



:| At The Double Bar Some Little Known Chamber Music for Amateurs

by Harold Haynes

We have been steadily making copies for many Cobbett & ACMP members during the summer but are still behind. We are hoping to catch up with all of your orders by the end of October and ask for your patience in the meantime.

New members continue to join our ranks, many coming from summer chamber music workshops. We thank those of you who have recruited on our behalf. Expanding the membership remains a top goal as this will allow us to begin many of the projects we have planned such as workshops, publishing, concerts, recording and, of course, expanding our library.

Several members have, in past months made copies for or contributed music to the Library, among them: John Wilcox, Charles Garbett, Lester Gershan, David William Olsson and Elisabeth Weis. Thank you. (Your editor has just donated a dozen 20th Century Czech string quartets.) Again, those of you with large collections, we would very much appreciate your help in this area.

Several members have asked about whether we have an e-mail address or have a home page on the Internet. Alas the answer is no. It has been suggested that we might be able to reach more prospective members if we did. I don't doubt this, but there is the issue of time. As editor of the Journal and the person who does the day to day correspondence etc., I simply cannot devote myself to this and invite those who are computer literate to come forward.

This issue marks the beginning of the third year of my editorship. I wish to thank all of you who have sent encouraging letters and compliments, but also those who have sent along their complaints and criticisms which have, I hope, contributed to our improvement.

[Editor's note: Mr. Haynes is the author of the well-received "Chamber Music Repertoire for Amateur Players" now in its second edition and available from SJ Music, 21-23 Leys Rd, Cambridge CB4 2AP, UK]

As one who has but recently joined the Cobbett Association, I should first explain the basis for my recommendations. Over 20 years ago, as a struggling amateur cellist at string quartet courses, I found that I could not play some 'standard' works suggested by optimistic leaders and so needed to have handy a 'black list' and a list of 'good' quartets that I could safely agree to play. No book classified the repertoire according to the difficulty of the cello part or listed works in order of 'quality,' so I started writing my own.

Eventually this developed into a guide to chamber music for all amateur players, giving a measure of the difficulty for each of the individual parts and covering not only the whole 'standard' repertoire but also hundreds of other works from 1750 to the present day.

With over 1000 works to consider, a practicable method for 'calculating' the difficulty for each instrument in each movement was needed. The method I employed was based on an allocation of points for each key technical problem, checked by playing experience in amateur groups wherever possible.

Our Offices will be closed between September 5th & September 23rd

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The Chamber Music of Alberto Ginastera

By Professor Keith Robinson, Cellist Miami String Quartet



It has been my good fortune for the past eleven years of my Quartet Life to play music of the highest caliber: The Quartets of Beethoven and Bartok, Brahms Sextets, the Mendelssohn Octet, and the Schubert C Major Quintet just to scratch the surface. My experiences with the Miami Quartet's introduction to the music of Alberto Ginastera was at the Evian International String Quartet Competition in 1994. The Quartet No.2 Opus 26 (1957)—one of three choice pieces in the modern element of the competition—had already been highly recommended to us by the composer Maurice Gardner. Given Miami's geographical location and reputation as the Northernmost point of South America, we chose it without ever having heard the piece. The final result was that we won the Modern Prize awarded by the French Government and were subsequently offered a recording contract by Pyramid Records, whose producer, Daniel Odier was in the audience at the competition. We decided to

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the chamber music of Alberto Ginastera must rank right up there with the aforementioned, however. Although perhaps not the first name that comes to mind when naming masterpieces of the Quartet Literature, Ginastera's music embodies the power, evokes the passion, and contains the mastery of composition that rates it with the other great composers of the 20th Century such as Bartok and Shostakovich.

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The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor

What follows are excerpts of a long, informative and excellent letter from T. David Kuehn. Space did not allow us to print it all. For the sake of continuity, responses are given to individual subjects immediately after rather than at the end.

New Recordings Not Noted

Being an avid recording collector of compositions in all forms written during the 1700-1900 period, I have followed your "New Recordings" feature. Here are some that you have overlooked: **J.C.F. Bach** 6 Qts for Flute & Strings on Dynamic CDS 31 / **Boccherini**: Str. Qts. Op.33 on CPO 999 206; also Op.64 Nos.1-2, Op.39, & Op.41 Nos.1-2 on Dynamic CDS 127 and Op.52 Nos.1-4 on Dynamic CDs 154 / **Breton** Str. Qt. in D; Piano Trio in E on Marco Polo 8.223745 / **Cambini** Str. Qts. Vol.1 on Stradivarius 33327 / **Gossec**: 6 Fluge Qts. on Talent 291050 / **Graf**: 6 Flute Qts. on MDG 311 0520 / **Kuhlau**: Str. Qt. & Piano Qt. Op.108 on CPO 999-238 / **I. Lachner**: 2 Str. Qts. on Amati 9503 / **Onslow**: Str. Qnts. Op.38-40 on Sony Vivarte SK64308. There are also piano trios by **Kiel, Pfitzner & Koch** on Musicaphon M56813 and Clarinet Quartets by **Fiala, Fuchs Pichl & Vent** on Multisonic 310348 as well as Trios for Flute, Cello & Piano by **Hummel, Ries & Dussek** on Jecklin JS 303

Even Homer nods. Unfortunately, we have neither the time nor the space to print everything coming out and, of course, much escapes our purview.

Krommer's String Qts-How Many?

I was interested in your article *Franz Krommer's String Quartets Currently in Print* and, like you, wish that more would become available. You state that Krommer wrote 9 Quintets for Flute, Violin, 2 Violas and Cello. Frans Vester, in his *Flute Repertoire Catalogue* lists 13. I believe your statement that Krommer wrote 69 string quartets is in error. I count 72 all issued in sets of 3, i.e. Op.3-7, 10,16,18,19,24,26,34,48,50,53,54,56,68, 72,74,85,90,92, & 103.

You may well be right. Dr. James Whitby, one of our Advisors, also wrote and said

that Krommer had composed 72 or 73 string quartets all or most of which he owns. I certainly don't know. Wilhelm Altman in his "Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler" states Krommer wrote 69. Many of the opus numbers listed by him are different from those which you list. It may well be that different publishers gave these works different opus numbers. Dr. Antonin Nemeč, writing for Musica Antiqua Bohemia, also states that Krommer wrote 69 string quartets. Additionally, Prof. Nemeč writes that Krommer wrote 7 flute quintets. But Othmar Wessely writing in the New Groves lists 71 string quartets. There may be no definitive answer to this question, especially with a composer like Krommer, who composed a lot, was published by several different houses and whose works were extremely popular in his lifetime. One thing is for sure, he wrote a great number of quartets and unfortunately few are in print and fewer recorded.

There's Another Kuhlau Piano Qt.

In Volume VI No.4, December 1995, of the *Journal*, in the 'Diskology' Section, writing of the Kuhlau piano quartets, you remark, "the piano quartets on this disk are his only two..." You will note from my list of new recordings that there is a *third*, Op.108 in g minor.

If it is as good as the other two, this is great news. When I wrote the article, I did not, at the time, have access to the New Groves, which does in fact list all three piano quartets. Cobbett's 'Cyclopedia' lists but one and the 3rd Edition of Groves doesn't even have an entry for him.

More News From the Trenches

At a recent quartet session we opened with **Pleyel's** Op.23 No.5 which though lovely was considered the weakest of what we played. This was followed by **Gyrowetz's** Op.29 No.1. I personally found it delightful but others thought it too derivative. Next was **Ignaz Lachner's** Op.43 which met with universal acclaim. **George(s) Onslow's** Qt. No.36 was also much applauded.

At a session for viola quintet, I started us off with Mozart's K.174, a little played

but beautiful piece of music. This was my easing the group into the more esoteric. Next was an arrangement of **Andreas Romberg's** Clarinet Quintet, Op.58 which was thoroughly enjoyable. The last item 'sprung' on the group was **George(s) Onslow's** Op.78 in d minor. The consensus was, "Let's do it again."

T. David Kuehn
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

You are fortunate to have the chance to play such music! Certainly no viola quintet party should be without George(s) Onslow's last 3 viola quintets, (Op.78, 80 & 82) which are, in my opinion, for the period, unsurpassed. The problem, of course, is getting the music.

Where Are These Publishers?

For those of us who read with interest about worthwhile works from obscure publishing houses, you would help us out by giving the address in addition to the name. For example, when you mention Franz Krommer's Op.24 Quartets from Kunzelmann, or Musica Antiqua Bohemia—where are they?

Marshall Sparberg
Chicago, Illinois

The problem with this is that many times publishers move and the address found on an edition may no longer be valid. Often, publishers cease to exist although their music is handled by agents and can still be obtained. Some publishers will not sell directly to the public. In general, where publishers are listed in the Journal, this means you may simply write or call a good music shop, such as Performers Music in Chicago or Padelson's in New York, Broekmans & Van Poppel of Amsterdam, Jecklin or Hug in Zurich, Doblinger in Vienna etc., and obtain the music.

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

Quartets for Clarinet & String Trio (Part II)

By Michael Bryant

(The first part of this article appeared in the June of the Journal) Frederic Blasius, Philipp Meisner, Jean Xavier Lefevre, Karl Göpfert, Bernhard Crusell, Franz Tausch, Heinrich Bärmann and Iwan Müller were all clarinetists who composed. Music for the clarinet formed a considerable proportion of their output.

Bernhard Crusell (1775-1838) was famous in his own day for his translation of foreign operas for the Swedish stage. Today, he is best known for the second of his three clarinet concertos. He wrote three quartets, Op.2, 4 and 7. Op.7 is for an A Clarinet but also exists in a version for flute. In these works, the clarinet is 'first among equals' but the works are of a high caliber and among the best of their period. The quartets have been published by Kneusslin (Opus 2 1960, Op 4 and 7 1970) and recorded by Kari Krtiku in Finland (Ondline ODE 727) and Thea King in Britain (Hyperlon CDA 66077) among others.

The German pianist, organist and singer **Karl Andreas Göpfert** (1768-1818) took up the clarinet at the age of 12. He worked in Vienna and took lessons in composition from Mozart, in exchange for copying work and making opera transcriptions, over a period of a year and half, before taking up a position at the Meiningen court. He wrote at least 6 quartets all published by Andre.

The Swiss clarinetist **Jean Lefevre** (1763-1829) made his name in Paris. His set of 3 quartets, Op 2, can be found in the Barcelona and the British Libraries. Other quartets can be found in Vienna and the Library of Congress.

Philip Meisner (or Meissner 1748-1816) was a well known virtuoso and travelled widely. He founded a clarinet school in Würzburg. Göpfert was one of his pupils. He wrote two quartets, one (Op 1 Schott 1814) dedicated to Georg Hoffman (1781-1814) the first clarinet at the National Theatre in Frankfurt and the other (c.1814) was attributed to 'Henry Kinzi', almost certainly a pseudonym.

Franz Tausch (1762-1817) wrote a Quartet in Bb that was published by

Andre c.1820. Copies are to be found in various libraries including those of Frankfurt, Milan, Stockholm, the Royal Academy of Music in London and the Library of Congress, in Washington. His Quatuor tres facile, Op.30, the Einsiedeln music library, southeast of Zurich.

Frederic Blasius (1758-1829) was a capable clarinetist and violinist who also played the bassoon and flute. He was a conductor at the Opéra Comique for a period of 25 years and was much praised for his conducting by Fetis. He directed the Comédie Italienne, played in the band of the National Guard and was appointed professor of wind instruments at the Paris Conservatoire when it opened in 1795. Blasius composed prolifically and wrote several quartets. A set of three clarinet quartets was published by Breitkopf and Hartel c.1782/4. He may have written as many as 9 other quartets, some of which are in the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna.

Estonian born **Iwan Müller** (1786-1854) was one of those responsible for modern clarinet design--the German system. He wrote 3 quartets. His first quartet in Bb was commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of London and published by Andre (1816). The Royal Academy of Music, London has a set of parts. His second quartet is dedicated to Simon Hermstädt. It was published by Ricordi in Florence and is reported by Tuthill to have been re-issued by McGinnis and Marx in New York. His third quartet was published by Gambaro. His second Quartet has been recorded on compact disc by Victoria Soames, Clarinet Classics CC 0006 (1993). This is virtuoso music par excellence in the style of Weber. It has two movements, the first in sonata form, the second a set of variations. Müller used only the Bb clarinet, to demonstrate the superiority of his fingering system. The key of the first movement is e minor which is f# minor for the clarinet (considered one of the most difficult keys--becoming six sharps in the major sections). This is not for the faint hearted. He certainly had no intention of making life easy for clarinetist.

Carl Maria von Weber wrote his clarinet concertos for **Heinrich Bärmann** (1784-1847). Bärmann's Quartet, Op 18, was published c.1818/9 by Gambaro, Schott and Breitkopf & Hartel. There is a copy of the Schott edition at the Royal Academy of Music in London. As Tuthill says, it is a concert piece for clarinet with string accompaniment in the style of Weber. There is no commercial recording.

The 20th Century

The German composer **Sigrid Walther Müller** (1905-1946) died in a Russian prison camp in Baku. He studied with Karg-Elert in Leipzig and taught there and in Weimar, before being drafted into the German army to join the eastern front. Most of his output was chamber music. He wrote a clarinet quintet entitled *Divertimento*, Op 13, but the Kammermusik for clarinet and string trio is his Op 1 (1926). Both were published by Breitkopf & Hartel. The Kammermusik consists of three movements: 1) Lively, 2) Scherzo; very fast and 3) Theme and variations. Tuthill remarks that it is "post-romantic with thick harmonies". It is out of print with no known recording.

Paul Hindemith's (1895-1963) *Plöner Musiktag' Quartet* (1932) is a simple set of variations and was originally written for non-professional use at an evening concert at the town of Plön between Lubeck and Kiel. Tuthill's comments "Easy but interesting." Published by Schott, there are no known commercial recordings.

The output of the English composer **Alan Rawsthorne** (1905-1971) was largely instrumental. He wrote his Clarinet Quartet in 1946. It was published by the Oxford University Press in 1948. Of it Tuthill writes "It is not a solo piece, real chamber music, a fine blend of parts." It was first recorded by Thea King in 1970 on LP ZRG 660. There is now a compact disc recording by Nicholas Cox from Redcliffe Recordings of London.

Edvard Fliflet Braein (1923-), the Norwegian composer and conductor,
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graduated from the Oslo Conservatory in 1943. He studied composition in Paris with Jean Rivier. His clarinet quartet entitled *De glade musikanter* or *The Merry Musicians*, is his Op.1. Published by Musikk-Husit, Oslo in 1967, It is dedicated to clarinetist Richard Kjelstrup and the three others who recorded it for Philips LP 6507 041. It is neo-classical in style and has 3 movements, fast-slow-fast.

The American composer **Howard Boatwright** (1918-) combined the neoclassicism of Hindemith with serial technique. He wrote his Clarinet Quartet in 1958. It won him the 1962 award from the Society for the Publications of American Music. It is lyrical but also dissonant and linear, with the clarity of Hindemith. Tuthill thought it a good work and wrote that here were "three well integrated movements, chamber music not a solo." There are no known recordings. It was published by OUP in 1962 and available from their archive.

The Hungarian composer **Rezso Kokai** (1906-1962) wrote his rhapsodic Quartettino in 1952. It has 4 short movements. It was published by Editio Musica Budapest in 1972. Although the

composer was at first against the folkloristic direction taken by Bartok and Kodaly, he found his own way to it through Liszt and this work reflects the influences of the Verbunkos, the Czardas and the world of Janos Lavotta. Highly recoended for its high spirits and its melancholy. Walter Boeykens has recorded it for Harmonia Mundi HMC 901419 (1992)

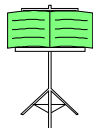
Berthold Goldschmidt was born in Hamburg in 1903. He studied with Schreker in Berlin and embarked on a career as conductor and music adviser at opera houses Darnstadt and Berlin. When the Nazis came to power he lost his job and moved to England in 1935. While still composing, his sole sources of income were teaching and coaching. He was music director of the BBC German Service from 1944-7 and took British citizenship in 1947. He continued to conduct for BBC until 1964 who also commissioned several works and incidental music from him, but aparently the public did not take to his music and he stopped composing in 1969. In 1982-3 and at the age of 80, he broke a 24 year old silence with the composition of the Clarinet Quartet. The Clarinet Quartet is a fine work, written at the request of Gervase de Peyer, for whom he wrote a

concerto in 1955. From a professional player's point of view, it is technically challenging in places but stylistically it is tonal and approachable and contiguous with his earlier works. Played without break, it is divided into four sections slow-fast-slow-fast. It opens with a recurring Andante motto theme. The slow third section draws on music from the long lost Passacaglia, Op 4 for orchestra (1925). The opening of the Rondo finale quotes from his radio production of Kafka's *Investigations of a Dog* (1922) The music is available from the hire library of Boosey and Hawkes, London and been recorded on a German compact disc Largo 5117.

Krzystof Penderecki's (1933-) eclectic Clarinet Quartet dates from 1993. It contains many moods, by turns, intimate, reflective, aggressive and neurotic. It has been claimed that the Clarinet Quartet was inspired by Schubert's String Quintet in C for 2 cellos (Op.163, D.956) although this is not obvious at first hearing. It has been recorded by the virtuoso clarinetist, Martin Frost on a BIS CD 652 (1994)

I should like to thank John Wilcox for his invaluable and generous help in preparing this article.

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New Recordings



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

String Quartets

Domenico DRAGONETTI (1763-1846) No.4 in Eb, Dynamic CD 133 / Hermann GOETZ (1840-1876) Quartet in Bb, Jecklin JD 703 / Fernando Lopes-Graca (1906-1994) Quartet No.2, Rustic Suite No.2, & 14 Annotations, Op.170, Portugalsom SP 4036 / Paul HINDEMITH (1895-1963) Quartet Nos.1-7, Mimimax & Overture to the Flying Dutchman, Praga PR 250 088 & 250 093.94 / Nikolai MIASKOVSKY (1881-1950) Quartet Nos. 1-11, Russian Disk RD 11 013, 11 031-4 / Arvo PÄRT (1935-) Fratres, Collins 14572 / Kaljo RAID (1921-) Str. Qt., KRCD 02 / Georg RAUCHENECKER (1844-1906) Quartet No.1, Jecklin JD 703 / Edmund RUBBRA (1901-1986) String Quartets Nos.1-4, Conifer 51260-2 / Othmar SCHOECK (1886-1957) Quartet

Nos.1-2, Quartetsatz, MDG 603 0665 / Eric-Sven Tüür (1959-) String Quartet, Collins 14572 / Peteris VASKS (1946-) Quartet No.2 & Summer Songs, Collins 14572 / Henri VIEUXTEMPS (1820-1881) Quartet Nos.1-3, Koch-Schwann 3-1720.

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Domenico DRAGONETTI (1763-1846) Quintet in G for Vln, 2Vla, Vc & KB, Dynamic CD 133 / Kaljo RAID (1921) Trio for Vln, Vc & KB, KRCD 02

Piano Trios

Cécile CHAMINADE (1857-1944) Nos. 1 & 2, ASV CD DCA 965 / Giuseppe MARTUCCI (1856-1909) 2 Trios in C Op.59 & 62, Dynamic CDS 132 / Ludwig SPOHR (1784-1859) Nos.2 & 4, Naxos 8.553205 / Mieczyslaw VAINBERG (1919-1996) Op.24, & Children's

Notebooks Nos.1-3, Olympia OCD 581

Piano Quartets & Quintets

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856) Piano Quartet Op.47, MDG 6150673

Winds & Strings

Adolphe BLANC (1828-1885) Septet Op.40, Thorofon CTH 2277 / Felix DRAESEKE (1835-1913) Quintet for Horn & Strings Op.40, MDG 6150673 / Jan DUSSEK (1760-1812) Grand Sonata Op.65 for Vc, Fl & Pno, Tiziano TZ 96002 / Friedrich KALKBRENNER (1785-1849) Sonata for Vc, Fl & Pno, Op.39, Tiziano TZ 96002 / Konradin KREUTZER (1780-1849) Grand Sonata for Vc, Fl & Pno, Op. 23 No.1, Tiziano TZ 96002 / Kaljo RAID (1921-) Suite in Olden Style for Cln & Str. Qt., KRCD 02 / Ferdinand THIÉRIOT (1838-1919) Octet, Op.62, Thorofon CTH 2277

Some Little Known Chamber Music for Amateur Players

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Assessment of 'quality' in music is notoriously controversial, but though the members of an amateur group may not have a wide knowledge of the literature, they still want to choose a work which will prove worthwhile. Thus it seemed that a list placing works in order of recommendation would be useful. The key was to use recordings. Initially, I compiled an order of preference for a wide range of works (including much of the standard repertoire as well as 20th Century works) by comparing the first movement of a work with the first movement of other works written by the same composer about the same time, then with his earlier and later works. Then I would follow the same procedure by comparing the movement to the first movements of other contemporaries. This procedure was used with all of the movements in a given work. Opinions of distinguished musicians, writers and amateur players were taken into account. Later, given a new work, it was only necessary to compare it with two or three works of similar type that had already been 'assessed.' This comparison, however, was done over a period of time to avoid giving undue weight to first impressions. Radio broadcasts introduce me on average to about 100 little known or contemporary chamber works a year of which, I have found, usually around 30 are playable by amateurs and 10 of which are deserving of their time. What follows then is a selection of little known works I recommend for amateur players.

String Quartets

Anton Arensky's (1861-1906) **Op.35** for violin, viola and two cellos has a particularly magnificent opening. [It is in print and available from Wollenweber in this version, however, as *Theo Wyatt of Merton Music writes it has for this reason remained unknown, i.e. it is a combination which one in life rarely encounters. Arensky himself recognized this and wrote a version for standard string quartet, his Op.35a available from Merton Music, No.MM113-ed.*] The **Three Pieces** by **Frank Bridge** (1879-1941) recently published by SJ Music are light-hearted and short. Entertaining 'composit' works are **Quartet B-L-A-F** and **Jour de Fete** or 'Festive Moods.' The former is available from Peters as agent for Belief and the latter from International. [Jour de Fete is a slight work with movements by Glazunov, Liadov and Rimsky-Korsakov. Quartet B-L-A-F is a substantial piece with movements by Borodin, Glazunov, Liadov and Rimsky-Korsakov and was composed as a birthday present for M.P. Belaiev the famous Russian music publisher and passionate amateur chamber musician (violinist) who was responsible for publishing much of the chamber music which came out of late 19th Century Russia. From his last name, the composers took the key for the movements: *Be Lai eFF*. Two other works along this line are also very fine. The first is "Variations on a Russian Theme" with variations from Glazunov, Liadov, Scriabin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Wihtol, Blumenfeld, Ewald, Winkler and Sokolov available from International. The second is perhaps the strongest of all of the above works. It is called 'Les Vendredis' (Fridays) and is a collection of 15 works in two volumes. Each Friday, Belaiev would have a banquet at his mansion for his friends which included most of the leading Petersburg composers. The dinner was always followed by Belief's quartet, a group of good but not

brilliant amateurs, performing. Composers such as Rimsky, Borodin, Glazunov and many others would bring a new piece to be tried out each week. Over the years, Rimsky culled what he believed to be the best of them and they were published by Belaiev from whom it is still available, Nos.240 & 241-ed) **Lullaby** by **George Gershwin** (1898-1937) has an impressive cello part and some stopped harmonics for all, available from New World Music. **Charles Gounod** (1818-93) **Quartet No.3** in a minor is charming throughout, available in several editions. **Daniel Jones's Quartet No.8** was completed two days before he died. Full of emotion, it has a complicated Capriccio. Jones worked with the poet Dylan Thomas. (Those interested in obtaining the music should contact Mr. Haynes directly at 9 Caxton Lane, Foxton, Cambridge CB2 6SR, UK) There is a light-hearted **Gavotte** from **Egon Ledec**, an Auschwitz victim. It is published by Excelsior Music in their Terezin Collection. **Jan Jacob Ryba** (1765-1815) **Quartet in d minor** has a striking first movement, available from Heinrichshofen. **Shostakovich's Two Pieces** (1931) discovered in 1985 are highly recommended but not easy. There are two quartets from **Maddalena Sirnen** (1745-1818) in B Flat and f minor which are comparable to those of Arriaga. **Luminita Spinu** has written a piece (1994) **Isihie** (state of inner silence or contemplation). It is has some difficult time markings but rewards study. **Meditation on the Czech Chorale St. Wenceslas** by **Joseph Suk** (1874-1935) **Anton Webern's Langsamer Satz** is an early work comparable with Dohnanyi's Quartet No.2.

String Trios, Quintets & Sextets

Dvorak's Miniatures (Drobnosti) Op.75a is for two violins and viola. **Tanz** by **Hans Krása**, another Auschwitz victim, is haunting with sinister overtones, from Bote & Bock. **George(s) Onslow's** (1784-1853) String Quintet (2 violas) **Op.78 in d** is published by SJ Music. **Ralph Vaughan Williams' Phantasy Quintet** (written in 1912 & also for 2 violas) are both recommended. **Boccherini's** String Quintet (2 cellos) **Op.30 No.6, G.324** "Ritirada di Madrid," an early example of program music. The **Sextet** by **Frank Bridge** written sometime before 1913 features two very fine movements, from Stainer & Bell

Strings & Piano

The Piano Trio of **Cecile Chaminade** (1857-1944), **Op.11 in g** minor has charm. Even finer is that of **Clara Schumann, Op.17** in g minor from Wollenweber. **Enrique Granados** (1867-1916) **Piano Quintet in g minor** has an outstanding Allegretto. **Joaquin Turina's** Piano Sextet, "Escena Andaluza", **Op.7** is for piano, string quartet and solo viola.

Quintets for Flute & Strings

Boccherini's Op.17 No.2, G.420 is one his best. **Alberto Ginastera** (1916-1983) creates a sound picture of the Pampas in his **Impresiones de la puna**. Finally, **Andreas Romberg** (1767-1821) **Op.41 No.3** in f with 2 violas is comparable to Boccherini.

Antonin Dvorak's *Other* String Quartets

by R.H.R. Silvertrust

If you ask quarteters how many quartets Dvorak wrote, most won't know. Some of the more knowledgeable might guess 7, but few have any idea that he published 14, not including the *Two Waltzes* Op.54 and the 12 *Cypresses* B.152. (There is also a *Quartetsatz* from 1873, *Andante Appassionato con sordini*, and a fragment, B.120 from 1881) Of the 14, judging from publishers' lists, it's fair to say that seven of the quartets may qualify for the sobriquet of 'known' or at the very least obtainable. These are, Op.27 (Old Op.80), Op.34, Op.51, Op.61, Op.96, Op.105, and Op.106, the so-called Master Quartets. But the fact remains, in concert, one rarely hears anything other than the last three: Op.96, the ubiquitous 'American', Op.105 and Op.106. Occasionally, one is treated to Op.34 or 51, but that's it. [In more than 30 years of concert-going, I have never heard Op.27 or 61— perhaps if I lived in Prague...] Although some readers may not be familiar with all of the aforementioned 7 quartets, the subject of this article is the 9 other complete works for string quartet that Dvorak wrote.

But before any discussion of the composer's works can begin, one must deal with the problem of reliability presented by the opus numbers attached to Dvorak's works. Many were intentionally misnumbered by Dvorak's greedy (if not unscrupulous) publisher, Simrock and have subsequently become known to the public by these incorrect numbers. The huge success of Dvorak's first set of Slavonic Dances made Simrock rich. He realized he was sitting on a gold mine and quickly sought to publish earlier works which Dvorak had been unable to sell. However, Simrock intentionally christened these works with much higher opus numbers than they should have had thus misleading the public into believing that the works were of a recent vintage. A prime example of this chicanery is Dvorak's String Quartet No.8, B.57 originally published as Op.80. Only after Simrock's death did the public learn that it was in fact, Op.27. It was only in 1960 after many years of painstaking study, that the preeminent Dvorak scholar, Professor Jarmil Burghauser, was able to compile a definitive listing of the composer's works. Burghauser did for Dvorak what Ritter von

Köchel and Otto Deutsch did for Mozart and Schubert, hence musicologists now append "B" numbers to his works.

As an avid collector of recordings I learned early on that there were more than just seven string quartets thanks to the Vox Box LPs that appeared in the 1960s in which the Kohon Quartet recorded all of his works for quartet. Today, happily, there are several sets of CDs from which to choose including the legendary recordings originally made by the Prague Quartet for Deutsche Grammaphon on LP in the 1970s and the excellent set by the Chilingirian.

Until recently, it was virtually impossible to obtain parts to any but the 7 'known' quartets, but now, thanks primarily to the Czech publisher, Supraphon, they are all in print.

Dvorak's **First Quartet, Op.2 in A, B.8** was written in 1862 when he was 21. (It is interesting to note that his first two efforts were both chamber works, Op.1 being a viola quintet.) This first quartet, is in my opinion, a marvelous work and a very mature sounding Op.2. The last page of the manuscript bears the inscription, "To God Thanks!" which most scholars have explained as a thanksgiving after much effort and hard work. Sadly, the quartet was not even performed until 1888 and not published until 1947, nearly half a century after Dvorak's death. Critics have always found No.1 to bear a kinship to Schubert, Schumann and Brahms. Certainly in form this is so, but the thematic material is Dvorak's and Czech sounding as well, although certainly not in the full-blooded way of his later quartets. The opening 13 measures of the *Andante-Allegro* bears a choral quality one often finds in Dvorak's slow movements. The *allegro* section is full of dramatic impact. The following *Andante affetuoso ed appassionato* overflows with lyrical and rich melody and a intimate tenderness one finds again in the later quartets. An excellent *Allegro scherzando* is nearly on a par with any he wrote later and the lively finale, *Allegro animato*, rounds out what was acclaimed to be a very good work when the famous Bohemian Quartet made it part of their repertoire in the 1890s. There are two problems with the work. The work is far

too long as are all of Dvorak's first 7 quartets. While Dvorak (now with more than 25 years experience behind him) and the Bohemian Quartet made numerous large cuts in 1888 tightening the work's structure and heightening its dramatic impact in preparation for public performance, unfortunately, Supraphon, publisher of the complete edition, has chosen to print all works in their full uncut version hence destroying the effect of Dvorak's later efforts. The reader is encouraged to compare the performance of the Kohon Quartet, Vox SBVX 550 an LP, who take all of the Bohemian Quartet's cuts and then some with the performance of the Prague Quartet. Good as the latter is, the sheer length of the performance starts to approach the Brucknerian. The other problem with this quartet is the fact that first violin part, while not giving the appearance of dominating, is almost without relief the deliverer of the melodic material. Given the proper cuts, this quartet could succeed in the concert hall, and there are no extreme technical difficulties that might scare away experienced amateurs.

Listening to Dvorak's next three quartets always makes me think he stepped off of earth onto another planet. That planet was called Wagner! These works are so different from what came before or after that almost no listener would guess that the same man wrote them, let alone that that man was Antonin Dvorak. In actual fact, Dvorak personally met Wagner the next year in 1863 when he played in the viola section under RW's baton, the latter conducting preludes to *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger*. Dvorak fell under Wagner's spell. Quartet Nos. 2-4 were written by Dvorak sometime between 1869-1870. They were attempts by him to combine the discipline imposed by chamber music with the concepts of Liszt and the harmonic and thematic principles of Wagner.

I have waded through **Quartet No.2, B.17** twice and each time found nothing but vague sounds of Wagner in this overly long work—the cello part is 23 pages. Some critics have found parts which reminded them of Schubert and Professor Burghauser points out that Dvorak quotes

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Mendelssohn's Wedding March in the fourth movement, an 8 page *Andante-Allegro giusto*, as part of a musical joke. If so, my quartet could not find it and few were laughing. But why let me ruin it for you, this strange music can be yours from Supraphon, H.3439.

Stranger and, sad to say, more appalling yet is **Quartet No.3, B.18**. There can be few quartets longer than this, the first violin part runs 31 pages, the cello part 27. In fairness, the editors indicate possible cuts but it is impossible to smoothly implement them. One would be forced to cover up parts of several pages and cut and paste. More Wagnerian than the Second, one can plainly hear parts of Lohengrin in the *Andantino*. The work is characterized by themes which are repeated over and over and over and then when you can stand it no longer, they appear again in marginally mutated form in the next movement. If you've a lot of time on your hands, the work is available from Supraphon, H.3813. Should this sound harsh, read on.

By the time Dvorak got to **Quartet No.4, B.19**, he was either running out of paper or energy, as evidenced by the fact that this work is only half as long as the Third, although it is still somewhat longer than his last quartets. The Quartet is *a la Liszt* in a single movement, 15 pages long. The thematic material is a diseased Tristan. The fact is, that Dvorak, unlike say Sinding, had no affinity for the music of Wagner and was not very good in expressing himself in such a way. As the parts to Nos.3 & 4, unlike No.2, were not in the Dvorak family's possession, it was thought that these were among the works that Dvorak referred to as "burned." It is known that Dvorak came to realize that this writing was not very good. While Nos.2 & 3 can be played by experienced amateurs, they will not make much headway on No.4, Supraphon H.4592.

By the time we reach **Quartet No.5 in F, Op.9, B.37**, Dvorak has, at last, surfaced from the drowning pool of Wagnerism. In the three years which separate this Quartet from Nos.2-4, Dvorak was fortunate enough to have had several of his works performed at the Prague Free Music Concert Series. The director of these concerts, Dr. Prochazka, the influential Prague music critic, made a point of

championing Czech music, and the compositions of Smetana were widely featured. Most Dvorak scholars believe it was the example of Smetana that was responsible for Dvorak's departure from Wagnerian writing and the beginning or return to composing in Slavic and especially Czech idioms. Certainly Quartet No.5 exhibits these traits. Though still a lengthy work, the composition is clearer. The opening themes of the *Moderato-Allegro con brio*, are clearly Czech. Perhaps best known as a piece for Violin and Orchestra, the gorgeous second movement, *Andante con moto quasi Allegretto*, was originally created for this

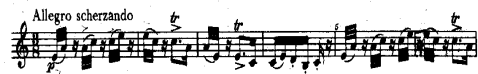


Quartet. There are few things that Dvorak wrote which are more beautiful. This is followed up by a magnificent *Tempo di Valse*, which for once is just the right length. The concluding, *Allegro molto*, though good, is twice as long as need be. Performance cuts are indicated in the Breitkopf & Härtel (No.5454) edition. The work belongs on the stage and would be very successful so long as the indicated cuts are observed.

Quartet No.6, Op.12 in a minor, B.40 also dates from 1873 and was, according to Burghauser, with the exception of the last movement, composed before No.5. Apparently at the time it was begun, Dvorak was still enamored with the concept of a whole work in one movement and that is how the Quartet was originally composed. By the time he got to the last part, he had divided it into four classical movements and removed certain sections. He never actually completed his revision although, again according to Burghauser, his intent was clear and the work could be published without any guess work. Again the work is too long, 20 pages per part. Though a major advance over Nos.2-4, it is neither, in my opinion, as strong as No.5 nor as focused, and is not likely to be a success in the concert hall. Parts from Supraphon H.6549

Quartet No. 7, Op.16 in a minor, B.42 dates from the following year, 1874. It was the first to be published (1876) and as such the first to become publicly known. Here at last, is the beginning of Dvorak's mature chamber music style. In four movements,

this work is of the right length. There is little or anything to quibble with here and for all practical purposes, this, too, should be considered one of his 'Master Quartets.' In the opening *Allegro ma non tanto*, Dvorak shows considerable skill in the extensive development of the movement's two main themes. The beautiful *Andante cantabile* is a very polished and fetching piece. The *Allegro scherzando* is quite possibly the strongest of the four movements, tightly written with a



contrasting trio is every bit as fine. The finale, *Allegro ma non troppo*, whose main theme is based on a recurrent triplet figure, is perhaps a trifle long and does have considerable 'sawing' in it, but having performed it several times, I can attest to the fact that audiences always find it effective. It should present little problem to amateurs and should be given a chance by professionals. Supraphon H.2849.

The **Two Waltzes, Op.54 B.105** (*Moderato* and *Allegro vivace* available from Amadeus No.GM 651) date from 1880. By then, he had written the Op.27, 34 & 51 quartets. Originally for piano, Dvorak took especial care in reworking them for quartet as they were a kind of gift offering to the Prague Chamber Music Association which had programmed his music in concerts. Though slight, they are in totally charming and mature works which would make excellent encores.

The last important work for string quartet is the **Cypresses B.152** (1887), twelve short pieces which were a reworking of a song cycle by the same name composed in 1865. In these youthful songs, Dvorak had tried to express his feelings about love and as such the music is highly romantic. The pieces bear titles as *You are my glorious rose*, *When your sweet glances on me fall* and so on. But make no mistake, these are not overdone, but rather superb intimate sketches marvelously expressing a tremendous range of emotions. Every quartet group should attempt at some point to have a go at these rather unique love songs for quartet. Available in several editions, perhaps the one edited by Josef Suk, Dvorak's son-in-law and prize student, is the best.

The Chamber Music of Alberto Ginastera

(Continued from page 1)

pair the Second Quartet with the Composer's earlier Quartet No.1, written in 1948, since the two Quartets had never appeared on the same CD.

Both Quartets will offer the amateur player a handful: Technical problems must be conquered on an individual basis before attempting a reading. The **First Quartet** is the most approachable from that standpoint: It is about 20 minutes in length and is very direct and compact. Ginastera himself said this Quartet marked the beginning of his second period which he described as "Subjective Nationalism". The music is rich with the flavor of the Argentinean prairies or "Pampas" region, utilizing dance rhythms of the Gauchos (Cowboys). The first movement is typical Ginastera with a second theme that varies little from the first, resulting in a four minute ball of energy. The second movement is a Scherzo in three parts that offers the player a study in different pizzicati, both strummed and plucked. The Third movement is treated rhapsodically: opening with the open strings of the guitar in the lower voices, the first violin has ample opportunities to weave magic over the slow moving harmonies. Two contrasting themes alternate in the last movement evoking the virile strumming of the guitar and the campfire music of the Gauchos.

Quartet No.2 is a much more complex work and marks the Composer's third period, which he called "Neo-expressionism." This Quartet is a real workout for all of the instruments and demands constant upkeep when we are on the road, both individually and as a group. There are incredibly difficult unison passages that require a lot of attention as well as problematic passages for all instruments. If your quartet can tackle Bartok's Fifth String Quartet, then you will enjoy this one, which I have heard jokingly referred to as Bartok's "Seventh Quartet!" The pieces are similar as both are in five movements, in arch form, and employ folk elements.

The Second Quartet begins much like the First with a rugged theme, both powerful and driving. This time, however, Ginastera provides a contrasting second theme that is yearning in nature and gives the movement breadth. The second movement begins with a viola solo accompanied by the violins playing slow, painful chords, reminiscent of a distant train. The result is a lonely and anguished movement. The central movement is entitled "Presto Magico" and the composer utilizes every effect a string instrument can muster, including glissandi, pizzicati, tremolo, Bartok snaps, and colegno. The entire movement

is played con sordino and is pianissimo for the most part, conjuring images of Bartok's "Night Music" The fourth movement is a theme and variations that offers each player a tremendous cadenza. This movement will keep you honest and is shape ! Furioso is the apt title for the last movement which is a moto perpetuo of rapid sixteenth notes and is tremendous exercise for the right arm. The final result is a quartet that can finish a program with a bang or can end the first half as well.

For those players who wish to explore Ginastera's self described first period, "Objective Nationalism", then I would strongly recommend that you grab a friend who plays the flute and discover "**Impresiones de la Puna**" for flute and string quartet. This work exemplifies the native Indian music and dances of Argentina and is about eight minutes long. As opposed to the Quartets, this piece is quite simple and is not taxing technically. I found this piece in the catalog of Southern Publishing Company and the two Quartets can be acquired through Boosey and Hawkes. Two other works which I have yet to explore are the **Piano Quintet** and **Quartet No.3**, which is for string quartet and soprano.

For the adventurous chamber music lover, Ginastera's music will enrich one's collection and musical language.

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Cobbett Members Record & Publish



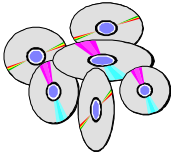
We are pleased to announce that **The Philadelphia Trio**, who are Cobbett Members, have recently recorded **Turina's Piano Trios Nos. 1 & 2**. Also on the same disk, a Centaur CD CRC 2259, is a recording of **Martinu's Bergerettes** for violin, cello and piano. These are fine works and we recommend that members obtain the recording.

Featured in a publicity release in October 1992, we are looking forward to printing an interview about their approach to and the problems of performing piano trios as well as their view of the piano trio

repertoire in an up-coming issue of the *Journal*.

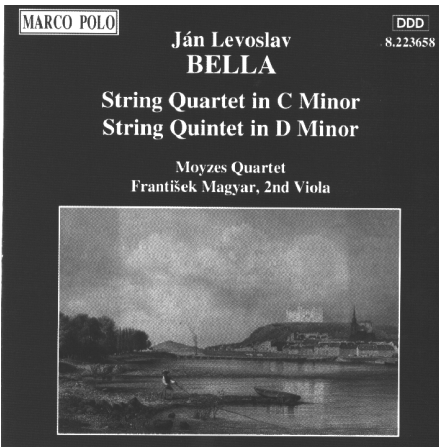
Cobbett Member **Theo Wyatt**, founder of his own music publishing business, Merton Music, has recently brought out, at very reasonable prices, several works long out of print, among them are quartets by **Spohr, Raff, Volkmann, Krommer, Rubinstein, Vanhal, Jansa, Gade and Ignaz Lachner** as well as some trios including works by **Bruni, Pleyel and Orellana**. To obtain a list of works he has published write to: Merton Music / 8 Wilton Grove / London SW19 3QX / England. However, Non-UK Cobbett Members should be forewarned that Mr. Wyatt, at the moment, has all he can do filling orders from the UK.

We are also looking to get into publishing and have talked to Mr. Wyatt. He uses something called a scan-printer but to date, we have been unable to locate any. If any Cobbett Member knows where such machines can be purchased, please contact us.



Diskology: String Qts by Bella & Onslow; Gretchaninov's Piano Trios & Wind Octets by Franz Krommer

Well, we've done it again, I hope; that is, chosen a few names you have yet to meet. Certainly, until recently, the Austro-Slovakian **Ján Levoslav Bella** (1843-1936), was such to me. Bella, for the first 76 years of his life was an Austrian, he spent his last 17 as a Czechoslovak, and today, he is posthumously a

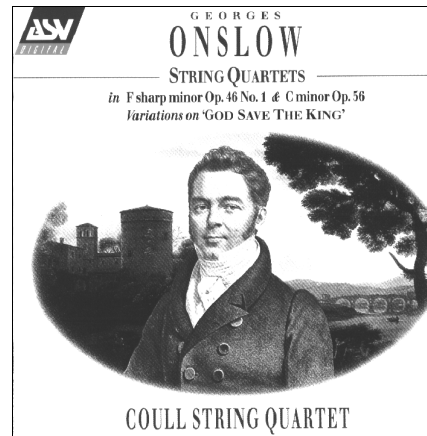


proud son of the Slovak Republic. Although known to the editors of *Groves* as early as their 3rd edition, to those of *Cobbett's Cyclopaedia*, Bella remained a cipher. Others who knew him included Richard Strauss, with whom he was on especially good terms, Liszt, Brahms, Dohnanyi and Joseph Joachim. Bella spent much of his life (1881-1921) as City Music Director (Stadtskapellmeister) in Hermannstadt (now Sibiu, Romania), a town with a sizeable German population in what was then part of the Hapsburg Empire or Austria-Hungary. His string chamber music consists of 4 quartets (g minor 1866, e minor 1871, c minor 1880 and B flat Major 1887, and a viola quintet (1868) all of which (excepting the g minor quartet) have recently been recorded by the Moyses Quartet on two Marco Polo CDs: 8.223658 & 8.223839. The music notes, though providing a biographical sketch of the composer and a thorough analysis of the works, do not offer much information about the circumstances giving rise to the composition. From Dr. Alois Koliczek writing in *Groves* (3rd ed.) we learn that the Bohemian Quartet included his C Minor Quartet, on their programs. With the exception of a *Nottorno*, which dates from 1930, Bella wrote all this music before 1888. Robin Stowell recently reviewing some of these works in *The Strad* noted that they were in the tradition of Brahms with traces of Dvorak and Smetana. If so, then 'traces' is the key word. Actually, I found little if anything to remind me of either Bohemian and, to my mind, I think Dr. Koliczek was right in writing, "...the German neo-romantic school attracted him more than the dramatic naturalism of Smetana." The music is not particularly Slavic sounding and tonally, though not in form, shows more of the influence of Liszt. It is very difficult to describe this music for while clearly rooted in the mid or late 19th Century, it exhibits considerable modern tendencies nonetheless. The more one hears the music, the more original it sounds. This must be emphasized, for at first one is not immediately struck by the originality, but rather a certain common quality. All in all, I found these works very strong, engaging chamber music. Bella knows how to write effectively for strings, and as far as I could tell from the recordings, which are of high quality, each voice is given excellent opportunities. These pieces appear to be within the realm of experienced amateur players. I am particularly glad to have come across these recordings which I warmly recommend, and hope their

appearance is an indication that it will not be too long before these works are published.

Here and there, little by little, the large treasure trove of string chamber music which **George(s) Onslow** (1784-1853) composed is being rediscovered. To my mind far too little and far too slowly, and those recordings which have been made have generally been of poor quality by less than stellar groups. This recording by the Coull Quartet on ASV CD DCA 808 breaks ranks with those earlier disks. Technically and interpretively, the Coulls leave nothing to be desired.

While the music notes by Alexander Waugh give some information about Onslow himself, there is none on the works which are recorded: **Quartet No.19, Op.46 No.1 in f# minor, Quartet No.30, Op.56 in c minor** and the **Variations on God Save the King** which is the second movement of his **Quartet No.7, Op.9 No.1**.

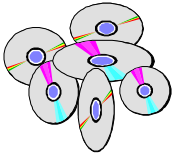


The variations, though obviously modelled on Haydn's Op.76 No.3 'Kaiserquartet' are not mere pale imitations. They are at once ingenious and effective with the penultimate variation, a fugue, being especially fine.

By the time Onslow wrote Op.46 No.1, he had moved beyond the

lessons he had learned from Haydn, Mozart and Schubert and unlike many of his contemporaries, shows a good grasp of what Beethoven had been accomplishing in his Middle Quartets. The opening bars to the first movement, *Allegro espressivo e non troppo presto* clearly demonstrate a power and emotional range found in few others writing at this time, save Beethoven. The rest of the quartet is very fine as well, especially the finale, *Allegro moderato*, which is a grand chase in 6/8 reminiscent of the last movement to Schubert's No.15, Op.161, D.887.

Of the opening bars to the *Allegro Maestoso ed espressivo* to Quartet No.30, Op.56, I know of nothing like them in the quartet literature: The sheer drama of it as the cello solo ascends from the depths of the open c string to an A flat nearly 4 octaves above it is breathtaking. This is not a quartet that your average cellist is going to sight read. In the menuetto which follows, the cellist once again is given a strenuous workout in a moto-perpetuo *sciolte* section. A beautiful *Adagio* comes next followed by a *Vivace* which for sheer excitement is hard to beat. How can music like this be unknown? A guaranteed knockout in the concert hall if our timorous professional groups would but give it a look. Hats off to the Coull Quartet!



Alexander Gretchaninov's Piano Trios & Wind Octets from Franz Krommer

For some reason, perhaps because we are used to it, seeing Romanov, Korsakov or Rachmaninov spelt Romanoff, Korsakoff or Rachmaninoff or vice-versa is not particularly jarring. Not so for Gretchaninov whose name is now being rendered as Grechaninov. (Both by the *New Groves* and Marco Polo Records while *Cobbett's Cyclopedia* and *Baker's Dictionary* stick with Gretchaninov). Of course, the composer probably would not mind either way as he is so little known outside of his native Russia. For years, he was nothing but a name to me in the rapid-fire song about Russian composers sung by the American comedian, Danny Kaye.



Alexander Gretchaninov (1864-1956), the son of a tradesman, was born in Moscow and in 1881 entered the Moscow Conservatory where he studied with Arensky and Taneiev. In the late 1880s, after a quarrel with Arensky, he moved to Petersburg where he studied composition and orchestration with Rimsky Korsakov until 1893. The latter's influence can be heard in Gretchaninov's early works, such as his String Quartet No.1, Op.2 (a prize-winning composition) which shares

considerable affinity with the works written by other well-known composers, who at one time were students of Rimsky, and then later part of the so-called Belaiev Circle, for example: Borodin, Liadov, Glazunov, Sokolov, Kopylov et. al. Around 1896, he returned to Moscow and was involved with writing for the theater, the opera, and the Russian Orthodox Church. By 1910, he was considered a composer of distinction and was receiving an annual stipendium from the Tsar. Though he remained in Russia for several years after the Revolution, ultimately, he chose to emigrate, first to France in 1925 and then to the U.S. in 1939 where he remained for the rest of his life.

Trio No.1, Op.38 in c minor dates from 1906. By this time, he was again back at the Moscow Conservatory teaching, and on good terms with Taneiev and Arensky, judging from the fact that the Trio is dedicated to the latter. One hears nothing of the Petersburg period in this work which in many ways sounds as if it could have been written by either of his Moscow teachers. He is firmly back in the "Moscow Camp" and clearly avoids writing Russian-sounding music which was so favored by the Nationalists of Petersburg. This is a big work in every way. Lasting nearly 35 minutes, it overwhelms from the very beginning with the rhythmically driving, powerful *Allegro passionato*. The *Lento assai* gives flight to great lyrical episodes in both the violin and the cello, while the finale, *Allegro vivace*, full of restless energy which leads to an emotionally draining conclusion. This cannot be an easy work to play. Those familiar with the works of Taneiev will know what I mean. It is, at the very least, on a par, difficulty-wise, with Brahms' last piano trio.

Piano Trio No.2, Op.128 in G Major is said to have been completed by the composer in 1930 at a time while he was living in Paris. (It is not clear if this is the same piano trio Sabaneiev

speaks of in *Cobbett's Cyclopedia* as having been written in 1913 but still in M.S.) This is a work on a much smaller scale, only slightly greater than half the length of No.1. In feel, it is totally different. For a start, one hears that, however haltingly, Gretchaninov has taken some degree of modernity into his music. Rather than the tremendous formidable and daunting quality one feels in No.1, the Second exhibits an intimacy more suitable for the medium of chamber music. Whereas the First exhibits a striving, emotional intensity almost beyond the power of the instruments, the Second is controlled, charming and self-limiting in an updated Mozartian way. Gretchaninov seems to have assimilated some of the clarity of line and focus one finds in the French neo-classicists. The melodies are lighter and more transparent. One hears in the opening *Allegro* that this work is tonally more advanced but still, for the time, conservative. A brief and lovely *Intermezzo* is then followed by a finale marked *Vivo*, which features a clever fugue leading to an exciting close. These works are recorded on a Marco Polo CD I.223416.

Franz Krommer (1759-1831) if he's known at all today, is known primarily by wind players. While in no way suggesting that his string compositions are on a lower level, it is for certain that the excellence of his wind compositions place him among a very select group of composers, all the more remarkable when one considers



that he was a violinist. The four octets, **Op.57, 71, 76 & 78**, which appear on this EMI CD CDC 7 54383 are performed by the Sabine Meyer Wind Ensemble. (Yes, the same Sabine over which Herbert von Karajan fought the Berlin Philharmonic) They are part of a set of 13 compositions which were called "Harmonies." The word implied a serenade-divertimento-partita type composition written specifically for wind instruments. In the time frame we are talking about, 1760-1815, the Austrian aristocracy was mad about wind bands, which generally consisted of 8 to 10 instruments, usually 2 clarinets, 2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons and a contrabassoon. Because of this popularity, most of the composers of the Vienna-Classical period including Haydn and Mozart were engaged, at one time or another, in writing works for such an ensemble. But none, including those of Mozart, surpassed the popularity of Krommer's whose *Harmoniemusik* was the only set of compositions to be published contemporaneously by two different publishing houses. The secret to the success of these delicious compositions is that Krommer understood the tremendous sonorities which were possible if each part was treated individually even in accompaniment and avoided slavishly doubling up the instruments which was the common practice. The results show the great breadth of tone color he was able to achieve.