. Studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with Niels Gade and Johan (J.P.E.) Hartmann. He worked as a teacher and composer and eventually became a professor and then director at the Royal Danish Academy. Among his many students was the composer Knudage Riisager. His **Op.36 Piano Trio in a minor** dates from 1889. It shows the influence of

Schumann, and in its time was widely regarded as one of the very best Danish piano trios from the Romantic era. In four movements it begins with an *Allegro moderato* which has a Nordic folk melody for its main theme. The music by turns dramatic and lyrical. The second movement is a dainty *Intermezzo* full of lovely melodic writing shared equally by all of the voices. Full of charm, its dance-like rhythms are quite appealing. The third movement, *Notturmo*, begins with a cantilena melody first in the cello. The violin's reply is somewhat darker and sadder. The finale, *Presto*, is bright and lively, playful and elegant. This is an all round good work which deserves to be heard in concert and certainly can be recommended to amateurs.



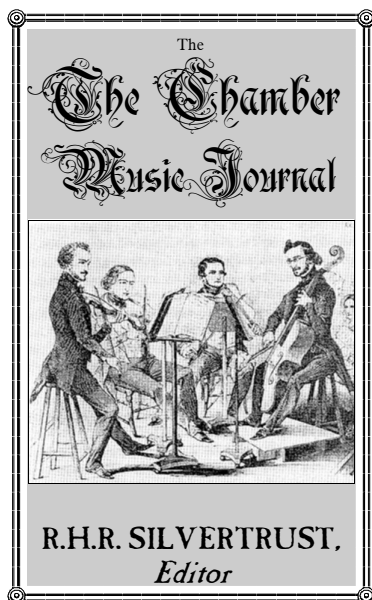
Today, **Heinrich Marschner** (1795-1861), rival of Weber and friend of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, is remembered mainly for his many romantic operas. He was widely regarded as one of the most important composers in Europe from about 1830 until the end of the 19th century and is still generally acknowledged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

a composer of opera, he did write 7 piano trios. These did not escape the notice of Schumann who praised the piano trios lavishly

and for good reason. Marschner did not just toss off these works as an afterthought but clearly devoted considerable time and effort writing them. To each of his works for piano, violin and cello he gave the title "Grand Trio", indicative of the importance he attached to them. In these fine works, one finds all of the emotions prevalent in the romantic movement during the mid-19th century expressed in a fresh, original and captivating manner. Marschner wrote his First Piano Trio while still relatively young in 1823. He did not return to the genre for nearly twenty years during which time he was almost exclusively occupied with composing for the opera. However, between 1840 and 1855 he was to compose six more piano trios. I am only familiar with four of them.

The first, **Piano Trio No.2 in g, Op.111** begins *Allegro con spirito* and the word Mendelssohnian immediately comes to mind. This is perhaps not so surprising since not only were the two friends. The strings are massed together in longish fetching melodies against a florid but sparkling piano part. The striking use of chromaticism greatly adds to the excitement. In the following *Romanze, Andantino*, the strings are given the lead whilst the piano falls back into a tasteful accompaniment role. Here the music sounds of Marschner's own original voice. In the gorgeous middle section, the cello is given an extraordinarily fine solo lament. This is a very lovely movement, certainly as fine as anything Mendelssohn wrote. In the powerful *Scherzo, Presto* which comes next, the piano at first takes the lead, but in the equestrian, bouncing second theme, all three voices work together to achieve a telling result. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, is a kind of relaxed tarantella, perhaps more lyrical and not as lively as the title suggests. Nonetheless, the melodies are fresh and the music captivating. This is a work which should be reintroduced to concert audiences. Both themes to the *Allegro giusto* which begins **Piano Trio No.4 in D Major, Op.135** are very fetching. The piano writing is first rate and effective without bringing attention to itself. This is a very captivating movement. Again, in the slow movement, *Andante*, we find the cello given the lead with a sad and reflective vocal aria. When the violin enters, a very fine duet ensues. In the middle section, the strings bring forth an emotionally charged theme in the form of a desperate plea. This gorgeous music is archetypical of mid 19th century romanticism. It is hard to imagine it could be improved upon. Again, a *Scherzo, Presto* is placed third and again it is the piano which provides the forward motion. A *Vivace* concludes the trio. The opening theme, though lovely, is not very dramatic and seems more suitable for an intermezzo. The development brings more excitement. The short coda is excellent. This is another very good work, deserving of performance. **Piano Trio No.5 in d minor, Op.138** which dates from 1848. The opening *Allegro giusto*, is a very different sort of piece from what we heard in No.2. The second theme has a certain Beethovenian feel to it, especially with a rhythmic quote from the finale to the 3rd *Rasumovsky*; but more interesting are the several Brahmsian moments. (Brahms was only 15 at the time) The lovely second movement, *Romanze, Andantino*, is the only piece of Marschner's chamber music to have survived into

(Continued on page 3)



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the 20th century as a salon cum encore piece. It begins with a highly romantic vocal solo for the cello with the piano in the background. After some minutes the violin takes over the thread but soon all three are equally singing away. A stormy middle section brings the music to a dramatic high point before it softly closes. A superb gem. Next is an atmospheric and original sounding *Scherzo, Presto*. It features dazzling and effective piano writing along side moody writing for the strings. A wonderful Schubertian trio, with the strings in the lead, provides fine contrast. In the finale, *Allegro, Vivace*, the piano introduces a racing, polka-like melody in minor. The second theme, slower, and highly lyrical, is entrusted to the strings. It concludes with a powerful and exciting coda. This trio is absolutely first rate and belongs in the repertoire. **Piano Trio No.7 in F Major, Op.167.** also begins with an energetic and at times dramatic *Allegro giusto*. Next comes an *Andantino, quasi allegretto grazioso* which begins with a dancing piano solo. The strings are given a lovely but somewhat cloying theme which is more in the realm of Sunday afternoon parlor music. Third is another *Scherzo, Presto*. This chromatic, ghostly galloping music is fresh and memorable; the trio less so. The main theme to the finale, *Vivace*, is a restatement of the opening theme to the work, but dressed up differently. A lyrical second subject follows. The coda is exciting and effective. In my opinion, Trio Nos. 2, 4 & 5 belong in the repertoire and deserve regular performance.



**Bohuslav Martinu** (1890-1959) was somewhat of a violin prodigy as a child. He entered the Prague Conservatory but did not graduate. Eventually, he went to Paris where he studied with Albert Roussel. His **Piano Trio No.1** (also known as Five Short Pieces) was composed in 2 days time during 1930. The movements, *Allegro moderato, Adagio, Allegro, Allegro moderato* and *Allegro con brio* are in fact quite short, all but one of less than three minutes duration and quite different from each other. In the first movement one hears what has been called his 'Neo-Baroque' style which features busy string parts against unison writing in the piano. The writing is primarily polyphonic with discordant harmonies, but the music definitely is not atonal. There is neither Czech nor French influence so much as the emerging International or European sound. Perhaps there is a bit of Stravinsky in the last movement. These are enjoyable and fun pieces to hear. Twenty years separates the First Trio from **Piano Trio No.2 in d minor**. Written when Martinu was living in New York, it was dedicated to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is in three movements and relatively short, under 20 minutes duration. The music is neither harsh nor angular but has returned to the world of traditional tonality with little or no use of polytonality. The opening *Allegro moderato* immediately shows tonalities which are more lyrical than that of the First Trio. There are touches of Czech melody and Central European Romanticism, but they are presented in an updated way. The music is mostly dark and searching until the end when it syncs into an enthusiastic coda. The *Andante* begins in a reticent fashion but then becomes quite lyrical, its melody a tip of the hat to Dvorak and Brahms, although the tonal totality of the music is much more modern. This is a very fine movement. The lively finale, *Allegro*, is alternately nervous and buoyant and concludes with a brilliant coda. This Trio is a first rate modern work which deserves to be heard in concert often. Two years later, in 1952, **Piano Trio No.3 in C Major** was composed. It, too, is in three movements and is dedicated to Leopold Mannes, founder of the Mannes School of Music in New York where Martinu taught. The tense mood and rhythmic first theme of the opening *Allegro moderato* is similar to the last movement of Trio No.2. The soft second theme, however, is rich and sweet. The contrast between the two themes is quite great. There is a strident modern urgency to the first theme which all but overwhelms the second theme. The middle movement, *Andante*, begins darkly on the outer limits of conventional tonality with some harsh dissonances but gradually, as the emotional pitch rises and the tempo quickens, becomes more tonal and has several short lyrical episodes. The last movement, *Allegro*, begins on a happy note. It is music of movement and of celebration. No clouds overhead. From time to time a bit of Czech melody can briefly be heard. Perhaps not immediately as accessible to listeners (with the exception of the last movement), the Third Trio is in its own way every bit as good and should be placed in the first rank of 20th century works for Piano Trio.



**Giuseppe Martucci** (1856-1909) was born in the southern Italian city of Capua. His father was a bandmaster and gave him his first music lessons on the piano. When it was discovered that the boy was prodigy, he was sent to the Naples Conservatory at the age of 11. Before he could graduate, his father, seeing his son's amazing talent, decided to cash in and started him on a successful concert career.

Martucci became well-known as a concert artist throughout Europe and his playing was admired by Liszt among others. However, later when he became of age and gained independence from his father, he worked as a professor at the Naples Conservatory, virtually ending his concert career. Besides being an important teacher, he also became the conductor of the Naples Symphony Orchestra and later the Liceo Musicale Bolognese orchestra. He is recognized as an important late 19th century Italian composer and was considered the leader of the group of Italian composers determined to break away from the dominance of opera in Italy and to restore instrumental music to its rightful place. Written between 1882-83, both of the trios are massive works each taking about 45 minutes to perform. **Piano Trio No.1, Op.59 in C Major** opens with a spacious and not terribly *Allegro Giusto* in which the strings play a lovely theme above the piano. The melodies are gorgeous and the part writing very good indeed in that the strings are not forced to duel with piano, but there is nothing very Italian-sounding about the music. A furious *Scherzo* follows in which the piano takes the lead. In the short contrasting trio, the melodic material is given to the muted strings. A melancholy cello solo opens the almost painfully lovely *Andante con moto*, clearly the Trio's center of gravity. The finale, *Allegro risoluto*, by use of similar tempi and themes gives the feel of the first three movements without directly quoting but overall, there seems to be sufficient lack of forward motion and drama one would expect in a finale. All in all though, this is a very fine work. **Piano Trio No.2, Op.62 in E Flat** was written almost immediately after the first. An *Allegro*, sounding more *moderato*, introduces a very lyrical and lazy melody. One hears the influence of Brahms. This is a big movement, but there are no small movements in this trio. Even the *Scherzo-Allegro* is a lengthy affair. Rather more subdued, again *a la* Brahms, than the average scherzo this *Scherzo* plods along almost interminably finally ending without warning on one chord. The contrasting trio is a marvelous other-worldly theme given to the strings over the piano. Next is an *Adagio*, huge, again one hears the guiding hand of Brahms in the very long but lovely themes. In the *Finale*, *Allegro vivace*, again we hear Johannes, but also some very original musical thought especially in the splendid conclusion to this work.



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

much so, that he was hailed the successor to Schubert, and Hugo Wolf as a song composer. On the strength of these works, he obtained the position of professor of theory at the Vienna Music

Academy (Hochschule für Musik) and later served as its rector. He also was an adviser to the Turkish government in laying the foundations of a conservatory in Ankara. Marx's music drew from many sources. He could be called a late romantic impressionist. Although one can hear certain affinities with the music of Debussy, Scriabin, Delius, Ravel, Respighi, Jongen, Richard Strauss, Reger, Korngold, Brahms, Mahler and Bruckner, his sound is nonetheless his own. His **Trio-Phantasy** dates from 1913 and is in five movements. The opening movement, *Schwungvoll, aber nicht zu schnell*, (lilting but not too quick) the dramatic opening subject rises. The second movement, an *Adagietto* recalls the spirit of Beethoven. Next comes a Viennese *Scherzando*, full of tempo changes, with echoes of Johann Strauss's Fledermaus song: *Trink Liebschen, Trink*. The fourth movement, *Intermezzo*, recalls the opening movement. In closing movement, *Tanz-Finale*, many of the themes heard in the earlier movements are reprised but new material is also added. The work can certainly be recommended, even to amateurs who are experienced and of good ability.



**Rudolf Mauersberger** (1889-1971) was trained at the Leipzig Conservatory where he won a prize for his **Piano Trio in c minor**. He pursued a dual career as composer and choral conductor. Most of his works are for choir. His Piano Trio dates from 1914. In four movements, the work begins with a gloomy somewhat ominous *Adagio* introduction. This in turn leads to the main section, a highly dramatic *Presto*. The second movement can be summed up by its tempo marking, *Adagio martiale*. It is a grim funeral dirge. The mood finally lightens with the dance-like *Scherzo* which comes next. It is bright and full of good spirits. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, begins with a gypsy dance flavor. Dark clouds are no longer dominant as good spirits prevail. Once can see why he won prize for the work, it is very well-written with appealing themes. A late Romantic era work which deserves performance but which can be played by amateurs.



**Henryk Melcer** (1869-1928) studied violin and piano with his father, a music teacher in Kalisz before entering the Warsaw Conservatory where he studied piano and composition, the latter with Zygmunt Noskowski, then one of Poland's leading composers and musical figures. He then pursued a career as a piano soloist, composer and teacher, holding posts at conservatories in Helsinki, Lvov, Vienna and finally in Warsaw where he became director

of the Conservatory and also conductor of the Warsaw Philharmonic. His **Piano Trio in g minor** dates from 1894. It won the grand prize in the 1895 Berlin Anton Rubinstein Competition and is a very good work. It opens with a massive *Moderato*, by itself almost long enough to be a short piano trio. It is full of passion and drama. Almost as long is the sweet *Andante con moto* which follows. The third movement, *Vivace*, is a kind of spooky scherzo. The boisterous finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, is full of good spirits and appealing melody. Surely a first class piano trio like this should have made it into the repertoire. It deserves concert performance and is not beyond the scope of experienced amateur players.

I include the name of **Felix Mendelssohn** for the sake of completeness. While No.1 in d minor, Op.49 is featured quite often on concert programs and is quite well-known, surprisingly his Piano Trio No.2 in c minor, Op.65 rarely gets an outing and is relatively unknown by both amateurs and professionals. Though a very different work from the first, it certainly does not deserve the lack of attention it has received.



**Aarre Merikanto** (1893-1958) was born near Helsinki. His father was a professor of music. Merikanto studied with Erkki Melartin at the Helsinki Conservatory, then with Max Reger in Leipzig and Sergei Vakilenko in Moscow. His **Piano Trio in a minor**, which was composed in 1917, the year after Reger's death, was inspired by Max Reger's chamber music, but it is certainly much more approachable than all but Reger's earliest works. Although the work was performed shortly after it was completed and received favorable reviews, Merikanto withdrew it and did not allow it to be performed until the 1930s. This may be because shortly after he composed it, his style changed radically, combining elements of Scriabin and Szymanowski. He probably felt this early work was no longer representative. The manuscript was rediscovered in 1987. It is a fairly substantial work in four movements. The opening movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, is cast in a late romantic style, the melody is very lyrical and the music rises to several dramatic climaxes. The second movement, *Andante*, opens rather hauntingly with the strings playing double-stops over a tinkling piano accompaniment, after which comes the main section which is in the form of a sad romance. Next is a turbulent, pounding *Scherzo, vivace*, full of forward motion, but not without a lyricism. The jovial and triumphant main theme of the finale, *Allegro energico*, begins in a conservative way but soon the modernism which imbues all of the melodic writing of the trio can be heard. This is a very good work, deserving of concert performance.



**Franz Mittler** (1893-1970) was born in Vienna. As a boy he was given violin and piano lessons, the later with the famous pedagogue Theodore Leschitzky. At the Vienna Conservatory, he studied theory with Joseph Labor and composition with Richard Heuberger and Karl Prohaska. Mittler made a name for himself not only as a composer and became one of the most sought after lieder accompanists and made a name for himself as a chamber music pianist, joining forces with such groups as the world famous Rosé String Quartet. Of Jewish extraction, Mittler left Austria for New York in 1938 when the Nazis seized power. In the United States, Mittler enjoyed a varied career, performing chamber music on the radio, teaching, writing for Hollywood and television. He returned to Europe in 1964 and spent his final years teaching at the famed Mozarteum in Salzburg. His chamber music was written during the first half of his life and shows that he had firmly rejected atonalism. Instead, his work takes Brahms as a starting point and builds on it, extending the limits of tonality and combining them with fresh and original ideas. The **Piano Trio in G dates from 1911**. The big opening *Allegro molto appassionato* is framed on a broad tonal canvas. The main theme is leisurely and genial. But very soon, its romantic nature reveals itself, as the music soars to a dramatic climax. The second movement is a

spooky Scherzo. What is unusual is that Mittler uses a military march for this purpose. Powerful, strident chords interrupt the music at crucial times creating a sense of shock. Yet, for all of the grotesquery, the music has an undeniable charm. The languid trio section, with its lovely lyrical theme, makes for an excellent contrast. The following *Andante* presents a gorgeous lover's duet, sung by the strings. The buoyant finale, *Allegro vivace*, begins with a restless, syncopated subject which races along as it quickly builds excitement. It is only with the appearance of the song-like second theme, which provides a brief but slower interlude, that the pace lessens. Good for concert and presenting no technical difficulties can be recommended to amateurs as well.



**Bernhard Molique** (1802-1869) was born in the German city of Nuremberg. After studying with his father, Molique took lessons from Louis Spohr and Pietro Rovelli. After pursuing a career as a touring virtuoso for several years, Molique accepted the position of Music Director to the Royal Court in Stuttgart. He also taught for several years in London at the Royal Academy of Music. As a composer, he was largely self taught. His music shows the influence of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Spohr. Remembered now only for his violin concertos, he wrote a considerable amount of chamber music. He wrote two piano trios. **Piano Trio No.1 in g minor, Op.27** dates from 1845. It was a favorite of the pianist Hans von Bülow who was said to prefer it to those of Schubert. The opening theme to the first movement, *Allegro*, recalls Beethoven's Op.59 No.1, probably no accident a Molique was a life long quartet player. There is a lilting second subject. A catchy Scherzo with trio comes next and is followed by an *Adagio* and a dance-like Rondo for a finale. A good work, but I cannot see how one could prefer it to Schubert. Piano Trio No.2 in F Major, Op.52 came out 13 years later in 1858. It appears to have left little impression and disappeared rather quickly.



**Ernest Moeran** (1894-1950) was born in Heston near London. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to the remote Norfolk Fen Country. As a child he learned to play the violin and piano. He subsequently enrolled at the Royal College of Music and studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford. He fought in World War One and received a severe head injury, with shrapnel embedded too close to the brain for removal. He underwent what would now be considered primitive head surgery which involved the fitting of a metal plate into the skull. Unsurprisingly this was to affect him for the rest of his life. After discharge, in 1920 he continued his studies the Royal College, studying there under John Ireland. Moeran completed the **Piano Trio in D Major** in 1921 but after hearing it performed was not entirely satisfied with it and continued working on it until 1924. It was published the following year. In four movements the music is a blend of French impressionism, English pastoral melody a la John Ireland, his second teacher, with further tinges of Brahmsian effects, no doubt gleaned from his main teacher, Charles Stanford.

Emanuel Moór (1863-1931) was born in the Hungarian town of Kecskemét and studied piano and organ in Budapest, Prague and



Vienna. He enjoyed a career as a pianist, conductor and sought after composer, with many famous instrumentalists such as Casals, Kreisler, and Ysaye, to name but a few, commissioning works from him. He wrote a considerable amount of chamber music and was exceptionally fond of the cello. His Piano Trio in C Major, Op.81 dates from 1909. It is a Brahmsian work, full of magnificent melodies and very effectively executed. The opening Allegro is lyrical and full of atmosphere. The middle movement Largo is serious and deeply felt. The finale, Allegro moderato, is lyrical and full of verve. A good choice for the concert hall but one which can also be recommended to amateurs.



Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) was born in Prague. He was won of the major musical figures of the 19th century, a friend of Beethoven and teacher and friend of Mendelssohn, he was a piano virtuoso of the first order. Mendelssohn selected him to be the first Professor of Piano at his newly formed Leipzig Conservatory. He had been pianist to Prince Albert in England and knew and

was on friendly terms with most major musical personalities of his time, Wagner excepted. His **Piano Trio in c, Op.84** was composed in 1830. Superb and lovely melodies for all 3 voices are found in the opening Allegro con spirito, a huge movement nearly as long as the rest of the trio. There is, as one might expect from a pianist of Moscheles stature, some very fine writing for piano, which must have been characteristic of his technique, but there is also very fine writing for the strings as well. The piano, in contrast to the efforts of so many other piano virtuosos, does not dominate. The lovely Adagio which follows again keeps the parts in balance and while the piano does receive the occasional florid run, it is more in the tradition of Beethoven rather than Mendelssohn. Most original of the four movements is the short but unusual Scherzo alla Scozzese: Presto, leggiero e ben staccato. Scozzese one finds in Beethoven and elsewhere, but they are invariably slow, but here we have a Scottish scherzo! It's very clever and quite effective. In the finale, *Allergretto grazioso*, the piano "escapes" once or twice but no more than in Mendelssohn. While perhaps not as strong as the first three movements, it is nonetheless good albeit perhaps a bit backward-looking toward early Beethoven. All in all, one can see why Schumann was enthusiastic—it was because of the music and not the man. This trio would be a success on stage and could be revived.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** appears here for the sake of completeness. It must be said that his piano trios, except for the last three K.502, 548 and 564 are in the style of Haydn in that the cello part is little more than a double of the piano bass line. And even in the aforementioned last three, the cello is not as well treated as one finds in Beethoven's Op.1 trios.



**Vitezslav Novak** (1870-1949) originally Viktor Novak was born in Kamenice nad Lipou, a small town in Southern Bohemia. He was a leading proponent of Czech nationalism in music in the generation after Dvorak and Smetana. He studied at the Prague Conservatory. It was at this time that he changed his name to Vitezslav to identify more closely

with his Czech identity, as many of his generation did. At the Conservatory, he attended Dvorak's composition class. When Dvorak departed for America in 1892, he had no choice but to study with the ultra-conservative Karel Stecker. Novák, however, was to reject not only Stecker's teaching but also to a certain extent, the influence of Dvorak. By 1900, his compositions began to show the influence of the new modernist movement. He chose to explore Moravian and Slovakian folk melody, both of which were then regarded as culturally backward by the cosmopolitans of Prague. He also developed an interest in what would come to be called musical impressionism. It was thought that he had borrowed from Debussy but Novak categorically denied these claims, stating in no uncertain terms that he had arrived at similar techniques on his own. These included forays into bitonality and non-functional, parallel harmony. Rather surprisingly, Novák was to become influenced by the music of Richard Strauss. Despite his move to modernity, however, his music retained at least a partial allegiance to the late-Romantic style until his death. His earliest work to receive an opus number was his **Piano Trio No.1 in g minor, Op.1** which dates from 1892. It predates his interest in Slavonic folk melody and the writing is in the traditional Central European romantic style. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, begins in a dark and brooding mood. There is a sense of yearning as well as impending storm clouds. But the second theme, given out by the cello, expresses hope. The sunny second movement, *Allegro giusto*, is a relaxed scherzo. The Trio's center of gravity is clearly its slow movement, *Andante sostenuto e mesto*, which begins in a quiet and reflective mood. Although it is marked *mesto*, it is not particularly sad. The highly romantic middle section, *doppio movimento*, with its beautiful melodic writing rises to a brief dramatic climax before the music once again becomes more reflective. The finale, *Allegro non troppo*, begins with powerful and triumphant introduction brought forth by the piano. The second theme, is softer and more lyrical. **Piano Trio No.2, Quasi una Ballata Op.27**, was written at a time (1902) when his allegiance was torn between two different musical camps. He was still attracted to the use of folk melody as was advocated by the older and more conservative generation of Czech composers such as Dvorak, but he was also attracted to the tonal modernism which was emerging from fin de siècle Europe. This conflict caused him considerable anguish and he was later to write that in many ways, the trio was autobiographical. Although the trio is written in one movement, hence a ballad, it nonetheless follows traditional classical structure in that it has four succinct episodes or sections. It begins with an introductory *Andante tragico*, (example above) full of pessimism and though tonally advanced for the time, there are still traces, mostly rhythmical, of Moravian folk songs. The *Andante* is followed by an *Allegro* which has a heroic theme for its main subject but it too is tinged with a sense of the tragic. (example on right) Next comes a sarcastic scherzo, *Allegro burlesco*. In the fourth section, the *Andante tragico* is reprised, this time followed by a very dramatic *Allegro* which leads to a somber and funereal coda. Both of these trios deserve to be heard in concert and can should be investigated by amateurs as they present no real technical problems.

**Max d'Ollone** (1875-1959) was born in the French town of Besançon and studied composition at the Paris Conservatory with Jules Massenet, winning the prestigious Prix d'Rome. He then pursued a career as a composer, conductor and teacher and eventually served as a professor at the Paris Conservatory. Most of his works are for the stage although he did not entirely ignore



chamber music, composing this piano trio, a string quartet and some instrumental works. The **Piano Trio in a minor** dates from 1920. The structure is entirely conventional and his use of cyclical form, of which the French, since the time of Cesar Franck were so fond, can be heard throughout. It is the main theme from the first movement, *Allegro ma non troppo e ben deciso*, which reappears in each of the succeeding

movements, but it is dressed up in such a way as to be virtually unrecognizable. This *Allegro* is characterized by its distinctive rhythmic drive. The second movement, *Adagio*, is somewhat melancholy with long-lined melodies given a subtle accompaniment which is based on the main theme from the first movement. Next comes a nervous *Scherzo*. The exciting finale, a *Presto*, bursts out of the starting gate with tremendous energy and forward momentum which is kept up from start to finish. This trio certainly belongs in the concert hall where it will be welcomed by audiences for its freshness and originality. It should also be of interest to experienced amateurs.



**Norman O'Neill** (1875-1934) was born in London. He studied first with the British composer Arthur Somervell. At the suggestion of Joseph Joachim, he then went to the Frankfurt Conservatory where he studied with Iwan Knorr. He became friendly with four other British students then studying with Knorr—Percy Grainger, Roger Quilter, Balfour Gardiner and Cyril Scott. Together, they became known as

the Frankfurt Gang. Upon returning to London, he primarily wrote for the theater and became quite well-known for his scores. But he also wrote for the ballet, and penned several works for orchestra, chamber ensemble and instrumental groupings. His **Piano Trio in One Movement** dates from 1909 and was dedicated to Sir Arthur Somervell, his first teacher. It begins with an *Andante* introduction, with the violin muted to the cello's pizzicato. This leads to an energetic *Allegro con fuoco*, the first main section. It is jaunty and quite rhythmic. After a few *Andante* interruptions, the central section of the trio, *Allegro scherzando*, emerges. Here, the shifting tonality is characteristic of French and American developments of the time. The finale is a reprise of the opening *Allegro con fuoco*. An excellent work both for concert and home. He also wrote a set *Variations on a the theme Polly Oliver*.



There is probably no composer more than **George Onslow** (1784-1853) who deserves to be included among the greats, at least as far as chamber music goes. Nearly all of his 36 string quartets and 34 string quintets are of the first order. That Schumann and Mendelssohn ranked him alongside of Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven says it all. When it comes to his ten piano trios, the case is less clear. Not all of

them can be called works of the first order. I will discuss those most deserving of revival. In 1807, he composed a set of three trios, his *Opus 3*. **Piano Trio No.2 in C Major, Op.3 No.2**, was the second of the set. Its quality is indicative of Onslow's native talent. Mozart's trios serve as Onslow's model. The charming opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, might well have been written by Mozart except that the string-writing, especially for

the cello, is better. The piano part does not dominate, which is somewhat surprising since these trios were dedicated to the piano virtuoso Jan Dussek. The Mozartean *Andante non troppo lento* is exquisitely conceived. Even as early as 1807, Onslow's Menuettos were beginning to sound like scherzos. This one, however, leans more toward the classical minuet. The *Finale* concludes in an early Beethovenian vein, which in itself is extraordinary, since Beethoven's early period was only then just ending. This is a fine early work. **Onslow's Piano Trio No.3 in e minor, Op.3 No.3** Critics were impressed and the trios became quite popular and went through several editions. The opening movement, *Vivace*, begins with a very original introduction with the violin and cello alone in unison presenting a remarkable theme, dark and foreboding. The movement proceeds with tremendous forward energy and excitement. The *Andante grazioso* which follows is calm and quite lyrical, but dramatic episodes from time to time break through to disturb the idyll. The third movement is marked *Minuetto*, however, it is much closer to a scherzo in mood and tempo. A fine contrasting trio is provided. The finale, *Allegro agitato*, with its compelling themes which alternate between reckless breakneck subjects and Schubertian loveliness cap off this fine work. Onslow's **Piano Trio No.4 in e minor, Op.14 No.1** is the first of another set of three which appeared in 1818. It, too was quite popular and for a time entered the standard repertoire. The work opens with an *Allegro* with a dramatic dialogue between the first violin and cello, which immediately captivates the listener. The dramatic effect is heightened by the fact that the melody rises in the violin and then plunges in the answering cello part. This movement is an excellent example of one of the individualistic characteristics which marks Onslow's quartet music—it is a perfect fusion of operatic drama and melody with chamber music style. In the following *Andante Grazioso*, the lovely opening theme is given to the cello in its tenor register, A long passage in the violin creates a gauze-like filigree while still remaining within the bounds of chamber music. The *Minuetto Presto*, in actuality a scherzo, is of the type of which Onslow always excelled, it is a pounding, propulsive Beethovenian affair. A stately trio section makes a wonderful contrast. The finale, *Allegretto*, is a big movement. The first theme has an Italian vocal quality to it. The ingenious second theme, passed from voice to voice each time modulated to increase tension, is full of bravado in a French military fashion.

**Piano Trio No.7 in d minor, Op.20** was composed in 1822 and it, too, was popular, especially in Germany, where it remained in the repertoire well into the last part of the 19th century. An example of his emerging mature style, its opening *Allegro* begins in a bombastic and florid fashion. The main theme is pretty, but fussy, however, an exciting moto-perpetuo section is quite riveting. The second movement, a *Thema con variazione*, is not bad but not out of the ordinary. Next comes a *Minuetto, Presto*. It is not a minuet but a whirling and exciting scherzo with a finely contrasting trio. The main theme to the finale, *Allegro*, is attractive with a good, if somewhat involved development. Excitement is maintained throughout. **Piano Trio No.8 in c minor, Op.26** was written in 1824 at a time when Onslow's mature style was emerging. This trio, along with several others he composed, enjoyed considerable popularity during the 19th century and demand was such that it received a second edition. The first subject of the opening movement, *Allegro espressivo*, is lyrical and dreamily poetic. The piano writing recalls Schubert. The second subject is a jaunty, almost march-like melody. A lengthy introduction precedes the lovely and highly romantic main theme of

the Adagio which comes next. The music is quite deliberate and yet there is a very delicate exquisiteness to it. A complimentary second theme conveys a sense of yearning. The third movement, though marked Menuetto, is music which could never be danced to—it is a rather fleet and somewhat spooky scherzo, full of forward motion. It is coupled with a bright and marvelously contrasting trio with a beautiful long-lined theme. The finale, Allegro agitato, bursts forth with an introduction of dramatic downward plunging chromatic passages which lead to a theme which is both lyrical but also with considerable motion. It must be admitted that the last two movements are very good, while the first two are considerably weaker. **Piano Trio No.9 in G Major, Op.27** also dates from 1824. It begins as if it were salon music. The second movement, *Andante cantabile*, continues on in this vein. A *Menuetto*, which is a scherzo dominated by the piano, is quite good. The genial last movement, again simply marked *Finale*, returns to the style of the earlier movements. **Piano Trio No.10 in F Major, Op.83** dates from the early 1850's, not long before his death and is a fine work deserving to be heard in concert. The opening *Allegro pathetic* is full of drama and excitement. It sounds almost Beethovenian. A lengthy *Adagio grandioso* begins in a calm, reflective manner. There is a true sense of the valedictory. Onslow did not write a better slow movement for piano trio. A stunning and thrilling *Scherzo* comes next. The use of pizzicato in the strings is quite telling. The syncopated *Finale* races forward with determination. Again it is almost Beethovenian but with Onslow's highly effective use of chromaticism.



**George Alexander Osborne** (1806-1893) was born in Irish city of Limerick. His first music lessons were with his father, the cathedral organist. Subsequently, he went to Paris where he studied piano with Johann Pixis and Friedrich Kalkbrenner, one of the greatest virtuosos of the first decades of the 19 century. He also studied composition with Joseph Fetis. He became an

important soloist in his own right, but also pursued a career as a composer. After living in Paris for a number of years, he returned to London in the 1840's and spent the rest of his life there where for many years he was a leading personality in that city's musical life. He served as both a director of the London Philharmonic and the Royal Academy of Music and for many years hosted his own series of concerts at which he performed his compositions. Osborn composed in most genres but was mostly known for his solo pieces for piano. His **Piano Trio in G Major, Op.52** was composed and published in the 1840's. It was his most popular chamber music work and his friend Hector Berlioz described the work as "lofty in style and special in design." The trio not only shows the influence of Schubert and Mendelssohn but also from the Italian operas that were then popular in Paris. The opening Moderato has an abundance of lyrical themes as well as some exciting passage work. A rambunctious and Scherzo, which is dominated by its rhythm, follows. The third movement, Adagio, is a Mendelssohnian Song Without Words and one also hears echoes of Rossini and Bellini. The exciting finale, an Allegro, has for its main theme a syncopated gypsy melody and is full of dramatic effects.

**Horatio Parker** (1863-1919) was born in Auburndale, Massachusetts. He first studied composition with George Chadwick at the New England Conservatory in Boston and subsequently with Josef Rheinberger at the Bavarian Royal Conservatory in Mu-



nich. Like other American composers working at this time, he was primarily influenced by the major German Romantic composers. He enjoyed a long career as a teacher, first at the National Conservatory in New York under Dvorak's directorship and subsequently as a Professor and Dean of the Yale Music School. He wrote in most genres but today is primarily

remembered for his vocal compositions. Composed in 1904, the **Suite for Piano Trio in A Major, Op.35** clearly harks back to that popular in the baroque era as it follows the format of a Bach dance suite, but its style is that of the romantic era and not the baroque. The opening movement, Prelude, in the piano part, with its arpeggios, resembles a Bach prelude, but the long-lined, yearning string melodies are something not found in Bach. The second movement, Tempo di Menuetto, in structure resembles the formal minuet, but the melody and rhythm are clearly those of a romantic waltz. A slow movement, entitled Romance, follows. The main section is lush and yearning but a the contrasting middle section is lighter and almost playful. The finale, an Allegro, though not so marked, is clearly a march dominated by its dotted rhythms. The middle section is faster and more lyrical.



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

in commerce. From 1870 to 1877 he worked in the insurance industry, but he continued his musical studies, first with from William Sterndale Bennett, and later with the pianist Edward Dannreuther when Brahms proved to be unavailable. After leaving the insurance industry, Parry became a full-time musician and during the last decades of the 19th century was widely regarded as England's finest composer. In the 1890s he became director of the Royal College of Music and was appointed Professor of Music at Oxford. He helped establish classical music at the centre of English cultural life. As head of the Royal College of Music, his pupils included Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge and John Ireland. His music shows the influence of Bach and Brahms, His **Piano Trio No.1 in e minor** was completed in 1878 and performed to acclaim. The trio shows the hand of a bold and eager mind. The first movement, Allegro appassionato and the Scherzo, molto vivace, display great ingenuity and originality in their handling of form and tonality. Both movements are brimming with attractive, highly appealing melody. The emotional heart of the trio can be found in the third movement, Adagio ma non troppo. Parry's gift for lyrical composition is of the first order. The finale, Allegro giocoso, is an energetic rondo, full of exhilarating melodies and elan. This work is of the first rank and if it had been composed by a German or Austrian it would have entered the concert repertoire. **Piano Trio No.2 in b minor** dates from the mid 1880's. The opening movement, Maestoso--Allegro con fuoco, begins with an slow, stately introduction which is seamlessly incorporated into the turbulent and passionate first theme of the Allegro. The whole movement is permeated with intense rhythmical energy. A highly lyrical slow movement, Lento, follows. Then comes a buoyant scherzo, Allegro vivace, with a melodious trio. The finale, Maestoso--Allegro con moto,

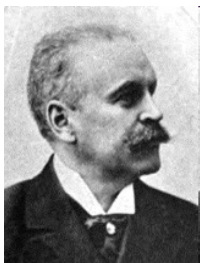


begins with an introduction which recalls the first movement. The main theme of the Allegro (where our sound-bite begins) is Brahmsian in nature, but melodies from each of the preceding movements make brief appearances in altered forms. Also a fine work.



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

is considered one of Croatia's most important 20th century composers and many of her works, during her lifetime, enjoyed considerable success and were performed throughout Germany, Austria, Hungary and the rest of the Habsburg Empire. The **Piano Trio in C Major, Op.29**, finished in 1910, is actually her second piano trio. Her first effort composed eight years before is not, as is this trio, representative of her mature style as a composer. The opening movement, Allegro con moto, is characterized by its two very attractive and lyrical, flowing themes which are punctuated by a swinging rhythmic development and bridge passages between. A very original Scherzo comes next. Brilliantly conceived, its main theme is playful and its lopsided rhythm attracts attention. Pizzicato is also used to telling effect. The rather more transparent and lyrical trio section provides a fine contrast. A rather extraordinary slow movement, Lento, follows. The music is essentially quite lyrical but constant tempo and key changes create a wide panoply of moods and feelings. The finale, Allegro risoluto, is an energetic affair with several suspenseful and exciting climaxes. This is a first rate late romantic work mostly likely ignored because she was a woman composer.



**Richard Perner** (1854-1911) was born in the Austrian city of Graz. He studied composition in Vienna with several teachers, including Brahms, whose influence can often be felt in his music. His career was divided between composing, conducting and teaching. He served as director of the Rotterdam Conservatory and later the Vienna Conservatory as well as the Wiener Singverein (Vienna Choral Society) and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. He wrote in most genres and his chamber music, in particular, was held in high regard. His **Serenade for Piano Trio, Op.17** dates from 1889. The opening movement, Allegretto, sets the mood with its march-like main subject which leads to a more lyrical serenade theme. One might call the second movement 'Night Music' or a nocturno, a brooding Allegro moderato e patetico. The work concludes with a Schumannesque Vivace. Very well written for all instruments. It deserves to be heard in concert and can be warmly recommended to amateurs as it presents no special technical problems and plays quite easily.



**Georges Pfeiffer** (1835-1908) was born in Paris. His mother was a pianist and student of the famous virtuoso Friedrich Kalkbrenner. His father was a piano maker and ran the Pleyel piano store in Paris. After studying at the Paris Conservatory, Pfeiffer pursued a career as a performer and composer. As a performer, he was particularly active in the realm of

chamber music serving as pianist for several French chamber music societies. He composed two piano trios, two piano quartets, a piano quintet and some instrumental sonatas. His **Piano Trio No.1, Op.14** dates from 1862. It is an uneven work. The two inner movements, an Andante cantabile and Scherzo, are particularly appealing, but the outer movements although they sound all right lack compelling themes and are rather threadbare. His **Piano Trio No.2 in D Major, Op.103** is another matter. Dating from 1885, the opening Allegro moderato has a searching melody for its main theme. Tension is slowly built to dramatic climax after which a slinky march-like melody follows. The second movement is a bright, airy, fluttering Scherzo. The trio section is a simple, but attractive country dance. The cello gives forth the lovely and lyrical main theme of the Largo which follows. It is valedictory and reflective, almost haunting. The finale, Allegro ma non troppo, is busy and lilting, conveying the bustle and charm of late 19th century Paris. A good work deserving of performance.



**Hans Pfitzner** (1869-1949) was born in Moscow of German parents. His father was a professional violinist and he received violin lessons from his father. Later he studied piano and composition at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt. He enjoyed a long career as a conductor and teacher. His music was held in high regard by contemporaries such as Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler. Pfitzner was an

avowed opponent of the Second Vienna School with its serialism and atonal music. Instead, he sought new paths for traditional tonality. He composed in nearly every genre and is best known for his operas. He did not ignore chamber music, writing a number of string quartets, two piano trios and a piano quintet. His first piano trio dates from 1886 when he was 17 and is derivative. His **Piano Trio No.2 in F Major, Op.8** was composed during 1895-96 and was published in 1898. Though not particularly easy, it is not beyond the reach of accomplished amateur players. Interestingly, a side theme from the first movement (a waltz from, at the time, Puccini's little known opera La Boheme) is used throughout all four movements of the trio as a binder link, that is to say a leitmotiv. The first movement, Kräftig, feurig, nicht zu schnell (powerful, fiery, not too quick), is so stormy and turbulent that one barely notices the aforementioned side theme. In the slow second movement, Langsam, Pfitzner, harks back to the music of the past for his source of inspiration. This leitmotiv is least recognizable in the third movement, Mässig schnell, etwas frei im Vortrag (moderately quick, but not in strict time), which is a cross between a humorous scherzo and a capriccio. The finale begins Rasch und Wild (fast and wild) but soon the leitmotiv appears and leads to a slow fugue. Several dramatic episodes follow wherein the leitmotiv is clearly recognizable. As the trio reaches its stormy conclusion, the composer shifts into an extensive slow and effective coda. This a very good late Romantic work.



**Gabriel Pierné** (1863-1937) was born in the French city of Metz. His parents were musicians and he was eventually sent to study at the Paris Conservatoire, where his teachers included César Franck and Jules Massenet. A gifted and highly talented student, he won several prizes, including performance awards in piano and organ and composition awards in counterpoint and fugue. He also won the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1882. He enjoyed a successful career as an organist as well as a conductor at the Ballets

Russes in Paris. He was also a prolific composer who left several works in most genres. Pierre's **Op.45 Piano Trio** dates from 1922 and show the influence of his teacher Cesar Franck. This is a work which is beyond the ability of all but the best amateur players. The massive opening movement, *Agité*, is quite complicated both rhythmically and thematically. It is emotionally charged and agitated. It could serve as a stand alone trio by itself. There are many sections which are connected and interrelated in ways that are not always apparent, especially on first hearing. The second movement, *Allegretto scherzando*, is lively and dance-like, again, the rhythm is unorthodox. Next comes *Modérément lent*, which begins with a dreary introduction. It is followed by several variations. During a lengthy development themes from the first movement appear and finally the work concludes with an upbeat dance section.

**Ignaz Pleyel** (1757-1831) Haydn's most celebrated student, a man whom Mozart predicted would be the next Haydn, did write a considerable amount of chamber music including some 30 piano trios. His opus numbers are unreliable due to the fact that different publishers gave them different numbers, something which happened to Boccherini and others who were prolific. They are rather similar to those of Haydn, the cello is perhaps a little better treated, but in many cases the works lose nothing by eliminating the string parts.



**Walter Rabl** (1873-1940), was born in Vienna. He studied at the Vienna, Prague and Salzburg conservatories with Karl Navratil and Guido Adler. His composing career was rather short and most of what he wrote was either for voice or the opera. He made his name as a conductor and only has three chamber works to his credit, this set of fantasy pieces for piano trio, a quartet for violin, clarinet, cello and piano which was awarded a prize by Brahms in a competition and a violin sonata. His **Fantasy Pieces for Piano Trio, Op.1** appeared in 1897. These consist of eight very effective works which deserve to be heard in concert and will also be welcomed by amateurs. No.1 is a deeply felt *Adagio molto*. No.2, *Allegro vivace* is a rustic Austrian peasant dance. No.3, *Allegro con spirito* pleases by virtue of its simple humor, Especially fine is No.4, a delicate *Adagio con espressione* which is in the form of a canon. No.5, *Allegro con impeto*, is energetic and stormy while No.7, a short atmospheric *Largo*, serves as a serious introduction to the final piece No.8, a lilting *Allegro vivace*.



Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943) is well-known both for having been a famous piano virtuoso and for having composed several important piano concertos as well as other works for orchestra. Few, however, know that he wrote chamber music. **Piano Trio No.1 in g minor** (it has no opus number) was composed during the first part of 1892 and performed shortly thereafter. Though it circulated in manuscript for several years, it had to wait until 1947 for publication. It shares the same subtitle, *Élégiaque*, as his **Piano Trio No.2 in f minor, Op.9** which was composed the next year. What is interesting about both of these trios is that although they are early works, they show a mastery of technique and an uncanny similarity to his later compositions. The work is in three movements. From the opening notes of the massive *Moderato*, one is aware of a deep sadness which is accentuated by the re-

peated funereal accompaniment of the strings in the piano. The music, though highly passionate, moves as a very deliberate, almost plodding pace. The second movement, *Andante*, quasi *variazione*, is also written on a grand scale. The piano alone announces the theme which is followed by eight substantial variations. The finale, *Allegro risoluto*, the piano states the very Tchaikovskian theme during a long opening solo. It is rough and punctuated by violent outbursts of emotion. The sense of pathos and passion is further heightened when the strings join in.



**Robert Radecke** (1830-1911) was born in the Silesian town of Dittmendorf. He studied at the Leipzig Conservatory shortly after Mendelssohn opened it—composition with Moritz Hauptmann, piano with Ignaz Moscheles and violin with Ferdinand David. He pursued a career as a teacher, conductor and chamber music player in a string quartet, Surprisingly, he only wrote two chamber music works, both piano trios. **Piano Trio No.1 in a flat Major, Op.30** was published in 1865 but may appear to have been composed several years before, shortly after he left the Conservatory. It is a bright and sunny work in four movements showing the influence of Mendelssohn and Schumann.



**Joachim Raff** (1822-1882) was born in the small town of Laachen not far from Zurich. His father, a school teacher and an organist, was not Swiss but from Württemberg. He had fled to Switzerland during the Napoleonic wars. The only real musical education Raff received was from his father. Early on it became clear that he had an extraordinary talent and at a young age was an accomplished pianist and violinist as well as an organist. Today, few have heard of him, but if you had, say between 1875 and 1910, consulted any of the many books and articles that were devoted to discussing the music of the then contemporary composers, you would have found Raff's name always mentioned along with those of Liszt, Brahms and Wagner as one of Germany's leading composers. His music was compared favorably with that of Mendelssohn, Schumann and Tchaikovsky and, if concert programs are anything to go by, performed just as often. Yet, by 1920, his music had all but disappeared from the concert stage and it would only be another decade before his name faded away altogether. Why is beyond the scope of this guide. Raff wrote five piano trios, four of which are extant. The first was composed during the late 1840's and was either destroyed or lost. His first surviving and published work in this genre, **Piano Trio No.1 in c minor, Op.102**, dates from 1861. It was premiered to considerable acclaim and almost immediately became regarded as a masterwork. Nearly seventy years later, in his 1934 *Handbuch für Klaviertriospieler* (Handbook for Piano Trio Players), the famous chamber music critic and scholar Wilhelm Altmann warmly recommended it, writing that it still deserved to be heard in concert and could hold its own against any of the other of the major works of this genre. The big first movement is marked *Rasch* (quick) but it does not actually begin this way. Rather, there is a masterful, slow introduction which only gradually ratchets the tempo up to speed as it builds dramatic tension. This introduction is a very fine example of Raff's abundant compositional skill. The piano opens the work in a Lisztian fashion, dramatic and dignified. Twice, the strings reply with a somewhat pleading answer. Then out of this the piano

takes over with a long, restless eighth note passage, entirely in its bass register. The tension becomes palpable. At last, the heavily accented first theme breaks forth. It has a martial quality to it and, although arresting, it is not particularly melodic. As it hurls forward with considerable motion, Raff adds a heroic touch to it. Interestingly, the first part of the development section shows a Schubertian lyricism which is absent from the theme itself. In the second theme, we hear the lyricism which was hinted at during the development section. Though not particularly sad, it has a valedictory quality to it. The second movement, *Sehr Rasch* (very quick), is a scherzo, which begins softly as a fugue with the violin beginning, then the cello and the piano. The theme is fleet with a tinge of the macabre. The very beautiful theme from the trio section is especially memorable. The third movement, *Mässig langsam* (moderately slow), is particularly fine, peaceful, poetic and inspired with uncommonly fine sonorities. The stirring finale, *Rasch bewegt*, (quick moving), is equally fine, replete with three memorable and tuneful themes. The movement, which is clearly a rondo, opens with an attractive theme, in the cello, full of yearning. The second theme is a Hungarian-melody which later in the minor sounds rather Slavic. Without question this trio belongs in the repertoire and is as good as anything written from this period.

**Piano Trio No.2 in G Major, Op.112** was composed two years after his first. Like those of the First Trio, the Second's tempi and other markings are in German, a practice Raff was to terminate as he began to distance himself from the New German School of Liszt. The title to the opening movement, *Rasch, froh bewegt* (quick, lively & joyful) in fact aptly describes the main theme which is presented by the violin. The second subject is gentler and lyrical. Next comes a scherzo marked *Sehr Rasch* (very quick). In the minor, it is a somewhat lopsided but lilting dance/ The lyrical but brief middle section consists entirely of a canon in which the violin leads and the cello follows while the piano provides the harmonic underpinning. The magnificent third movement, *Mässig langsam* (moderately slow), is undoubtedly the trio's center of gravity. Spacious and calm, this music might well serve as a eulogy. It is solemn and dignified with the aura of Schubert's late piano sonatas to it. The development, primarily entrusted to the strings, adds a mildly pleading air to this mix. Then a lengthy, turbulent and roiling middle section explodes forth. First, there is just unrest, but quickly Raff heightens the tension until there is a powerful sense of the melodramatic. The rondo finale, *Rasch, durchaus belebt* (Quick, lively throughout) begins with a catchy theme. Its development takes the form of a fugue. In the middle section, the piano is given a lively and peculiarly familiar Chinese interlude. Tchaikovsky borrowed it for use in his Nutcracker Suite. The coda follows an exciting stretto section and leaves nothing to be desired. It must be admitted that this movement makes considerable technical demands on all of the players, though it is certainly not beyond the scope of good amateurs. This is a fine trio, well worth concert performance.

Some seven years passed before Raff returned to the genre of the piano trio again. He composed his **Piano Trio No.3 in a minor, Op.155**, in 1870. In the opening movement, marked *Quasi a capriccio, Allegro agitato*, Raff takes his time before stating the main theme. He begins in a highly unorthodox fashion, not with an introduction or with something which at least sounds like an introduction, but with music which appears as if it is beginning in mid-phrase. The music does not really seem to move forward but, nonetheless, suspense is built up and eventually an agitated and passionate main theme. Surprisingly, we find that this unusual be-

ginning, which is treated as a caprice, is the kernel of the main theme. But then, as the movement progresses, we hear that Raff has virtually used every snippet of the caprice, each for a different and an important part of the material in the *Allegro*. This is, in my opinion, an absolutely outstanding movement, one of the finest in the romantic literature. It is highly creative, and, at one and the same time, full of passion and drama, but also filled with lovely, lyrical melodies, ingeniously juxtaposed between the fiery counter-melodies. Beyond this, it has excellent part-writing and a thrilling coda. As in his earlier trios, Raff places a scherzo, although he does not call it such, in the second position. This *Allegro assai* can almost be called an interlude, as it is rather short, but perfect in every way. Halloween Music is the phrase which best describes the main theme. It is spooky and conjures up images of goblins and ghosts. Raff was an absolute master of the mercurial and fleet-footed scherzo. In this, he has few if any equals and no superiors. This *Allegro assai* is a good example why. The third movement, *Adagietto*, is a theme and set of several variations. The main theme is solemn but not tragic. The magnificent finale, *Larghetto, Allegro*, begins with a slow, somewhat sad introduction. Unlike the opening movement, here we have a more traditional introduction, whose purpose is to build suspense. Several themes including Turkish sounding melody of the sort one finds in Mozart's 5th violin concerto. As might be expected, he concludes with a suitably exciting coda. To sum up, this work, along with his First Piano Trio, belongs in the repertoire and is the equal to any of the other piano trios from this era.

**Piano Trio No.4 in D Major, Op.158** was composed a few months after the Third Trio. The first movement, *Allegro*, begins with a sparking series of 16th note triplets lightly played in the piano whilst the cello introduces the noble main theme in a low registers. The second theme is closely related to the development and seamlessly evolves from it. This, unfortunately, creates a sense of monotony. The piano part is very difficult in that it has tremendously long, fast passages which require a secure technique and a very light touch. Again, the second movement, *Allegro assai*, is a scherzo though not so marked. The first theme is a lugubrious dance, lumbering along in the strings and a little on the heavy side. The piano is used quite nicely to compliment what is going on. The second theme is lyrical and quite romantic. This is a good but not a great scherzo. It does not, in my opinion, rise to the high level of excellence that one generally finds in Raff's scherzi. The impressive slow movement, *Andante quasi Larghetto*, begins with a fine melody first sung by the cello. Raff creates a magical similar to that which Mendelssohn achieves in some of his *Songs Without Words*. The finale, *Allegro*, begins with a brusque and modern (for that time) sounding theme. It is restless and driving, with some similarity to a tarantella. The second theme is frequently interrupted by the piano, loudly and violently playing the signature chords from the opening theme. This creates a very restless mood. Eventually, these interruptions become rather annoying since they are always played *ff*. The coda is short but adequate. Of Raff's four piano trios, to my mind, the Fourth is the weakest.



**François Rasse** (1873-1955) was born in the Belgian town of Helchin. He attended the Brussels Conservatory where he studied violin with Ysaÿe. He pursued a dual career as a conductor, leading such orchestras as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Monnaie in Brussels as well as the orchestra in Toulouse. He eventually became a professor at the Brussels Conser-

vatory and served as Director of the Liege Conservatory. He composed in most genres. François Rasse's **Piano Trio in b minor** was composed in 1898 and dedicated to his fellow countryman and teacher, the famous violinist Eugene Ysaÿe. The work begins with a brief Moderato introduction which leads to the main section, Allegro appassionato. It is characterized by two very different themes. The first is an elegant melody introduced by the strings, the end to which is rather surprising, an abrupt, pounding rhythmic figure which is unsettling. The second subject is calmer and serene. Both themes of the second movement, Andante, are melancholy and heavy-hearted. In the finale, Interlude et final, Rasse seamlessly melds new material with the subjects from the two preceding movements.



**Maurice Ravel** (1875-1937) was born in the French Basque town of Ciboure. He studied at the Paris Conservatory and though he did not graduate became one of the 20th century's better known composers, if only for a few orchestral pieces. His **Piano Trio in a minor** dates from 1915. Despite the haste and sense of concern attendant upon its creation, the Trio remains an objective, perfectly-shaped composition. The first movement, marked *Moderato*, opens with a piano motive described by Ravel himself as "*Basque in color*." This distinctive figure unifies the sonata-form movement by returning at the end of the exposition as an ostinato in bass octaves on the keyboard.

Ravel no doubt named the next movement Pantoum after the Malayan declamation sung to the accompaniment of instruments rather than the Malayan verse form made popular by Victor Hugo. The *Assez vif tempo* and the structure of the movement resemble a scherzo and trio. The outer scherzo sections employ three themes. The first, consisting of staccato repeated notes and biting pizzicatos, acts as a refrain within the scherzo and recurs once in the trio. The second theme is a bouncy string melody accompanied by piano arpeggios, while the third consists of piano triplets and chords in the bass with string octaves accompanying. In the stately *Passacaille*, Ravel borrows the Baroque passacaglia technique of continuously varying an ostinato melody initiated in the bass. The movement begins and ends as the three instruments successively provide clear, linear renditions of the noble theme. The middle section encompasses melodic and rhythmic variations of the ostinato, interrupted by incisive cadences with rich piano harmonies. After the dignity of the third movement, the *Andante* finale that immediately follows becomes a showpiece of instrumental color. The expository material commences with violin arpeggios in harmonics and double tremolos in the cello that accompany the two principal piano themes of octaves and open fifths. Though infrequently heard outside of France, it generally regarded as one of the great piano trios of the early 20th century.



**Napoléon-Henri Reber** (1807-1880), was no doubt given his first name as the year of his birth coincided with the time when Bonaparte was at the height of his power and popularity. But the composer, who was born in the Alsatian town of Mulhouse, for most of his life went by Henri Reber. He studied composition with Anton Reicha at the Paris Conservatory and thereafter pursued a career with considerable success as a composer, eventually becoming a Professor of Composition at

the Paris Conservatory and a member of Academie Francaise. Among his many students number Benjamin Godard, Jules Massenet, Pablo de Sarasate, and Wladislav Zelinski. He composed seven piano trios which span the years from 1837 to 1880. While the piano writing often takes into account that such performers as Chopin, Liszt, Moscheles and other great pianists often were the performers of his trios, the part-writing is entirely balanced and the piano is never allowed to dominate but remains an equal partner. I am not familiar with his first two trios. **Piano Trio No.3 in g minor, Op.16** dates from 1862. The opening movement is a powerful and turbulent Allegro, quite riveting. The middle movement, Adagio cantabile, is a delicate, lovely song without words. The finale, also an Allegro, is a fleet and exciting dance. An excellent work deserving performance and in no way beyond amateurs with a good pianist. **Piano Trio No.4, Op.25** came two years later in 1864. Like No.3 it is in three movements and was subtitled Trio Serenade. The opening Allegro is genial but not compelling. The middle movement, though marked Allegretto, is in actuality slow. It is sad and subdued., but again, it does not grab one like No.3. Next comes a Scherzo in which the piano is given several substantial florid passages. The finale begins with a lengthy, Beethovenian Andante introduction which lead to a rather pedantic Allegro. If this were all he wrote, he would deserve to be forgotten. **Piano Trio No.5 in C Major, Op.30** was completed in 1872. The opening Allegro is adequate but the thematic material is not particularly memorable. The Andante sostenuto which follows is an improvement in this respect with its sad, pleading main theme. The finale, Allegro molto, is pleasant but hardly captivating. **Piano Trio No.6 in E Major, Op.34** came four years later in 1876. I suppose you could say that it provides a sound picture of the style appreciated during the Second Empire and Third Republic by the French public and musicians. The music has a timeless dimension, clearly of the mid-romantic era, but with its roots clearly traceable to the late 18th century. Hence one can hear echoes of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn, while at the same time the influence of such contemporaries as Berlioz with its typical use of French coloration. The opening movement, Allegro ma non troppo, opens with a quiet but pregnant introduction which blends seamlessly into the stately main theme which bears march-like characteristics. It surprisingly dies away and leads to a tender episode alternately sung by the strings in air of calm beauty before the march is reintroduced. The second movement, Larghetto ma non troppo, begins with a lovely duet, with an undeniably vocal quality, brought forth by the strings over a quiet piano accompaniment. Slowly tension is built which eventually rises to very effective dramatic climaxes. Next comes a short Scherzo. The chromaticism coupled with the racing 16th note passages create an exciting picture. The finale, Allegro con brio, is a combination of Beethovenian thrust with French sensibilities. This is a good, though not great, work, which can be recommended to amateurs. Piano Trio No.7 in a minor, Op.36 was finished in 1880, the year of his death. The main theme of the opening Allegro moderato is powerful well conceived. There is lyricism as well. A stately and effective Adagio comes next. The Scherzo which comes next contrasts long lines in the strings against rapid, rippling passages in the piano. Unfortunately, the melodic material is rather uninteresting. The finale, Allegro non troppo, begins in a highly dramatic fashion and does not disappoint. The florid piano part is, in my opinion, uncalled for and mars, though not fatally, a very good movement.



**Max Reger** (1873-1916) was born in the small Bavarian town of Brand. He began his musical studies at a young age and his talent for composition became clear early on. Reger studied with the famous musicologist Hugo Riemann for nearly five years. By 1907 he was appointed to the prestigious position of Professor of composition at the Leipzig Conservatory. In addition to

this he was widely regarded as one of the best living conductors and organists. In a career that only lasted 20 years, Reger wrote a prodigious amount of music in virtually every genre except opera and the symphony. Chamber music figures prominently within his oeuvre. As noted in an earlier part of this guide, he wrote a trio for violin, viola and piano early on. His only work for standard piano trio is his **Piano Trio in b minor, Op.102** composed in 1908. It is one of his best works. It is quite clear and tonally beautiful. It is not just straight forward on paper, it plays that way as well. His use of harmony is uncommonly witty. The moods of the huge first movement, *Allegro moderato*, are alternately acerbic and passionate. There is something undoubtedly elemental to this music and here Reger's tremendous counterpoint skills are on display. The tonalities of the second movement, *Allegretto*, are quite original and leave a ghostly impression, while the middle section features a lovely, canonic duet between the strings. The magnificent *Largo* which follows is in the Lydian mode and is rich in ideas. The work concludes with a finale, *Allegro con moto*, brimming with appealing melody. The trio belongs in the repertoire and deserves concert performance and should also be of interest to experienced amateurs. It is one of the more original piano trios of the 20th century.



**Anton Reicha**, (1770-1836, Antonin Rejcha in the Czech form) was born in Prague. Orphaned at an early age, he went to Bavaria to live with his uncle, Joseph Reicha a concert cellist and music director. He studied composition, violin, flute, piano and composition while with his uncle. In 1785, they went to Bonn, where Joseph became music director at the electoral court. There, Anton got to

know Beethoven with whom he became friends. He traveled extensively, holding positions in Hamburg, Vienna and Paris, where he eventually settled. By 1810 he was a professor at the Paris Conservatory and became one of the most famous teachers of his time. George Onslow, Louise Farrenc, Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, Cesar Franck and Charles Gounod were among his many students. He also gained fame as a theorist. He was an innovator in many areas. Though perhaps not the inventor of the Wind Quintet, he was the first to popularize it. A prolific composer, he wrote in virtually every genre. Chamber music is a very important part of his oeuvre. He composed at least four piano trios. I am not familiar with his *Sonata for Violin, Cello & Piano, Op.47* which was composed in 1804.. In 1824, he completed six more piano trios, his *Op.101*. These works show that Reicha's conception of a piano trio went beyond that of Mozart or Haydn. He accepted the notion that there was a need for equality between the instruments. He wrote in the forward to the first edition of the *Op.101* trios that it was his goal to achieve a harmonic interaction between the voices. In this respect, they are certainly the equal of Beethoven's trios. The players were instructed not to regard the music as a mere piano score. All if these trios are in four movements. **Op.101 No.1 in E flat Major** begins with a Beethovenian *Lento* introduction which leads to an engaging *Allegro moderato*. The effective

*Minuetto, allegro* which comes next does not sound much like a minuet but a kind of an operatic, scherzo redolent of Rossini. The third movement, *Lento, andante* almost sounds baroque. The finale, *Presto*, especially the piano writing, sounds as if Mozart had composed it. All three voices are nicely served. The introduction to **Op.101 No.2 in d minor** *Allegro non troppo* creates an ominous mood. The dramatic main theme has a sense of urgency. But slowly during the development, the theme slowly brightens and the second theme, first given out by the cello is altogether happier. Though marked *Menuetto Allegro*, the appellation *Menuetto* is rather misleading. This is no minuet but an exciting scherzo.

Against the pounding accompaniment of the piano, the violin sets forth the dramatic first theme. When it is repeated, the mood immediately lightens and heads off in an entirely different direction. The *Andantino* which follows begins with a lengthy piano introduction. (the sound-bite presents on the last few seconds of it). The lovely and delicate main subject which the piano has developed painstakingly is immediately changed with the entrance of the strings. A very unusual and original figure in the piano opens the exciting finale, *Allegro assai*. The strings immediately join in. The bright second theme provides a wonderful contrast. Here is a trio from Beethoven's time that is in its own way on an equal footing *Op.1* trios, although the writing for the strings is more equal than what Beethoven then provided. **Op.101 No.3 in C Major** again uses a *Lento* introduction to begin the trio. It leads to a workmanlike *Allegro*. The second movement, *Minuetto, allegretto*, again, does not sound like a traditional minuet. The invention seems a little forced. A stately *Andante* comes next. The finale, *Allegro assai*, has a catchy main theme which holds one's interest. *Op.101* Nos 1 & 2 are notably strong than No.3. Nos. 4-6 with exception of the equalization of the parts, do not in any way stand out in particular. But the first two show that Reicha did have some original ideas which were fresh and not to be heard elsewhere. No harm would be done by dusting them off and bringing them into the concert hall. And they will give pleasure to amateurs.



**Carl Reinecke** (1824-1910) has been all but forgotten, an unjust fate, to be sure, for a man who excelled in virtually every musical field with which he was involved. As a performer, Reinecke was, during the mid-19th century, reckoned for three decades as one of the finest concert pianists before the public. As a composer, he produced widely respected and often performed works in every genre running the gamut from opera, to orchestral to chamber music. As a conductor, he helped turn the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra into a group with few if any peers. As its director, he helped the Leipzig Conservatory become what was widely regarded as the finest in the world. As a teacher of composition and of piano, he was considered to have few if any equals. Among his many students were Grieg, Bruch, Janacek, Albeniz, Sinding, Svendsen, Reznicek, Delius, Arthur Sullivan, George Chadwick, Ethel Smyth, Felix Weingartner, Karl Muck and Hugo Riemann. In his time, His *Piano Trio in D Major, Op.38* dates from 1853. It is dedicated to Robert Schumann and sounds much like the music of the dedicatee though even less interesting than that of his model. However, in 1880 He composed **Three Easy Trios, Op.159**. As the editors of *The Chamber Music Journal* noted "One must not forget how good these trios sound and how well they are put together. Just because they are relatively easy to play and present no technical problems. These works are perfect for amateur trios planning a

recital and should not be overlooked by professionals who need something pleasing they can perform with perhaps just one rehearsal. These tuneful, Schumannesque works are a valuable addition to the piano trio repertoire." Are they great works. No, but they are quite good especially in view of their aim.



**Carl Gottlieb Reissiger** (1798-1859) was born in the Prussian town of Belzig. He originally attended the famous Thomasschule in Leipzig as his father intended him to be a priest, however, his extraordinary musical talent was recognized and he was encouraged to pursue a musical career. He studied with Antonio Salieri among others. An early opera attracted Carl Maria von Weber's attention and Reissiger went to Dresden, eventually succeeding Weber as Music Director of the Dresden Court Orchestra, a post he held until his death. He became a leading conductor of German opera. Wagner worked under Reissiger for nearly a decade, and Reissiger premiered Wagner's first opera. A prolific composer, as most composers of that time were, he penned works in virtually every genre. His works show the influence of the Viennese masters, in particular Schubert and Beethoven. His piano trios, during his lifetime, were extraordinarily popular, so much so that he composed no less than 27. And his fecundity, made many of his contemporaries jealous and critical. They often would unfairly call him names such as "the poor man's Schubert." However, the public adored his music for its appealing melodies, excitement, and drama. Amateur chamber music players never ceased to enjoy playing his works and professionals performed them in concert often to great success. It is a pity, the jeers of those who could not produce such ingratiating works, and who were especially peeved that Reissiger could produce one after another, almost effortlessly, led to his music falling into oblivion. It is impossible within the scope of a work of this type to discuss all of these work. I will discuss three which can be taken as representative of this treasure trove of beautiful piano trios. The numbering of his trios is a bit confusing and sometimes two different trios have been given the same number. This is because he wrote three different sort of trios: the standard piano trio, the trio brilliant and the trio and trio brilliant et non difficile. This being the case, the Opus number is more important than the trio number **Piano Trio No.7 in E Major, Op.85**, dates from the 1830's. It is one of his so-called standard piano trios. The opening movement, *Allegro brillante*, begins with a series of attention-getting chords. The first theme is a beautiful Schubertian melody brought forth by the strings. A Beethovenian development section follows. The simple, second theme, is clearly a folk dance tune. The cello presents the very vocal and charming first theme to the *Andante* which follows. When the violin enters, we are reminded of an operatic duet. A Beethovenian, pounding *Scherzo*, full of forward motion, comes next. The finale, a syncopated *Allegro molto*, is a toe-tapping rondo with Hungarian overtones. **Piano Trio No.15 in G Major, Op.164**, was composed in the late 1830's and published in the early part of the next decade. It is a trio brilliant and the same trio number has also been given to Op.167. The lovely main theme of the first movement, *Moderato*, evokes the ghost of Schubert with its fine melodic writing which effortlessly flows forth like water from a fountain. A hard-driving *Scherzo, presto*, which does not allow for a moment's breath, comes next. A beautiful, languid trio section provides a fine contrast. This piano

trio has no real slow movement as the *Andante quasi allegretto*, is more of an upbeat march than anything else. The finale, *Allegro*, has a dramatic melody, pulsing with excitement for its main theme. Once again, the composer's great melodic gift is on display. From the mid 1840's there is also the very effective **Piano Trio in g minor, Op.181**. This is a trio brilliant et non difficile. It consists of a gripping *Allegro appassionato*, full of excitement and drama. A bumptious *Scherzo* with contrasting lyrical trio comes next. It is followed by a lovely *Andante quasi allegretto*. The finale, an excellent *Allegro non troppo*, tops of this fine work which would be well received in concert and certainly should not be missed by amateurs. And this is true of most of the others which I did not discuss.

**Wilhelm Reuling** (1802-1877) was born in the German city of Darmstadt. He studied violin and composition. Most of his career was spent in Vienna where he served as a concertmaster and conductor of various theater orchestras. His **Piano Trio No.1 in d minor, Op.75**, which appeared in 1841 was reviewed very favorably by Robert Schumann and created a stir in critical circles. **Piano Trio No.2 in A Major** came out two years later in 1843 and was followed in 1847 by **Piano Trio No.3 in b minor, Op.82**. They did not receive the attention that his first did. Reuling was influenced by Italian opera and one finds this in his trios. I am only familiar with No.3 which is filled with Schubertian melodies and good part-writing for all. It is not particularly difficult and can certainly be recommended to recommended to amateurs.



**August Reuss** (1871-1935) was born in the town of Znaim in Moravia, then part of the Austrian Empire. He studied with Ludwig Thuille at the Munich Conservatory and held various conducting positions in Germany. His **Piano Trio in F Major, Op.30** dates from 1913. This is not a work for beginners or the inexperienced but nonetheless worthwhile. The opening movement begins with a broad introduction, *Sehr breit*, The main part of the movement, *Bewegt*, alternates passionate episodes with more lyrical and gentle moments. The main theme is used as a kind of motto which reappears in subsequent movements a la Wagner. The second movement, a chromatic *Scherzo* is characterized mostly by its rhythms. The third movement. Next comes an *Adagio* which opens and ends with a lovely cello solo. The main part of the movement is rather like a funeral march. The finale, *Lebhaft*, begins in a rather edging fashion but also has contrasting more lyrical episodes.



**Prince Heinrich XXIV Reuss of Köstritz** (1855-1910), was born in the Prussian town of Trebschen. The Reusses were a large old German noble family with several branches and literally dozens of princes called Heinrich. There was even another Prince Heinrich XXIV, but he "of Greiz", hence the need for the lengthy name. Reuss studied composition privately with Carl Reissiger and then Heinrich von Herzogenberg who introduced him to Brahms. Although Brahms never formally gave lessons to Reuss, according to the prince he gave the young composers numerous suggestions and considerable help which as far as Reuss was

concerned almost amounted to the same thing. Though not a prolific composer, he did pen six symphonies as well as a considerable amount of chamber music. His style can be an amalgam of Brahms, Herzogenberg and to some extent Dvorak and Mendelssohn. His works were premiered to critical acclaim and were held in high regard for many years before disappearing from the repertoire after the First World War. His **Piano Trio No.1 in c# minor, Op.14** appeared in 1903. The opening movement, *Allegro moderato ma passionato*, makes a strong impression. It is followed by a warm *Andante un poco sostenuto*, quite beautiful. Next comes a fiery scherzo, *Presto con fuoco*, with considerable lilt. The finale, *Moderato maestoso*, is a set of superb variations on a funereal theme. Very effective and can be recommended for both concert performance and home use. **Piano Trio No.2 in G Major, Op.37** followed in 1908. The gorgeous opening movement, *Allegro non troppo, ma con brio*, is fresh and lively and full of convincing melodic material, headed by an extraordinarily expressive and impressive main theme. The second movement, *Allegretto quasi andantino*, is a simply, dreamy theme and set of wonderfully contrasting variations. It is followed by a fleet scherzo, *Vivace*, and a very lovely Brahmsian trio section. The finale, *Allegro con brio*, sports an excellent quick march-like subject for its main theme, with a strongly pronounced rhythm. This trio can fairly be called a masterwork and should be in the repertoire but is not in anyway beyond amateurs of regular ability.



From Swiss-German stock, **Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger** (1839-1901) was born in Vaduz, the capital of Liechtenstein. At the age of 5, he was given piano and organ lessons from a local teacher. His talent was immediately discovered and was of such a substantial nature that by 7, he was appointed organist for Vaduz. Eventually, he entered Royal Conservatory in Munich where studied with Franz Lachner,

one of Schubert's close friends and an important composer in his own right. After graduating in 1854, Rheinberger, who remained in Munich for the rest of his life, was in great demand as an organist and served in this position at all of the important churches in Munich. In 1859, he was began teaching at the Royal Conservatory where he became a Professor of Composition. **Piano Trio No.1 in d minor, Op.34** dates from 1862 and was composed in only 3 days time. Dedicated to Lachner, it was premiered in 1866 with Rheinberger playing the piano part himself. (An accomplishment of note, since the part requires a soloist absolutely of the first rank.) The first movement, *Allegro appassionato*, has a syncopated and muscular opening theme but it is harder to put together than it looks. The development section, in particular, requires the pianist to play several series of cascading triplets, which for the most part provide only background noise to the theme in the strings. The second movement, *Adagio espressivo* has two sections. The main theme, introduced by the piano with the strings tacit, is sweet and tender and perhaps the words "romance" might be justified. Of note are the very unorthodox figures which appear in the piano accompaniment when the strings take over the melody. As fine as the main theme is, it is the brief appearance of the second theme, *Piu mosso e feroce*, before the recapitulation which creates a lasting impression and gives striking evidence of Rheinberger's genius. The third movement, *Scherzo vivace*, is rather genial and relaxed which even the vivace tempo cannot change. The main section is in the form of

an elegant waltz in which the piano has a dominant role complete with little virtuoso flourishes that are not, however, as superfluous as some of the long runs given it in the first movement. The trio, a kind of musette, does not provide enough contrast to the main section. The conclusion, *Finale all'ongarese: Allegro vivo*, is an extraordinary movement from its opening measures which instantly grab one's full attention. Following this very unusual beginning, Rheinberger continues in a highly unorthodox vein veering off into a *capriccioso*, one that is full of gypsy fire. As fine as this movement is, it must be admitted that the technical demands on the pianist are at least as great as those of Mendelssohn trios, to the level of the virtuoso. Though not without blemish, this trio certainly deserves to be heard in concert. The 16 years which separate the First Trio from **Piano Trio No.2 in A Major, Op.112** which came out in 1878 made a difference. At 23, Rheinberger was a prodigious keyboard performer, feeling his way in the world of chamber music. In the First Trio the piano is given many bravado episodes. These are now gone. The development of the main theme and the second theme all show the touch of a master. The part-writing is in true piano trio style, *a la* Franz Schubert: The different capabilities of the piano are recognized but it treated in an equal, and as much as possible, similar way to the strings. The occasional flourish does not change any of this and is entirely in keeping with the music. The opening movement, though marked *Allegro*, is not particularly fast and is redolent of a kind of Brahmsian geniality. The second theme is a highly lyrical and romantic duet between the violin and cello. In the *Andante espressivo*, which comes next, there is a slinky, gnome-like first theme by itself. The second subject more lyrical and dynamic. Third comes a *Tempo di Minuetto*, we hear two lovers calling out to each other in joy. It is a lovely and sparkling moment. It is contagious, one wants to get up and dance. The trio cannot really be called dark although the mood is more subdued. The finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, is full of spirit beginning with the opening measures which are a trumpet call of affirmation: The real main theme comes after the trumpet call. It is a kind of destiny motif, a hymn of affirmation. This trio is a masterpiece from the romantic era. Successful in everyway. It belongs in the repertoire. It can be managed by amateurs with a good pianist. During his lifetime, **Piano Trio No.3 in B flat Major, Op.121**, dating from 1881, was probably the most popular of his piano trios, performed all over Europe and in New York and Boston. The opening bars of the first theme bring to mind *Rock-a-bye Baby* although it is hardly an exact quote. This genial theme sets the amiable mood of what is a rather large movement, perhaps larger than the thematic material justifies. The development section and second theme are an attempt to create a heightened sense of drama, but they seem ill-suited to the rest of the movement. What comes next is, without doubt, one of the finest movements in the romantic piano trio literature. The haunting theme of the *Romanze Andantino* is ushered in first by the violin and then the cello to the pulsating eighth note accompaniment of the piano. One is reminded of the slow movement to Schubert's *Piano Trio No.2* with its so-called Swedish Lied. Suddenly we hear the inexorable forces of destiny in the form of a powerful march which is taken up by all three instruments in unison. The two themes are masterfully blended creating a very effective, hushed coda. A few moments of silence are really required before going on to the captivating and clever Scherzo. *allegro* which sounds just like it jumped out of the composer's head fully grown. The middle section has a Brahmsian theme which provides a nice contrast. The finale, *Con moto*, is more or less a rondo, full of invention and clever effects. Basi-

cally upbeat, the mood is suddenly and surprisingly changes into one of horror and foreboding to the beat of a grotesque march in which the composer asks the performers to play the music with ferocity. The whole effect makes a great impression. In this trio, the strings are almost always in the forefront with long-lined melodies. The piano part, though not easy, is most often used to create the lovely landscape backgrounds upon which the strings sing. This is a first rate work which deserves to be heard in the concert hall and become part of the repertoire. It is well within the ability of amateurs and can be recommended to them as well. In 1898, Rheinberger composed his last piece of chamber music, the **Piano Trio No.4 in F Major, Op.191**. The attractive opening theme of the first movement, Moderato, has a somewhat autumnal quality to it. The tonal warmth and congeniality reminds one a bit of Brahms. The second theme is closely related to the first and does not initially change the mood. Here and there, the music builds to a brief dramatic climax, but overall it is amiable and without tension or pathos. The second movement, Adagio molto, has a brief introduction which is a slightly sad and march-like, but the main theme is one of more affirmation. It turns out that the second part of the main theme is composed of the sad march. It exhibits great power with marvelous writing. A high-spirited *Tempo di Menuetto* comes next. With an allegro bordering on presto yet the music shows no sense of hurry. The trio section is slower and is more muted in spirit. The main theme to the finale, *Allegro moderato*, carries the music forward effortlessly while creating a vibrant sense of excitement. None of the successive themes cloud this music of joy. Again we have a very good work well within the grasp of amateurs and certainly suitable for the concert hall.



**Ferdinand Ries** (1784-1838) was born in Bonn, the eldest son of one Beethoven's earliest teachers, Franz Ries, a violinist. Ferdinand was taught violin by his father, cello by Bernhard Romberg and later, when he came to Vienna, piano by Beethoven. He gained a considerable reputation as a piano virtuoso and toured widely. From 1813 to 1823 he lived in London and for the rest of his life in Frankfurt. He was also a prolific composer and though the bulk of his work is for piano, he did write a considerable amount of chamber music. He wrote three piano trios specifically for violin, cello and piano: Opp.2, 143 and WoO86. There are two others Opp.28 and 63 but Op.28 was for clarinet and Op.63 was flute but violin parts as substitutes for the wind instruments were supplied by the publishers. I am not familiar with his last trio. **Piano Trio No.1 Op.2 in E flat Major**, is from his early period, presumably before 1810. It is a transitional work, showing all the characteristics of the late Classical period with some early Romantic tendencies. The opening *Adagio con moto-Allegro* sounds a great deal like Beethoven's Op.1 piano trios. The melodies are appealing. The piano trios of Hummel are also called to mind as the elegant but, at times, florid piano part contains the bulk of the material. The second movement, *Andante un poco allegretto*, is particularly striking. Here, the strings are given the lead in presenting the haunting main theme. The light-hearted and fleet finale, *Rondeau-allegro*, recalls late Mozart, although Ries makes better use of the cello. **Op.143 in c minor** is thought to come from Ries' London period. The turbulent opening *Allegro con brio* brings to mind Beethoven's Archduke Trio. Here, the strings are given much more of the thematic material than in Op.2. The

middle movement, *Adagio con espressione*, though calm, is highly lyrical and leads without pause to the exciting finale, *Prestissimo*, which presents a wild ride though several lovely melodies. At times, the piano is unleashed, but this does not spoil the overall effect of the music. That both of these works are Beethovenian perhaps should come as no surprise. But, to some extent, this harms the case for whether they are original or striking enough to merit performance in the concert hall. They can be recommended to amateurs.



**Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908) needs no introduction. He is justifiably famous for Scheherazade, several operas and many other orchestral works. By the time he came to write his **Piano Trio in c minor**, in 1897, he pretty much considered himself just a composer of opera. Nonetheless, while on vacation, he composed a piano trio as a sort of relaxation. Although the trio was performed in manuscript privately many times, it was not published until his former student, the composer Maximilian Steinberg, edited it and prepared it for publication in 1939. Even a cursory glance at this work, which is written on a massive scale, in particular the outer movements, shows that this was a work to which Rimsky-Korsakov devoted considerable effort. The end result is a piano trio from the late Russian romantic era which rises to the level masterpiece. The huge opening movement, *Allegro assai*, begins with the cello introducing a noble, searching melody. The entire movement, lasting nearly a quarter of an hour, is full of drama and forward motion and a wealth of attractive melodic material. A playful and lively *Allegro*, which in its first section brings a Mendelssohn scherzo to mind. But the chromatic second subject is something very different. After the scherzo reappears, a gorgeous and lyrical middle section follows. A quiet, haunting theme opens the third movement, an *Adagio*. But the main subject, which is highly romantic and tinged with sadness, is entrusted first to the cello alone which is given a marvelous solo which takes it high into its treble register. The big finale, also marked *Allegro assai*, begins with a substantial *adagio* introduction. This is followed by a short violin recitativo which then gives way to an exciting and frenetic theme which races along at a feverish pitch. Finally, at some length, we reach a lyrical and lovely theme which provides some stunning duets between the violin and cello. Other than the Tchaikovsky Piano Trio and the last two of Rubinstein's piano trios, there is nothing in the Russian romantic literature which can compare to this outstanding work which both professionals and experienced amateurs should consider.

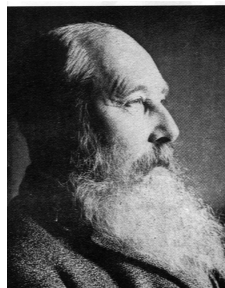


**Julius Röntgen** (1855-1932) was born in the German city of Leipzig. His father was a violinist and his mother a pianist. He showed musical talent at an early age and was taken to the famed pianist and composer, Carl Reinecke, the director of the Gewandhaus orchestra. Subsequently he studied piano in Munich with Franz Lachner, one of Schubert's closest friends. After a brief stint as a concert pianist, Röntgen moved to Amsterdam and taught piano there, helping to found the Amsterdam Conservatory and the subsequently world famous Concertgebouw Orchestra. He composed throughout his life and especially during his last 10 years after he retired. Though he wrote in most genres, chamber music was his most important



area. He is known to have composed 12 piano trios, five of these in the last year of his life. Most of these works have never been published, let alone performed. Most have no opus number and the numbering of the trios appears to be either arbitrary or in confusion. **Piano Trio No.2 in B flat Major Op.23** (however listed as the first trio he wrote by the Nederlandmuziekinstituut and hence should be No.1). The Nederlandsmuziekinstituut states the trio dates from 1883, other sources list 1894. The opening *Allegro molto* is full of rich harmonies and melodies. The second movement, *Un poco andante*, consists of a three part song, full of yearning. The fetching middle section is particularly noteworthy for its fine use of tonal color. The next movement, *Scherzo*, has for its main theme a jovial, fleet and very appealing subject. The contrasting trio is calm and somewhat reflective. The finale, *Allegro moderato*, has a lovely melody for its main theme charged with emotion. It slowly rises to a heroic coda. This is a first rate trio deserving of concert performance but also suitable for amateurs. Röntgen's 1904 **Piano Trio No.4 in c minor, Op.50** (The Nederlandsmuziekinstituut claims it is his third trio, other sources erroneously claim it is No.6) won the prize at the Concours International de Musique in Paris and was dedicated to Carl Nielsen with whom he was quite friendly. In three movements, the opening *Allegro non troppo e serio* begins with a short, dramatic piano introduction which gives way to a very lyrical theme in the strings. The second subject has the character of mystery and shows some influence of Brahms. The very original-sounding main theme to the *Andante* which follows sounds like Grieg but clearly tinted by German Romanticism. This is not an accident. Röntgen was very fond of Scandinavian folk melody. While the opening is very Nordic, the development takes the thematic material into Brahmsian, as well as post-Brahmsian, tonalities. This is a movement of great charm. The finale, *Allegro non troppo*, begins in a soft but agitated manner before exploding into a rich and dramatic exposition of the melodic material. For the superb coda, Röntgen takes a page from Brahms. It is not hard to see why this work won a prize, although it is hard to understand how it could disappear. It is a masterpiece, should be in the repertoire, hopefully will be republished, and should be explored by professionals and amateurs alike. Highly recommended. None of the other trios have opus numbers and their numbering is highly suspect, but several were given subtitles by the composer. **Piano Trio in g minor, 'Entam'**, appears to date from 1898. The opening *Allegro molto* is highly charged and full of charged torrential passages and restlessness. Next comes a peaceful, lyrical *Andante tranquillo e cantabile*. The third movement, *Animato ma non troppo presto*, has Mendelssohn as an antecedent. At times a quick elvish dance, at other times dreamy and with gauze like filligree. The finale, *Moderato*, is closely related to the preceding movement. After the excitement that has come before it is a bit of a let down, at least at first, because it takes a rather long time to get going, but even when it does, it does not quite reach the fevered pitch the other movements have led one to expect. Still, a very fine work. **Piano Trio in f minor 'Post tenebras lux'** was completed in 1924. The trio opens with a lugubrious *Allegro molto sostenuto*. There is an unrelieved heaviness to the music, rather like a thick river of sludge, hardly a tonal picture of light after darkness. Toward the end, the dramatic temperature rises but it does not relieve the weight. The second movement, *Intermezzo, poco allegro con sentimento*, is less heavy and more interesting but hardly riveting. The *Lento, mesto* which comes next is more successful. It is dark and

funereal. The finale, *Allegro non troppo ma agitato*, is more in the vein of a scherzo, not particularly light-footed because of the piano writing. The inspiration is rather thin compared with the two previous works. *Piano Trio in A Major, 'Gaudeamus'* also dates from 1924. The opening movement is marked *Con moto*, but surprisingly, the music hardly moves at all, at least at first. It wanders about almost without a sense of purpose. There is little rejoicing to be heard. However, the second movement, *Vivace* is bright and upbeat. Cleverly written and suggestive of rejoicing. The *Andante tranquillo* which comes next is just that, peaceful and calm. You could fall asleep to it, not out of boredom though. The finale, *Allegro molto*, begins in sparkling fashion. The writing is inspired and holds the listener's interest. While not of the quality of his earlier works, it is altogether that *Post tenebras lux* and perhaps deserving of concert performance.

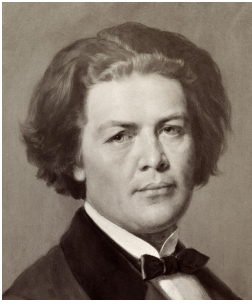


(Joseph) **Guy Ropartz** (1864-1955) as so many other composers, was originally trained as a lawyer. Subsequently, he studied composition under Jules Massenet. During his earlier period, he came under the influence of Cesar Franck. His **Piano Trio in a minor** which dates from 1918. Is a big work in four movements. The attractive opening theme to the *Modèrènt animé* serves as a Franckian Motif and appears throughout the work, it begins with a rhythmic "horn call" figure. The mood is romantic but punctuated by "modern effects" that the impressionists had used. It is original, sounding, as if Schumann had been "crossed" with Debussy. The second movement, *Vif*, is muscular and march-like and has hints of Stravinsky (who was probably absorbing the same influences in Paris at the same time as Ropartz). Next comes *Lent*, soft, sad, slow, disembodied and meditative. There is a haunting quality to it, perhaps related to the War. The finale, also march-like, begins with a cautious spirit of optimism. The music is a mix of straight melody with occasional impressionist side tours *a la Ravel*. I found this an entirely convincing and appealing work which surely belongs in the repertoire.



**Ludomir Różycki** (1883-1953) was born in Warsaw. His father was a professor at the conservatory there and Ludomir received a thorough musical education there studying composition with the important late 19th century Polish composer, Zygmunt Noskowski. After graduating, he moved to Berlin where he continued his studies with Engelbert Humperdinck. He then pursued a career as both a conductor

and teacher holding posts in Lvov and Warsaw. Along with Karol Szymanowski and Grzegorz Fitelberg, he was a founder of Young Poland, a group of composers whose goal was to move Polish music into the modern era. Although he was primarily known for his operas, he did not ignore chamber music, most of which was written during his so-called first period wherein his music remained traditionally tonal. The **Rhapsodie for Piano Trio, Op.33** dates from 1913 while Różycki was living in Berlin. Its premiere met with enthusiastic critical acclaim. The work is not in sonata form but rather characterized by a noble and expansive construction with broadly laid out themes, some of them imbued with idyllic poetry and others resembling Hungarian gypsy music, sensual and passionate.



The 'music' of **Anton Rubinstein** (1829-1894) was one of those rare concert virtuosi whose contribution to music went far beyond performing. In 1862, he founded the St. Petersburg Conservatory and served as its first director. His efforts in developing Russian musical talent were perhaps the greatest of any single individual. Not only did he introduce European educational methods but he also estab-

lished standards that were as rigorous as any conservatory in Europe. While Rubinstein's compositions were extremely popular during his lifetime, after his death, they were criticized because they showed 'no Russian influence' and were viewed as derivatives of prominent European contemporaries, especially of Mendelssohn. Despite the fact that commentator after commentator has repeated this assertion, almost as if it were a litany, it is nonetheless not entirely accurate. Although he was not part of the so-called emergent Russian national school as led by Rimsky Korsakov, it is not true that there is no Russian influence to be found in his music. This influence is just not as pronounced as in the works of Borodin, Mussorgsky or of Korsakov himself. However, it is there, for example in the second movement second movement of his first piano trio to quote but one of many instances. His **Piano Trio No.1 in F, Op.15 No.1** is an early work written when the composer was 22. It begins *Con moto moderato*. The first theme is gentle, although not particularly inspired, but Rubinstein immediately shows he knows how to write for this medium. The second theme, tinged with Mendelssohn's influence, makes a greater impression, but hardly justifies the massive development which he lavishes upon it. This could be said of the entire movement which is simply too long. The second movement, *Moderato*, is a theme and set of variations. It is huge but effective. The finale, *Moderato con moto* is well-done. The melodic material is good, if not great, and Rubinstein handles it convincingly. This is clearly the best movement. Whether this trio deserves to be revived and made part of the repertoire is arguable, but certainly it would give pleasure to amateurs. **Piano Trio No.2 in G Major, Op.15 No.2** was composed immediately after the First. The lilting main theme of the opening *Moderato* is indeed quite effective while the development section, which leads to the delightful, lyrical second theme, is very finely done. The magnificent second movement, *Adagio*, is a gorgeous Mendelssohnian Song Without Words. The *Allegro assai scherzo* which follows is in the form of a tarantella. This is a lively, fleet and very effective movement. Both melodies of the finale, *Moderato*, are expressive and well done. This trio deserves a place of honor in the concert hall. **Piano Trio No.3 in B Flat, Op.52** was composed some 6 years later in 1856-7. It was immediately hailed as one of the best of its kind and for next half century held a place in the standard repertoire. It combines a heroic spirit with radiant lyricism. The opening movement, *Moderato assai*, begins quietly but the bustling piano part builds tension and leads to a dramatic climax with outcries in the string parts. The second theme contrasts with its lyricism. The pensive *Adagio* which follows has a Russian flavor as Mendelssohn might have imagined it, while the dialogue in the development anticipates Tchaikovsky elegies. A playful *Scherzo*, full of humor, comes next. Its trio section features a lilting waltz. The heroic, memorable main theme of the finale, *Allegro appassionato*, is full of passion and forward drive while the second and third subject are full of majesty. **Piano Trio No.4 in A Major, Op.85** dating from 1870, is an excellent example of a first rate work which has been unjustly neglected and is not performed in

concert...The big first movement, *Moderato assai*, has a Russian folk melody of an elegiac nature for its main theme. The movement is by turns lyrical and passionate. The very original second movement, *Moderato con moto*, is a real devil's dance with unusual harmony, while the middle section provides good contrast. The third movement, *Andante*, begins in a deeply religious mood but this calm is periodically broken by stormy episodes. This is an effective and very impressive movement. The stunning finale, an *Allegro*, immediately attracts attention through the chromatic turbulence in the piano part juxtaposed against a yearning melody in the strings. This movement will certainly greatly please any concert audience. The work belongs in the repertoire and on the concert stage. **Piano Trio No.5 in c minor**, Rubinstein's last, dates from 1883. It begins with a chromatic *Lento assai* introduction which leads to a passionate *Moderato*. This movement features an excellent main theme as well as a very winning, more lyrical second subject. The second movement, *Con moto moderato*, falls somewhere between a scherzo and an intermezzo. Here the effective main theme is followed by lilting and expressive second melody. Next comes a slow movement, *Moderato assai*, with its lovely, heartfelt writing for the strings. The finale, *Allegro*, follows without a break begins in martial fashion with a staccato fanfare more lyrical music follows which is later interrupted by a fugue, a la Bach before movement is brought to a close in triumphant fashion. Again, we have another first rate work deserving of the attention of professionals and technically accomplished amateurs.



**Antoni Rutkowski** (1859-1886) was born in Warsaw. He studied piano and composition at the Warsaw Institute of Music. Among his teachers were Stanislaw Moniuszko, Wladislaw Zelen-ski and Zygmunt Noskowski. He was not a prolific composer. His **Piano Trio in g minor, Op.13** dates from 1878. It was premiered by a group which included the famous pianist Paderewski, who left behind reminiscences of the trio. He wrote enthusiastically of the trio but noted that

it was not without problems and this is true. The opening movement, *Allegro vivace*, has several extraordinarily gorgeous melodies, but the development is weak and the melodies perhaps too often repeated.. But the music is full of energy and excitement. The lyrical and stately middle movement, *Adagio*, unfolds its thematic material slowly and has a contrasting agitated middle section. The finale, *Allegro con fuoco* is a toe tapping rondo, captivating but fuoco it isn't, but that is not a slam against the music as opposed to mislabeling. *Allegro con spirito* would have been more accurate to describe the elegant, let spirited music. It is well to remember that Rutkowski was only 19 at the time he completed the work. Perhaps not a candidate for the concert hall, amateurs and their audiences are sure to appreciate this trio.



**Philipp Rüfer** (1844-1919) was born in the Belgian city of Liege and studied at the conservatory there. He mostly worked in Germany as a conductor and music director but also taught at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. Among his students was the Russian modernist composer Georgy Catoire. His **Piano Trio in B Major, Op.34** dates from 1882. It well constructed, plays easily and has fresh sounding

and appealing melodies. The opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, is genial and full of good spirits. A bright, sunny scherzo, *Allegro vivace*, follows, with original thematic material. The third movement is a serious but also warm *Adagio molto*, which makes particularly fine use of the strings as they sing a kind of lovers duet. The finale, *Allego assai*, is also fully of good spirits, no storms cloud the skies of the music. The trio can stand up to concert performance and certainly will be welcomed by amateurs.



**Joseph Ryelandt** (1870-1965) was born in the Flemish town of Bruges (Brugge in Dutch) in Belgium. He was largely self taught although he did study privately with Eduard Tinel. Because he was of independent means, he was able to devote himself entirely to composing. His **Piano Trio in b minor, Op.57** dates from 1915 and is two movements. *Allegro con moto* and *Andante*. His style, at least in this trio, is entirely free from

French impressionist influence and has more in common with the German Romantic tradition. It is an interesting and at times engaging work, and while not exactly compelling, is pleasant enough to occasionally bring out.



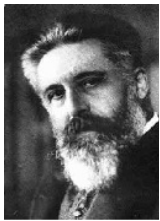
**Leonid Sabaneyev** (also spelled Sabaneev 1881-1968) was born in Moscow. He studied music at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and later at the Moscow Conservatory with Sergei Taneyev. He pursued a dual career as a composer and a musicologist. Today, he is primarily remembered for books, *With its high-strung volatility, its detailed motifs, its seething disquiet and unending expressive* suspense, the **Op.4 Trio Impromptu** of 1907 is the embodiment of the pre-revolutionary epoch in its anticipation of the approaching catastrophe. The foundations on which this daring piece is built reveal a terrifying fragility. In the opening movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, the formal structures are softened, the meter seems to have been thrown off track in the first bars, harmonic tremors make the painstakingly established tonality shake at its foundations. The middle section, *Appassionato*, is full of drama and passion but also has a mysterious, quiet middle section. The finale, *Largemente*, is drenched with pathos, a sense of the tragic permeates the powerful themes which collide with each other. This work like that of Georgy Catoire must be considered part of the early Russian modernism movement. The **Sonate pour Piano, Violon et Violoncelle, Op. 20** was composed in 1923/24. The contrasts in this piece are even more wide-ranging, with serene passages of a solo melody in violin or cello beautifully accompanied by rising lines in the piano juxtaposed with angular punchy ensemble intensity. A few rich melodies serve to unite the work as a whole, though of course their presentation in different moods and with different accompaniment makes the music unsettled. This is not a work for amateurs.



**Camille Saint-Saëns** (1835-1921) is widely regarded as the most important 19th century French composer of instrumental music. He was born at a time when the state of French instrumental music was at an all time low. The French attitude toward instrumental music was extraordinarily hostile. Opera, and especially Italian comic opera of the sort Rossini composed, completely dominated the music

scene. Young French composers such as Berlioz were stymied and composers such as George Onslow and Louise Farrenc, who were primarily composers of instrumental music, were widely ignored in their own country though their music gained renown elsewhere. His persistent championing of instrumental music finally revived French interest in it. **Piano Trio No.1 in F Major, Op.18** dates from 1863. It is a work that is at once elegant and brilliant and which shows a very skillful use of the instruments and their possibilities. The first of its four movements, *Allegro*, begins with a gay and buoyant theme in the cello followed by a more lyrical second theme. The second movement, *Andante*, makes a very strong impression, not only because it is so different in mood from the preceding *Allegro vivace*, but also because of the originality of its theme, a melody which gives the impression of being an almost mediaeval folk tune. The piano states the main theme, over a drone in the strings. This effect makes the music sound rather like a folk melody from the mountains of the Auvergne. The third movement, *Scherzo, presto*, is interesting because of the many cross rhythms which punctuate the music. The very unusual and lopsided first subject consists entirely of an exchange between the cello, which has a third beat pizzicato, and the piano, which has an accented chord on beat one. The bumptious second subject is less pointedly rhythmic but could not be called lyrical. In the finale, *Allegro*, Saint-Saëns seems out to prove that he can create a first rate movement from the meagerest of resources, and he succeeds. The music is light and elegant. From time to time, the piano loudly interrupts with abrupt chords which signal the entrance of the second theme. Thunderous crashes aside, this is a light and graceful movement full of youthful exuberance. Nearly thirty years passed before Saint-Saëns chose to write another piano trio. **Piano Trio No.2 in e minor, Op.92** was composed and completed in 1892. It is composed on a grand scale and required five movements to hold all of the many ideas he wished to present. The big opening movement, *Allegro non troppo*, (nearly twice as long as all of the other movements together) begins with a melancholy theme that bears a striking resemblance to the main theme of Tchaikovsky's *Piano Trio Op.50*. Even the treatment of the opening measures is fairly similar. It seems unlikely that this was an accident as Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky were good friends and they each admired the other's music. Saint-Saëns must almost certainly have been familiar with Tchaikovsky's piano trio which predated his by some 10 years. Against a soft arpeggio figure in the piano, the violin and cello alternate, each given two measures of the theme. Finally, when it has been completely stated, the two play it in unison in its entirety and then move into the development. The main theme of the *Allegretto* which comes next has neither the power, the drama, nor the huge scope of the first movement. It is sprightly and light-hearted and clearly intended as a brief, contrasting, palette-cleanser. But when the middle section takes this melody and thrusts it into the minor, it becomes menacing. The middle movement, *Andante con moto*, though it is the shortest movement of the trio and not as dramatic as the opening movement, nonetheless, serves as the trio's center of gravity. The somewhat introspective theme is a highly romantic love song first stated by the piano and then in turn by the strings. The mood is lightened by the fourth movement, *Gracioso*, *poco allegro* and can be likened to a sparkling Tchaikovsky waltz. It moves quickly but elegantly and is full of *joie de vivre*. The finale, *Allegro*, begins in a quiet, but restless and sinister fashion. The main theme dominates but the second theme is the subject of a short, somewhat frantic, marvelous fugue. It is then capped with a short, exciting coda. Both of these trios, though very different in

mood and style are masterpieces of the literature and ought to be heard in concert.



**Philipp Scharwenka** (1847-1917) was born near Posen, then part of Prussian Poland. He moved to Berlin in 1865 to complete his musical education. A good pianist, he primarily devoted himself to composition and teaching at several of Berlin's leading conservatories, finally joining the faculty and serving as director of the conservatory founded by his younger brother, Xaver. Otto Klemperer was

among his many students. During his lifetime, his orchestral compositions were featured regularly in German concert halls, but the common consensus is that his chamber music was his best work. Among Phillip Scharwenka's very best works are his two outstanding piano trios. These works are not only masterly in form, but spirited and full of noble melodies. They can be warmly recommend to professionals for concert performance but also to amateur players. **Piano Trio No.1 in c sharp minor, Op.100** dates from 1897. The first movement, *Lento e tranquillo* opens with a very somber and serious theme. The slow tempo, which only very occasionally speeds up, adds tremendous weight to the three powerful subjects. A big, fleet *Scherzo Allegro* follows. The finale, *Allegro appassionato*, begins with a bustling main theme, whose interest is only further heightened by its rhythm. Add to this a lilting second subject and a lyrical and deeply felt third melody. Though full of passion and power, this serious music ends on a calm and quiet note. **Piano Trio No.2 in G Major, Op.112**, like that of his First, is not only masterly in form, but spirited and full of noble melodies. In the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, the main theme presented in unison by the strings to the accompaniment of the piano is outstandingly effective and the modulations are particularly attractive as is the lyrical second theme. In the *Andante tranquillo* that follows, we find the use of the strings in their lower registers particularly striking as is the very appealing second subject. An energetic finale, *Allegro con spirito*, concludes this fine work. Particularly noteworthy is riveting main theme with the back and forth of the strings. This is set off by a lilting second theme.



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

his day. He also received instruction in composition. Subsequently, he began touring as a concert pianist and was widely regarded as one of the best then performing. He founded two conservatories, one in Berlin and another in New York and composed in nearly every genre. Although Scharwenka was a piano virtuoso, he did not compose **Piano Trio No.1 in f sharp minor, Op.1**, as a vehicle for the pianist and the strings are treated as equals. From the beginning, this work enjoyed considerable success and was often performed in concert right up until the First World War. It's not hard to see why when you listen to the sound-bites. The trio begins with a lengthy *Adagio sostenuto* introduction which then leads to the main section of the first movement, *Allegro con brio*. (our sound-bite begins here) The lovely main theme has a pleading, sad quality to it. The syncopated main

theme of the second movement, *Andantino quasi allegretto*, is a slinky march-like melody. The middle section, with its dignified, quasi religious melody, provides excellent contrast. A *Scherzo vivace* comes next. The scherzo is a light-footed dance with a certain lilt to it. Again, a fine contrast is presented by the trio section with its beautiful lyrical melody. The robust finale, *Allegro molto*, quasi *presto*, makes a strong impression from the opening notes of the energetic main theme. **Piano Trio No.2 in a minor, Op.45** was composed in 1878, is a mature composition and can stand comparison with any trio from the same period. The big opening *Allegro non troppo* begins quite softly with a mysterious introduction which holds the kernel of the lovely, yearning main theme. The second theme is lighter and more fleet-footed while a third melody is quite lyrical. A lengthy, but extraordinarily fine *Adagio* begins haltingly with a sense of quiet bereavement. This then leads to a highly romantic duet between the violin and the cello which builds to a dramatic climax. The third movement, *Allegro molto*, is a spooky, nervous scherzo. The mood of the trio is lyrical and happy. The wild finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, bursts forth with great energy. Its broad, moving theme is exciting and exotic, the second theme, led by the cello, is lyrical but expertly intertwined with the first.



**Johann Schobert** (circa 1720-1767) was born somewhere in Silesia, then part of the Austrian Habsburg Empire. He pursued a career as a pianist and composer, primarily in Paris where he spent most of his life and died after eating some poisonous mushrooms. Contemporaries considered his compositions the equal to those of C.P.E. Bach. He came to the attention of music historians because of his intersection with the six year

old Wolfgang Mozart whom he met in Paris. Schobert's music influenced the young Mozart to a considerable extent, so much so, that Mozart borrowed several movements from Schobert's piano sonatas for use in his own concertos. He wrote at least four piano trios but probably several more. I am only familiar with the four trios of his Op.16. The **Piano Trio in F Major, Op.16 No.4** is the last of a set of four which were published in Paris in the early 1760's. They are rather interesting not only because they are a definite link between the older trio sonata and the modern piano trio, but also because Schobert's handling of the parts was rather advanced for the time. The work is in four movements. It begins with a stately, tuneful *Andante* and is followed by a *Polonaise*, also marked *Andante*, characterized by its heavy accented rhythm. Next comes a classical *Menuetto* with a lilting trio. The work is topped off with rousing finale, *Presto*.

**Franz Schubert** (1797-1828) is only included here for the sake of completeness. His two just famous piano trios, *Opp.99* and *100* are among the absolute best ever written. He is the first composer who entirely solved the problem of balance and treatment of the three instruments. In this respect they are superior to every composer who came before him and most who came after him. And unlike many other composers, Mendelssohn for example, the piano is not allowed to fly off into showy virtuoso passages which have little or no place in a true chamber music composition.

**Clara Schumann** (1819-1896) was a gifted pianist whose lessons were from her father Friedrich Wieck, a prominent piano teacher. Robert Schumann also studied with Wieck and having gotten to know Clara eventually married her. She enjoyed a considerable



career as a concert pianist and teacher. Clara began composing early and was encouraged by her husband to continue during their marriage although after her husband's death she gave up composing and devoted herself to performing Robert's works for piano and was for many years considered his finest interpreter. Her **Piano Trio in g minor, Op.17** is the only chamber music work she wrote and

dates from 1847. It shows her considerable talent and one is left to wonder what else she might have achieved had she chosen to continue composing. The opening Allegro moderato, begins with a Mendelssohn theme of yearning. The second theme is a lovely, lyrical melody. The second movement, though it is marked scherzo and is also designated, Tempo di Menuetto, it really sounds like neither of these but rather a gentle, somewhat playful intermezzo. A slow movement, Andante, comes next. The atmosphere is highly romantic and exudes the aura of a very effective Song Without Words a la Mendelssohn. A thrusting, dramatic middle section interrupts the proceedings and makes for a fine contrast. The finale, Allegretto, begins quietly with a wayward, chromatic theme. The music is presented with great taste and elegance.



**Georg Schumann** (1866-1952 no relation to Robert or Clara) was born in the German town of Konigstein. He was born into a musical family. His father was the town Music Director and he initially studied piano and violin with him. He studied organ in Dresden and then entered the Leipzig conservatory where he studied piano with Reinecke and composition with Salomon Jadassohn. He became a brilliant pianist and

started off on a solo career but later branched off and enjoyed a conducting career in Bremen and later Berlin where he also taught. He composed throughout his life and he was especially fond of chamber music and composed two piano trios, two piano quintets, a piano quartet and some instrumental sonatas. Schumann's **Piano Trio No.1 in F Major, Op.25** dates from 1899. It begins with a beautiful sounding Allegro amabile which leaves us marveling at his art. The development and contrasting material are masterfully handled. The second movement, Andante con espressione, begins with a warm-blooded melody which is seamlessly passed from voice to voice and then later interrupted by a somewhat nervous con moto impetuoso section. The third movement, Allegretto grazioso, is closer to an intermezzo than a scherzo. There is a pastoral quality to its noble melodies and a passionate and contrasting middle section. In the finale, Moderato and then Presto, the composer shares his humor with the musicians beginning with cadenzas. This is a real show piece and though be no means easy, it is well within the reach of competent amateur players as well. **Piano Trio No.2 in F Major, Op.62** appeared in 1915. It is an outstanding work and shows the hand of a master composer in each of its four movements. The first movement, Allegro animato, begins in a genial vein and is followed by an extraordinarily fine second subject. The ideas and their working out are superb hold the listener's attention throughout. The second movement, Adagio con passione, begins with an impressive singing theme in the cello. The middle section of the movement provides a lovely contrast. The third movement, Allegretto, is a kind of intermezzo and is attached to quicker and

fetching scherzo, Presto. The original rhythm adds to the attraction. The finale, Allegro, is by and large a sunny, bright affair. Here is a work which if given a chance is sure to wind many friends, a work to treasure.

**Robert Schumann** (1810-1856) is included as is the case with all famous composers for the sake of completeness. He wrote three piano trios, Opp.63, 80 and 110. During the 19th century they enjoyed a certain vogue, largely because of his name, but as time has passed, these works have faded considerably. In the 20th and 21st centuries that have not been able to hold their place alongside the piano trios of other famous composers such as Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Brahms. The cause may be the thematic material itself, which is not always inspired. However, these are good works that deserved to be heard and amateurs will certainly enjoy them. Perhaps his most successful and best work in this genre is not a formal piano trio at all but his Op.88 Phantasiestücke, a set character pieces for piano trio. Here the writing is truly inspired.



**Eduard Schütt** (1856-1933) was born in St Petersburg, Russia. A talented pianist, Schütt graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, having studied piano with Theodor Stein and Anton Rubinstein. He then continued his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory where he took further piano lessons from Carl Reinecke and studied composition with Salomon Jadassohn and Ernst Richter. He then moved to Vienna and took additional lessons from Theodor Leschetizky after which he pursued a career as a concert pianist for a few years. He then devoted himself to composing and conducting. Most of Schütt's works involve the piano. As far as chamber music is concerned, he composed two piano trios a piano quartet and several instrumental sonatas. **Piano Trio No.1 in c minor, Op.27** dates from 1888. It is in four movements: Allegro maestoso, Scherzo vivace, Andante tranquillo and Allegro grazioso. His **Piano Trio No.2 in e minor, Op.51** appeared in 1897. It, too, is in four movements: Poco allegro, Scherzo allegro, Andante molto cantabile and A la Russe in several different tempi. Both of these trios are excellent works with fine writing for all three instruments. The second piano trio, especially the finale, a theme and set of variations makes a very strong impression and deserves to be heard in concert. Two other works for piano trio which deserve mention are his **Walzer Momente, Op.54** paraphrases of the works of Strauss and Lanner. Schütt was widely considered one of the best arrangers of his time and these are three character pieces are absolutely first rate and highly entertaining. His **Episoden, Op.72** which came out in 1905 are five very fine character pieces.



**Cyril Scott** (1879-1970) was born in Oxtou, England not far from Liverpool. He showed a talent for music from an early age and was sent to the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt to study piano in 1892. He composed up until the last three weeks of his life, dying at the age of 91. By the time of his death, he was only remembered for a few popular pieces that he had composed over sixty years before. Critics claim he was essentially a late romantic composer, whose style was at the same time strongly influenced by impressionism. His harmony was notably exotic. Scott wrote around four hundred works and

was called the English Debussy. Though he was considered one of England's leading composers during the first two decades of the twentieth century, by 1935, his rejection of the developments of the Second Vienna School led to his music being considered passé. **Piano Trio No.1** dates from 1920. This is a substantial work, in four movements. The opening *Allegretto moderato* is divided into several different tempo markings and sections. It begins in an unconventional way with the strings muted. The strings play in unison, albeit an octave apart, against the piano for great stretches of the work. This lends it a certain monotony. The use of the piano often consists of long, quick ascending and descending passages, as if the pianist had taken his hand and run it up and down the keyboard. It is an unusual effect but not altogether effective. The music might make a good accompaniment for a scuba diver in a big tank of water with exotic fish. The outstanding feature of the tonally murky second movement, *Sostenuto misterioso*, is the alternating of slow and fast sections. Again, the piano is used in a similar fashion. The strings are given pianissimo tremolos. Basically, it is a series of effects rather than music. Perhaps the best part is a vaguely Chinese sounding section. The third movement, *Andante sostenuto*, sounds rather like what came before, only without any fast sections. The finale is a *Rondo giocoso*, did not make use of unusual effects as much as the preceding movements. In trying to sum up this work, I am reminded of what the French general Pierre Bosquet said as he watched the Charge of the Light Brigade—*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre*. The word music could be substituted for guerre. His **Piano Trio No.2** was composed in 1951. It is in one movement, but divided into three subsections. Once again, not too much is going on. Scott's late style seems preferable to the earlier one. He is less mesmerized by trying to achieve affects and more concerned with writing music. **Cornish Boat Song for Piano Trio** is the only work for this ensemble in which one can hear a recognizable melody.



**Bernhard Sekles** (1872-1934) was born in the German city of Frankfurt am Main. Although his musical talent showed itself early, his parents did not want him to become a musician. It was only upon the intervention of the well-known Frankfurt composer Wilhelm Hill that Sekles was allowed to attend the Frankfurt Hochschule für Musik where he studied with Ivan Knorr. Sekles

enjoyed a career as a teacher both in his native Frankfurt and in Mainz, eventually becoming director of the Frankfurt Hochschule. His **Capriccio in Four Movements** for Piano Trio dates from 1932. It starts off with a Preludio that sounds like Bach had imbibed the music of the neo-classical movement with a touch of polyphonic madness. A frenetic and lively "Scherzino" follows. It gallops along at a wild pace that keeps one on the seat of their pants. Next comes an Intermezzo which serves as a tranquilizer, like seeing through a fog of opium. The finale is a set of superb variations on Yankee Doodle. It shows what a great composer can do with the simplest of tunes and, by itself, it would make a fine encore. The whole work is really a tour d'force by a composer whose music deserves to be better known.

**Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906-1975) is one of the best known composers from the 20th century. His two piano trios Opp.8 and 67, both in e minor, are both well-known and among the most frequently performed when a tonal modern work is called for. We list him here for the sake of completeness.



**Jean Sibelius** (1865-1957) is well-known for his symphonies, violin concerto and tone poems, but outside of his string quartet "Voces Intimae", none of his many chamber works has received the attention of the public largely because many of these works remained in manuscript until recently and all were from his early period. There are some 16 works for piano trio written between 1882 and

1891. Of these, four are complete piano trios, three of which have subtitles—Korpo, Hafrask and Lovisa. Many of these works are well worth performing. One such work is his **Piano Trio in C Major** from 1888 subtitled **Lovisa**. It has no opus number but has become known as the Lovisa Trio as it was composed at the family country home near the village of Lovisa. Although he was only 23 when he composed the trio, it is surprisingly mature. Up to this point his earlier works were based on classical models, but in the Lovisa trio, he has moved into the territory of full-blooded Romanticism. The opening movement of the trio, *Allegro*, begins with a buoyant melody full of élan and warmth. The middle movement, *Andante*, is quiet and tinged with melancholy. The mood is further heightened when the strings enter. The restless main theme of the finale, *Allegro con brio*, with its striking tonalities and downward-plunging rapid passages leaves a strong impression.



**Christian Sinding** (1856-1941), along with Edvard Grieg came to symbolize Norwegian classical music between 1885 and 1940. Born in the small town of Kongsberg near Oslo, Sinding, after studying music in Oslo, attended the Leipzig Conservatory where he studied violin with Henry Schradieck and composition with Salomon Jadassohn and Carl Reinecke. Whereas

Grieg's style of writing has been described as Schumann's technique combined with Norwegian folk melody, Sinding's is often and incorrectly characterized as combination of Wagner's technique with Norwegian folk melody. Although the influence of Norwegian folk melody can be found in his music, Sinding did not use it, as did Grieg, so extensively. Rather, it was German romanticism, and in particular the music of Liszt and Wagner, which greatly influenced Sinding. But unlike Liszt and Wagner, Sinding relied on wit and developed a more cosmopolitan style. Writing in virtually all genres, his chamber music must be considered an important part of his output. His **Piano Trio No.1 in D Major**, Op.23 dates from 1894. The first movement, *Allegro*, is sunny and full of good spirit. The second movement, an *Andante*, is in actuality a romance with a contrasting middle section in the minor that is elegaic. The energetic finale, *Con fuoco* is characterized by its sharply accented rhythms but also has several lyrical episodes. It is the least known and performed of his three trios, but is nonetheless a fine work. **Piano Trio No.2 in a minor**, Op.64 was completed in 1902. It has a generally Nordic mood and a romantic freedom of expression in its flowing melody and frequent modulation. The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, has a heroic cast, to which the lyrical beauty of the slow movement, *Andante* forms an effective contrast. The first and second movements begin in the minor, but the virile finale, *Allegro*, starts in the affirmative A Major. Near the end, after a masterly development and just when a conclusion is expected, a pregnant chord announces a brief and glorious epilogue. Themes previously heard reappear and the work ends with a satisfying coda. **Piano Trio No.3 in C Major**, Op.87 dates from 1908. Sinding's Piano Trio

The opening movement, *Con brio*, begins in stormy, restless fashion with a chromatic, descending motif. Only with the introduction of the second theme is tension relaxed. The middle movement, marked *Romanza*, is a calmer *andante*, while the finale, *Allegro*, is full of sunny optimism.



**Hans Sitt** (1850-1922) was born in Prague and was, during his lifetime, regarded as one of the foremost teachers of violin. Most of the orchestras and conservatories of Europe and North America then sported personnel who numbered among his students. He held the august position of Professor of Violin at the Leipzig Conservatory from 1883 on, and authored several important studies for that instrument, some of which are still used. He entered the Prague Conservatory where he studied violin and composition. Subsequently, he pursued a successful solo career for a short time before being appointed concertmaster of the Breslau Opera Orchestra at age 17, the first of many such appointments. Besides his pedagogical works, Sitt wrote several pieces for violin and orchestra, including six concertos and a number of sonatas for various instruments. His only chamber music is for piano trio. **Piano Trio No.1 in G Major, Op.63 No.1** dates from 1886. The genial and beautiful opening theme to the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, is perhaps just a little reminiscent of Schumann. The second theme is more exciting. Sitt dispenses with a slow movement and an *Allegretto* in *e minor* comes next. The mood is a mixture of minuet and scherzo. The trio provides an excellent contrast not only tonally (it is in *E Major*), but also in mood. It is a *pastorale*. The bright finale, *Allegro non troppo*, begins with a buoyant Schumannesque main theme followed by a more lyrical second theme. Sitt finishes with a short but excellent coda. Here then is a work which makes no great pretensions, yet is perfect in its way. It could be used in concert where a shorter work is needed between two more substantial trios. **Piano Trio No.2 in B Major, Op.63 No.2** is the more serious of the two. The opening theme to the first movement, *Allegro*, brought forth first by the strings alone is clearly heroic in nature and shows the influence of Brahms without being imitative. The second theme is sadder and more reflective. Unlike his first trio where he dispenses with a slow movement, here we find an *Andante*. The piano alone brings forth the lovely first subject and completely states it before the strings are brought in to heighten its beauty. An exciting *animato* section appears in the middle. The rollicking finale, *Allegro vivace*, has somewhat of a *tarantella* mood to it. A brilliant coda brings the work to an exciting close. Both of Sitt's trios can be strongly recommended to amateur groups looking for first rate musical content without technical difficulties.



Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884) is fairly well-known because of his operas and especially for his orchestra tone poem *Ma Vlast* (my country). His chamber music, however, has not received the same attention. His **Piano Trio in g minor, Op.15** is one such work. In three movements, it dates from 1855 and was occasioned by the death of his oldest daughter. The first movement, *Moderato assai*, expresses the composer's emotional anguish, opening with a haunting violin solo. This motif continues throughout the first movement echoed by both cello and piano. A second theme is heard in the cello, also as a solo

Though still sorrowful, it seems more controlled. At one point there is a quote from a song in Schubert's song cycle *Winterreise*, *Gefrorene Tränen*, frozen tears. The second movement, *Allegro ma non agitato*, is a kind of scherzo but with two trios, marked *Alternativos*. In the first trio we hear dance music, a polka-like *allegro*, reminiscences of happier times, but the second is more somber. The opening theme to the finale, *Presto*, is full of restless energy, the second subject is elegaic. The themes alternate with each other until they morph into a funeral march. A powerful work, full of emotion. Musically demanding but not for technical problems.



Julia Smith (1911-1989) was born in Denton, Texas. She studied piano and composition first at the University of North Texas, then at the Juilliard School of Music and at New York University where she obtained a doctorate. She enjoyed a career as both a concert pianist and a teacher, holding positions at Juilliard and the Hart School of Music. She is mostly known for her large scale works such as her operas and orchestra pieces. Her style is eclectic combining elements of folk music, jazz and French impressionism. It is traditionally tonal. The **Trio Cornwall** dates from 1966 and has nothing to do with the English shire of Cornwall, but rather with Cornwall on the Hudson in New York State where the composer first heard bird calls which she used as thematic material for the work, especially in the first movement. It is in three movements, the opening *Allegro giusto* is a bouncy melodic piece that is quite appealing. It has the feel of the New England School of composers, i.e. Beach, Foote, Chadwick et.al. A Theme and Variations comes next and has a sort of early American children's melody as its theme. The variations are ingenious with a blues-like episode and rumba interlude of particular note. The boisterous and playful finale, *Allegro quasi rondo*, resembles the first movement in spirit although it is punctuated by an occasional moody interlude before concluding with a catchy hoedown coda. This is a first rate work to which professionals should give serious consideration when searching for an 20th Century American work.



**Ethyl Smyth** (1858-1944) was born in London. She studied composition at the Leipzig Conservatory with Carl Reinecke and privately with Heinrich von Herzogenberg. Her **Piano Trio in d minor** dates from 1880 during her time in Leipzig, but it was not published until the mid 1980's. It is not surprising that the work shows the influence of Brahms since he was Herzogenberg's alpha and omega and also because it was at that time she was introduced to Brahms. The work opens with a big, spacious *Allegro non troppo* which proceeds at a leisurely pace. A gentle *Andante* follows and though not so marked is a theme and set of variations. Next comes a scherzo, *Presto con brio*. This is the most original sounding and impressive movement of the trio, but even here, we cannot escape echoes of Brahms. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, is full of forward motion and appealing thematic material. The influence of her teacher Herzogenberg hovers the music and for this reason it sounds less derivative. All said and done, this is an accomplished work by the 22 year old Smyth. Unfortunately, the fact that it has appeared some 100 years after it was composed is not going to help it get much traction.



The American composer **Rick Sowash** (1950-) was born in Mansfield, Ohio. He studied piano as a child and eventually went to Ohio State University where he studied music. He has five piano trios to his credit, four of which have subtitles. His style is eclectic combining many different elements from classical to jazz and beyond, but it is always tonal, full of original and engaging ideas and appealing

melodies presented in an updated fashion. He considers himself what he calls a regionalist composer. Ohio is a midwestern state and many of his ideas are related to his roots there. **Piano Trio No.1 “Four Seasons in Bellville”** dates from 1977. He lived and worked in Belleville, Ohio between 1976 and 1988. Copeland’s Appalchian Spring served as an inspiration for the work. The opening movement Adagietto subtitled ‘Winter’ is bleak. Next is a jaunty and upbeat Allegro moderato ‘Spring’. Then, of course, ‘Summer’ and Allegro moderato. This, too, is upbeat, good humored and full of energy. ‘Autumn’ is a Largo, rather lugubrious. A very evocative and well-put together work. **Piano Trio No.2 “Orientale and Galop”** is from 1980 and was commissioned by the Mirecourt Trio who championed his works playing them in concert and recording them on CD. In two movements, the Orientale, an Andante, is jazzy and has echoes of Gershwin. A contrasting middle section has a hymn-like quality. A jazzy cello solo precedes The Galop, an upbeat Presto, which has march-like elements which recall Sousa. **Piano Trio No.3 “A Christmas Divertimento”** was completed in 1983. It is in seven short movements and opens with an uplifting Allegro. Next comes an Allegretto which is a kind of sailor’s dance, a hornpipe. The third movement, Moderato, is slow with a sad plaint and is then followed by a very short Allegro vigoroso that provides a strong contrast. The fifth movement, Lento, quotes several Shaker folk songs. The Shakers were a religious group well known for their abstinence and primarily active in Ohio. The sixth movement, Moderato espressivo, is a soft, lyrical romance. The finale movement is a set of variations and a fugue based on the Boar’s Head Carol, a English folk song said to date from Anglo-Saxon times but the music appears to have come from Queens College, Oxford. **Piano Trio No.4** is a revision of a 1963 work finished in 1983. It is the only one of Sowash’s five trios without a subtitle. It is in two movements and opens with an angular, energetic and angry Presto tempesto. The second movement, Adagio molto espressivo, while not exactly sad, has dirge like qualities and a touch of the funereal. **Piano Trio No.5, “Eroica”** which started out life as a cello sonata. Begun around 1980, it was never completed. In 2000 Sowash returned to it and turned it into a trio. The massive first movement, *Allegro*, begins with the strings caught almost in mid-phase, as it were, with some inconsequential rambling. But after only a few seconds, the music quickly builds to a majestic opening. The main theme is of great breadth and power. The writing is unabashedly romantic, but neither clichéd nor derivative. The contrasting middle section features some unusual effects such as *ponticello*. The middle movement, *Adagio*, is elegiac. The bouncy main theme of the finale, *Presto*, sounds the most modern. It is full of twists and turns but shot throughout with rays of hope. Of these five trios, it is the first and the fifth, in my opinion, that are the most deserving of attention and should be heard in concert.

**Hermann Spielter** (1860-1925) was born in the German town of Barmen. He studied piano and composition and was active in Schwelm for a number of years as a teacher and composer. Some

time around 1900, he emigrated to New York, where he spent the rest of his life. In America, he continued to compose and held several conducting positions as well as continuing to teach. His **Piano Trio in F Major, Op.15** dates from 1888. This is a work perfect for amateur ensembles looking for a accomplished performance work. The work opens with a pleasing Allegro moderato and is followed by a lyrical Andante con moto. Then comes a lively scherzo, Allegro vivace. The trio concludes with a lilting and sharply accented Allegro commodo. Very well-written.



**Louis Spohr** (1784-1859 also know as Ludwig) was born in the German city of Braunschweig. From early childhood, he showed a great aptitude for the violin. He studied with the virtuoso violinist Franz Anton Eck in St. Petersburg and ultimately became one of the leading violinists in the first half of the 19th century. He also became a leading conductor, a highly regarded composer and a famous violin teacher. In the 1830’s he bemoaned his lack of ability on the piano and said that he would gladly trade a year’s salary to be able to play the piano well. Sometime during the late 1830’s he undertook a rigorous course of study of the instrument and by the 1840’s had become a good, if not great, pianist. The main result of this was that he was able to compose chamber works with piano, such as his piano trios. **Piano Trio No.1 in e minor, Op.119**, which Spohr subtitled Concertante, was completed 1841 and created a sensation upon its premiere. Critics wrote that it had no parallel from Beethoven through Mendelssohn either in its construction or use of instruments. This was because Spohr, as a violinist and quartet player, had an intimate knowledge of the abilities of the string instruments. He was able to write for them on an equal basis and even do such things as giving the cello the real bass while the left hand of the piano played an octave above, something no composer before him had ventured to do. Perhaps more than his other trios, this one with its wistful pathos is an expression of Spohr’s personality. This is especially prominent in the first theme of the opening movement, Moderato. A march-like second theme precedes several bravura passages. In the broad and lyrical second movement, Larghetto, Spohr presents only one theme but gives it several contrasting settings. The Scherzo which follows especially impressed critics with what we might now call its jazzy syncopation, which in some ways anticipates Slavonic dances. The finale, Vivace, combines a fiery main theme with a more relaxed second subject. **Piano Trio No.2 in F Major, Op.123** dates from 1842 and of his five trios is written on the largest scale. The first movement Allegro moderato begins with a powerful opening phrase which leads directly to the chromatic first theme. The second theme demonstrates an example of imaginative scoring. The Larghetto which comes next is one more remarkable in the literature. The cello with only the piano for a soft accompaniment, in its lower registers, sings a sad and forlorn theme. The violin’s entrance briefly creates a moment of tension before moving on to the lyrical second theme. Then comes a Scherzo with a haunting leisurely dance-line melody. By contrast, the trio section is bright and sunny. The finale, Vivace, begins in the minor with a promising theme which quickly dissolves into rushing triplet passages which create considerable excitement. **Piano Trio No.3 in a minor, Op.124** was also completed 1842. The dramatic opening of the Allegro moderato, begins with a theme of pathos. This is immediately followed by a highly romantic theme. In the second movement, Andante con variazione, Spohr chooses a fine folk



ballad for his theme, which proves capable of withstanding the wide-ranging treatment it is given. The Scherzo which comes next is of the sort in which Spohr was a master. It might be called the flip-side of the Mendelssohnian scherzo with its elves and fairies. Spohr's scherzos are haunted and tend to feature ghosts and ogres. The contrasting trio is more ethereal. The finale, Presto, seems to take up where the Scherzo leaves and begins with a haunted "march of the goblins." Full of exciting and bizarre twists and turns, it provides an excellent conclusion to what is one of Spohr's very best chamber works. **Piano Trio No.4 in B flat Major, Op.133** dates from 1846. It is generally lighter in mood than his other piano trios. The opening Allegro has for its main subject a flowing, dance-like theme, untroubled in character. For his second movement, Spohr substitutes a stately Minuetto for what, by that time, would almost certainly have been a scherzo. What is perhaps surprising are the sudden capricious interruptions. The third movement, Poco adagio has the character of a noble hymn. The finale, a playful Presto, is a sparkling affair. Spohr called it a Sprudelsatz—a bubbling movement—because the music just bubbled forth from his pen effortlessly, while he was taking the cure at Carlsbad Spa with its bubbling springs. **Piano Trio No.5 in g minor, Op.142** was composed in 1848. The opening movement, Allegro vivace, is filled with urgent, march-like themes. In contrast, the themes of second movement, Adagio, are calmer and filled with nobility. A restless Scherzo follows. The finale, Presto, opens with dramatic ascending passages and its flowing undercurrent creates an even greater sense of restless than the opening movement, although the lyrical second theme serves to relieve the tension created by the opening section.



**Alexei Stanchinsky** (1888-1914) was born in the Russian town of Obolsunovo. He received piano lessons at an early age and by the time he was six, he was regarded as a prodigy. Eventually, he enrolled in the Moscow Conservatory where he studied piano with Joseph Lhevinne and composition with Sergei Taneyev. His compositions, which were regarded as groundbreaking by his teachers and peers, were mostly for piano. Very few were published during his lifetime. His father's death in 1908 led to a nervous breakdown from which it took him 2 years to recover. His music was influenced by several composers, the most noticeable being Scriabin, Mussorgsky and Grieg. The **Piano Trio in D Major**, in one fairly large movement, was not published until some 52 years after his death in 1966. It was begun in 1907 and completed in 1910, but this was not because he worked on it for 3 years, but because shortly after it was begun, Stanchinsky suffered his breakdown from which he had to be hospitalized. The main theme of the trio is clearly folkloric in nature. The melodies most often sound like something out of the American West that Aaron Copeland might have written but at other times, they are clearly inspired by Russian folk melody. It is heavily scored in the string parts, with the violin often given substantial passages of double stops. The treatment of all of the instruments is masterful.

**Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852-1924) was born in Dublin without question one of Britain's most important 19th and early 20th century composers. He was fortunate in being able to study under two of the leading teachers of his day: Carl Reinecke in Leipzig and Friedrich Kiel in Berlin. While studying abroad, Stanford met



Brahms and became friends with him. Upon his return to England, he helped found an English national style and contributed to the renaissance of British music. This was particularly true in the realm of chamber music where Stanford almost single-handedly jump-started the British repertoire. Among his many students were Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, Frank

Bridge, Ernst Moeran, Arthur Bliss, and Percy Grainger. During his lifetime, he and his compositions were held in the highest regard. After his death, he was unfairly attacked for having been too heavily influenced by Brahms. While it is to some extent true that his early works show a German influence this should really come as no surprise for two reasons. First, during the last part of the 19th century, the British, unlike the French and the Russians, had yet to develop anything that could be called a national style. Since the time of Mozart, the leading composers of Austria and Germany were held up as the models to follow: Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Schumann showed the way. Later, men like Reinecke and Kiel transmitted this influence to their many students, a prodigious amount of whom, like Stanford, became famous in their own right. It should be noted that very few who studied in Germany escaped or wanted to escape this German influence. Men from such disparate backgrounds as Borodin, Busoni, Respighi, Grieg and the American George Chadwick, to name but a few, are examples. His **Piano Trio No.1 in E flat Major, Op.35** dates from 1889. The opening Allegro grazioso begins in a relatively unassuming way and slowly builds momentum but always remains true to its grazioso character. The melodies are certainly ingratiating. The light-hearted second movement, Allegretto con moto, performs the function of a brief, dance-like intermezzo. The tempo of the Tempo di Minuetto which comes next is perhaps that of a slow minuet but the music is more in the form of a lyrical andante. The finale, Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco, right from the start begins in an exciting fashion. The themes are thrusting and energetic and crown a well-crafted and appealing work. If Stanford had been German, no one would have hesitated, even today, to place it in the front rank of piano trios from this time period. Sadly, the prejudice against Anglo-America composers led to its being marginalized. **Piano Trio No.2 in g minor, Op.73** was composed in 1890. It opens with an impetuous theme, Allegro moderato, rich and full-blooded. A questioning bridge passage leads to the romantic and lyrical second subject. In the second movement, Andante, the piano presents the gentle theme alone for sometime before the strings finally enter to restate it. (our sound-bite begins here). There is a short fugal bridge section which leads to the powerful, dramatic climax of the movement. This is followed by a Presto, which is a muscular and thrusting scherzo. The gorgeous trio section is slower and provides excellent contrast. The finale, Larghetto--Allegro con fuoco, begins with a slow, introduction, pregnant with expectation, in which several parts of what is to be the main theme, are heard in a distended version. Then, after a brief pause, the powerful Allegro bursts forth (our sound-bite starts here) fulfilling the expectations created by the Larghetto. **Piano Trio No.3 in A Major, Op.158** dates from 1918. Although the work is dedicated to the memory of the sons of two of his friends who had been killed in the First World War, the music does not commemorate their deaths. The main theme to the opening Allegro moderato ma con fuoco is thrusting and energetic while the second theme is lyrical and reflective. The middle movement, Ada-

gio, is sweet and a bit sad, but not funereal. Even when it rises to moments of heightened passion, there is no bitterness. The finale, *Allegro maestoso*, begins ceremonial with a celebratory, jovial melody and continues on in a triumphant vein. All three of his trios are first rate and deserve to be heard in concert and should also interest amateur ensembles.

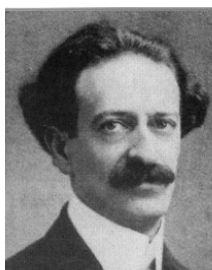


**Ewald Straesser** (also Sträßer 1867-1933) was born in the Rhenish town of Burscheid not far from Cologne. After studying music locally, he entered the Cologne Conservatory where he studied with Franz Wüllner. After graduating, Straesser held a teaching position there and then later became a professor at the Stuttgart Conservatory. Between 1910-1920, Straesser's symphonies enjoyed great popularity and were performed by the leading conductors of the day such as Artur Nikisch, Richard Strauss, Willem Mengelberg, Felix Weingartner, and Wilhelm Furtwängler. His chamber music was also frequently performed by the then active leading ensembles. His **Piano Trio in D Major, Op.33** dates from 1917. It is in three concise movements. It opens with a *Ben sostenuto* introduction leading to an *Allegro moderato* whose main theme is quite appealing. The middle movement *Andante sostenuto* has a particularly impressive melody for its main theme and a quicker contrasting middle section, which might be considered in lieu of a scherzo. The finale, *Frisch un energetisch*, begins as a kind of a German march and later becomes quite dramatic, almost operatic. This is an engaging work, good for the concert hall, but it is not an easy work and will be beyond most amateur groups..



**Richard Strauss** (1864-1949), is quite well-known for his operas and symphonic tone poems. Many people are completely unaware of the fact that he did write a string quartet, a piano quartet, and two piano trios. These works were all written before Strauss reached 25. His two piano trios date from 1877 and 1878. The occasion for their composition has to do with the fact that Strauss' good friend, Ludwig Thuille had been accepted as a student of composition at the Royal Music School. Strauss, who as mentioned received his musical tuition privately, felt the urge to compete with his friend. The trios were dedicated to Richard's maternal uncles; the first to Munich Public Prosecutor, Anton Knözinger, and the second to Georg Pschorr, owner of the famous Munich brewery, Hacker-Pschorr. They were performed privately on several occasions apparently to acclaim. That they were subsequently forgotten is no doubt due to the fact that Strauss had been but 13 and 14 at the time he composed these works and later he no doubt felt they were not representative of who he was as a composer. The trios remained unpublished throughout Strauss' lifetime and in fact were only brought out in 1996. If no one told you who the composer was to Strauss' **Piano Trio No.1 in A Major**, reasonable guesses might be late Mozart, early Beethoven or Carl Maria von Weber, or perhaps an amalgam of all three. Yes, the year was 1877 and yes, Strauss was clearly a student at the time, but like many of Mendelssohn's youthful works which were modelled on earlier composers, this piano trio is more than a mere student work in that it shows a mastery of technique and does not sport the kinds of errors characteristic of student efforts. In four movements, the trio begins with an *Allegro moderato*, in which all three voices

together introduce the listener to the main theme which sounds like something Beethoven might have penned about the time he was studying with Haydn: One difference is that the cello writing is far better than was Beethoven's at that time, although Ludwig may well have been influenced by Haydn's rather anemic use of the cello in his own piano trios. Not too long and well-worked out, this is a reasonably good movement. An *Adagio* comes next. It is relatively short and without a second theme but again well written. The third movement is a *Menuetto* which reaches back beyond the Viennese Classics to the French Rococo for its inspiration. There is nothing very remarkable about it, although in the short trio section, the violin is given a very charming melody. To me, the most striking and best movement is the finale, *Allegro vivace* in which the cello introduces a hunt-like rondo melody in 6/8. There is some very fetching and clever piano writing which achieves the kind of brilliant and original effect Weber often achieved. All in all, this is a remarkable effort for a 13 year old, especially if, as Strauss claimed, it was written in 2 days time while he laid sick in bed. Strauss shows a very good understanding of the three instruments and how to combine them and the part writing is both clear and even-handed, the piano part is neither incrementally harder or nor bigger than the string parts. While I don't think the trio is a candidate for the concert hall, amateurs will certainly enjoy this work which makes only very modest technical demands. Although **Piano Trio No.2 in D** was written only a year later, it is, in part, tonally far more advanced. One can hear the influence of Schumann, Mendelssohn and of the young Brahms. However, the writing is not as even as that of the first trio. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, is quite good. The part writing, the use of the instruments, and the thematic material are all above reproach. It is doubtful anyone hearing this movement would conclude it was written by a student, let alone a 14 year old. The first theme shows the influence of Schumann and has a brief Brahmsian introduction. An *Andante cantabile ma non troppo* comes next. The piano introduces the faintly Hungarian sounding first theme. It is played entirely in the middle and lower registers until the strings join in some 16 measures later. The very effective second theme has more forward motion and a heightened sense of drama. Again the writing is of a high standard. It is in the third movement, *Scherzo, allegro assai* that, in my opinion, the writing falls off. The first theme is pedestrian and not worthy of all of the excitement that Strauss tries to generate through the quick tempo and racing rhythmic part in the piano. In fact, the piano has far too many notes. The writing in the trio section is better and sounds a bit like Schubert. In the finale, *Allegro assai*, the piano part is both florid and preeminent. The music sounds like a cross between Weber and Mendelssohn but the thematic material is weaker. It is a pity because if the entire trio were of the standard of the first two movements, it could be recommended to professionals for performance in the concert hall, perhaps as an historical rarity. Amateurs will enjoy it, but will need a pianist who is quite good.

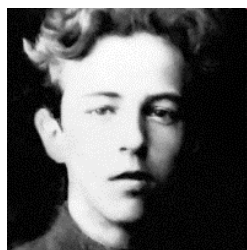


Oscar Straus (1870-1954) was born in Vienna and studied at the conservatory there with Hermann Graedener and then later with Max Bruch. He was primarily a composer of operettas. His **Suite in Tanzform, Op.43** for Piano Trio appeared in 1900. As the title suggests, it is lighter music. The music to the opening movement, *Preambule, Allegro moderato*, flows easily along with attractive

themes. Next comes a charming, waltz-like Scherzo with a contrasting and effective trio section. It is followed by an Intermezzo, Andantino quasi allegretto, a true salon piece, and concludes with a jolly Allegretto grazioso. This is not music which is intended to plumb the depths, but it is superbly written, highly entertaining and makes for a good performance piece.



**Josef Suk (1874-1935)** was born in Krecovice in southern Bohemia, then part of Austria. He studied piano, violin and organ with his father who served as village choirmaster. His exceptional talent led to his being enrolled at the Prague Conservatory in 1885 at the age of 11 where he first studied violin. Eventually, he became a composition student of Antonin Dvorak. He graduated in 1891, and kept up a friendship with Dvorak, whose daughter he married in 1898. He formed what became the world famous Bohemian Quartet with three of his fellow students. Suk played second violin with the Quartet for most of his life. From 1922, he taught at the Prague Conservatory. Among his many students were the composer Bohuslav Martinu and the pianist Rudolf Firkušny. His **Piano Trio in c minor, Op.2** was composed while Suk was studying at the Prague Conservatory. It was performed in 1891 and as a result of this performance, Suk was recommended for a place in Dvorak's composition master class. Suk eventually showed the trio to Dvorak who made further recommendations. The main theme to the opening Allegro is expressed by a powerful series of piano chords against a striving melody in the strings. The slower, second theme, introduced by the cello, is more lyrical. The second movement is a striking, Andante. It is a relaxed and elegant folk dance. The lovely second subject is extremely romantic. The main theme to the finale, Vivace, is a highly original and heavily syncopated dance. Its forward energy has a bright and brilliant second part, while the second theme is an optimistic march. It can be recommended to both professionals and amateurs, who will surely find it pleasant to play, be it in concert or at home



**Georgy Sviridov (1915-1998)**, was born in the Russian town of Fatezh in Kurst province. After studying folk instruments locally, he eventually entered the Leningrad Conservatory where he studied with Shostakovich among others. He spent most of his life in Moscow working as a composer. He wrote primarily for voice and his piano trio is his only chamber music work other than a sonata. His **Piano Trio in a minor, Op.6**

was composed during 1945-46 and clearly shows the influence of Sviridov's teacher Shostakovich. It is a massive work, written on a grand scale. The first movement, marked Elegy opens with a subdued melody shared by the strings. This mood is brusquely interrupted by a powerful episode in the piano, full of passion and anguish. Given that it was written during the height of Leningrad's struggle for survival against the brutal Nazi attack lengthy siege, and that Sviridov was in the city at the time, most commentators suggest that it is related to this. The second movement, Scherzo, though exciting and energetic is a dance macabre, a devil's dance of death. The trio section, romantic and innocent stands in sharp contrast. Next comes a Funeral March, once again we hear the main subject of the elegy from the first movement, but now it is even more somber and gloomy as befits such a

march. The finale, marked Idyll, has a pastoral quality, perhaps connoting that peace has returned to the land, but the movement ends sadly and quietly, a reminder of the tragedy of war. It was not for nothing that this incredible work won the 1946 Stalin prize. Those who either hear or play Sviridov's stunning piano trio for the first time will wonder why we never hear this masterpiece in concert. It certainly belongs in the repertoire.



**Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983)** was a star at the Paris Conservatory and became part of the famous group of composers (Auric, Durey, Poulenc, Honneger & Milhaud) known as *Les Six*. She was perhaps France's best known woman composer of the 20th century. Besides her ties with *Les Six*, she was also on friendly terms with Stravinsky and Ravel as well as many of the most important avant garde writers of her time. Her **Piano Trio (1978)** was begun in 1916 and completed the following year, it was originally in three movements: *Assez animé*, *Calme sans lenteur*, and *Trés animé*. It was never published. Then in 1978, Tailleferre received a commission from the French Ministry for Culture. She decided to use the outer movements of the 1916/17 trio and wrote two inner movements. The opening *Allegro animato* is full of lush tonalities against a background of nervous energy. It shows the strong influence of Debussy. This is followed by an *Allegro vivace* which is a short engaging march, filtered through the lens of late French impressionism. A gentle and lyrical *Moderato* comes next and serves as the work's slow movement. In the sparkling finale, *Trés animé*, some very interesting and beautiful melody is sandwiched between the fast sections. The four movements stylistically seem of the same cloth and make a remarkable whole. It is a short and excellent work and deserves to be heard in concert.



**Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915)** is one of the greatest Russian composers from the last half of the 19th and early 20th centuries and probably, from this group, the one whose music is the least known in the West. Taneyev came from an aristocratic family that patronized the arts and when Sergei's talent became apparent, his father sent him to the newly opened Moscow Conservatory at the age of

10. His main teachers there were Nicolai Rubinstein for piano and Tchaikovsky for composition. Although he became a brilliant pianist, Taneyev opted for a career as a composer and teacher and soon became a professor at the Conservatory. His fame both as a teacher and as a composer quickly spread. Among his many students were Gliere, Rachmaninov, Gretchaninov, Scriabin and Medtner. In Russian concert halls, one always finds a bust of Taneyev alongside those of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Tchaikovsky. Sadly, the fame of this outstanding composer has not spread beyond his homeland. His **Piano Trio in D, Op.22** dates from 1908 and dedicated to the composer Alexander Gretchaninov. The opening theme to the first movement, Allegro, is noble, yet reserved. It is followed by a dark, somewhat macabre and brooding scherzo, Allegro molto. A slow movement, Andante espressivo, with rich and warm melodies comes next. The finale, Allegro con brio, is full of life and good spirits. It qualifies as a masterpiece and certainly deserves to be heard in concert and not to be missed by good amateurs



**Peter Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893) is known for his symphonies, orchestral works and operas but not so much for his chamber music. His piano trio cannot be said to be entirely unknown, but unlike those of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Shostakovich or Beethoven, it is very rarely played so I will include it here. The **Piano Trio in a minor, Op.50** was occasioned by the death

in 1881 of his close friend Nicolai Rubinstein. Rubinstein, who is all but forgotten today, was one of the great personalities of 19th century Russian music. Considered the pianistic equal to his famous brother Anton, Nicolai had chosen not to pursue an international concert career. Instead he served as founder-director of the Moscow Conservatory. It was he who hired the young and struggling Tchaikovsky as a professor, and it was he who arranged for the premieres of many of the composer's most important works. The trio is subtitled *To the memory of a great artist*. The balance between the instruments could be better as the piano has an inordinate amount of the interest. Tchaikovsky was well aware of this, having written to a friend, "I am afraid, having written all my life for the orchestra and only taken late in life to chamber music, I may have failed to adapt the instrumental combination to my thoughts. In short, I fear I may have arranged music of a symphonic character as a trio instead of writing directly for my instruments." Much of the opening movement finds the violin and the cello taking a subsidiary role, despite the fierce quasi-orchestral flavor of many of their accompanying figures. There are devices to strengthen these, including a *sempre marcato* instruction against the left hand of the piano part. The movement includes expressive tempo changes, and during the more hectically dramatic passages, there are moments when the chordal writing in massive octaves for the keyboard are certainly redolent of the romantic concerto. This tension-laden style appears only intermittently, but in the coda to the movement the sheer excitement of the music sweeps away criticisms of Tchaikovsky's "symphonic" chamber music style. The concluding movement, *Tema con variazioni*, is more a metamorphoses since the varied treatment of the theme is in no way classical. It has been suggested that each variation represents some incident in Rubinstein's life, and although the actual music gives no direct evidence of this, it could account for the free fantasia style of much of the writing. A sober statement of the melody by the piano, violin and cello in turn is followed by the second variation. It is in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time and has the character of a mazurka. The tempo quickens for the third variation to *Allegro moderato*, the piano part being marked *Scherzoso*, while the violin and cello are limited to gentle pizzicati. The brilliance of this variation represents Tchaikovsky at his best. Realizing perhaps the attractive effect of these moments of sparkling good humor, he turns to more serious matters somewhat cautiously, for the fourth variation is kept at the same tempo, hinting however at fugal methods. Although Variation V is in the minor, the right hand of the keyboard part is full of gaiety, while Variation VI, though in A Major, is a waltz tinged with sadness. Variation VII is rather orchestral in layout and as such more powerful. Variation VIII is in fact a fugue on a variant of the theme but is often cut in concert (a revision Tchaikovsky suggested after hearing the first performance). Variation IX is a rhapsodic fantasia with the melody mainly in the muted violin. Tchaikovsky was unhappy about the proportions of the finale and decided that the first 145 measures could be omitted. This means that the movement, superficially in sonata form, starts at its recapitulation, thus avoiding a "re-restatement"

of the theme of the variations. Though now lacking the size of a full-scale finale, this section still is an effective apotheosis, especially when the dark, elegiac opening theme of the first movement reappears (*lugubre*) in the form of a funeral march as the coda, a powerful and beautiful ending to this highly suggestive if somewhat problematic work.



**Alexandre Tcherepnin** (1893-1977) was the son of the composer Nikolai Tcherepnin. He studied piano and composition at the Petersburg, Tiflis and Paris Conservatories where his family moved after the Revolution. He enjoyed a cosmopolitan career teaching both in Europe and U.S. His time in Georgia was of considerable significance to his later work as a composer as he became very interested in Georgian folk

music with its different tonalities. This and his fascination with the major-minor triad and its modal possibilities led him to create a 9 tone scale divided into three tetrachords. He used this scale to compose most of his works and wrote a treatise on the subject. His tiny **Piano Trio, Op.34**, which dates from 1925 is in three short three movements. The first *Moderato tranquillo-Allegro*, begins softly with a somewhat depressed and dragging theme. The tonality is rather muddy and uncertain. However, this changes in the tense and exciting *Allegro*. A definite melodic theme can be heard and is logically developed in a way which can be easily followed. In the coda, the slow section reappears but ends on a tonic. The very appealing second movement *Allergretto* is very chromatic. It combines an elegant lyrical melody with bizarre flourishes. The middle section is quick and lively. The opening section then reappears to conclude the movement. The hectic, frenetic finale, *Allegro molto*, is also highly chromatic. A relentlessly pounding theme of the sort Shostakovich was later to use is featured. It is a very approachable work and not hard to see why it was often performed.



**Thomas Dyke Acland Tellefsen** (1823-1874) was born in Norwegian city of Trondheim. His first music lessons were with his father a church organist. In 1843 he went to Paris, where he studied with Charlotte Thygeson, Friedrich Kalkbrenner and then with Frédéric Chopin, whose favorite student he became. During his lifetime, Tellefsen was widely regarded as one

of the outstanding pianists of his time, and was especially admired as an interpreter of Chopin's music. Besides his career as a concert pianist, he was also active in performing chamber music. Most of his compositions are for piano. However, he did write a number of instrumental sonatas of note, in particular for the violin and cello. He was close friends with the French violinist Alard and the Belgium cello virtuoso Franchomme, with whom he often performed, and this no doubt was the impetus for writing those sonatas as well as his **Piano Trio in B flat Major, Op.31**, which was completed in 1861 and is in four movements. The opening *Allegro maestoso* begins in relatively sedate fashion. But slowly, tension is built as the romantic opening theme is given a striving development. A second theme is of an heroic nature. In the second movement, *Scherzo moderato*, the piano is given the lead in presenting a light-footed, French, somewhat delicate theme to a long-lined, brooding accompaniment in the strings. The trio section begins in the same vein with bursts of Norwegian folk melody making brief appearances. An Adagio, featuring very roman-

tic, Chopinesque melodic writing, follows. The finale, *Allegro*, begins rather calmly with the piano introducing the main subject. When the strings enter, they repeat it with a heightened sense of delicacy and elegance. Suddenly, they burst into a marching development, full of power and energy. This trio is typical of the mid-romantic French era. It is an engaging work combining elements of Chopin's musical thought with some Norwegian folk melody.



**Sigismund Thalberg** (1812-1871) was born in Pâquis near Geneva, Switzerland. Born out of wedlock, his father was a prince, his mother a baroness who was a brilliant amateur pianist and it generally thought that she became his primary teacher. By the time he finally took some lessons from the famous virtuoso Ignaz Moscheles at the age of 14, Moscheles was of the opinion that Thalberg needed no further

lessons to become a great artist. He subsequently became one of Europe's leading piano virtuosos, generally considered the equal of Liszt, though some such as Mendelssohn and Onslow thought him better. One of the main differences between Thalberg and Liszt was that Thalberg did not engage in overweening showmanship. His repertoire remained rooted in the classics and he often performed in chamber music ensembles. The bulk of his compositions were for the piano, however, he did write a few works for violin and piano as well as this piano trio. As a frequent performer of chamber music, Thalberg realized that excessive virtuosic displays were out of place in chamber music and saved those for his piano works. Instead, one finds in his **Piano Trio in A Major, Op.69** that all three instruments are treated in true chamber music style. Composed in 1853, the work is in three movements and begins with a richly scored *Allegretto molto moderato*. The gorgeous but leisurely themes take their time to reach a dramatic climax. In the second movement, *Andante cantabile*, the piano is held entirely in the background—extraordinary for a composer who was a piano virtuoso. All of the action is in the string parts. The writing is redolent of Schubert and Schumann, but it even out does them in the way the piano is held check. Certainly, this is one of the most beautiful movements in the romantic era literature. The finale, *Allegretto ma non troppo*, begins as a scherzo but slowly morphs into a true *allegretto* only to periodically return to the style of a scherzo. Again, the fine writing for all three instruments is on display. This is a first rate piano trio from the mid romantic era which is deserving of concert performance. It is no way beyond amateurs who certainly enjoy it as well.



**Pedro (Pere in Catalan) Tintorer** (1814-1891) was born in Palma de Mallorca to Catalan parents but grew up in Barcelona where he studied with Ramon Vilanova music director of the cathedral. At the age of 16 he entered the Madrid Conservatory where he studied piano with Pedro Albeniz and composition with Ramon Canicer after which he attended the Paris Conservatory where he studied with Pierre Zimmerman. He remained

in Paris until 1836 during which time he is thought to have studied privately with Franz Liszt. He served as a professor for many years at the Lyon Conservatory before returning to Barcelona where he served as a professor and then director of the Conservatori del Liceu in Barcelona. He composed in most genres. His

**Piano Trio** dates from the mid 1840's. The opening *Allegro* begins with a bright and clever melody, however, its elaboration though attractive and appealing often veers across the border in the land of drawing room music, though of a high quality. The cello is allowed to present the main theme to the middle movement, *Andante moto*. It is simple but lyrical and there is a vague Spanish flavor to it, although it is mostly dressed in the clothing of early the romantic period in Vienna. The substantial finale, *Allegro moderato*, begins with a charming and sprightly melody. The music is gay and carefree, attractive and appealing. It probably was not intended to be more than it is, very pleasant.



**Fernand de La Tombelle** (1854-1928) was born in Paris and studied piano with his mother who had been a student of Liszt and Thalberg. He also studied organ with the famous French organ virtuoso Alexandre Guilmant. At the Paris Conservatory he studied composition with Theodore Dubois and organ with Guilmant. Subsequently, he became a well-known organist in Paris. He was, along with Vincent

d'Indy, Guilmant and Charles Bordes, one of the founders of the Schola Cantorum, France's other great conservatory. He taught there for many years. He wrote in most genres. His **Piano Trio in g minor, Op.35** dates from 1894. The big opening *Allegro* is definitely French, showing as it does the influence of his teacher Dubois but also of his friend Vincent d'Indy. It is fluid, the themes full of yearning, but there are also hints of Schumann which makes for an interesting mix. A dreamy, somewhat sad *Lento* follows. The short third movement is a nervous *Allegretto scherzando*, not really an *allegretto* at all but an *allegro*. The exciting finale, an *Allegro vivace*, owes more to the tradition of Schumann than to his French cohorts. An excellent work, suitable for concert performance and the music stands of competent amateurs.



**Donald Tovey** (1875-1940) was born in the English town of Eton. He studied piano privately and subsequently attended Oxford and the Royal Academy of Music in London where he studied composition with Hubert Parry. He enjoyed a career as a concert performer as well as a composer and served as a Professor of Music for more than 25 years at Edinburgh University. Today he is best remembered for his essays on music, but he regarded himself first and foremost as a composer.

Tovey wrote in most genres and his compositions were not only respected but regularly performed in such important venues as London, Vienna and Berlin. But like the works of so many others, it has inexplicably disappeared from the concert stage. He wrote several chamber music works, most dating from the last decade of the 19th century up to the First World War. Tovey's **Piano Trio No.1 in b minor, Op.1** was composed in 1895 while he was a student at Oxford and submitted for a competition but was published until 1910. It was dedicated to Hubert Parry with whom Tovey had studied periodically on a private basis. Somewhat surprisingly, for a first work, it is written on a massive scale. The opening movement, *Maestoso, Andante ma con moto*, over shadows the other movements in its breadth and length. It begins rather calmly, almost languidly. Rather than any sense of the majestic, there is a diffidence. But slowly tension is built and

leads to several effective dramatic climaxes. The second movement is marked Minuetto, molto moderato and it is identifiable as such to begin with. But this is a very free-form movement and soon the music is unrecognizable as any kind of a minuet. It has a rather dreamy and limp quality. The mood is subdued and the tempo is rather relaxed. It is only with the arrival of the third movement, Rhapsodie, Feroce, that the music acquires real energy and drive, however, it cannot be styled as fierce. Rather it begins as a kind of cheerful march. The second subject has a vaguely Oriental flavor to it. The finale, Allegro ma non troppo, begins unusually with a tinkling part in the piano but an attractive yearning melody in the strings. The music quickly builds in drama and excitement. **Piano Trio No.2 in c minor, Op.8** also dates from 1895 and was originally composed for clarinet, horn and piano. Tovey, who was quite fond of this composition, wanted it to receive as wide an airing as possible and recognized that it would not receive many performances if it remained solely as a trio for winds and piano. He therefore set about and created a version for standard piano trio and it is in this form that the work became best known. Both versions were published simultaneously for the first time in 1912 by which time he had also added the "Style Tragique" to the title. Certainly the beginning of the opening movement, Allegro moderato, has the mood of the tragic to it. A heavy and emotion laden theme is brought forth by all three instruments. The forward motion is very deliberate although the various tempi give the music the feel of rubato. A second theme is more lyrical and less dramatic. The second movement, Largo, opens quietly with subdued chords. The theme takes a long time to unfold like a garden of flowers planted from seedlings, however, when it finally is in full bloom, it is glorious to behold. Thus the music here. The finale, Allegro non tanto, begins with a very powerful theme which is an unusual blend of thrust and lilt. Here and there, one catches, tinges of Brahms. **Piano Trio No.3 in D Major, Op.27** was composed in 1910. The opening Allegro con brio has for its main theme a heroic subject full of drive and confidence. The lovely main subject of the middle movement, Larghetto maestoso, is presented first by the piano and then the strings. It is developed in a rhapsodic fashion. The finale, Allegro energico, non presto, though marked non presto nevertheless is lively and exciting. One can hear that Beethoven is not far from the composer's thoughts in some of the fugal episodes. This is an absolutely first rate work which was popular for a short time, but then like so many other fine works from the Romantic era disappeared from the concert stage and the literature. It is a fresh alternative to the often heard "War Horses" and is sure to make a strong impression in the concert hall as well as impressing amateur players.



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

and composition under Vincent d'Indy in the Schola Cantorum. He became good friends with Isaac Albeniz and Manuel de Falla. It was Albeniz who encouraged to find inspiration in the popular music of Spain and Andalusia. After finishing his studies, Turina moved to Madrid where he spent the rest of his life composing

and teaching. His **Piano Trio No.1 in D Major, Op.35** dates from 1925. It was the winner of the Anglo-Spanish Society's prize the following year. It combines the French impressionist influence of his teachers with the music of Spain. It opens with astringent Prelude which leads to a somewhat lighter Fugue. Turina noted that the music was "unbelievably difficult technically," which may explain why the trio is so rarely performed. The second movement is a set of five on a Spanish folk melody. Each variation is based on a regional Spanish dance. The first is a Muniera from the northwest, Galicia, the next is from Castile. It is followed by a jazzy Zortzico a Basque dance, then comes a Jota from Aragon. The final variation features the Soleares from Andalusia. The third movement reveals that the trio is cyclical as the fugue and a theme from the first movement reappear. **Piano Trio No.2 in b minor, Op.76** dates from 1933. The first movement goes through three moods corresponding to different tempi, *Lento—Allegro molto moderato—Allegretto*. The themes are highly romantic and Andalusia melodies, although subtly presented, can be heard. The second movement, *Molto vivace—Lento—Molto vivace*, starts off as a scherzo, with the strings buzzing about as the piano plays a long-lined melody consisting of chords. The finale has seven distinct sections: *Lento—Andante mosso—Allegretto—Meno mosso—Moderato—Allegretto—Allegro molto moderato—Allegro vivo*. For all of this, it lasts less than six minutes. Interestingly, the mood does not change much between the various sections. This trio is at once romantic, but, at the same time, very modern-sounding. Lastly, we have **Circulo, Fantasia for Piano Trio, Op.91** dating from 1942. It is a work in three short movements, each with the subtitles: *Dawn, Midday and Dusk*. *Dawn* begins quietly, the mood is dark, slow and quiet. *Midday* is somewhat more lively with some vague tinges of Spanish style. *Dusk* is the most energetic but ends peacefully. Though slight, *Circulo* is an ethereal and intellectual work of considerable charm.



**Alice Verne-Bredt** (1860-1938), born of German parents who had settled in Southampton. She studied piano with a daughter of Robert Schumann and became a prominent performer. Her one movement 9 minute **Phantasie Trio** was composed in 1908 for one of the Cobbett competitions. This is quite a good work, and though romantic, it does not hark back to Schumann or Mendelssohn but is considerably more *au courant*. Certainly worth performing where a short work is called for.



**Henri Vieuxtemps** (1820-1881) was born in Verviers, Belgium. He received his first violin instruction from his father, subsequently studying with Charles de Bériot. He toured Europe for several decades and was regarded as one of the leading violinists of his time. Schumann compared Vieuxtemps to Paganini, and Paganini, himself, was extremely impressed when he heard Vieuxtemps at his London debut in 1834. Vieuxtemps also devoted himself to composition, having studied composition with Simon Sechter in Vienna, and Anton Reicha in Paris. His violin concertos are still in the repertoire. In addition to this, he became an important teacher, founding the violin school in St. Petersburg and teaching at the Brussels Conservatory, where Eugène Ysaÿe was among his many students. Although the bulk of Vieuxtemps' compositions were for the violin, he often turned to other instru-

ments, writing two cello concertos, a viola sonata and three string quartets among other things. Vieuxtemps composed the **Duo Brilliant, Op.39** in 1864 with his friend, the virtuoso cellist, Adrian Servais in mind. The work was originally intended as a double concerto with orchestra and, in fact, the two virtuosos did perform it with orchestra. However, his publisher immediately insisted on a version for violin, cello and piano and it is in this version that it became known. Vieuxtemp, also a superb violist, created an alternate viola part as a replacement for the cello. He often performed this version with Benjamin Godard, a violin and viola virtuoso and composer in his own right, who had been one of Vieuxtemp's students and who toured with him. The work is in three sections. A short opening Allegro followed by an Adagio and a substantial finale, Allegretto. The music shows considerable melodic flair, is captivating from start to finish. This obviously is not for players of average technical ability but for those who can, it will make a strong impression on an audience.



**Pancho Vladigerov** (1899-1978) was born in Zürich to a cosmopolitan couple. His mother, Dr. Eliza Pasternak, was a Russian Jew and a relative of the famous writer Boris Pasternak. His father, Dr. Haralan Vladigerov was a Bulgarian lawyer, who had studied in Brussels. Pancho grew up in Bulgaria, but in 1912 he moved to Berlin where he studied with Paul

Juon and Friedrich Gernsheim. After his graduation, he became a music director at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin and worked with the famous director Max Reinhardt. In 1932, he was appointed professor in Piano, Chamber Music and Composition at the Bulgarian State Academy of Music in Sophia. Vladigerov composed in nearly every genre. His **Piano Trio, Op.4** dates from 1916. Though no key signature is given, it is a traditionally tonal work of the late Slavic romantic idiom. In fact, the big, passionate opening movement, *Moderato*, though certainly more modern than either the trios of Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninov, immediately reminds one of those works. Bristling with vigor and striving, the music is full-blooded and powerful. The main theme of the middle movement, *Andante cantabile*, given out at length by the cello alone, is a passionate love song. When the violin does enter, the strings produce a lover's duet while the piano tastefully remains in the background. The superb finale, *Impetuoso*, with its angular rhythms and unusual jazz-like tonal effects anticipates Stravinsky. The melody reminds of Russian-Jewish folk music. This is a very fine work which would triumph in the concert hall.



**Friedrich Robert Volkmann** (1815-1883) was born in the German town of Lommatszsch. Almost an exact contemporary of Wagner, however, he certainly did not tread the same path as his fellow countryman. Volkmann forever kept Beethoven in front of him as his model although he was later to fall under the sway of Mendelssohn and then Schumann. Though born and schooled in Germany, he

studied at Freiburg & Leipzig, Volkmann, after a brief stint in Prague, got a job in Pest in 1841 and made friends among the large German community there. Though he went to Vienna in 1854, he missed Pest and moved back in 1858 where he remained for the rest of his life. Liszt, when he had friends visiting him, for whom he wished to provide a superlative enjoyment, often played

a Volkmann piano trio with his countryman, Joachim and the cellist Cossmann. High praise indeed for a composer who today is barely known. During his lifetime, Volkmann's music was regularly compared to and considered the equal of Schumann or Mendelssohn. His second piano trio was often mentioned in the same breath as Beethoven's Op.97, "The Archduke." **Piano Trio No.1 in F Major, Op.3** was composed in 1842-3 during his first sojourn in Pest, but not published until he moved to Vienna in 1852. The trio begins with a stately Adagio introduction which builds slowly in tempo and emotion and seamlessly leads to the main movement Quasi Andante (where our sound-bite begins) The heavily accented first theme is reminiscent of Beethoven while the second theme is lighter, almost playful. The second movement, Allegretto, is a scherzo and again shows the influence of Beethoven. The slow movement, Andante, is for the most part a calm pastorale, straight forward and simple, although the middle section (our sound-bite) provides a clever contrast in both tempo and emotion without becoming overly dramatic or stormy. The finale, Allegro con fuoco, is clearly the show piece of the trio. It contains three excellent themes, all of which provide excellent contrast. It begins with a highly dramatic and rhythmically swaying subject which suddenly, without any development, gives way to an exciting gypsy theme. Brahms himself later borrowed this technique many times. **Piano Trio No.2 in b minor, Op.5** was hailed as a masterpiece from the day it was premiered in 1850 and there is no reason to change that assessment today. It was called a "New Path" because of its highly unusual structure, which represented a clear break from the standard four movement trios of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann. The format of the trio is not easy to describe. It has been called a multi-part fantasy with each movement having two and sometimes three sub-movements. The opening movement, entitled Largo, is an example of this. It is a long introduction, which leads to a genial, seemingly unrelated section. The third theme begins as a pleading melody which rises to a tremendous dramatic climax. (our sound-bite gives part of the Largo and all of the third theme) The second movement is entitled Ritornell. A ritornell is usually an instrumental interlude in a vocal work. Here, Volkmann seems to have used the title in place of intermezzo. The tuneful music is mellow and relaxed. The main theme of the finale, Allegro con brio, is both forceful and exciting. It is hard to understand how these trios which were prized by the likes of Liszt of Joachim are no longer in the repertoire, where they certainly should be. And, they are not beyond amateur players.



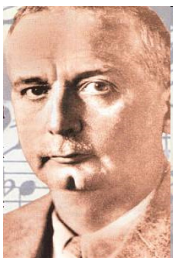
**Victor Vreuls** (1876-1944) was born in the Belgian town of Verviers. He initially studied the violin at the local conservatory and then continued his studies in Liege with Sylvain Dupuis and Jean Radoux. In Paris, he studied with Vincent d'Indy later becoming a professor of harmony at the famous Schola Cantorum and subsequently at the Luxembourg Conservatory of which he served at

director for many years. He composed in most genres. Although it is marked Opus 1, the **Piano Trio in d minor** is hardly Vreul's first work. By the time he came to write his Piano Trio in d minor, he had already composed a prize winning piano quartet and several other works. Nonetheless, as the opus number suggests, the trio is an early work. It was composed in 1896 when Vrculs was barely twenty. The music is full of youthful vigor and reckless abandon. The opening movement, *Impetueux*, opens in

stormy fashion. We encounter many beautiful melodies accompanied by rich harmonies, and frequent tempo shifts. There is even a jovial choral section. Two slow, intimate movements follow the tumultuous opening. The ethereal ending of the Moderement lent is particularly effective. The charming third movement, Simple et calme, is relaxed and meditative but always engaging. The trio is a fine representative of the late Franco-Belgian romantic movement. It certainly would do well in concert where it is sure to find appreciative audiences.



**Carl Maria von Weber** (1786-1826) rests almost entirely on his famous operas *Die Freischütz* and *Oberon* and a few other works such as his clarinet concertos. But Weber's music by and large is unknown to present day players and listeners, which is a pity since it is uniformly well-written, particularly for wind instruments. Chamber music, however, comprises only a very small part of his oeuvre. There are only three works which qualify as chamber music—his Piano Quartet, his Clarinet Quintet and this work for Flute or Violin, Cello and Piano. Weber studied with Michael Haydn in Salzburg the Abbe Vogler in Vienna, two of the leading teachers of their day. He pursued a career as a conductor and music director holding posts in Breslau, Prague, Berlin and Dresden. The **Piano Trio Op.63** was composed in 1819 while Weber was serving as music director in Dresden. In four movements, the first, Allegro moderato, is more moderato than allegro and has an air of melancholy and contemplation. Next comes a short, martial Scherzo. The third movement, The Shepherd's Lament, is in the tradition of the French Air Pastorale, evocative of a rustic scene with a lonely shepherd, playing a song-like ballad on his flute. The finale, also an Allegro, displays Weber's gift for melody and invention. It was apparently intended for Flute, Cello and Piano, however his publishers immediately dubbed it a piano trio for Violin, Cello and Piano and it actually became better known in this version. It plays equally well with a violin, something which often not the case when a violin plays a part intended for flute.



**Julius Weismann** (1879-1950) was born in the German town of Freiburg. He studied with Joseph Rheinberger and Ludwig Thuille at the Royal Bavarian Conservatory and pursued a career as a composer, conductor and pianist. His **Piano Trio No.1 in d minor, Op.26** appeared in 1910. The big first movement, Allegro ma non troppo, makes a strong impression by virtue of its lovely tonal writing. It is followed by a clever scherzo, Molto vivace, with a finely contrasting trio section, Grave. The third movement, Adagio, is a set of spirited variations on a simple but charming theme. The finale, Poco allegretto, is effective but it must be admitted very hard to keep together and for this reason alone, most amateurs will find it beyond them. Weismann composed another, his Piano Trio No.2 in 1926. It hovers between polytonality and atonality.



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

recommendation of Charles Gounod and Camille Saint-Saens, he was appointed to the most important position an organist could hold in France, the position of organist at Saint Sulpice Church in Paris. In 1890, he succeeded Cesar Franck as Professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatory and many important composers, including, Darius Milhaud, Louis Vierne, Marcel Dupre, and Edgar Varese, studied with him. He composed throughout his life in virtually every genre and left a considerable amount of chamber music. The fact that his chamber music along with his other non-organ compositions have been ignored is because of his tower contribution to the organ literature. The **Piano Trio in B flat Major, Op.19**, composed around 1875, illustrates that Widor was not only a fine melodist but in complete control of compositional technique. The lovely and sophisticated opening Allegro clearly shows that the young Widor had already adopted the new French school of composition which was just coming into its own. The delicate and exquisite Andante con moto quasi moderato is an updated version of a baroque Sarabande. Next comes a marvelous, lively Scherzo which starts off lightly and moves to a compelling second theme and then back to a elvish dance. The trio is somber and darker in tonal color. The finale, a light and swift Presto, both charms and excites with its vitality. This first rate trio is a superb example of the burgeoning French school of composition. With its lovely melodies and tasteful writing it would make an excellent concert choice. Amateurs will also enjoy it. He also wrote several other small pieces for piano trio, including *Soiree d'Alsace, Op.52*, and *Quatre Trios WoO*.



**Mortimer Wilson** (1876-1932) who was born in Chariton, Iowa and first studied organ, violin and composition at the Chicago Musical College before attending the Leipzig Conservatory where he studied with Hans Sitt and Max Reger. Upon returning to the U.S., he taught at the Atlanta Conservatory and conducted the Atlanta Philharmonic before taking a job as a consulting editor for the National Academy of Music in New York. Most of his works remain in manuscript, however, his Suite of Miniatures for Piano Trio, **From My Youth, Op.5** was published in 1911. It consists of four very short movements which wonderfully conjure up memories from childhood. The first, entitled Funeral of a Calico Cat, is reminiscent of Charles Alkan's *Marcia Funebre sulla Morte d'un Pappagallo*, with its somber but mawkish mood. At the end, the violin gives out a few sad meows. This is followed by Love Song of an Alpine Doll, a lovely 19th century, Central European lovers' duet, played by the strings. Next is Tin Soldier Dress Parade which starts with a bugle call played by the violin on harmonics. The piano enters and we are treated to a playful toy march, expertly handled. The last piece, Over the Little Blue Tea Set, has, for its time, a rather modern, urban, socialite sound to it. This is a lovely little set of miniatures, quite original. Any of the four would make a good encore and together, as they were intended, the Suite provides a pleasant short program work which would work well between two longer pieces.



**Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari** (1876-1948) was born in Venice, the son of a German father and an Italian mother. Throughout his life, he felt torn between the two cultures, uniting in himself the deep-felt German seriousness of purpose with sunny, Italian bel canto melody. His father was a painter and initially Ermanno wanted to follow in his footsteps.



However after studying painting in Rome and Munich, he enrolled in the Royal Bavarian Conservatory and studied composition with Joseph Rheinberger. He spent the rest of his life between Munich and Venice, never entirely satisfied in either place. This tension was, however, an important source of creativity for him. Wolf-Ferrari enjoyed his greatest success while still rather young, winning international fame for several of his operas between 1900 and the First World War. He served as Choral Director in Milan and later became the director of the Marcello Music Academy in Venice and taught at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Though mainly known for his operas, he was quite fond of chamber music and wrote a fair amount including two piano trios, a piano quintet, a string trio, a string quartet and a string quintet. His **Piano Trio No.1 in D Major, Op.5** comes from his first surge of creativity. It is brimming with original ideas and is full of youthful exuberance. The opening movement, Allegro molto moderato, begins in a rather relaxed fashion with the violin giving out a stately theme. But gradually the music rises to a feverish pitch of dramatic tension before the introduction of the energetic second theme. The second movement, Presto, is an unusual kind of scherzo. The main section is characterized by long-lined lyricism. A dance-like based on rising and falling scale motifs is juxtapositioned between the faster outer parts. A superb Larghetto follows. The main theme is a lovely, sad plaint, powerfully framed by a strong repeated rhythm. A quicker middle section, Andante mosso, provides a charming contrast. In the finale, Allegro vivace assai, one fine theme follows another, there is enough thematic material here for an entire work. The first section opens quietly but the promise of the upbeat theme in the first bars is quickly realized. But almost immediately, a second theme, a Slavic dance folk-tune, is introduced. Then comes an exciting chromatic interlude which in turn is followed by a fairy-land dance of the elves out of which a powerful and dramatic melody subject makes its entry, and this is only part of what is in this magnificent finale. **Piano Trio No.2 in F sharp Major, Op.7** dates from 1900. It is well-written and contains fine and serious ideas which are quite interesting. The work leaves a strong impression of an independent artist, uninfluenced by others. The main theme of the first movement, Sostenuto, has an other-world atmosphere that is quite charming. The second movement, Largo, perhaps even more than the first has this same quality. The finale, *Lievemente mosso e tranquillo sempre*, is noteworthy for the clever and interestingly written theme presented in canonic fashion. This makes an effective work for the concert stage and certainly will also appeal to experienced amateur players. While both trios are excellent, the first makes a strong impression and is more enjoyable to play.



**Amilcare Zanella** (1873-1949) was born in the Italian town of Monticelli d'Origina. He showed a talent for music at an early age and after studying locally entered the Parma Conservatory where he studied piano, horn and composition with Giovanni Bottesini among others. He began his career as an opera conductor in Buenos Aires. From 1903, he succeeded Giovanni Tebaldini as the director of the Parma Conservatory and then

served as successor to Mascagni as director of the Rossini Liceo Musicale in Pesaro. In 1921, he founded an important Quartet Society in Northern Italy and in 1927, together with the violinist Giovanni Chiti and the cellist Nerio Brunelli, he created the Trio di Pesaro, an ensemble which would remain active until 1949.

His piano playing was of such a caliber that he was frequently mentioned in the same breath as Busoni. Although he composed in virtually every genre, he was especially fond of chamber music. His **Piano Trio No.1 in e minor, Op.23** dates from 1899. It was published, however in 1906. It is written on a huge canvas and is packed full of excellent ideas which easily hold one's interest. Each of the parts is grateful to play. The first movement, Allegro agitato, is full of lively but also sensitive themes makes a very strong impression. The second movement is a tonally magnificent Andante with an especially captivating middle section. Next comes a lively Scherzo, Allegro vivace, with an Intermezzo which serves as the trio section. The finale, Allegro, is similar in rhythm to the preceding Scherzo. Particularly impressive is the beautiful, lyrical second theme. **Piano Trio No.2 in f minor**, no opus number, dates from 1928. Allegro impetuoso opens with a super dramatic theme. The whole movement is riveting. A funereal Recitativo follows. Next comes a frenetic Scherzo, modern and updated sounding. The finale, Allegro vivace con spirito, like the opening movement, begins in ultra dramatic fashion, with dashing melodies, full of angst, truly outstanding. This work would bring down the house, it has so many spectacular features. A pity one never hears it in concert. It is not beyond accomplished amateurs.



**Eric Zeisl** [1905-1959] was born in Vienna and entered the Vienna State Academy when he was only 14. There he studied with Joseph Marx, Richard Stöhr and Hugo Kauder. By the late 1930's he was recognized as one of Austria's leading composers. Being Jewish, he fled Austria in 1938 after Hitler came to power stopping first in Paris and then continuing on to America and settled near

Los Angeles where he spent the rest of his life as a teacher. Though he won the praise of such eminent men as Milhaud, Stravinsky and Toch, success came slowly in his adopted country and it was only toward the end of his life, which was cut short by a heart attack, that he began to make a name for himself. Primarily a composer of vocal music, he did write some chamber music.

His **Piano Trio Suite in b minor, Op.8** is an early work dating from around 1924 when the composer had just completed his formal studies and was not yet 20. It clearly establishes the position he staked out for himself in the spectrum of 20th Century composition as a bridge between the music of Richard Strauss and Mahler and the Vienna avant-garde. Atonalism did not appeal to him. The opening Praeludium features a march-like, heroic, theme of descending chords. It has the same spirit one finds in Fritz Kreisler's Miniature Viennese March. The quiet introduction of the Adagio which follows leads to a very broad lyrical post-Brahmsian theme akin to early Dohnanyi. Its emotional peak is reached in a piano solo to a tremolo in the strings. The Allegretto Scherzando, though a scherzo, is not at all a fast movement; based on a simple theme which is very quickly developed, it is scherzo in feeling and not tempo. The lyrical middle section shows very assured compositional technique. It is a Schumannesque lied albeit in very late romantic idiom complete with telling ponticello effects. The Finale is a theme and variations. Nearly as long as the three preceding movements, it is the center of gravity for the trio. The theme is tonally modern and melodically dry but clearly a folk melody. Its austerity is further increased by a unison passage in the strings played at the same pitch. The first variation is given over to the piano with lovely

arpeggio figures in the strings. In the 2nd, the cello is given the theme to a rich piano accompaniment, it is followed by a quick rumbling scherzo in the piano's lower registers while the violin plays quickly in a higher register. In the 4th variation a late Faure-like perfumed violin solo is played over the piano's broken chords; in the 5th, a brooding Hebraic funereal melody is played by the cello and when the violin joins in, it becomes an unmistakable dirge, but the final variation brings the trio to a close with a sprightly modern Viennese March Militaire. This is an excellent piece of music which would make a handsome addition to any professional piano trio's repertoire. It deserves revival. And, it is certainly well within the ability of experienced amateurs.



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

after which he enrolled in the Paris Conservatory where he continued his composition lessons with Henri Reber. Upon his return to Poland he enjoyed a long career as a concert pianist, teacher and composer. He held several important teaching posts including Director of the Cracow Conservatory which he helped to found. He wrote in most genres and left a number of chamber music works. His **Piano Trio in E Major, Op.22** dates from 1874. It is unusual in that it is programmatic with each movement is given a subtitle. The opening movement, an Allegro, is subtitle *Vivos voca* (The living I assemble). This is a well-written dramatic movement, with fetching melodies. It sounds rather Schumanesque. The middle movement, *Andante sostenuto*, subtitled *Mortuos plango* (The dead I lament). The music is melancholy but not really sad and does not, to my mind, bring a lament for the dead to mind. Again, it is well-written and tonally in the Germanic romantic tradition. There is very little to indicate that he studied at the Paris Conservatory. The finale, *Allegro deciso*, subtitled *Fulgura frango* (Thunder I crush) Again, I have to wonder at this subtitle as the music, a dance like march with hints of Polish melody sound nothing like a thunder being crushed. It is rather joyous and triumphant and again, Schumann comes to mind. This is a fine work, not particularly original tonally, it would be hard to guess the nationality of the composer or just who he might be. Still, it would not be amiss to hear it in concert and it will also appeal to amateurs.



During his lifetime, **Alexander Zemlinsky** (1871-1942) was very highly regarded not only as a composer but also as a teacher and conductor. His works are an authentic testimony of the turbulent developments in music between 1890 and 1940. He stands between times and styles but in this intermediary position he found a rich, unmistakable,

musical language. His personality and work epitomize one of the most fascinating epochs of art in Europe. Zemlinsky was born in Vienna. His musical talent became evident at an early age and he was enrolled at the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde Konservatorium* (Conservatory of the Society of the Friends of Music) when he was 13 years old. There he studied piano and composition. He was greatly influenced by Johannes Brahms, who at the time was serving as President of the *Gesellschaft*. By 1900, Zemlinsky was firmly established as an important, though not a leading,

musical figure in Vienna and therefore accepted the important post of opera conductor of the Prague *Deutsches Landestheater* until 1927. He became well-known as a perceptive interpreter of Wagner, Bruckner, Mahler, and Schoenberg. In 1927, he moved to Berlin to take up a position as a conductor of a major opera house. In 1933, he returned to Vienna where he remained until 1938, before emigrating to New York. When Zemlinsky showed his **Piano Trio in d minor, Op.3** for Clarinet, Cello and Piano to Brahms in 1895, Brahms was mightily impressed and immediately recommended that his own publisher Simrock print the work. Simrock, however, with an eye for sales, insisted that Zemlinsky add a violin part so the work could be performed by standard trio. Zemlinsky did not simply arrange the clarinet part for violin, he wrote a part specifically for the violin and as a result, one can almost say that he created two works, each which stands on its own. The big, broad opening movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, has for its main theme a heroic melody to be played "Mit Schwung und Wärme" (warmly and with swing). This is late Romantic music on a grand scale. The coda is particularly well done and makes a great impression. Although the influence of Brahms is undeniably in the language of the music, it does not sound much like him. In the second movement, *Andante con moto espressione*, which in the clarinet version calls for an A clarinet to create a bright sound, the violin plays the overtly romantic melody in a high register. The middle section is slightly faster and very freely written. It takes an almost melodramatic stance but is undeniably effective. The bustling finale, *Allegro*, has a remote slightly exotic quality, interspersed with dramatic and passionate outbursts. A first rate late Romantic era work that will always be appreciated in concert and by amateurs.



**Hermann Zilcher** (1881-1948) was born in the German city of Frankfurt. He studied at the conservatory there with Ivan Knorr and pursued a career as a piano soloist, composer and director of a number of conservatories. His **Piano Trio in c minor, Op.56** was composed in 1927 and is in two big movements. The first, *Ruhig, fließend beginnend*, is, despite the title, not very peaceful but rather full of strenuous

striving. It is characterized by considerable unisono playing in the strings, punctuated by loud chords. The more gentle middle section has an appealing, almost French impressionist quality to it. Briefly and unexpectedly, snippets of Schumannesque melody burst forth only to quickly disappear into a sea of modernity. This is a very engaging movement which runs the entire gamut of musical emotions. The last movement, *Variations on a Welsh Folksong*, takes the tune *All Through the Night* as its theme. Beginning quietly and maintaining the simple chorale quality of Welsh song, the variations imperceptibly shift tonally into the rarified atmosphere of impressionism. The emotional range of the variations is narrow and the music remains calm and peaceful in keeping with the quiet nature of the theme. A candidate for the concert hall and within the range of experienced amateur players



**Agnes Zimmermann** (1847-1925) was born in the German city of Cologne. At the age of nine, her family moved to London. She entered the Royal Academy of Music in London and studied piano with Ernst Pauer and composition with George Macfarren. Afterwards, she pursued a successful career as a soloist in England and abroad, but also worked as a composer. She was

interested in chamber music, of which she was a frequent performer, and composed, in addition to this cello sonata, three violin sonatas, two works for piano trio, a piano quartet, a piano quintet and a string quartet. The **Suite for Piano Trio, Op.19** Suite was composed in the mid 1870's. The movement titles, Introduction & Allegro, Canon, Gavotte, Air and Gigue, clearly indicate that Zimmermann was harking back to the old Baroque era suite we find in the works of Bach and his contemporaries. Zimmermann's treatment, however, is not an imitation of the Baroque but a more modern rendition. This lovely Suite is an ideal work for the recital hall where a lighter work which blends the Romantic with the Baroque is required. It presents no technical difficulties and is ideal for amateurs as well as professionals.

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