



THE
CHAMBER MUSIC
JOURNAL

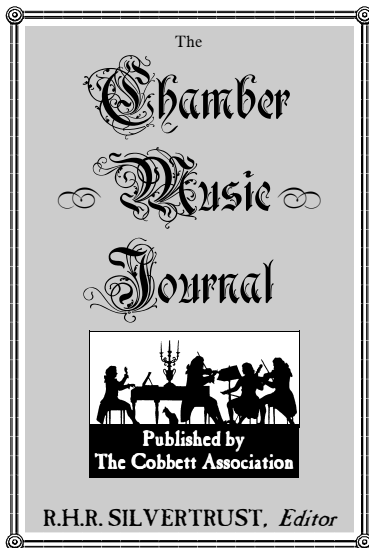
The Essential Guide
For Players & Listeners
To The Wider World
of Chamber Music

***Leon Boëllmann's
Piano Quartet & Piano Trio
The String Quartets
Of Antonio Bazzini
d'Indy: Chansons et Danses—
Septet for Winds***

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The Sounding Board-Letters to the Editor



Louise Farrenc's Chamber Music

I recently attended a piano recital at our local music school and heard some charming works by the composer Louise Farrenc. What can you tell me about her and did she write any chamber music with strings—I am a violinist.

Michael Klein
Los Angeles, California

Louise Farrenc (1804-1875) was perhaps the foremost woman pianist of her day. She studied with the likes of Ignaz Moscheles and Johann Nepomuk Hummel among others.. Because she also showed great promise as a composer, her parents decided to enroll her at the Paris Conservatory where she studied composition with Anton Reicha. After completing her studies at the Paris Conservatory, Farrenc embarked on a concert career and gained considerable fame as a performer, primarily in France, during the 1830's. By the early 1840's, her reputation was such, that in 1842 she was appointed to the permanent position of Professor of Piano at the Paris Conservatory, a position she held for thirty years and one which was among the most prestigious in Europe. (No woman in the 19th century held a comparable post.)

The great bulk of her compositions were for the piano alone, however she did write chamber music for various combinations of winds and or strings and piano throughout her life. These include a string quartet, two piano quintets, a sextet for piano and winds which later appeared in an arrangement for piano quintet, two piano trios, a nonet for winds and strings, a trio for clarinet (or violin), cello and piano, and a trio for flute (or violin), cello and piano.

Humorous Chamber Music

We are putting on a musical review, complete with skits and are looking for some chamber music works which will garner some laughs. Can you recommend anything?

Bill Smith
Denver Colorado

Well, chamber music is not generally known for garnering laughs, as you put it, however, there are some works out there which may bring a smile to the face of the cognoscenti. You might try some of these: Antonin Razek's 14 Comic Pieces for String Quartet available from Amadeus. Razek (1852-1929), an Austro-Czech, studied violin at the Prague Conservatory with Ferdinand Laub. Among the 14 pieces are those bearing titles such as "The Sparrows Congress" and "The Cat's

Serenade". Perhaps the best of the set are his Variations on the Austrian National Anthem as played by the different nationalities of the old Hapsburg Empire, the Kaiserlied taken from Haydn's Op.76 No.3. Then there is Werner Thomas-Mifune who has written a send-up of Haydn's "Quinten" Quartet, Opus 76 No.2" It's called Haydn's Südamerikanische Saitensprünge. Not easy to translate in English. South American Detours, though not a literal translation, perhaps captures the meaning best. Mifune quite cleverly interrupts the first movement with sudden episodic visits to Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and other Latin destinations. Your audience will need to know the Quinten for it to be found funny. From Edition Kunzelmann another work by Thomas-Mifune is his Komisches Streichquartett über Die 5 Symphonie von L. van Beethoven originally translated by the editors of Edition Kunzelmann as "Fanny String Quartet" Sadly, I understand this error has now been fixed. It doesn't require a chamber music knowledgeable audience to get the humor. Also worth considering is Eine Kleine Lachmusik by Wolfgang Schröder from Edition Moseler. It along with the Thomas-Mifune's Haydn has been recorded on a Koch CD

How many volumes of Folk tunes Did Moritz Käsmayer Write?

The Cobbett Association Library, as mine also, has 13 Volumes of the Humorous Volksliedern. Some of them are very pleasant and indeed humorous. Others are rather less successful. Are there really 14 as you mentioned in your answer to Mr. Raskin last issue?

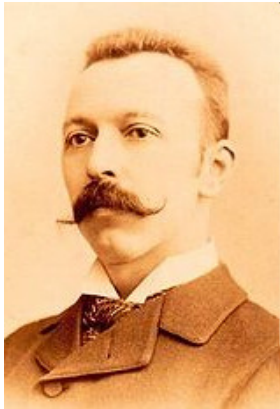
Dr. James Whitby
London, Ontario

No, there are only 13. I only have 12 of the 13—I am missing No.3. Given that it clearly states on the cover of each volume that there are 13, the number also mentioned in the Cyclopedia, I can only conclude that a wandering finger hit the wrong key of the keyboard. Dr. Whitby also notes that there are entries on Käsmayer both in Mendel's Musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon, Berlin 1875 and Schmid's Dizionario Universale dei Musicisti, Milan, 1939. However, these add little to the information provided by me in my answer to Mr. Raskin.

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

LEON BOËLLMAN'S CHAMBER MUSIC

by Georges Calleure



With the decline of the aristocracy and the rise of a middle class after the French Revolution, chamber music in France lost its patronage and support. It fell onto hard times that lasted well beyond the mid 19th century. For the most part, French composers ceased to write pure instrumental music and concentrated on the opera which was the taste of the new musical public. Of course chamber music was not entirely abandoned, but performances of instrumental music were limited to a hand-

ful of composers such as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and to a lesser extent Pleyel, Onslow and Farrenc.

By the mid-19th century new names, now mostly forgotten, began to appear on the scene: Gouvy, Bertini, Litloff, Lefebure-

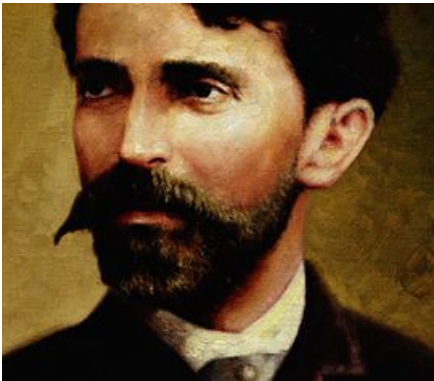
Wely, and Niedermeyer. Without their efforts, the level of instrumental and orchestral music in France would have sunk to even greater depths than it then did. Conspicuously absent from chamber music circles were Berlioz and the still unknown Franck. Saint-Satins went on record as saying that any French composer who tried his hand at chamber music was engaging in folly. But slowly, during the last years of the Second Empire, chamber music began to gain a small toehold. Composers such as Felicien David, who had concentrated exclusively on opera, along with Saint Saens and Lalo, tried their hands at chamber music, which at least among a small sector, was once again becoming fashionable.

After 1860 new French works began to be played, but even then only with difficulty, for the prevailing taste was for the music of well-known composers, mostly from the Classical era. It is telling that a composer such as Saint-Saens had to resort to arranging performances of his chamber music at his own expense. This was

(Continued on page 4)

The String Quartets of Antonio Bazzini

By Orlando Lorenzetti



Antonio Bazzini (1818-1897) is that rare example of a complete musician. A concert virtuoso who at the height of his career in the mid 19th century was regarded as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, violinist before the public. Yet, he gave up his concert career to devote himself to composing, teaching and above all to restoring the instrumental tradition, then in decline, in his native Italy. For several decades Bazzini, who was a fine conductor, devoted himself to introducing the masterpieces of the Austrian and German

repertoire to Italian audiences. Sadly, today Bazzini is only remembered as the composer of the fiendishly difficult encore piece, *Ronde des Lutins* (Dance of the Goblins). Yet, in his time, Bazzini's chamber music and his operas were greatly esteemed.

Bazzini was born in the northern Italian city of Brescia. He was seven and a half when he began to study the violin with Faustino Camisani, the local Kapellmeister. By the time his lessons ended with Camisani's death in 1830, Bazzini's technique was such that within a few years, he was himself a maestro di cappella for the church of San Filippo in Brescia. His early works, as might be expected, were often religious in nature, and while at San Filippo, he wrote masses, vespers, and six oratorios.

Perhaps the most important event in his young life took place in March of 1836 when as first violin, he performed a quintet by Luigi Savi. The work was dedicated to Paganini and the dedicatee was in the audience. After hearing him play, Paganini advised the young man to tour as a virtuoso, and Bazzini took this advice to heart. Beginning in 1837 he toured Milan, Venice, Trieste, Vienna, and Budapest. One

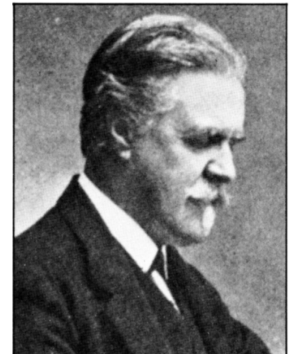
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Vincent d'Indy's

Chanson et Danses for Wind Septet

by Jean-Luc Belcoir

Vincent D'Indy (1851-1931) was born of aristocratic stock. He was raised by his grandmother who had the means to provide him with piano lessons from famous teachers. However, when it came to a career, music was



not something the d'Indys did as a profession, at least in grandmama's aristocratic eyes. Thus, he was packed off to Paris, where he was to study the law. D'Indy, however, had his heart set on becoming a composer. So, he joined a Parisian orchestra as a timpanist to learn music "from the ground up." He managed to get introductions to Massenet and Bizet, both of whom thought that his first efforts showed considerable talent. Massenet suggested he show his work to César Franck. Franck did not

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At The Doublebar



I don't particularly like writing about the fact that our membership (readership) is declining, but it is something which must be done in the hopes that you will be able to interest other chamber music players in the Association. The decline in membership,

while not precipitous, has been steady and has finally resulted in our not being able to take advantage of the best domestic postal rates. Though not dramatic, it should go without saying that this decline cannot go on indefinitely. Almost all of the loss we have sustained can be attributed to the attrition of old age or death. However, the recent downturn in the economy has forced a few to drop their memberships. I suppose it is not for me to say one can always manage \$28 dollars. Certainly, I have wasted this much on frivolities many a time. But I have received letters to the effect that "I am on a fixed income and must make the difficult decision to cancel my subscription." It is surely sad to read such letters. This decline, however, is not something that we alone are experiencing. Other classical music organizations around the globe are reporting the same trends. This, though, is small comfort as we represent a small sliver of the greater classical music world—namely chamber music players who are interested in the wider repertoire to be found beyond the few famous composers whose works continue to be performed today. The bottom line, as accounts are fond of saying, is that the most likely way this decline can be either slowed down or reversed is by interesting our fellow chamber music players.

Thanks to Messers Calleure, Belcoir and to Professor Lorenzetti for their fine articles. All of the works discussed are well worth playing. Thanks also Professor Behrman for his book review.

Most of you will have renewal notices enclosed with this issue. As always, we ask that you return them as soon as you are able. As most of you know, we operate solely on the membership dues and charitable contributions we receive.—Ray Silvertrust, Editor

LEON BOËLLMAN'S CHAMBER MUSIC

(Continued from page 3)

the only way he could get works, such as his Op.14 Piano Quintet and his Op.18 Piano Trio performed. (The performances took place in 1860 and 1865 respectively). Perhaps more than any other man, Saint Saens must be credited with the resuscitation of French Chamber Music. With the help of such men as Bussine Fauré, Guiraud, Franck and Duparc, he founded the Societe Nationale de Musique in 1871. The Societe regularly put on performances of new French instrumental music with the result that a veritable renaissance of French music, orchestral and chamber music that today form the greater part of the French repertoire, were introduced at the Societe's concerts. The works of d'Indy, Chausson, Debussy, Magnard, Ravel and Roussel all had their premieres at concerts of the Societe that helped these composers to make their names.

Leon Boëllmann (1862-1897), had he lived more than a mere 35 years, would surely have been among them. He was born in the Alsatian village of Ensisheim. After the Franco-Prussian war, when Alsace was given to the Germans, Boëllmann went to Paris. He enrolled in the Ecole de Musique Classique et Religieuse, informally known as the Ecole Niedermeyer, named after its founder Abraham Louis Niedermeyer. Niedermeyer had taken a virtually moribund institution and turned it into one of France's leading music schools. Among its many students was Gabriel Fauré. Boëllmann studied with Niedermeyer's son-in-law, Gustave Lefevre, and with the organist Eugene Gigout, winning numerous first prizes and graduating with honors in 1881. He accepted the post of Assistant Organist at St. Vincent de Paul and was later elevated to the rank of Organist. In 1885 he married Lefevre's daughter Louise, who was also Gigout's niece. He went to work at Gigout's newly established organ school and proved to be a dedicated teacher. Multitalented, he served for the Parisian journal *L'Art musical* as a keenly perceptive critic who signed himself "le Reverend Pere Leon" or "un gargon de la salle Pleyel". Also he gained a reputation as a fine performer and improviser, and he won recognition as a composer.

The Suite Gothique for organ, with its brilliant toccata finale, remains Boëllmann's best known work, and for many years the Variation Symphoniques for cello and orchestra was played in concert halls throughout the world. His premature death in 1897 cut short what surely would have been a brilliant career. His musical legacy comprises six orchestral works including a symphony, two chamber music compositions, a few sonatas, some songs and numerous works for organ and piano.

Boëllmann's two chamber music works, the Op.10 Piano Quartet in f minor and the Op.19 Piano Trio in G Major, were both awarded prizes by the Societe des Compositeurs. The Piano Quartet dates from 1890, while the Piano Trio was composed five years later. Both works showcase Boëllmann's solid command of technique, his bold use of harmony, his imaginative use of rhythm and his fresh and original melodies. Both are unmistakably French. One finds not only the influence of Franck, but also the highly original combination of Gregorian modes with modern harmonic developments.

The **Piano Quartet in f minor, Op.10**, follows the classical four-movement design. At the outset of the opening *Allegro moderato*, rich harmonies in the strings create an atmosphere of hazy, muted color over which the piano introduces the first theme.

PIANO.

Boëllmann characteristically cast his second subjects in broad, Franckian terms, and this movement is no exception. It is spirited throughout, almost of a playful nature, and even fugal elements within the development arise spontaneously and remain far from any hint of the academic.

The opening pages of the *Scherzo* the feature racing scale passages in the strings which bring Saint-Saens to mind.

II. Scherzo.



The piano's underlying arpeggios in the trio create an exquisite effect. This is sunny music, overflowing with *joie de vivre*.

A rhapsodic, nocturnal quality infuses the *Andante* in three-part song form, which treats a simple, flowing melody with considerable harmonic sophistication.

III. Andante.



The faster middle section offers greater rhythmic definition as well as some sense of development.

Modality imparts archaic coloration to the vigorous first theme of the *Allegro* finale, where the rhythmic energy is unstoppable. Everything proceeds at a breathless pace,

IV. Finale.

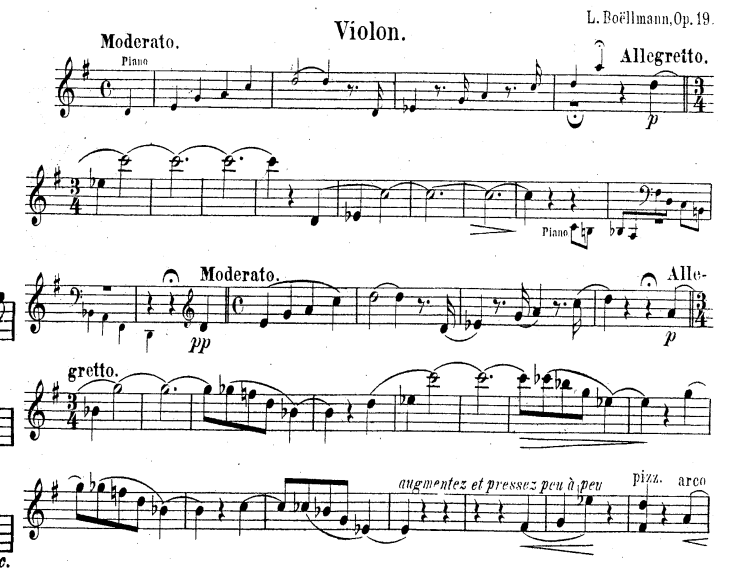


and when the broader second subject enters after less than a minute, it seems more like a counter theme than an idea in its own right. The development occupies nearly half of the entire move-

ment, and in a climate of perpetual motion, a profusion of ideas blossoms with seeming effortlessness. Again, all the permutations of Boëllmann's formidable technique come across as purely spontaneous, and with unflagging verve an expanded recapitulation brings the quartet to its joyful conclusion.

A noticeable evolution separates the quartet from the **Piano Trio in G Major, Op.19**, composed some five years later and dedicated to Vincent d'Indy. Here a change in the emotional climate is sensed immediately in the increased chromaticism, and the overall refinement of feeling is closer to the language of Chausson. The form is unusual, comprising two large parts. The first consists of a connected introduction, allegro and slow movement; the second contains the joined scherzo and finale.

After the introductory bars, the meter shifts to 5/4 for a flowing, rhythmically free *allegretto*, which is followed by an *andante* with occasional touches of quasi-oriental languidity.



A quick, dance-like scherzo (see below) begins the second part, and a broadly melodic trio is so integrated that the rhythmic un-



derpinning continues without interruption. The finale follows without pause, and the recurrence of its incisive, dance-like opening theme shows it to be a freely constructed rondo. Again the contrasting material is broadly melodic. Toward the end, an *andante* episode interrupts the flow with a reminiscence of the slow movement, only to be dispelled by the final return of the rondo theme. Both works are really first rate and deserve to be heard in concert. Sound-bites can be heard on the Cobbett website. Parts can be found at IMSLP and Edition Silvertrust Both works were recorded on a Marco Polo CD.

A Forgotten Book for Amateur String Players And Some Related Treasures

by Professor E.J. Behrman

All musicians, even professionals, need comprehensive lists of chamber music pieces. These are to be found in The New Grove Dictionary of Music⁽¹⁾, in Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music⁽²⁾, in Altmann⁽³⁾ and in Cohn⁽⁴⁾. The latter three add helpful discussions to their thorough surveys. There are less comprehensive works by Christensen⁽⁵⁾ and Berger⁽⁶⁾. Some comparison of coverage in the more recent contributions can be seen in the number of composers listed under "A": Reference work 5 gives two & Reference Work 6, one; Cohn has 113. These serious volumes are importantly supplemented by amusing but highly relevant writings for amateurs. This *genre* has its origin in a 1924 newspaper article by Ledermann⁽⁷⁾ which was acknowledged and greatly expanded by Aulich & Heimeran in "Das stillvergnügte Streichquartett"⁽⁸⁾. There is an English translation⁽⁹⁾. Chafetz⁽¹⁰⁾ has made a notable addition to this literature (e.g., see his chapter, The Sociopathology of the String Quartet.) Reference work Nos. 8-10 all have useful lists of compositions with comments. I omit serious works of pedagogy such as Herter Norton⁽¹¹⁾.

"Friends and Fiddlers" by Catherine Drinker Bowen⁽¹²⁾ is in an entirely different category. Here is a quotation from her Forward: "Search the library catalogues under "Music," and you will find books on counterpoint, on composers, on Gregorian chants, on the tragedy of Tchaikovsky or the spiritual development of Beethoven, the love letters of Wagner, the compositional difficulties of Brahms, the finest shades of professional musical criticism- all have found their way into print. But there remains a voice to be heard. Not the voice of your confirmed concert-goer, nor of the fortunate hostess whose music room is graced of an evening by the brilliant concert players of the day, but another voice, modest but none the less insistent. The playing amateur, the hard-bitten fiddler, the string-quartet addict, the piano-duet enthusiast, the lady who cannot sing and knows it---" This book was originally published in 1935 and reprinted at least eighteen times. This makes it easy to find on used book websites. The addicts that I know have not heard of it, nor do I find it mentioned in other works useful for amateurs that I have cited. Bowen's book has thirteen chapters each in effect a short story with topics such as: On Musical Hunger; God Makes the Viola Players; On Cellists, Wild and Domesticated; and even On Organs and Organists. There are no lists of recommended pieces. Where Bowen excels and makes a rare contribution to chamber music is her marvelous treatment of the emotional effect of making music with others. Some quotations: "An instant flash, an instant communication passes between strangers who discover a mutual love of ensemble playing." "The warm invisible bond, the banishment of aloneness, the sudden reawakening reawareness of life, that only communication brings." "To break for an instant that shell, that hard protection with which every adult surrounds himself." (p. 17). "Then we look at each other and smile, and are silent." (p.78)

Related Treasures

1. The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 volumes, New York, Grove, 2001.
2. *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, Oxford, Lon-

don, 1929-1930, 2nd Ed. 1963. The 2nd edition adds a third volume with material for the period 1929-1960, but listed by country rather than by composer. There is a valuable Bibliography.

3. Wilhelm. Altmann, *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler*. Four volumes, Hesses Verlag, Berlin, 1928-1931; reprinted, Heinrichshofen's Verlag, Wilhelmshaven, 1972. The first two volumes contain a chronological list of string quartets according to the birth date of the composer. The third volume deals with string trios, quintets, sextets and octets while the fourth volume concerns pieces for strings and winds. There are many musical examples.

4. A. Cohn, *The Literature of Chamber Music*, 4 vols, Hinshaw Music, Chapel Hill, 1997.

5. James. Christensen, *The String Players' Guide to Chamber Music*, Open Court, Chicago, 2008. This is an expanded and revised version of Chamber Music:Notes for Players (1992). There is a biographical sketch of each composer and a description of each piece movement by movement. The difficulty and the pleasure to be experienced are estimated on a scale of 1-5.

6. Melvin Berger, *Guide to Chamber Music*, Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1985.

7. F. A. Ledermann, *Zur Naturgeschichte des Dilettantenquartetts*, Berliner Tageblatt, May 9, 1924. This is reprinted by Aulich & Heimeran. *Auf Wiedersehen bei der Fermate* is a subtitle. Ledermann's article, in turn, has its roots in a type of musical humor exemplified in H. Simon, Professor Kalauers *Musiklexikon and andere musikalische Schnurren von Osmin*, 7th ed., Steingraber-Verlag, Leipzig, 1925.

8. B. Aulich & E. Heimeran, *Das stillvergnügte Streichquartett*, Heimeran Verlag, München, 1936. The 13th edition (1956) contains added material such as an index and a note on the murder of Ledermann and his family by the Nazis. The 20th edition, Barenreiter Kassel, Basel, 1987 enlarges still further the number of works discussed. Stillvergnugte is difficult to translate into English (quietly joyous?) but the sense of it is perhaps given in the p. 78 quotation from Bowen (supra).

9. D. M. Craig, *The Well-Tempered String Quartet*, a translation of ref. 8(1" ed), H. W. Gray Co., N.Y. , 1938. The 3rd edition, Novello, London, 1951, has added notes on some contemporary works.

10. L. Chafetz, *The Ill Tempered String Quartet*, McFarland, Jefferson (NC), 1989. Reprinted, 2005.

11. M. D. Herter Norton, *The Art of String Quartet Playing*, Simon & Schuster, N. Y., 1962.

12. C. D. Bowen, *Friends and Fiddlers*, Boston, Little, Brown, and Co., 1935. Bowen was also the author of many popular biographies.

(Continued from page 3)

share this enthusiasm and was reputed to have told d'Indy, "You have ideas but you cannot do anything." However, he must have recognized d'Indy's potential, for he agreed to take the young man as a student. Although d'Indy would be influenced by many different sources, it was his teacher Franck and Franck's music which made the greatest impression upon him. D'Indy's reputation, during his own lifetime was considerable, having founded, in 1900, what was to become the most important music school in France after the Paris Conservatory—The Schola Cantorum.

Of Cesar Franck's many students, d'Indy was the one most decisively attracted to Wagner during the 1880's. As that decade ended, however, d'Indy changed course and began a systematic study of French musical tradition. As a result of this, he was a dominant figure in the revival of the Baroque master, Jean-Philippe Rameau. It was also at this time that d'Indy first began to be influenced by folk song. The folk song, as applied to d'Indy's subsequent compositions, provided a great contrast to the noble and heroic themes which had been utilized in his large Wagnerian orchestral works. For d'Indy, the folk tune and its bucolic charm were perennially stimulating.

This coupled with his love of the countryside—until his death, he regularly returned to the place of his birth, Les Faugs, high in the mountains of the Vivarais for relaxation and inspiration—resulted in works which were to evoke the moods and *mise en scene* of the French countryside. Works such as his *Fantasie* for oboe and orchestra, based entirely on French folk songs, and the *Chansons et Danses* are prime examples of this.

The inspiration provided by the folk song spurred d'Indy to turn to chamber music as the 1890's began. He had written no chamber music since an early piano quartet (1878), but after the *Symphony on a French Mountain Air* (1886), having exorcised the spirit of Wagner and thereby cleansing his orchestral palette, d'Indy wrote five chamber works in the next ten years: a septet, a trio for piano, clarinet, and cello, two string quartets, and the **Chansons et Danses for Wind Septet, Op.50.**

It is the general consensus that *Chansons et Danses* is d'Indy's most succinct lyrical composition. The blending of horn tone with that of the woodwind, in this case flute, oboe, 2 clarinets, and 2 bassoons, is masterly. Perhaps this is no surprise considering that d'Indy was himself a horn player, and one can sense an almost child-like delight in the counter-posing of sonorities. D'Indy's impulse toward the lyrical is directed toward a rekindling of innocence; but it is an innocence achieved by careful musical composition.

Chansons et Danses was the result of a commission from Paul Taffanel of the Societé des instruments à vent. D'Indy finished the work in the summer of 1898. The main subject of the *Chansons* calls Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* to mind, as does the suavely animated second theme.

I. Chanson

Muted, fragments of both themes lead to an elegiac close.

The *Danses* take the form of a simple rondo; an insistently attractive folk melody, chirping over a percolating accompaniment. It is heard three times, each time more brilliantly, interwoven with serenely blithesome episodes, and rounded off, in good cyclic fashion, with a recall of the *Chanson*

There are not many wind septets from this era and certainly this is one of the best. A number of recordings are available .

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(Continued from page 3)

review by a Milanese critic in 1839 is typical of the high praise Bazzini's playing received: "His violin, which transforms all your soul, combines enthusiasm with perfect intonation ... [his] mastery of the bow ... [produces] a song that resembles the human voice, and [he] has the technique for the most difficult whims found in Paganini, executed without hampering true expression." Between 1841 and 1845 he toured Germany, Denmark, and Poland. For several years he lived in Leipzig, where he studied the German masters. While in Germany, Bazzini performed with Mendelssohn's Gewandhaus Orchestra, reputedly giving one of the first private performances of Mendelssohn's E minor Violin Concerto. It was while Bazzini was living in Germany that Robert Schumann got to know and hear him often. His critique of Bazzini's playing stands as a great tribute. "For some time now audiences have been making virtuosi understand that they are weary of them... The virtuosi themselves seem to have got the message for recently they have started emigrating to America. Many of their enemies secretly hope that they will stay over there for good, since, all things considered, their new virtuosity has contributed very little to the art. Yet when this virtuosity is brought to us as gracefully as it is by the above-mentioned young Italian, we will happily listen to it for hours on end, it is years since a virtuoso has given me such deep joy and such delightful moments as Antonio Bazzini. I believe that he is still little known, and even here has not been given the degree of appreciation that he deserves... He is wholly Italian, in the best sense of the word: he seems to come not from a land on this earth but from a land of song, from an unknown, eternally serene land: this was the impression I had at times listening to his music."

After a short stay in Denmark in 1845, Bazzini returned to Brescia to teach and compose. In 1846 he played in Naples and Palermo. In 1849–1850 he toured Spain and from 1852 to 1863 lived in Paris. His famous *Ronde des Lutins* was published around this time and immediately entered the repertoire as a show piece. In 1864, after a tour of France and the Netherlands, he no longer wished to put up with the many discomforts that were part of a great international performer's life and decided to put his concert career aside in favor of composing. He then returned to Italy and settled in his native Brescia, but frequently was to be found in either Florence or Milan, the two major northern Italian musical centers.

Although not always homogeneous, Bazzini's works represent an important link between early and late 19th century Italian instrumental writing. The direct results of his efforts to make Italians aware of the great German and Austrian masterpieces, then virtually unknown in Italy, was to lead to the works of a younger generation of Italian composers, such as Martucci and Sgambati who were seduced by German Romanticism. In 1861, the Societa del Quartetto of Florence was formed; and in 1864 a similar organization in Milan. Bazzini took an active role in both societies, often performing the quartets of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert (of whom he was particularly fond) and Schumann. Some of his works were written as a result of competitions held by these societies or by Italian music publishers to reward the best instrumental compositions by Italian authors.

The works that Bazzini wrote from the early 1860's on, when he had practically retired from concert activity, had a dual aim: First to show that he was *au courant* with international musical trends

and second to help educate Italian audiences who were unfamiliar with the tradition of chamber music. The Austrian presence in northern Italy, hated though it was, did have the effect of creating a new music-going public which regularly attended the concert seasons that the Quartet Societies of post-unification Italy. The audiences in Milan and Florence began to show an interest in new music.

In letters to friends and to the publisher Ricordi, Bazzini clearly states his intention as a composer was to create two separate sets of chamber music works. One would be ambitious works, complex of form and making greater instrumental demands. The other would consist of *Morceaux fantastiques*, *Morceaux lyriques* and *Morceaux caracteristiques* for violin and piano, aimed at skilled, progressive amateurs. His six string quartets belong to the first category.

The quartets were composed over a span of almost thirty years, between 1864 and 1892, and show significant changes in the composer's musical outlook. **String Quartet No. 1 in C Major** won the competition announced by the Societa del Quartetto of Milan in 1864. In an 1865 review, Arrigo Boito called it a "...fine, noble work, remarkable from all points of view, full of splendor. In Bazzini's quartet we perceive a mind trained for many years not only to listening but also to performing the great German quartets; we perceive a mind which, because of exceptional circumstances and a natural disposition for instrumental music, remained without the existing operatic movement and was able to dedicate itself entirely, for a singular coincidence, to the cult of independent art." Boito's meant that Bazzini, familiar as he was with the great quartets of Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schumann, could not have ignored them when it came to writing his own. To him, this explains why the noble and austere *Adagio-Allegro* opening movement.

The image shows the first four staves of the musical score for the first movement of String Quartet No. 1 in C Major. The first staff is marked 'Adagio' and 'ff'. The second staff has 'espress.' written below it. The third staff has 'con passione' written below it. The fourth staff has 'p' written below it. The music is in C major and 4/4 time, featuring a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some rests.

and the pensive *Andante sostenuto* following it call to mind Beethoven because of their incisive use of thematic material as well as the skilful development of a "lyrical polyphony" long alien to Italian instrumental music. The *Scherzo* (see below) clearly owes something to its Mendelssohnian predecessors, while the Finale

The image shows the first two staves of the musical score for the Scherzo movement. The first staff is marked 'p leggiero'. The second staff has 'p' written below it. The music is in C major and 3/4 time, featuring a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some rests.

hides its relatively poor inspiration behind skilful contrapuntal writing.

Completed around 1877, **String Quartet No. 2 in d minor Op. 75** was dedicated to the Societa del Quartetto of Florence. It opens with a dramatic and vibrant *Allegro appassionato*, tensely expressive. (example below)

Allegro appassionato. VIOLINO I. A. Bazzini, Op. 75

The second movement, *Andante con moto*, is melancholic and imbued with intense lyricism. Wilhelm Altmann called it a true Song without Words in the Mendelssohnian sense. In place of the usual Scherzo, a lovely Gavotte (*Allegretto*) serves as a third movement. Witty and lively, it became fairly popular as a piece in itself and was even published as an arrangement for piano.

Gavotte. (Intermezzo.) VIOLINO I.
Allegretto. M.M. ♩ = 100. 1. Viol.

The quartet ends with a vigorous and virtuosic *Quasi Presto*.

All. Vivo (M.M. ♩ = 158)

The **String Quartet No.3 in E flat Major Op. 76**, composed approximately one year later in 1878, reveals a more modern, almost Brahmsian, tonality which is especially noticeable in the beautiful first movement which begins with a long, slow introduction, *Molto sostenuto*. This in turn leads to the main section *Allegro vivo*, which is full of élan and has melodically attractive themes.

The second movement, *Minuetto, Allegro giusto*, is in the classical tradition. It begins energetically, but is at times lyrical and tender. The third movement, *Andante quasi allegretto-Allegro impetuoso*, is clearly the center of gravity of this quartet. The sad, lilting opening theme (see below)

Andante quasi Allegretto

is followed by a more subdued musette (see below) and then a set of excellently contrasting and effective variations.

The exciting finale, *Vivacissimo*, is full of energy and forward motion, its pressing rhythmic writing shows the influence of Schumann.

Vivacissimo (M.M. ♩ = 160)

About ten years separate the third quartet from **String Quartet No.4 in G Major Op.79**, the autograph of which is kept in the archives of the Societa dei Quartetti of Brescia and is dated Padua 1888 Compared to String Quartet No.3, this quartet is austere and constrained. It does not show the same dramatic melodic content as his earlier works. The opening theme of the first movement, *Allegro giusto*, though genial, is not particularly inspired.

Allegro giusto ANTONIO BAZZINI, OP. 17

The second movement, *Lento*, begins with a lengthy violin recitative which appears to augur something significant, however, the

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

main movement, *Andante con moto*, is disappointing, rather light-weight, almost trite.

This is followed by a *Tempo di Gavotta*, which though lively, perhaps cute, borders on the banal.

It is only in the finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, which shows considerable vigor, that Bazzini hits his stride. The first theme is dramatic and holds the listener's attention but same cannot be said of the second which quickly follows.

String Quartet No. 5 in c minor Op. 80, composed between 1888 and 1892, opens with a beautiful *Allegro appassionato* imbued with romantic feeling and yet tempered by a sort of expressive reserve, typical of the best Bazzini. (See the example at the top of the next column)

There are some moments of what seems like needless sawing, or even filler, but on the whole, they do not detract from the overall beauty of the music.

The *Andante*, with its intense lyricism, absorbed and sorrowful, is one of Bazzini's best slow movements.

The *Intermezzo*, which follows, is clever and light hearted. Not quite a scherzo, it is livelier than a typical intermezzo. Here Bazzini's light touch is almost magical.

The finale, *Allegro agitato-Vivace con fuoco*, is perhaps what might be called a typical Bazzini finale—it begins in dramatic fashion, to be sure. At letter B a fugue is begun, deftly handled and effective. Only later does the music lighten a bit.

Certainly, this quartet is in the running for being called his best.



Bazzini's last quartet, **String Quartet No. 6 in F Major Op. 82**, was also composed in 1892 and is the last opus number in the catalogue of the then seventy-four year-old composer from Brescia. It is not listed in the *New Grove* and very little information can be found about it in most of the standard reference sources, although it is listed on Wikipedia and was recorded as part of a complete set of his quartets back in 2002. I have never come across the sheet music nor,

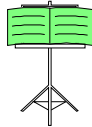
needless to say, played it, although I have heard it. It is hard to categorize. In part, Bazzini seems to have taken a step backward looking to the works of Haydn and Mozart, although the music sounds nothing like them. The polished and classical writing of the initial *Allegro* is quite lovely but there is no real sense of drama or excitement. It is charming but not memorable. The following *Andante espressivo*, is quite lyrical and is infused with an Italian vocal quality. Again, though charming and sweet and certainly effectively written, it really leaves no lasting impression. However, the third movement, *Saltarello, vivacissimo*, is not guilty of this. It is a fleet-footed affair, quite Italian in inspiration

and original-sounding. Excellent with a slight Mendelssohnian tinge. The middle section is a more subdued intermezzo which appeals by virtue of its slinky syncopated melody. The finale, *Allegro energico*, is robust and roughly rhythmic with an attempt to create a dramatic aura. However, because the thematic material is simply not up to it and despite Bazzini's best attempts through the use of dynamics, rhythm etc., it can only be judged good but not great.

So then, to recap I think it fair to say that none of the six quartets can be called an unqualified masterpiece. However, this said, four of the six are quite good—good enough to be called first rate and to be performed in concert. I am referring to Nos. 1-3 and No.5. No.6, as I have written, has much charm and will certainly appeal to amateurs, should they ever be able to find the music, but I do not think it deserves a berth on the concert stage. No.4 struggles to be merely average.

Of course, all of this is beside the point if you cannot play the music. Fortunately, you can. All but No.6 are in print. Amadeus reprinted Nos. 2 and 4 and reedited them. Edition Silvertrust has reprinted Nos.1-3 and No.5. A recording of all six quartets is available on a three CD set by Dynamic, CDS 418.

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New Recordings



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

String Quartets

Friedrich GULDA (1930-) Qt in F#, Granola 98843 / Pavel HAAS (1899-1944) No.3, MD&G 304 1524 / John HARBISON (1936-) Nos.1-4, Meridan 84571 / Karl Amadeus HARTMANN (1905-63) Nos.1-2, Cybele Kig 001 Franz Anton HOFFMEISTER (1754-1812) Nos.2-4 (Str Trio + Kb), VMS 610 / Joseph HOROVITZ (1926-) Nos. 4-5, Carducci 6482 / Otto KETTING (1939-) Qt, Etcetera 1381 / Krzysztof MEYER (1943-) Nos.5-6 & 8, Naxos 8.570776 / Willem PIJPER (1894-1947) Nos.1-5, Etcetera 1381 / Robert RODRIGUEZ (1946-) Meta, Albany Troy 1136 / Christopher ROUSE (1949-) Nos.1-2, E1 Entertainment 7757 / Edmund RUBBRA (1901-85) No. 2, Naxos 8.572286 / Peter SCULTHORPE (1929-) Nos.14-17, Tall Poppies 206 / Apollinary SZELUTO (1884-1966) Op.72 in E flat, Dux 0672 / Anton TIETZ (Titz) (1742-1810) 3 Qts in G, Eb & F, Prohl 09046 / Michael TIPPETT (1905-98) Nos.3 & 5, Naxos 8.570497 / Matthijs VERMEULEN 91888-1967) Qt, Etcetera 1381 / Mieczyslaw WEINBERG (1919-96) Nos.6, 8 & 15, CPO 777 393 / Iannis

XENAKIS (1922-2001) Tetras, Naïve 40016 / Bob ZIMMERMANN (1948-) Qt, Etcetera 1381

Strings Only-Not Quartets

Joly Braga SANTOS (1924-88) Sextet, Op.59, Portugalsom 5015 / Rudolf Escher (1912-80) Trio, Etcetera 1381 / Matthijs VERMEULEN 91888-1967) Trio, Etcetera 1381 / Jan van VLIJMEN (1935-2004) Quintetto & Sextet, Etcetera 1381 / Eugene YSAYE (1858-1931) Trio Le Chimay, Naxos 8.7570977

Piano Trios

Wilhelm HILL (1835-1902) Opp.12 & 43, Melisma 7242 / Bohuslav MARTINU (1890-1959) No.3, Chandos 10551 also Nos.1-3, Praga Digitals 250256 / George OSBORNE (1806-93) No.3, RTE Lyric 103 / Robert RODRIGUEZ (1946-) Trio I, Albany Troy 1136 / Edmund RUBBRA (1901-85) No. 1, Naxos 8.572286 / Joly Braga SANTOS (1924-88) Op.58, Portugalsom 5015 /

Piano Quartets, Quintets & Sextets

Philip GATES Qt, Melodist 3130 / Hermann GOETZ (1840-76) Qt, Op.16, Divox 20506 / Reynaldo HAHN (1875-1947) Qt, Naïve 40013 / Bohuslav MAR-

TINU(1891-1959) Pno Qt, Chandos 10551 / Joachim RAFF (1822-82) Qt Op.107, Divox 20506 / Joly Braga SANTOS (1924-88) Pno Qt Op.26, Portugalsom 5015

Winds & Strings

James CLARK (1957-) Qt for Ob & Str Qt, Metier 28513 / Christopher FOX (1955-) Qt for Ob & Str Qt, Metier 28513 / Howard SKEMPTON (1947-) Garland for Ob & Str Trio, Metier 513 / Joseph HOROVITZ (1926-) Qt for Ob & Str Trio, Carducci 6482 / Roger REDGATE (1958-) Qt for Ob & Str Qt, Metier 28513

Winds, Strings & Piano

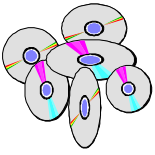
Charles KOEHLIN (1867-1950) Petite Pieces Nos.2-4 for Vln, Hn & Pno & Lament for Vln, Vc, Hn & Pno, VMS 187 / Bohuslav MARTINU (1890-1959) Qt for Ob, Vln, Vc & Pno, Chandos 10551

Piano & Winds

None this issue

Winds Only

Pavel HAAS (1899-1944) Qt, Op.10, MD&G 304 1524



Diskology: Hear Sound-bites to These CD Reviews On Our Website—www.cobbettassociation.org
**Onslow: 5 Str. Quintets-4 for 2 Cellos or Cello & Bass, 1 for 2 Violas,
 A Nonet for Winds & Strings and 2 Piano Trios**



The chamber music of George (not Georges) Onslow (1784-1853) is at last starting to get the recorded recognition it deserves, but not on the same level as that of Mozart or Beethoven, despite the fact that Mendelssohn and Schumann, among others, once considered it the equal of the chamber music by those composers. Nonetheless, it is gratifying to note that in the past few years, no less than eight and perhaps more, CDs of his chamber music have been released.

Onslow has appeared often enough in *The Journal* to dispense with any biographical information here, especially since I wish to discuss a number of the CDs released. Not all of these are brand new (some are though) but all are fairly new and available. Given the space constraints, I cannot go into great detail on all of the works presented on the 8 CDs I will cover. Some works are more deserving than others and they will receive a somewhat more detailed treatment. I would recommend any of these CDs although the playing on the Naïve disk is not particularly musical.

It is his string quintets, for which he is most remembered, that have received the greatest attention. Unless otherwise stated they are all for 2 cellos or alternatively cello and bass. **Pierre Verany CD#707031** presents two. **String Quintet No.21 in g minor, Op.51** dates from 1834. It is without question one of his most exciting and one of his best works. After its publication, it was performed by several well-known players and always to great acclaim, more than holding its own against such quintets by Mendelssohn and Beethoven which sometimes appeared on the same program with it. The opening measures of the first movement, *Allegro impetuoso*, set the tone immediately creating a great sense of excitement. But rather than develop this pregnant theme, he moves quickly on to the lyrical and more relaxed second subject. The excitement created by the first movement is only heightened by the breathtaking and superb *Scherzo, presto* which follows. Only in the lovely trio section, which has a chorale quality, does the pace slacken. In the slow movement, *Andante non troppo lento*, we have the cello and viola taking the lead in presenting a lovely and calm folk melody. The exciting finale, *Presto agitato*, bursts forth demanding the listener's attention and holding it from the start to the finish of the movement. **String Quintet No.34 in E Major, Op.82** is one of only six quintets which are for 2 violas rather than 2 cellos or cello and string bass.

It is his last work for strings and was completed in 1850. Right from the opening *Allegro grazioso*, one hears a Mozartean sunny lyricism. The second movement, *Scherzo molto vivace*, bursts forth without any preparation, driving forward with great impulsiveness. The trio section not only provides a fine contrast but is quite unusual. The melody is but short notes against a guitar-like pizzicato accompaniment in the cello, which soon takes over as the main melody. The *Andantino*, which follows, is characterized a deliberate stateliness. The upbeat finale, *Allegro molto vivace*, is full of clever effects and radiates a sense of good feeling

Two more quintets are presented on **MD&G CD#603 1390**. **String Quintet No.15 in c minor, Op.38** in dates from 1829. It is one of his best known, perhaps because it programmatically

recounts an incident in which he was accidentally shot in the face and nearly killed during a hunt, in which he only came along as a spectator. The movements bear such titles as *Dolore*, *Convalescenza* and *Guarigione*. The opening begins with a powerful crashing chord and at once we know something bad is going to happen as a dramatic and melancholy theme is presented. In the second movement, *Dolore*, he has been shot. Tremendous use of downward plunging chromaticism, dynamics and powerful chords create a very heightened sense of terror. He convalesces in the slow movement, a quiet, almost religious *Andante sostenuto*. The finale, begins with a frantic fanfare of the sort a movie star who has made a come back might use, but the rest movement is somewhat less thrilling. **String Quintet No.26 in c minor, Op.67**, composed in 1843. Though marked *Allegro grandioso*, it begins rather quietly, not at all grand. A compelling, lyrical melody, full of longing serves as the main theme. The following *Scherzo* is powerfully resolute, quite good of the sort of which Onslow was a master. A soft, naïve and delicate melody serves as the main theme of the *Andante* which follows. A march and then a stormy section complete it. The finale, *Allegretto quasi allegro*, has a highly appealing lyrical subject.

CPO CD#777 151 presents another string quintet and couples it with his nonet. **String Quintet No.19 in c minor, Op.44** dates from 1832. A lengthy, tense *Introduzione, Largo* precedes the *Allegro spiritoso*, which is surprisingly upbeat given what one might expect from what has come before. It is not, however, without considerable drama. Though marked *Menuetto*, the second movement is a thrusting and exciting scherzo. There is no real slow movement, only a march-like and unremarkable *Andante quasi Allegretto*. The finale, *Vivace et agitato* has a lot of flustered motion but the thematic material does not support the sense of excitement Onslow tries to create. Onslow's **Nonet in a minor, Op.77** for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon and string quartet dates from 1848. The first movement, *Allegro spiritoso*, is full of nervous excitement. The *Scherzo agitato* which follows has the same nervous excitement. The nonet's center of gravity is its big, slow movement, *Adagio*, a theme and set of five variations. Onslow changes the ensemble groupings, rather than varying the mood or tempo of the music. The finale, *Largo, Allegretto quasi Allegro*, begins with a slow, slightly ominous theme. The *Allegretto*, however, is bright and full of bustling energy.

Two piano trios are recorded on **CPO CD#777 230**. The first, **Piano Trio No.5 in E flat Major, Op.14 No.2** dates from 1818. It is one of a set of three which Onslow eventually turned into a set of three string quartets, his Op.36. Unless this is a planned release of all of the piano trios, I can see no reason why Op.14 No.2, the weakest of the set was recorded. Standing out from the first two movements which are rather ordinary is an appealing *Andante con variazione* and the attractive *Finale*. The second trio on disk, the 1824 **Piano Trio No.9 in G Major, Op.27** 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.

More Onslow: Two More Piano Trios, Four Works for String Quartet A Piano Sextet and a Piano Quintet

On CPO CD#777 231 Onslow's last chamber music work, **Piano Trio No.10 in F Major, Op.83**, is the first work presented. It dates from the early 1850's, not long before his death and is a fine work deserving to be heard in concert and republished. The opening *Allegro pathetico* 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. The second trio on disk, **Piano Trio No.2 in C Major, Op.3 No.2**, was the second of a set of three. It was composed in 1807, nearly 45 years earlier and before he had taken formal composition lessons. It's 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.

In 2005, Onslow's complete transcription of his three act comic opera **Guise ou les Etats de Blois for String Quartet Op.60** surfaced. Originally published in 1839, it had long been thought to have been lost. It was recorded in 2009 in its entirety—lasting nearly 70 minutes—on **Ligia Digital CD#0302198**. Transcriptions of operas for chamber groups such as string quartets were quite common in the 19th century. Josef Küffner made his name writing highly popular and effective transcriptions of the operas of Rossini and Weber, among others. It could be said that Onslow's great originality, as far as chamber music goes, was in his ability to combine the drama of the opera within a chamber music style. Interestingly, his operas were not terribly successful. This transcription, unlike those of Küffner, which were only of the most famous parts, is a blow for blow, note for note kind of transcription and, as such, cannot be compared to Küffner's excellent transcriptions. Rather it must stand as an historical curiosity, especially since there are no recordings of the opera.

Three string quartets, two never before recorded, come to us on **Naïve CD#V5200**. The first, **String Quartet No.28 in E flat Major, Op.54**, was composed in 1835. The first movement begins with a downwardly chromatic adagio *Introduzione* which gives warning of impending doom, however the main section is a bright and lively *Allegro moderato*. The second movement, *Preghiera, Andante con variazione*, is a theme and set of variations. A *Scherzo*, full of elan, is the focal point for the entire quartet. The finale, *Allegro non troppo*, is a strange cross between a showy, virtuosic first theme and a commonplace, Biedermeier-esque second subject. While the inner movements to

this Quartet are first rate, the outer movements are not. **String Quartet No.29 in d minor, Op.55** was composed shortly after No.28. The first movement, *Allegro*, is so rich in thematic material, wonderful melodies and original effects, that there is almost too much to be found in just one movement. A magnificent and exciting *Scherzo* comes next. The impressive third movement, *Adagio cantabile*, is also a theme and very fine set of variations. In the finale, Onslow uses arpeggio passages quite originally. The only other example from this period is Beethoven's Harp Quartet. The last work on disk is **String Quartet No.30 in c minor, Op.56**. This has been previously recorded and in a much better rendition than here. It is a masterpiece, but requires a cellist of very high technical ability to perform it. There is nothing like the opening bars to the opening *Allegro maestoso ed espressivo* in the quartet literature: The sheer drama of the cello solo, as it ascends from the depths of the open c string to an A flat, nearly four octaves above it, is breathtaking. The second movement is a relaxed and nostalgic *Menuetto*. In the trio section, the cello is given long running 16th note scale passages, played softly and *sciolte*. The third movement, *Adagio cantabile e sostenuto*, is written on a large scale, similar to what one encounters in Beethoven's Middle Quartets. The main theme is a long and tranquil song, which is reminiscent of Schubert. And then—an explosion! Sudden, heart-stopping and powerful, The *Finale, vivace* quite literally explodes forth without warning. The music then hurtles forward without respite until the end.

MD&G CD#603 1442 presents two of Onslow's works for piano and strings. The first is the **Piano Sextet in E flat Major, Op.30** for piano, string quartet (or winds) and bass. It dates from 1825 and was published and sold simultaneously in both versions. French audiences of the day enjoyed hearing the piano played in quintets and sextets—compositions which resembled mini-concertos and allowed the piano to shine in all its glory. Onslow dedicated the work to Hummel, the foremost piano virtuoso then living. The first movement, *Introduzione, Largo-vivace*, gives the introduction to the piano alone. The main section is stormy and exciting. The piano part clearly requires a pianist with Hummel's light touch and Mozartean technique. The part-writing is excellent. The second movement, *Minuetto, allegro*, opens by putting the viola front and forward. The music is dramatic and full of interest, with a finely contrasting trio. A compelling *Andante con variazione* follows. The finale, *Allegro*, is genial, like a leisurely ride on horseback across the countryside. A fine work. The second piece, **Piano Quintet in B flat Major, Op.79bis** for piano, string trio and bass is in Schubert's 'Trout instrumentation.' Composed in 1849, as the opus number indicates, it is a version of a prior work. In this case, the Grand Septet for Piano, Wind Quintet & Bass, Op.79. Again, the publisher asked for such a version to generate more sales. The opening movement, marked *Allegro moderato*, sounds more like an andante and one can, from the writing tell the original was for winds, though perhaps not if one did not know it was originally written for them. The themes are not particularly memorable. The second movement, *Scherzo, vivace*, is thrusting and exciting. Here, the string version is much more convincing. The poetic main theme of the follow-

Johann Sobeck: Three Wind Quintets / A Piano Trio by Charles Villiers Stanford 2 String Quartets by Stanislaw Moniuszko, 1 by Ignacy Dobrzynski

ing *Andante*, is recycled from one of his string quartets. Also a good movement with fine part-writing. The piano part may have been geared to the poetic style of Chopin, who recently had been so prominent in Parisian salons. The finale, *Allegretto*, is more relaxed than Onslow's typical finales, but still very effective.

I had not come across the name of **Johann Sobeck** (1831-1914 Jan Sobek in the Czech form) until I encountered **CPO CD# 777203** on which three of his wind quintets are recorded. There is little information to be had in any of the standard reference sources although Cobbett does list his chamber works—four wind quintets and a wind trio. Sobeck was born in the Bohemian town of Luditz. He studied clarinet at the Prague Conservatory after which he enjoyed a long career as a virtuoso clarinetist who later settled down and served as principal clarinet of the Royal Orchestra of Hanover. He was also a composer and well-known teacher. The bulk of his works were for the clarinet in one form or another, such as concertos, sonatas, opera fantasies and so forth. The three wind quintets on disk were all written about the same time and a discussion of one suffices to give the flavor of the others. **Wind Quintet No.1 in F Major, Op.9** was composed in 1879. The other two not long after. Though not written in concertante form, each of the instruments, right from the opening *Quasi Presto*, are given the chance to present the lovely melodies, which grace this movement, by way of grateful solos. The harmonically rich second movement, *Adagio cantabile*, expertly reveals the individual qualities and characteristics of each instrument. The third movement is a nimble and rhythmically interesting *Scherzo*. In the trio section, a hint of Bohemian folk melody can be heard. The captivating finale, *Allegro molto*, tops off this original and very fine work. **Wind Quintet No.2 in E flat Major, Op.11** is every good, while **Wind Quintet No.3 in g minor, Op.14**, which in part recalls Mendelssohn, stands out from the others by being in the minor. These are enjoyable works. Recommended.



Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) was one of Britain's most important 19th and early 20th century composers. He is, in my opinion, a "Cobbett Composer"—one deserving of far more respect and notice than he has received. **Naxos CD#8.570416** presents the world premiere recording of his **Piano Trio No.3 in A Major, Op.158**. The trio was discussed recently in Vol.XX No.2 and I will not go into details here except to say that the main reasons this out-

standing work never received the attention it deserved was the fact it was published at the close of the First World War, which was not a particularly auspicious time for a work to come out. Further, the fact that it was written in a romantic idiom did not help as such work, for many years during and after the War, were, en masse, regarded as entirely irrelevant, without any examination as their intrinsic merits. Highly recommended

Stanislaw Moniuszko (1819-1872) was born into a family of Polish landowners in Ubiel, not far from Minsk in what was then



Russian Poland, now Belarus. When he was 9, his family moved to Warsaw where he began piano lessons. Both his talent and interest justified sending him to Berlin to continue his studies. Moniuszko was to become the foremost 19th century composer of Polish song. The source of his melodies and rhythmic patterns can usually be found in Polish folkdances such as the polonaise, mazurka, krakowiak, kujawiak and oberek. The bulk of his oeuvre consists of operas, operettas, and secular and sacred songs. Among his instrumental works are two string quartets which date from 1840 toward the end of his time in Berlin. The opening theme to the first movement, *Allegro agitato*, of **String Quartet No.1 in d minor** is mildly agitated, a gracious second theme, sounding a bit like Schubert, follows. The second movement, *Andantino*, has a lovely, naïve melody, again reminiscent of early Schubert. Dramatic tension is added during an operatic dialogue between the first violin and cello. In the original-sounding *Scherzo*, the main theme is a lilting and very danceable, attractive Polish mazurka. The finale, *Allegro assai*, is subtitled, *Un ballo compestre e sue conseguenze*. It begins with a traditional Polish dance, a Hajduk or Haiduk. Although the Hajduks of Polish history were rather rough and romantic characters with shaved heads and long pigtailed a la Genghis Khan, what we hear at first is not the rustic revelry of rude mercenary brigands but rather a kind of formal French musette. **String Quartet No.2 in F Major** begins with a Schubertian *Allegro moderato*. The main theme is lyrical with some lovely chromatic passages, while a second theme is more assertive and dramatic. The second movement, *Andante*, is in the form of an elegy. It begins with a funereal theme of Beethovenian pathos which at times is punctuated by sudden bursts of anger. The scherzo, which follows, is entitled *Baccanale monacale*, and is a light, happy piece. The trio is a rustic fiddler's dance. The short airy finale, *Allegro*, is a whirling affair that is over almost before it begins. These are charming works that are pleasant. The third work on this **Dux CD#0561** is **Ignacy Dobrzynski's String Quartet No.1 in e minor, Op.7**. Being familiar with his two fine string quintets, full of lovely melodies and charm, I found it a disappointment. With the exception of its scherzo, it is an entirely pedestrian effort. It is an early work, Dobrzynski (1807-1867) was only 21 and a student at the time he wrote it. Perhaps its worth hearing for its historical interest as far as his development goes. Recommended for the Moniuszko.

Mozart predicted **Ignaz Pleyel** (1757-1831) would be the next Haydn, but he turned out to be the next great Parisian piano manufacturer. Well, even Mozart was capable of mistakes, although it must be said that Pleyel briefly made a name for himself as a composer, primarily of chamber music, and was considered one of the lesser lights of the Viennese Classical era. He stopped composing while relatively young and devoted himself first to music publishing—his firm later became C.F. Peters—and then to the manufacturing of pianos. A lot of recorded attention, more than is probably justified, has been given to his music lately. An example of this is

Ignaz Pleyel: 3 Piano Trios / A String Quintet by Joseph Miroslav Weber Ludwig Thuille's Two Piano Quintets

Gramola CD#98768 on which we hear three piano trios dating from 1788-1791. They were recorded on period instruments in what sounds like a large cathedral, though the jacket notes state otherwise. The trios are Ben numbers 436, 440 and 442. Pleyel's works have been given "Ben" numbers after Rita Benton who has done for him what Köchel and Deutsch did for Mozart and Schubert. Trouble is, the result is more like what Hoboken did for Haydn. Haydn's works circulated with opus numbers for too long for Hoboken's to be useful except to musicologists. Who knows the Hoboken number of Haydn's Sunrise Quartet? Next to no one, although quite a lot of quartet players probably know it as Op.76 No.4. This is the problem here. The jacket notes do not give any indication of what the opus numbers these works traveled under. In any event, I don't think its terribly important in that I do not see why these works were recorded. They are okay in a rather ordinary way. They do not compare to the music of the Wranitzkys or Franz Krommer, let alone Mozart or Haydn. I cannot recommend that you spend your money for this CD unless you are a Pleyel aficionado.



Joseph Miroslav Weber (1854-1906) was born in Prague. He studied violin and organ there and enjoyed a career as a solo violinist and conductor, holding posts in Thuringia, Prague, Wiesbaden and Munich. His **String Quintet in D Major** (2 cellos) was composed in 1898 for a competition held by the Prague Chamber Music Society. It won first prize. It is a tonally beautiful work which blends Central European Romanticism with Bohemian melody and rhythms

much as one finds in the works of Dvorak and Smetana. Perhaps the quintet might be styled as program music since Weber gave each movement a separate title. The first movement is the longest and bears the intriguing title "*As the Herr "Professors would want to compose"*". It certainly strongly hints at the tensions between academics and more freethinking composers of the time. The title must surely be sarcastic as the music is far from dry and academic. To the contrary, it is highly romantic and in free form. The second movement, subtitled *Youthful high spirits*, is a Scherzo, wherein Weber demonstrates his mastery of rhythms. His use of the exciting Obkročák dance rhythm, laced as it is with drones and chattering, is particularly telling. Next comes a highly expressive slow movement, an Adagio which bears the subtitle *Longing for the Fatherland*. The aria given to the first cello is especially touching and generates delicious warmth. The finale, a presto, bearing the title *In the Countryside*, recalls some of what has come before, especially in the scherzo. This is a very attractive work, well worth hearing and playing. The other work coupled on this **Cello Classics CD#1017** is the Sebastian Brown reconstruction of Brahms' Op.34 quintet, originally a string quintet for 2 cellos. Brahms was not satisfied with it and destroyed the manuscript which he had shown to Clara Schumann. She wrote that she thought it better than the version for piano. You can listen to this CD and draw your own conclusions.



Ludwig Thuille (1861-1907) was born in the then Austrian town of Bozen located in the South Tirol (now in Italy and called Bolzano). Thuille studied with Josef Rheinberger at the Bavarian Royal Conservatory in Munich. He befriended Richard Strauss when he was ten and they remained friends for the rest of Thuille's life. Strauss' influence on Thuille's music was certainly as great as that of Rheinberger. The last part of his life, Thuille

spent as a music professor and composer, achieving considerable fame for his operas. He was the founder of the so-called New Munich School of composition. Among his many students was Ernest Bloch. Thuille wrote in most genres and often turned to chamber music

He wrote two piano quintets and **CPO CD#777 090** presents both of them. **Piano Quintet No.1 in g minor**, WoO dates from 1880, while Thuille was still a student. It remained unpublished until 1997 when Wollenweber brought it out. Despite the fact that it was a student work, it shows an astonishing mastery of form. It is said that Rheinberger found the first movement, *Allegro maestoso*, too stormy and wild, but there are many calm interludes which must have eluded him. On the other hand, there is a certain pomposity, which could not have escaped Rheinberger's notice. But despite this, it is convincing. The second movement is a gorgeous *Larghetto*, calm and flowing with ever so slight a Brahmsian tinge to it. The finale, *Presto ma non troppo*, is more turbulent than the opening Allegro. The hard-driving main theme is quite compelling, while the more genial second subject provides good contrast. All in all, this is a good work that is enjoyable to hear and to play.

Piano Quintet No.2 in E flat Major, Op.20 was completed in 1901, toward the end of Thuille's short life, and is accurately described as post-romantic. It is a massive affair which marks the first of the works from his so-called second period in which he struck out to find new and more modern paths for tonal expression. And it is in the opening *Allegro con brio* that these tendencies are the most noticeable. The thrusting main theme is ever striving for a seemingly unobtainable climax. The plasticity of the ideas is truly striking. The second movement, *Adagio assai sostenuto*, begins with a lengthy, somber, almost funereal, introduction in the piano. Afterwards, the strings, first alone, take on the development of this highly potent theme. As the piano joins in, drama and tension build. The *Allegretto* which follows, though lively, is overshadowed by the darkly colored but beautiful tonal language. In the finale, *Allegro risoluto*, once again, the piano has a lengthy, and this time very powerful, introduction before the strings announce the triumphant main theme, which surges forward with great drive. Here then is another first class work awaiting discovery and deserving a place in the concert repertoire and in the concert hall, where it would make a welcome replacement for the inevitable Schumann, Dvorak or Brahms. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust. A highly recommended CD.

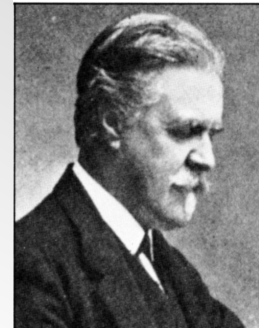
FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



Leon Boëllmann



Antonio Bazzini-



Vincent d'Indy



George Onslow



C.V. Stanford



Stanislaw Moniusko



Jos. Miroslav Weber



Ludwig Thuille

ON SLOW, SPOHR, STENHAMMAR, FUCHS, KIEL



HERZOGENBERG, GLIERE, TANAYEV, REINECKE

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

KROMMER, LACHNER, GRANADOS, VAN BREE, GRETCHANINOV