

THE  
**CHAMBER MUSIC**  
**JOURNAL**

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

***A Guide to String Trios  
For Violin, Viola and Cello***

***The Chamber Music  
Of Hans Koessler***

***Johann Amon's Quintets for  
Flute, Horn, Violin, Viola & Cello***

***Alexander Fesca  
The Piano Septets***

# The Chamber Music of Hans Koessler

By Werner Dahlm



Hans Koessler (1853-1926), the last name is sometimes spelled Köbler, is one of the most unjustly ignored composers from the late 19th century, certainly with regard to his chamber music. He was born in the upper Bavarian town of Waldeck, today Kemnath. He studied organ and composition with Joseph Rheinberger and Franz Wüllner at the Royal Bavarian Conservatory in Munich from 1874 to 1877. When Wüllner was appointed director of the Dresden Conservatory, he took Koessler with him and offered him a position teaching music theory and choir singing. In 1879, he became director of the famous Dresden choir, the Liedertafel. It was under his direction that the choir took first place at the 1882 International Festival of Song in Cologne. As a result, he was offered the position of City Music Director (Stadtskapellmeister) or if he preferred Director of the Cologne Opera. Koessler turned down both of these attractive offers, perhaps, as one scholar suggested, because as a Bavarian, he did not feel entirely comfortable in the Rheinland. This seems a dubi-

ous speculation as not long after, he accepted a teaching position at the Budapest Academy of Music. And while there was in 1882 still a very large German community in Budapest, there is little grounds to suggest he was more comfortable in a foreign country than a different part of Germany. It may be that the position was more attractive. In any event, within three years of moving there, he obtained the prestigious position of Professor of Composition at the Academy, a position he held until he retired in 1908. During these 26 years, virtually every Hungarian composer of note passed through his composition classes. Among them were Zoltan Kodaly, Bela Bartok, Ernst von Dohnanyi Leo Weiner and Imre Kalman. While in Cologne, Koessler had the chance to meet and befriend Brahms. He became a Brahmsian acolyte and for the rest of his life, the music of Brahms exerted a great influence upon his music and his teaching. This fact alone explains why the early works of the above named students shows the indelible influence of Brahms. In 1908, Koessler, though only 55, grew tired of teaching and decided to retire. He did so with a small pension

*(Continued on page 27)*

## Johann Amon's Quintets for Flute, Horn, Violin, Viola & Cello

By Rainer Wilhelm Graezer



We have string quintets, wind quintets, quintets for clarinet and strings, flute and strings, horn and strings, oboe and strings. But the combination of flute, horn, violin, viola and cello is not very common. And this brings us to Johann Andreas Amon who wrote two such works of note. The combination of transverse flute, natural horn, and strings provides striking sound effects, from the use of the lowest register of the horn to the subtle blend of the flute and strings and at times almost orchestral effect of the complete ensemble.

Amon (1763-1825) was born in a small village just outside of the German city of Bamberg. His early musical training was from members of the court orchestra. His first instrument was the violin but later he developed an interest in the horn and became quite proficient. About this time, he attracted the attention of the famous Bohemian horn virtuoso who went by the name of Giovanni di Punto. (His real name was Jan Vaclav Stich). Di Punto, a very interesting and controversial figure, was then serving as first horn in the court orchestra of the Bishop of Wurzburg and took Amon under his tutelage. Not long after, in the early 1780's, di Punto embarked on a solo tour which took him to Paris. Amon went with and toured with him, ultimately becoming a virtuoso in his own right. Later he held positions as music director at various courts. A relatively prolific composer, he wrote a fair amount of chamber music.

So when di Punto left Wurzburg for Paris in 1783, he took his prize student Amon with him and thus began a series of concert tours to France, Germany, and Vienna. On these tours, Amon acted as Punto's second and conducted the concerts given by Punto. By 1789, Amon was known in his own right and left di Punto to accept the post of municipal musical director in Heilbronn, where he conducted concerts for almost 30 years. He had already given up the horn for health reasons by then in order to concentrate on the violin, viola, and piano. In 1791 he founded a music publishing house, at the suggestion of Franz Anton Hoffmeister, whom he had met in Vienna. Hoffmeister had established his own publishing business which was later

*(Continued on page 3)*

## The Piano Septets of Alexander Fesca

by Karl-Heinrich Kartheiser

Beethoven's Op. 20 of 1799 for strings and winds became the model for this type of ensemble. It inspired similar works by Conradin Kreutzer, Franz Lachner, Franz Berwald, and Archduke Rudolph of Austria. Septets for piano, strings and winds, the so-called Piano Septet, however, came about later, during the early years of the nineteenth century and, none ever served as a model that went on to influence later compositions. Instead, all sorts of different instrumentation and compositional techniques were employed. All such piano septets nevertheless had in common a turning away from the serenade character that had still predominated in Beethoven's Op. 20. This was in fact indicated by the customary title Grand Septuor, employed for the first time by Ferdinand Ries in his Op. 25 for piano, clarinet, two horns, violin, violoncello, and bass published in 1812. Four years later, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, the great piano virtuoso, produced his first piano septet in 1816. A second followed in 1829 and included a trumpet which let to its being titled "Septet Militaire." Other piano sep-

*(Continued on page 23)*

### IN THIS ISSUE

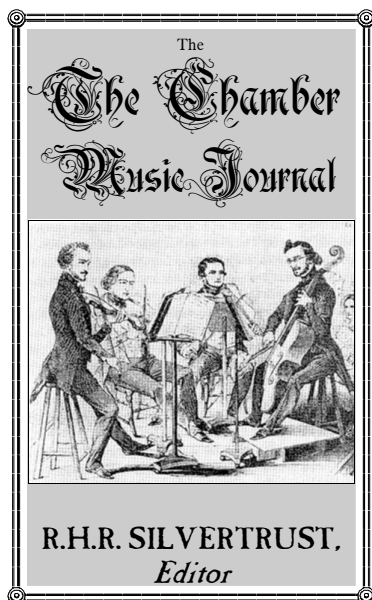
Alexander Fesca's Piano Septets

A Guide to the String Trio Literature

Johann Amon's Quintets

For Flute, Horn, Violin, Viola & Cello

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**The Player & Listener's  
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Since 1990**

to become C.F. Peters. In addition to his own works and those of musicians from his immediate circle of friends, such as Johann Evangelist Brandl, Amon's firm, with Hoffmeister's help, published around 300 works by the most popular Viennese composers of that day, the latter often as reprints. In 1817 Amon became musical director at the princely court of Nordlinger Ries. The post did not last very long as the orchestra was soon disbanded for financial reasons. Amon was kept on at a small salary and died in 1823.

He composed in nearly every genre but he never tried to plumb great emotional depths but rather favored light, pleasing music, which was certainly easier to sell to the then large market of amateur musicians. Amon's obituary, which appeared in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* stated that his works did not create a sensation or attract attention throughout the world; they were not suited for that, nor was he, but they provided many people with enjoyment and agreeable, pleasing entertainment. Over a third of Amon's chamber music was probably composed during his eight years in Wallerstein, including the two quintets for flute, horn, and strings, op. 110 and 118, which were originally brought out by the Offenbach publishing house Andre in 1824 and 1825. Scholars have noted a direct connection between Amon's Opp. 110 and 118 quintets and di Punto's *Trois Quintetti*, which were performed in Paris during the 1783 tour, and hence had to be familiar to Amon.

Although both quintets are in the early Romantic idiom, they are written in a concertante style, perhaps because of di Punto's phenomenal success with such works in Paris during the 1780s. Even the first movement of the second trio, Opus 118, which is in e minor, though somewhat subdued in character is not particularly minor sounding.



The structure of the two works follows conventional patterns.

Each work begins with an expansive opening movement in sonata form and is followed by a brief minuet, including a contrasting trio, and a songlike slow movement. Only the closing movements are different in structure—Opus 110 ends with a typical allegro in sonata form while Opus 118 concludes with a theme and set of variations

As the original titles of both quintets—*Quintetto pour Flute & Cor, obliges, Violon, Alto & Violoncelle, Contre Bass ad lib*—make clear, the quintets are intended to be a vehicles for the flute and the horn. The strings play an accompanying but indispensable role. Though clearly written in the early Romantic style, the Quintet nonetheless remains in the concertante mode which has served Punto and Amon so well when they toured Paris in the 1780's. A cheerful, light-hearted serenade-like mood pervades the music. Opus 110 in F Major follows a traditional structure, opening with an *Allegro ma non troppo* which is followed by a short Minuetto with contrasting trio. The beautiful third movement is an *Andante*. The finale is another *Allegro*. The Opus 118 Quintet is in e minor, but the key is only used to subdue and not darken the atmosphere as is typical with the use of the minor. It also follows a traditional structure, opening with an expansive *Allegro moderato* which is followed by a short Minuet and trio. The third movement is a *Romanza* filled with cantilena themes. Only in the finale, a Theme and set of five variations, does Amon venture away the traditional form. The theme was originally entitled 'Air Juif' or Jewish air, presumably a popular song of the time, but surprisingly, it displays no particular Jewish character.

Both of these works were recorded on Coviello Classics CD 21111. Parts are available from a number of publishers. The works are fun to play and not particularly difficult. I recommend them to horn and flute players and assure them that your string playing friends will not be bored.

# A Guide to String Trios for Violin, Viola & Cello

By R.H.R. Silvertrust

This Guide to String Trios is part of a book on chamber music I am hoping to complete. However, in the meantime, I have decided to make it available to all and sundry here in *The Journal*. Readers can treat it both as an article and perhaps more probably as a reference source. The main objective of this guide is to provide both professional and amateur chamber music players, as well as concert-goers and record collectors, with a practical guide to the string trio literature. But it is a special type of guide which up until now has not existed in English; a guide which can be used as an aid to helping explore the wider world of chamber music, most of which in my experience, is virtually unknown to professional musicians as well as the listening public. However, this guide is by no means a mere compilation or an encyclopaedia of works, nor is it an academic treatise which analyzes how a composer actually wrote his music.

It is unfortunate that today's concert-goer is presented with the same works over and over again. As far as chamber music concerts go, most of them are by string quartets or piano trios. One almost never hears string trios, quintets or sextets, piano quartets or quintets. And then, one can go to a string quartet concert in Vienna, Amsterdam, London, Tokyo or Chicago and often find the same works on the program. From the classical period, there will almost always be a quartet by either Beethoven, Mozart or Haydn. Of the Romantics, Brahms, Dvorak and Mendelssohn are played with deadening regularity. From the so-called "modern" period, Bartok is the ever present choice, although Shostakovich, now that he is safely gone, is finally making his way into the concert hall frequently. Now I would not for one minute wish to be without the works of any of these composers, but the problem is worse than the fact that these are the only composers that tend to be programmed. Dvorak wrote 14 string quartets, yet if one gets to hear a Dvorak quartet performed live, there is well over a 90% chance it will be Op.96, "The American". Very occasionally, Op.51 or Op.105 get an airing. But there are at least five other quartets which deserve to be performed regularly. Schubert wrote 15 quartets. Again, however, the odds are one will only get to hear No.14 "Death and the Maiden". On a leap year, Nos.13, 15 or "Quartetsatz" [No.12] may get a chance. Yet many of the others are charming early classical gems, full of wonderful melodies. Who knows of them? Certainly not many professional quartet players and thus the concert going public as well.

There are several reasons for this sad state of affairs. In talking with professional players over many years, I have heard a number of explanations put forward. One common scapegoat often cited is the demand of the Box Office. Common wisdom has it that only the well-known or famous works will fill the concert hall. Sometimes the fault lies with the sponsoring organization which requests the old chestnuts. Often the artists themselves neither wish nor have time to explore and prepare new works which bear the risk of being poorly received. Whatever the reasons though, the result is that the same works are performed over and over to the exclusion of any others.

*"Chicken Kiev is without doubt my favorite dish, but I would not want to eat it three times a day for forty years,"* a famous raconteur once quipped. Making the same sort of statement with regard

to chamber music, one might say, Dvorak's "American" String Quartet is certainly among my favorite string quartets, but I do not wish to hear it at every string quartet concert I attend where a work by Dvorak is programmed, nor do I wish to play it at each of my bi-weekly quartet rehearsals if it is not being prepared by us for a performance. Familiarity does indeed breed contempt and musically, it is possible to get too much of a good thing. I can well recall, in my youth, purchasing rock hits and playing them non-stop for a month and then never wishing to hear them again. It may be unfair to compare a rock hit with a quartet of Beethoven or Brahms, but I cannot agree with those who argue that one cannot hear a masterpiece too many times. Although I have the greatest love and affection for many famous works, nowadays, I will go out of my way to avoid hearing and playing them frequently, given that I have done so many times already. Doing this allows me to retain my enthusiasm.

But there is another excellent reason to explore the wider chamber music literature. Those who take the time and trouble to make the trip will be well rewarded and will have the opportunity to make many exciting discoveries. This is because there are an incredible number of excellent pieces, many masterpieces in their own right, awaiting a hearing. Of course, not every rediscovered work by a little known composer is a masterpiece, but one must remember that not everything Haydn, or even Beethoven, wrote is a masterpiece. The sad thing is that many marginal chamber works get performed simply because they are the work of composers who became famous by virtue of writing operas or symphonies, while a truly superb piece by a composer, such as George Onslow or Friedrich Gernsheim, whose metier was chamber music, sits awaiting to be discovered.

There have been many composers posterity has forgotten whose music has literally been brought back to life through the efforts of devotees. For example, it seems incredible that Bach could have been consigned to oblivion at the start of the nineteenth century, yet this was the case, at least as far as public performance went. It took a Mendelssohn to get Bach's music back into the concert hall. In part, this was due to changing musical fashion and tastes. Schubert could not get his quartets or his symphonies published during his own life time and was virtually unknown for anything other than his lieder until 40 years after his death.

After the First World War, literally dozens of 19th century romantic era composers, who were well known up until that time, were consigned to the dustbin of musical history in the wake of a strong anti-romantic sentiment. Judging from what commentators of that period have written, no Romantic composer's reputation was left entirely intact by this reaction. Mendelssohn and Schumann were downgraded while lesser luminaries such as Raff, Hummel, Herzogenberg, Kiel and Rheinberger to name only a few, were relegated to an existence in encyclopedias and musical dictionaries. After the Second World War, the big names gradually bounced back but it was not until the 1960s, and almost exclusively thanks to the record industry, that the public was able to hear the music of other composers from the Romantic period.

(Continued from page 4)

It is not only the Romantics who, *en masse*, were consigned to the historical role of musical footnote, there are many fine composers from the classical period whose reputations were all but snuffed out as the decades passed by the sheer brilliance of Mozart and Haydn. Few would claim that Paul and Anton Wrantitzky, Carl von Dittersdorf or Franz Krommer deserve to sit in the front rank with Mozart and Haydn, yet they all wrote several very charming works which would be welcomed by listeners and players alike. In the case of Juan Arriaga, some might argue that his three quartets are masterworks able to withstand comparison with the best of the Viennese classics.

Of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the situation is more problematical. It is a constant that most new composers meet with resistance. It happened to Schubert and to Beethoven in their time. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has happened to Stravinsky and Shostakovich to cite but two examples among hundreds. The fact is, it is hard for any new artist to get a hearing. Beyond this, however, came the belief at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as first voiced by the composers of the New Vienna School, that all which could be accomplished through the use of traditional melodic writing had been. A few modernists rejected this path and created some fine work, but a very reactionary listening public for years consigned the music of even the most conservative of these composers to death.

Having said this, one must come to terms with atonal and so-called experimental music. Contemporary accounts claim that the Viennese found Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 to be incomprehensible cacophony. However, the story must be apocryphal. While they may not have liked it, it is inconceivable the audience found it to be merely sounds. The melodies are there. It was his increased use of woodwinds that upset the critics. Of his Late Quartets, the argument can certainly be made that few contemporaries were ready for such music, but it was tonal music, containing an occasional melody which could be sung by the average listener, along with much which due to its complexity could not. As for atonal music, the listening public has now been exposed to it for a century and for those who wish to know the truth, the verdict is in. Despite many fervent supporters and committed performances by professional groups, Schonberg's Quartets, (excluding his Op. 7 and the D Major of 1897), to give but one example, great as they may be on paper to a musicologist or the student of music theory, are not an experience the average listener generally wishes to repeat.

Why it has come to pass that so many composers felt that traditional tonality and melody should be abandoned is not a subject for this guide. But music goes on. Popular music continues to enthral, be it from India, America, Europe or Arabia, the music which most wish to hear is music which can be sung, music which is tuneful.

Experimental music, as it has come to be regarded, may be an extraordinary experience both visually and aurally, but ultimately it is not music which someone turns on a radio to hear. It is not my purpose to pass judgment on or write a polemic against atonal or experimental music, some of which is extraordinarily interesting. Nor do I wish to attack composers who write for the violin as if it were a kind of percussion instrument. I put forward these thoughts to explain why the reader will not find detailed analysis of atonal or experimental music which does not seem to recog-

nize that violins, violas and cellos are stringed instruments. Fortunately, there is a plethora of recent music which, while quite daring in many ways, is nonetheless appealing. The problem is having the opportunity to hear this music. Where possible, I will attempt to draw attention to such new works.

The reader will also notice that the vast majority of this guide, which will appear over the next several issues of *The Journal*, will deal with chamber music involving string instruments. This is because it has been the common consensus among musicians, writers and musicologists that composers usually have saved their best chamber music efforts for music that includes string instruments. Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, string quartets have been considered the ne plus ultra of chamber music formats and more of these have been written than any other kind of chamber music. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the piano trio and piano quartet, followed close on the heels of the string quartet. And, of course, there are an abundance of fine string quintets, though not as many as the preceding. The same is true for string sextets, piano quintets and other ensembles of greater number. However, masterpieces have been written for septets, octets and nonets, usually involving a mixed combination strings and winds, strings and piano or all three. These groupings will be dealt with, and to a lesser extent, works for winds alone will also be touched upon.

Given this guide's main objective, sometimes, though not always, less attention will be expended on famous works than on lesser or unknown pieces which also deserve our consideration. Besides, entire books have been devoted to many of these famous works, for example, Beethoven's string quartets and there is little, if any more, of importance to be said on the subject by anyone writing today. Hence, this guide will only list such works for the sake of completeness

. In authoring such a guide, the reader has the right to inquire as to the qualifications that the writer brings to his task. I have had the opportunity to play several times a week and regularly perform chamber music for the past 40 years, mostly in amateur groups, but occasionally as a member of a professional or semi-professional ensemble. Along the way, I developed a love of the broader chamber music literature to which I was first exposed through the medium of phonograph records. To my chagrin, years of concert-going made clear that I was unlikely to ever hear such music performed live, either because the professionals did not know of the music or because the music was unavailable. When I realized this state of affairs, I undertook to obtain some of the music I had heard on disk so that at least I could play it. To this end, I began to search music stores, antiquarian dealers and libraries both in America and Europe. Later, I used my briefly held position as chamber music critic for a classical music radio station to further the cause of lesser known but fine chamber music by encouraging many of the groups passing through our city to examine them. I have, on occasion, sent copies of some of these works I unearthed to well-known ensembles currently performing. Additionally, I have served as the editor of and a frequent contributor to *The Journal* for more than 20 years and have headed up The International Cobbett Association for Chamber Music Research for a similar period or time.

Over the years, it occurred to me that a guide such as this was needed by both players and listeners. Guides to chamber music

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

have appeared from time to time, but have been little more than detailed analyses of a few famous works. In contrast, Cobbett's marvellous and mammoth *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* is just that, an encyclopedia, not a practical handbook that the performer, whether professional or amateur, can rely upon in navigating the literature.

Despite the fact I recognized the need for a different kind of guide, I did not initially consider the possibility of undertaking it myself until a number of my chamber music friends and colleagues, after regularly hearing me complain such a book was needed, suggested I had the knowledge and experience and urged me to write it myself. To this end, I have been fortunate in having had the opportunity to play thousands of pieces of chamber music by several hundred composers and with a strange sense of foresight, I had in many instances made notes on the pieces played. I have also been fortunate in collecting a large number of little known works over the years through my searches. Finally I have had the opportunity to hear many works that I would otherwise never have encountered through the medium of records.

As to the question of whether a work is a good one and deserving of attention, the answer unfortunately must be subjective. There is, as they say, no accounting for taste and intelligent men can differ on such things. Fashion and tastes change over time as well. My judgments as to the value of most of the works discussed obviously come into play and I make no apology for them. At the same time, unlike late 19th century Viennese music critics, I do not consider myself a Tsar on the question of Musical Worth. Therefore, I have taken considerable pains to arrive at a composite judgment based not only on my own feelings but also the opinions of my fellow players and performers and in many instances the audiences in front of whom I have had the opportunity to perform. This fact has allowed me to be able to comment with some confidence on whether a given work might be well received by an audience or would be fun for an amateur group to read through or to work on.

Still, no one person is going to know it all and I make no claim to this. Even *Cobbett's Cyclopedic*, with its several hundred contributors, is incomplete. This fact, in and of itself, was enough to make me consider the hopelessness of what seemed a daunting undertaking and for a long time, I thought of abandoning it. However, upon reflection I concluded my ultimate goal was to broaden the general public's knowledge of chamber music and to rescue as many unjustifiably ignored works as I knew about. It is hoped this guide will serve as a catalyst by informing chamber music lovers about the music and by directing them, when possible, to a source where they can either get a chance to hear or play the music for themselves.

When record collectors buy records from those companies offering new selections, they increase the chances that previously unrecorded works will see the light of day. When professional chamber music groups are urged by their audiences to present a wider offering of works from all periods, concert halls will be filled with the sounds of new and long-forgotten works. Inevitably, a by-product of this will be that music publishers will bring out modern reprints and publish new music which in turn will increase its availability among amateur players. (This is something which I have already undertaken by founding a publishing firm,

Edition Silvertrust, which has, to date, made over 1500 chamber works available) So it is with this goal in mind that I offer the reader this work.

Where possible, I try to include whether the work has been reprinted or generally available and or has been recorded in recent times, i.e. during my active musical life, beginning circa. 1960. Works go in and out of print, sometimes quickly, as do recordings. Nonetheless, if they have been available in recent times, there is a good chance, especially via the internet, that musicians and record collectors will be able to track down a copy of what they looking for. As a reference resource, I think it is important to take the long view. More rediscovered works have been reprinted and recorded during the past 20 years than at any other time.

While it is arguable that there is no point in discussing works which the player is unlikely to ever get a chance to play, I have, nonetheless, included many such works, which I consider to be of merit and which I have found at antiquarian music shops. In my experience, if one is persistent, there is a good chance of finding out of print works. There is also the possibility of obtaining such works through university and national libraries. And now, there several websites dedicated to digitalizing and making available parts and scores of thousands of works which have never been reprinted.

I wish to briefly acknowledge all of those who have been of special help to me over the years and without whom this work would not have been possible. Most of these individuals have been my fellow chamber music enthusiasts who joined me in playing through a huge amount of chamber music. Some are teachers, and some introduced me to works which I had not known. I must begin with my son and daughter: Skyler Silvertrust, Loren Silvertrust. Both are violinists and together, with an army of violists, bassists, clarinetists and others, have played through more chamber music than probably any other set of players on the face of the planet. Among those who joined me on this adventure are Gordon Peterson, Morton & Lura Altschuler, Henry Coretz, Eric Eisenstein, Kathleen Tumminello, Richard Sherman, Jean Mielke, Thalia Collis, Kristen Wilkinson, Dr. Prof. Hugo Zeltzer, Willi Boskovsky, Walter Willinhanz, Herman Essak, Thomas & Margaret Evans, Beverly Bloom, Girard Miller, Dr. Maurice Burke, Francis & Irene Peterson, Dr. Nicholas Cunningham, Dr. James Whitby, Eugene Chang, J. Steven Moore, Andrew Green, Sylvie Koval, Sally Didrickson, Tom Weyland, Siegfried Moysich, Carl Fox, Dr. Bernard Resnick, Mordy Rhodes, Dr. Charles Turk, Lillian Cassey, Joseph Kirschner, Gunther Fonken, George Smith, Naomi Feldman, Alan Garber, Gerda Bielitz, Beverly Kaushagen, Steven Spiegel, Rose Ross, Samuel & Paula Golden, Sylvie Koval, Dr. Iris Cosnow, Frank & Paula Tachau, members of the Con Brio Quartet, Die Musikfreunde Quartet, The Melos Quartet of Stuttgart, The Hinman Quartet, the Largi Quartet and Quartetto Bel Canto.

Since around 1800, string trios for violin, viola and violoncello have been considered the standard format. However, prior to 1800, it could be argued that the standard string trio was for the combination of two violins and violoncello. More of these were written than for any other combination. The composer who wrote the most important of such trios was Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805). He composed more trios for this combination than that for violin, viola and cello. There were contemporaries of Boccherini,

such as Felice Giardini (1716-1796) who wrote more the latter, but they were in the minority. The trio for two violins and cello can be directly traced back to the Baroque era and that is no doubt why it was the more common of the two. But the appearance of Beethoven's three Op.9 trios in 1799 can be said to be the demarcation line, after which the string trio for violin, viola and cello came to be regarded as the norm. So much so, in fact, that after 1800, there were very few trios, and almost none of any importance, written for two violins and cello.

Additionally, there have been trios for 2 violins and viola, violin and 2 violas, viola, cello and bass and perhaps other combinations. Only a handful of such works, such as Dvorak's Op.74 Terzetto and Kodaly's Trio for 2 Violins and Viola, achieved any success, although there are others such as Sergei Taneyev's and Robert Fuchs' trios for 2 Violins and viola.

### String Trios for Violin, Viola and Violoncello

**Walther Aeschbacher** (1901-69) a Swiss composer and conductor. His **String Trio, Op.21** is in four movements. It is quite effectively written in what might be called a neo-baroque. It is entirely tonal, but with many episodes of wayward dissonances which are, however, always resolved. This is an excellent work which would make a suitable entry on a concert program. It presents no real technical difficulties. Never recorded, it was published in 1976 by Amadeus Verlag.



**Feodor Akimenko** (1876-1945) Russian composer who studied with Rimsky-Korsakov and after the Russian Revolution settled in France. His **Op.7 String Trio in C Major** dates from 1900. Unlike the works of most of Korsakov's students, it does not sound Russian or even Slavic. It shows some French influence, some influence of Scriabin. What melodies it has are on the austere side. It is not an easy work to play, not because it is technically difficult but because it is not only hard to stay together, but also is difficult to achieve a clean ensemble sound. It was never recorded and has not been republished but can occasionally be found in antiquarian music shops.

**Franz Maria d'Alquen** (1804-77) German composer active in London.. **Trio in C Major** published by Cocks & Co.

**Nikolai Amani** (1872-1904) Russian composer who was a student of Rimsky-Korsakov. His **Op.1 String Trio** was published in 1900 and republished by Amadeus Verlag in 1988 but never recorded. Rimsky-Korsakov's influence is not evident and this is not a Russian sounding trio. It opens with a melancholy Allegro moderato introduction. The main part of the first movement, Allegro, is characterized by agitation and unrest. The second movement, Andante, has a vocal quality based on a simple melody. The Intermezzo, allegro scherzando, which follows is perhaps the most memorable of the four movements. The folk melodies sport a charming and inventive accompaniment. The lively finale, Rondo, allegro molto, has a fleet-footed main theme and two good lyrical secondary subjects. The tonalities are akin to what Central European composers were writing about this time. The trio does not present any technical difficulties and is not hard to play. A reasonably good work.



**Volkmar Andreae** (1879-1962) A Swiss composer and conductor. Director of Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra for almost half a century. His **String Trio in d minor, Op.29** dates from 1919. This is a very valuable addition to the string trio literature, which presents no great technical difficulties. In each of its three movements the main theme of the first movement, Allegro moderato, makes an appearance, each time treated inventively so that the music remains fresh. This trio can be recommended for concert performance but also to amateurs. It has not been recorded but the parts were available from Edition Silvertrust as of 2010.

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750) did not write string trios, however, many arrangements of his sonatas etc. for string trio can be found such as those on his 3 part inventions published by International Music Publishers as 15 Terzetti.

**Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) wrote five trios. The first, dating from 1791, is **Op.3 in E flat Major**. It has the same number of movements, basically in the same order and is in the same key as Mozart's K.563 Divertimento for string trio. There seems little doubt that it served as Beethoven's model. The six movements are Allegro con brio, Andante, Menuetto allegretto, Adagio, Menuetto and Allegro. This is quite a good work and can be considered a full-fledged work from his so-called Early Period and is the equal of the other trios as well as the Op.18 String Quartets. and shows him in complete command of his material. It deserves to be heard in concert occasionally.

His second trio is the **Op.8 Serenade in D Major**. It also dates from 1797. It is in 7 movements—Marcia, allegro, Adagio, Menuetto, allegretto, Adagio—Scherzo, allegro molto, Allegretto alla polacca, Andante quasi allegretto and Marcia, allegro. This is an interesting work for a number of reasons. It is clearly a work intended for concert performance, a show piece. The Marcia, with which he opens and closes the work, is quite unusual. The placement of a scherzo within the confines of a slow movement is also very original as is the inclusion of a Polacca. It should be noted that the technical demands are perhaps the greatest of any of the trios, though they cannot be styled as excessive. It is the only trio, other than Op.9 No.3 in which the cello is asked to play, albeit briefly, in thumb position. (once in the Polacca). This is a one of a kind work.

In 1798, the most famous set of trios was published, his Opus 9. There are three in the set. The first **Op.9 No.1 in G Major**, in my opinion, is the most effective and the best of the set, however, the general consensus seems to be otherwise and has favored the third. It opens with a soft and suspense filled Adagio introduction which leads to the exciting Allegro con brio. The conclusion (coda) to this movement is one of the most exciting in the literature as the violin and cello answer each other over the pulsing 16<sup>th</sup> note double stops in the viola. If the violist doesn't sound urgently excited with its relatively unexciting part, the effect is entirely lost. The second movement is a masterly Adagio, ma non tanto e cantabile, The E Major key makes intonation a bit problematic here. A bumptious Scherzo is followed by the *piece d' resistance*, a wonderful Presto, which must fly like the wind but must not sound hurried. The ending always brings the house down. Technically this trio makes no special demands.

(Continued from page 7)

**Op.9 No.2 in D Major** is in my opinion the weakest and in no way the equal of the Nos. 1 and 3. The opening Allegretto is longer than the thematic material justifies while the ending is nothing to write home about. The best movement, and quite a good one too, is the Andante quasi Allegretto in d minor. Suspense and interest are maintained throughout. It is as good as similar movements one finds in his middle quartets. A rather pedestrian Menuetto, allegro follows. The material in the trio is more appealing. The finale, Rondo, Allegro once again is too long in view of the thematic material and the ending is only ordinary.

**Op.9 No.3 in c minor** is the only one of any of his trios one ever hears in concert. Admittedly, there are few string trios performing before the public these days. It is generally held to be his best, but as I have said, I would put it second. The opening movement, Allegro con spirito is exciting but by no means easy to make sound so. I think the thematic material is carried along more by the key than any intrinsic excellence. It cannot be denied that the Adagio con espressione is magnificent. The material is very rich and the rhythmic patterns intricate. It is in this movement that the cello once again ascends, albeit briefly, into thumb position. The Scherzo, allegro molto e vivace which follows is a hard driving, forward thrusting affair which is very exciting but again requires good ensemble players to achieve this. The finale, to my mind, though by no means bad, is the weakest of the movements and not as exciting as either the opening movement or the scherzo, nor can it compare to the thrilling ending of Op.9 No.1. Its playful pianissimo ending, clever though it is, is somewhat of an anticlimax. All of Beethoven's trios have been recorded both on CD and LP and the parts are always in print.



**Hermann Berens** (1826-1880) a German Composer who lived most of his life in Stockholm. He composed a set of three string trios, his Op.85, in 1871. These are a valuable addition to the repertoire, being one of the few sets of trios from the mid-romantic era. The one problem one finds is various bouts of pianistic writing that requires very dexterous string players to bring off. That said, these trios are certainly worthwhile. **Op.85**

**No.1 in D Major** is the weakest of the set, though not without its good points. An example of the pianistic writing can immediately be found in the opening bars to the first movement, Allegro vivace. The main theme contains a set of 16<sup>th</sup> note flourishes that are suited more to the piano than strings. The thematic material is not strong enough to hide this problem. The second movement, *Andante Maestoso*, is a Schumannesque funeral march with rich deep sonorities. Pizzicato is also used to telling effect. A charming minuet, *Allegro non troppo*, comes next. There is a chirpy, updated Mozartean feel with a contrasting trio section of slightly darker hue. The main subject to the Rondo-finale, *Allegro non troppo*, is graceful and elegant. However, the fast downward-plunging and upward-rocketing passages are clearly pianistic and do not sit well with strings, especially the lower voices. The coda, though exciting, is not that easy to put together.

**Op.85 No.2 in c minor** is the best of the set. The trio takes its inspiration from Mendelssohn whose influence can be heard especially in the coda to the exciting first movement, Allegro agitato. This coda brings to mind the Hebrides Overture. It is followed up by a lovely pastoral Andante con moto. The third movement, Al-

legro patetico, is full of forceful forward propulsion. The naive trio section provides a striking contrast and features a sweet country dance melody. The exciting finale, Allegro vivace, is sure to please any audience which gets the chance to hear it, but pianistic writing makes it hard to bring off, especially in the lower voices. The ending is quite well done.

**Op.85 No.3 in F Major** might well have been called Grand Trio for it is truly written on a large scale. The opening Allegro is a huge movement brimming with ideas which Berens effectively presents. It begins quietly, almost like a pastorale. As the first theme is developed, momentum is gradually added. By the time the theme is fully elaborated, things are really moving along. A second theme has a whimsical feel. This in turn leads to a lyrical melody, given in turn to each voice and played against an effective pulsating accompaniment. If this were not enough, suddenly a brief but wild, turbulent episode, which gives the feel of the sea bursts forth. When the storm clouds clear, an uplifting chorale is sung against a quiet pizzicato accompaniment. The poignant second movement, Andante, has a heavy, solemn dirge-like air. The mood of the Halloween-like Allegro scherzando which follows could not be more different. It is a nervous, fidgety scherzo rushing here and there. The slower and lyrical trio section provides fine contrast. The finale, Allegro e con brio, wastes no time getting going. It explodes out of the starting gate full of energy. Again there are episodes of pianistic writing which create ensemble headaches for string players, but these are much less prominent than in the preceding two trios. Once again there is an effective conclusion.

All three trios were reprinted by Amadeus Verlag in 1977 and by Edition Silvertrust in 2009-10. They were recorded in Intim Music CD 107 around 2008.



**Wilhelm Berger** (1861-1911) was a German Composer. His one string trio **Op.69 in g minor**, from 1898, is a first class work in every respect. The idiom is that of the late Central European romantic period. The first movement, Lebhaft (lively), begins with a lovely Idyll. The main theme is warm and charming. The second movement, Etwas belebt (somewhat lively), is a set of variations on a march-like theme. The fugal variation in the minor is particularly fine. The magnificent Scherzo, Sehr lebhaft (very lively) that follows has the quality of a tarantella. The finale has a long, slow introduction, while the main section combines a sense of charming naiveté with the spirit of a humorous prankster. The trio was published by Amadeus Verlag in 1985 and Edition Silvertrust in 2010. It was recorded on a Querstand CD.



**Lennox Berkeley** (1903-89) was an English Composer. His **String Trio, Op.19** dates from 1944. It is a three movement work of relatively short duration. It is tonal with definable, sometimes even singable, themes but the tonalities are contemporary for the time. The opening Moderato has a wayward melody presented over a pulsating rhythm in the lower voices. A second theme is questioning and angular. The second movement, Adagio, is subdued and has a mournful quality



to it. The finale, Allegro, the theme is more dependent on its rhythm than tonal development. It is angular, pulsing and exciting. This is a fine work. It was published by Chester and was recorded in 1994 on Cadenza CD 900 907



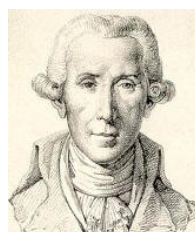
**Antoine Bessems** (1806-1868) was Flemish composers. His **String Trio in E flat Major, Op.90** was published in 1866, but despite its late opus number, it was almost certainly composed some decades earlier. Judging from its style, one might well conclude it was composed in the 1820's or 1830's. The work, which Bessems called "Grand Trio", is, for its time, quite substantial and in five movements. Bessems displays an excellent understanding of the instruments and writes quite well for each of them. The huge opening movement begins with a solemn and stately Grave introduction, which immediately captures the listener's attention. The main part of the first movement is a lively and upbeat Allegro vivo. Next comes a muscular Scherzo. A charming Andante con moto, somewhat in the form of a serenade, with simple but lovely melodies follows. Bessems surprises by inserting a Tempo di Menuetto rather than proceeding directly to the finale. This is an old-fashioned traditional minuet. The finale, Allegro, begins in rousing style but soon we hear the influence of Rossini and the introduction of Italian vocal type melodies. It has not been recorded, parts available from Edition Silvertrust.

**Adolf Binder** (1845-1900) was a Austrian composer. Little is known about him. His **String Trio in C Major, Op.1** was published in 1900, however, judging from the music, it seems unlikely that it was composed then but rather several decades before as it is written in a mid-romantic era idiom. This is a solid, well-written, four movement work, which can be heartily recommended to amateurs. It opens with an Adagio introduction which creates suspense. The main movement, Allegro moderato, has a bravura quality, somewhat Mendelssohnian. The second movement, Allegro scherzando with its trio is cute, but it is the Adagio that follows which makes the strongest impression being lyrical and dramatic. It is interspersed with Allegro molto interruptions which add further to its interest. The finale, Molto Allegro, has much of the same quality as the opening movement. It has never been recorded but parts are available from Amadeus and Edition Silvertrust.

**Kaspar Bischoff** (1823-1893) was a German composer and teacher. In 1854, he composed his **String Trio in c minor, Op.5**. This trio was entered in a competition and received first prize from the judges, Franz Lachner, Louis Spohr and Josef Strauss. It is somewhat surprising that it has found no modern reprint. It is a substantial four movement work that begins with an impressive Beethovenian Adagio introduction. The main section is a passionate Allegro vivace, which though good, is overly long for the amount of thematic material, hence detracting from the overall impression. It could benefit from cuts. The slow movement, Adagio, with its pathos, again recalls Beethoven. (the piano sonata Pathétique and also the slow movement of Op.18 No.3) The scherzo, Allegro, is in 5/8, which must have been unusual for the time, as the publisher includes 2 whole paragraphs informing players how it is to be done. Bischoff appears to have had Beethoven's Op.18 No.4 in mind, but nonetheless the music is original and not imitative. The finale, Allegro, has a good main theme but suffers from being overly long. Again, substantial cuts would greatly improve it. .



**Adolphe Blanc** (1828-1885) was a French composer and violinist. He wrote three string trios, **Opp. 25, 41 and 48**. None have been recorded. Nor until recently when Edition Silvertrust made them available had they been reprinted since the 19th century. All three are full of appealing melodies and well-written and should appeal to amateurs. Of the three **String Trio No.2 in A Major, Op.41**, which dates from 1860, is perhaps the best. It opens with a charming Allegro moderato. The Allegro vivace scherzo makes a stronger impression with its unusual rhythm and lyrical trio section. Better yet is the slow movement, Adagio religioso, with its noble themes and somber atmosphere. The best of all is the finale, Rondeau espagnol. It may well be that Bizet borrowed the themes from this movement for his opera Carmen, written some 15 years later. Blanc captures Spanish dances to a tee, the melodies, the rhythms and even the creation of a guitar sound through the clever use of pizzicato. This work could also be performed in concert.



**Luigi Boccherini** (1743-1805) was an Italian composer and virtuoso cellist who lived most of his life in Spain serving as composer to the royal court. He composed over 70 string trios, most for 2 violins and cello rather than violin, viola and cello. However, he did write at least 12 for the latter combination. Virtually all of his trios were published in sets of six. The first and best known for this combination is his **Op.14, G.95-100**. These have remained in print off and on since they were first published in 1772. They all have either three or four movements. No.1 has three movements and are sometimes known as his "Great" trios. These works were clearly intended for concert performance, perhaps, judging by the difficulty of the cello part with its extensive use of thumb position, with Boccherini on the cello. The first 2 movements of No.1 are excellent, the last falls off in interest. No.2, the only trio set in the minor, is perhaps the best of the group, each of its four movements maintains interest throughout. It is still strong enough to be programmed in concert. Each of No.3's four movements are pretty average, the thematic material is not particularly memorable. This is true of the opening movement to No.4, however the last 2 movements are quite good. No.5 is one of the stronger trios in the set while only the middle movement of No.6's three movements is at all memorable. These trios were last published by Edition Silvertrust around 2008. They were recorded on Dabringhaus CD# 3378. The other set of six trios for violin, viola and cello, **Op.47, G-107-112** appeared in 1793. They are all in 2 movements and nowhere near as ambitious as the earlier set. They appear to be more on the order of "Hausmusik", intended for home music making. They present no serious technical problems, the cello part, which was intended for the cello-playing Prussian King Frederick William is far more manageable.



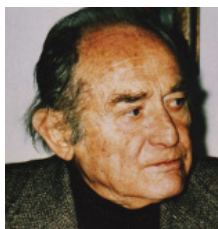
**Alexandre Boëly** (1785-1858) was a French composer and organist. His **Op.5** set of three trios were first published in 1808 and appeared to be modelled after and sound a great deal like Beethoven's Op.9 trios although each of them are written on a much larger scale. **Op.5 No.1 in D Major** is the biggest of the three. The size and scope of the opening

(Continued on page 10)

Adagio introduction to the first movement is truly extraordinary. Highly dramatic, it creates a sense of unease which is only dispelled by the appearance of the brighter and energetic Allegro. The Allegretto grazioso which follows begins in a rather banal fashion, however, it is subsequently developed into an exciting and lyrical piece of music with very telling use of pizzicato and lengthy double stops to create a bagpipe effect. There is no slow movement, and for the third movement, we are given a first rate Scherzo allegro with a finely contrasting lyrical trio. The exciting finale, Allegro assai, with which Boëly tops off this trio, quotes a theme from Beethoven's Op.9 No.2, but he gives it an entirely different treatment.

The opening bars to **Op.5 No.2 in C Major**, quote Beethoven's Op.18 No.2 Quartet, however, by the fourth bar, Boëly departs onto his own melodic path. The lovely second theme is lyrical while driven forward by the pulsing accompaniment in the cello. The slow movement, Adagio, which follows, is leisurely but has an air of mystery to it. The theme of the third movement, Minuetto, Allegretto, depends more on rhythm than its melodic line and is presented in canonic form. The opening bars of the finale, a Presto, bring the finale movement of Beethoven's Op.18 No.3 Quartet to mind, but again Boëly gives the material a different treatment.

**Op.5 No.3 g minor** is in some ways the most interesting and also the least interesting and weakest of the set. Like Beethoven Op.9 No.3 it is the only one set in the minor but the thematic material is perhaps the least interesting. On the other hand, it sounds the least like Beethoven and has the most challenging cello part of the three. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust. No.1 has been recorded on La Chant du Mond CD#278 821 and No.2 on Laborie CD# LC105.



**Hans Melchior Brugk (1909-1999)** was a German composer and teacher. He primarily composed choral works. His **String Trio in D Major, Op.11** was published by Simrock in 1963. It is in three movements, Allegro vivace, Adagio (a theme and set of variations) and Vivace. It is tonal but mostly not in the traditional sense with

many long episodes of dissonance. But these are always resolved. Rhythm plays a greater role than the thematic material. The Vivace is particularly appealing. It presents no unusual technical difficulties and can be handled by amateurs of average ability. never been recorded.

**Henry Cowell (1897-1965)** was an American composer and teacher. Edition Peters published his **Seven Paragraphs for String Trio** in 1966 which was composed in 1925. Seven short movements each different. Basically not tonal. Recorded on a New World LP 285.



**Jean Cras (1879-1932)** was a French composer and admiral. His **String Trio** dates from 1925. The opening movement which is without any tempo marking other than a metronome indication begins with a searching melody. After a reprise, one hears a series of jazz rhythms as the development proceeds. The second subject, is gentler. The extraordinary second movement--

there is nothing like it in the trio literature, *Lent*, is a serious of unrelated episodes. The first is religious, the strings create a soft, meditative organ-like sound that one might well hear in church. Next comes a peasant dance, perhaps a musette with just a touch of the exotic. Then, the violin is given a long wailing solo in the exotic sounds of the Levant. This is in turn followed by a haunting viola solo. The movement closes much as it began. The third movement, *Animé*, presents a broad panorama of traveling music. The lower strings strum, guitar-like, as each voice takes turns bringing out a bright melody. Then the tempo begins to increase until it reaches a wild whirling feverish pitch before the main theme is reprised. In the finale, *Tres anime*, begins with a Bach-like etude which as it goes along morphs into a Gaelic dance which must have come from his native Brittany. A lyrical second theme is sung over the soft ponticello voices in the background. This is an unquestionable masterpiece. It belongs in the concert hall, but experienced amateurs of an advanced technical level will also revel in its beauty and originality. It was reprinted by Edition Silvertrust in 2008 and has been recorded on Antes CD#31.9185.



**Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739-1799)**

Austrian composer and violin virtuoso. His **Divertimento in D Major, Krebs 131** is a short three movement (Andante, Menuetto & Presto) work, which judging from how its sounds was composed in the 1770's. It has the typical sound of Mozart and Haydn from that period, i.e. the early Vienna Classical era sound. All three instruments are well treated. Not technically hard. Pleasant. Available from several publishers. Recorded on Calig CD 50 876



**Ernst von Dohnanyi (1877-1960)**, also Ernö Dohnanyi in the Hungarian form). His **Serenade in C Major, Op.10** is one of the great works for string trio. It was composed in 1904. Dohnanyi intentionally chose Beethoven's Op.8 Serenade as his model as it was his goal to produce an updated version of the classical serenade for string trio. Beethoven begins his Op.8 *Serenade* quite ceremoniously, as was the custom, with a relatively

short march. So does Dohnanyi. Beethoven's movement marking is *Marcia. Allegro*. So is Dohnanyi's. Traditionally, of course, a march has a contrasting trio section which serves as the middle portion of the movement after which the march reappears and is used to conclude the movement either with or without a coda. Beethoven follows this procedure. Dohnanyi does not. Instead, he compresses the 21 measure march into five bars by means of representing the original 16th note runs that lead to the main dotted rhythm of the march into a run of only three notes while retaining the dotted rhythm. This compression creates a heightened tension which is missing in the original march. Rhythmically, Dohnanyi's *Marcia*, unlike Beethoven's, is not a straight forward affair. Instead, it is complicated and requires precise and intricate ensemble playing with each voice having to enter at rather unexpected times. There is not much tonality to this march, its is not to say that it is atonal, merely that the melody is slight. However, the theme of the middle section, entrusted entirely to the viola and cello, is quite powerful. Post-Brahmsian in tonality, it is a wailing lament. At this point, it is impossible to know that Dohnanyi will return to use it as a coda in the final movement. In the

second movement, Romanza, to the off-beat pizzicati in the violin and cello, the viola, in a long solo, a kind of folk melody. Contrast is provided in the brief, somewhat quicker middle section, Beethoven follows his *Adagio* with a *Menuetto, allegretto* before inserting a scherzo. Dohnanyi, not feeling himself slavishly beholden to Beethoven's model, skips the minuet and uses a *Scherzo, vivace* for his third movement. The playful main theme is introduced in a fugal fashion. The theme bears some similarity to that used by Dukas in the middle of his *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. The fourth movement *Andante con moto, us* a theme with a set of five variations. This is the most serious movement of his *Serenade*. The theme, which all three instruments present together, is reflective and elegiac in nature and full of harmonic surprises. These carry over into the variations which are one of the most extraordinary sets ever composed, and characterized by a very high degree of craftsmanship. The main theme of the finale. *Rondo*, is only a short kernel of four measures. It is frenetic and full of nervous energy. Although it begins as an entirely independent theme, as the movement progresses, it starts to bear a distant relationship to the thematic material in the opening movement. But then, without any warning, the coda, marked *L'istesso Tempo*, offers up the lyrical theme of the march from the first movement in the violin, echoed by the cello, against the inexorable drumming rhythmic figure in the viola (see right). The effect is quite dramatic not only because of the sudden interjection of a lyrical theme but also because the tempo slows down despite the marking since Dohnanyi shifts to notes of longer value. Hence Dohnanyi not only brings the work to a powerful close but also, by reintroducing the theme from the first movement, does it in a way which approaches that of the traditional classical serenade. Although there are some technical difficulties, they are not insuperable and every string trio party should make this work's acquaintance.

spirituoso, as the marking suggested is spirited and full of forward motion. A pastoral *Andante quasi allegretto* follows. The middle movement, Eichberg subtitled *Waldnacht*—forest night. It is darkly hued but not certainly not gloomy. This is followed by a sprightly movement titled *Mährchen*, an archaic spelling of the word *Märchen*, meaning fairy tales. The finale, *Vivace* is also given a title, *Genuesischen Ständchen*—a Genoese Serenade. Perhaps Eichberg should have entitled this work *Suite for String Trio*, for that is what it is. It makes a fine mid-romantic era choice for a concert program. It presents no technical difficulty and should certainly appeal to amateurs.



**Georges Enescu (1881-1955)** was a Romanian composer, violin virtuoso, conductor and teacher. He wrote a short, one movement work entitled *Aubade*. It dates from 1899 but has been republished by Editura muzicala. Based on a Romanian folk tune. It sounds like a song sung to guitar accompaniment. Charming morsel. There is no recording that I know of.



**Joseph Eybler (1765-1846)** was an Austrian composer, a student and good friend of Mozart. Published in 1798 as 'Grand Trio,' the **String Trio Op.2 in C Major** in five movements is no slight work. It clearly takes Mozart's own great string trio, *Divertimento K.563* as its model. After an introductory *Adagio* comes a rollicking *Allegro* written in concertante style, much like K.563. Each voice is given a rather

substantial chance to shine and the writing is more grateful for the two lower voices who are not asked to try and duplicate what the violin has just played before them. A well-crafted *Andante*, not in concertante style, follows. Next comes a typical Austrian *ländler*, which serves as the main theme to the *Menuetto allegro* which features three charming and contrasting trios. This is a very fine movement in the noble tradition of the 18th Century serenade. A short *Adagio*, in which the violin is *tacet*, comes next. This somber interlude in the lower two voices is an ingenious 'palette cleanser' which provides just enough contrast from the preceding minuet so that the taste of the melodically delicious finale, *Rondo*, is not lost. It is a bouncing, joyful affair which brings this satisfying work to a close. This trio deserves performance in the concert hall where it will undoubtedly bring pleasure to its audience and it should certainly not be missed by any amateur trio party. It has been recorded a number of times on CD and is available from a number of publishers..



**Jean Françaix (1912-1997)** was a French composer. His **String Trio** dates from 1933. It is one of the more important 20th century string trios. In four movements, its style is firmly neoclassical. The opening *Allegretto vivo* is a lively yet intimate. All three voices are muted. The viola is entrusted with a theme which spells, in German notation, Bach in reverse. (the notes B, C, A, B-flat corresponding to HCAB in German notation.) A lively scherzo follows. In the songlike *Andante*, once again mutes are employed. The violin plays soloist to the lower voices. The finale, *Vive*, is full of effervescent drive, but ends surprisingly softly, though, fading away.

A work for the concert hall, it is by no means beyond experienced



**Johann Justus Friedrich Dotzauer (1783-1860)** was a German cello virtuoso and composer. He wrote a huge amount of chamber music, much of it quite appealing, however, virtually none of it has been republished since the 19th century. His **Grand Trio in E flat Major, Op.57** is a concertante style work which makes technical demands on all of the parts, especially and not surprisingly, the cello. It has not been recorded



**Johannes Driessler (1921-1998)** was a German composer and organist. His **String Trio Op.1 No.2** was published by Barenreiter Verlag in 1953. This four movement work (*Molto Adagio*, *Alla marcia*, *Allegretto moderato* and *Allegro vivace*) is mostly dissonant but not repellingly so. There is tonal resolution and several tonal passages. Excellent part writing and not at all difficult technically this can be considered a worthwhile work. It has not been recorded to the best of my knowledge.



**Julius Eichberg (1824-1893)** was a German composer and violinist who emigrated to the U.S. and founded and directed the Boston Conservatory of Music. His **5 Skizzen, Op.23** (Five Sketches) for String Trio were first published in 1857. The first movement, *Allegro*

amateur players. Published by Schott, it has been recorded on several occasions.



**Robert Fuchs (1847-1927)** was an Austrian composer. His **String Trio in A Major, Op.94** is an important work and one of the best from the late Romantic period. It dates from 1910.

This was, for the time, a fairly modern sounding work, completely tonal but certainly showing that Fuchs, who was then 63 was not immune from the advances in tonality that composers such as Bruckner, Mahler and the post-Brahmsians had made. By and large, this trio sounds no less modern than Dohnanyi's. The fresh main theme of the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, is immediately attractive. The slow movement, *Andante espressivo*, consists of very melodious variations on a Scottish folk-song *O cruel was my father*, perfect in design and simple in character. A richly chromatic *Minuetto* serves as the third movement. A bright, energetic trio is placed in the middle. It has a bit of the early 20th Century freneticism one later hears in neo-classical music and surely the roots of those who stuck with tonality can be seen here. The last movement contains a slow introduction, an *Allegretto piacevole* with a fugato opening and a really thrilling *Allegro vivace*.



**Hans Gal (1890-1987)** was an Austrian composer who fled the Nazis and emigrated to Scotland. His **Trio, Op.104** was published by Simrock in 1974. It was originally scored for Viola d'amore, however, the unlikelihood of it being performed with instrument led to a viola part being made. It is in three movements and tonal to the extent that there are identifiable themes and resolution to what are

dissonances. Well-written, the third movement, a big theme and variations is especially well-done. A good modern work. There is no recording.



Moritz Ganz

**Moritz Ganz (1806-1868)** was a German cellist and composer. His **Grand Trio in D Major, Op.8** was composed in the 1830's and has not been reprinted or recorded.

**Joseph Gehot (1756-1820)** Belgian violinist and composer. He wrote a considerable amount of chamber music. Among his string trios are his **Op.1 Nos.1-6** from 1781 and his **Op.5 Nos.1-6** from sometime during the same decade. The style varies from concertante to the more modern structure used by Haydn and Mozart. The music sounds quite a lot like Boccherini with occasional echoes of the early Vienna Classical School. Straight forward and fun to play for home music making. Some of the **Op.2 Nos.1-2** and **5-6** have been published in new editions by SJ Music some during the 1990's. **Op.1 No.2** and **Op.5 No.3** were both recorded on Koch CD#3-1553.



**Felice Giardini (1716-1796)** was an Italian composer and violin virtuoso. He wrote 18 string trios for violin, viola and cello, in three sets of six, **Opp. 17, 20** and **26**. Of these, the only set to remain in print is the **Op.20 Nos.1-6** were recently reprinted individually by Edition Silvertrust. In mid 20th century, Editioni Zani-

bon reprinted these as a set and also included **Op.17 No.2** which they mislabeled. At the time of writing, (2010) there were plans by a Hungarian firm to issue new editions to all of these. Each individual trio is available from Edition Silvertrust. There is a recording of all 18 on Hungaroton CD 31828. The trios combines the so-called "Style Gallant" with the mid 18th classicism of J.C. Bach, the Stamitzes and the Mannheim school. In the "Style Gallant", the writing emphasizes the soloistic qualities of the instruments, rather than the integrated writing of all three parts to create a whole, which J.C. Bach and the Mannheim composers pioneered. One can hear the roots of early Mozart and Haydn. In these trios, the roles and importance of each instrument is constantly varied. While the viola is often the glue between the violin and the cello, at times, it becomes the soloist. The cello covers the entire range of its registers, hopping from deep in its bass to high in its tenor. Giardini generally, but not always employs a fast-slow-fast pattern to each movement, using then popular dances such as the Tedesca and the Scozzese (the German and the Scottish dance prototypes) Each of the trios is in three movements and can be recommended. .



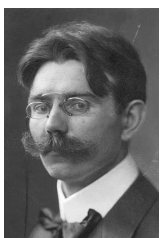
**Benjamin Godard (1845-1897)** French composer and violinist. In 1872, he composed **Morceaux, Op.5** for string trio. These consist of four pieces programmatic pieces. These finely put together charming movements are beautiful and in no way difficult to perform. They are so lovely chamber music players will certainly want to play them. The first movement is entitled *Ballad* and is a *Vivace*. Next is an *Allegretto* entitled *Dans le Bois*. This is

followed by a slow movement, *Reve*, *Andante quasi adagio*. The finale, an *Allegro* is simply entitled, *Scherzo*. There is no recording but the parts can be had from Edition Silvertrust.



**Carl C.P. Grädener (1812-1883)** German composer. His **String Trio in G Major, Op.48** is currently in print although there are plans by Edition Silvertrust to make it available. Composed in 1864, it must be considered a cut above the average which is well-written for the instruments and uses the ensemble to good advantage. Mendelssohn, to some extent serves as an inspiration.

There is an intense *Lento* introduction leading to a compelling *Allegro molto moderato*. Of note is the fine accompaniment to the main theme of the second movement, *Un poco vivace*, a minuet. A lovely *Adagio*, perhaps reminiscent of a Mendelssohnian *Song Without Words*, serves as the slow movement. The finale, *Allegro vivace, ma non troppo*, combines a light-hearted theme with more lyrical elements. The coda is an exciting *stretto* in which the theme from the first movement reappears. This trio is strong enough to be programmed in concert but also well within the range of the average amateur player. There are no recordings.



**Joseph Haas (1879-1960)** had his **Divertimento for String Trio in D Major, Op.22** published in 1909. It was reprinted once more a few decades later and recently by Edition Silvertrust. Like Beethoven's **Op.8 Serenade for String Trio**, Haas' *Divertimento* is in the best tradition of such works. It is intended to be entertaining and amusing and certainly succeeds in this. Each of the five tightly

written movements is fresh and inventive. But one must note that this is not merely “light music”, for it shows the composer’s complete grasp of chamber music style, understanding of tonal beauty and how to combine the three instruments to their best use. In the first movement, In gemässigtem Marschtempo mit Humor (in a moderate march tempo with humor), the use of humor is cleverly executed and never obvious or overdone. The inspired main theme is appealing and far above the ordinary. The second movement, Capriccio, is marked very lively and light, and is in fact fiery and piquant, while the beautiful, brief middle section provides a striking interlude. Next is an attractive Minuet, Graziös, nich zu rasch (graceful and not too quick) in the rococo style. The slower trio section is also quite appealing and lovely. This in turn is followed by a Romance, Sehr ruhig und mit viel Ausdruck (very calm and with much expression). The finale, Sehr lebhaft and Humorvoll (very lively and humorous), is a rondo. As the title suggests it is full of unaffected humor and fine touches. This trio would make a fine program selection for the concert hall and is truly a ‘tasty morsel’ for amateurs.

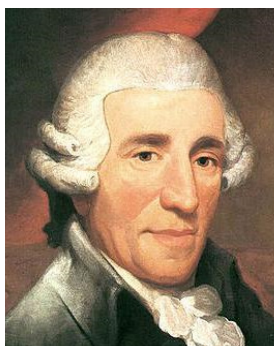


**Peter Hänsel (1770-1831)** German composer and violinist active in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Paris. He was a student of Haydn and assimilated the master’s late style in which he more or less composed throughout his life, though adding some of the modifications of early romanticism. He wrote a great deal of chamber music, virtually all of it out of print. His last three works, number by Hänsel himself as Op.40 Nos.1-3, are for string trio.

They date from 1830 and remained in manuscript until Edition Gravis brought out the first two. **Op.40 No.1 in F Major** was published by them in 1989. It is a substantial work in four movements. It opens with a tuneful Allegro, but which could improve by some judicious cuts. Next is a charming Andante con moto which is a set of variations. This is followed by a classical style Minuetto, allegro with trio. Here the material is mostly given to the violin. The finale, Presto, though it has appealing melodies is also overly long. In 1993, Edition Gravis brought out **Op.40 No.2 in g minor**. On the whole, it is the stronger of the two works. The opening Allegro con fuoco is quite exciting, however, the bulk of the melodic material is to be found in the violin part, at least more than one might expect from this period. Again, the movement would benefit from cuts but the thematic material is more compelling and does not make this such a glaring problem. The second movement, Menuetto, allegro. In the trio section, the viola is given the chance to lead throughout. The third movement, Andante, is again a theme and set of variations. The cello presents appealing melody by itself, rising into its treble register.. The variations which follow are quite well done. The finale, Vivace, although effective, is overly long with too much of the material going to the violin. Still, this is a good work which can be recommended to amateurs. Op.40 No.3 was apparently never published. There are no recordings.

**Charles Haubiel (1892-1978)** was an American composer and teacher. His **String Trio in d minor** was published in 1958 by Elkin. The fact that it is in a key signature is somewhat misleading. An Adagio introduction is tonal and presents a promise of things to come. The main movement, Allegro con trio, is angular, and mostly dissonant, at times quite harshly so. An Allegro con

spirito which follows is a scherzo, also angular, more tonal but not particularly melodic. The finale is an Allegro, where sandwiched between long slices of dissonance is an appealing tonal episode. It is well-written and not overly hard. There is no recording.



**Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)** of course is after Mozart, the most famous composer from the Vienna Classical era. He wrote a lot of trios, mostly for baryton, viola and cello as his employer, Prince Esterhazy, was a baryton player. The only trios that he wrote for violin, viola and cello that have remained in print are his **Op.53 String Trios**, these are a set of three. These are charming, but slight, two movement works. The violin dominates, but

they are not written in concertante style. They are pleasant to play and offer no technical difficulties. They have been reprinted a number of times, with International Music Company being one choice. They were recorded on Phillips LP SAL 378 by Arthur Grumiaux Trio and also on Westminster LP 9033. I am aware of no CD recording.



**Swan Hennessey (1866-1929)** Irish composer. His **Petite Trio Celtique Op.52** dates from 1921. As the title suggests the work is relatively short consisting of four movements. The first, Allegro, bears the subtitle in Irish style and indeed sounds like an Irish dance. The second movement, Moderat, is subtitled in the style of Brittany while the last two movements, Andante and Allegro are in Irish style. Easy to play, program music of no great depth. There is no modern reprint or recording.

recording.

**Eduard Herrmann (1850-1937)** was a German violinist and composer. His **String Trio in g minor, Op.39** It is in a post-romantic style. The opening Allegro moderato begins with the viola introducing a somewhat dark, yearning melody over the cello cross string accompaniment which gives the music considerable spaciousness. The middle movement, an Adagio, is in the form of a lovely romanza. The finale, Allegretto, begins with an introduction of bright arpeggios before the viola enters with the main theme quickly taken up by the violin. dates from 1920. The trio has not been recorded but parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.



**Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1843-1900)** wrote two first rate string trios worthy of concert performance. Both were composed at the same time in 1877. The first, **String Trio No.1 in A Major, Op.27 No.1** The opening subject to the first movement of String Trio No.1, Op.27 No.1 in A Major, Allegro, is bright, graceful and syncopated. The second theme, is equally cheerful, but somewhat broader and is sounds especially

well in the viola and cello. The Andante which follows begins with a beautiful folk melody, slow and lyrical, while the middle

section is quicker and somewhat turbulent. Next comes an Allegretto, which for its main theme has a kind of “Shepherd’s Lament” which quickly morphs into a rustic peasant’s dance. The mood of the finale, Allegro, is similar to that of the 1st movement, mostly bright and graceful. Toward the end, the writing becomes almost orchestral which is quite an accomplishment for just three voices. The second, **String Trio No.2 in F Major, Op.27 No.2** begins with the cello, all by itself, quietly introducing the first theme pizzicato. The bowed version is presented thereafter by the viola. When the violin enters, it becomes clear that this is a fugue, after which the theme receives canonic treatment. The second theme is dark, more chromatic and so intricately woven into the fabric of the first that it is hard to hear where one begins and the other ends. The Andantino, which follows, has the same format as the slow movement of 1st Trio. A lied presented entirely by the violin and again it is followed by a piu mosso section, the theme to which has the quality of a barcarole. These rolling 16th notes eventually become accompaniment to a cello melody. A Tempo di Minuetto comes next. It begins with an old-fashioned and somewhat dry melody of the sort to which 18th century French aristocrats might dance. The second strain, partially in minor, is more robust. The trio section, rather than being slower, is marked Piu vivo. Its lovely melody is sung by the violin and then later appears in cello as part of the coda. It is accompanied by the striking use of bariolage in the other voices. The very fine finale, Allegro vivace, begins with a truncated fugal version of the energetic first theme. The second is more lyrical and quite exotic and oriental-sounding. These trios have been published by Wollenweber Verlag in the 1980’s and more recently by Edition Silvertrust. String Trio No.1 was recorded on CPO CD 999 608 and No.2 was recorded on CPO CD 999 710. They should be in every amateur’s library.



**Willy Hess (1906-1997)** was a Swiss composer and important Beethoven scholar. His **String Trio in G Major, Op.76** was published by Amadeus Verlag. This is a wonderful work written in neo-romantic style. It opens with a slow, somber, introduction that has a jazz feel to it, and leads to a playful, upbeat and bright Allegro giocoso. The second movement is a theme and set of six variations, each very different from the other. The sixth is a very clever fugue. The third movement, Deutscher Tanz, is a very well done modern version of an alla tedesca minuet. The finale, Rondo, begins with a Grave introduction which repeats the theme from the opening movement before changing into an Allegro grazioso which has much the same mood as the opening Allegro giocoso. Here is an excellent work, strong enough for concert performance but within the ability of even players of modest technical accomplishments. It has never been recorded.



**Kurt Hessenberg (1908-1994)** German composer and teacher. His **String Trio, Op.48** was published by Edition Schott in 1954 and has remained in print. It was recorded on a Deutsche Grammophon LP 18403. This is a work with no fixed tonality and yet in a very modern way tonal. It has many dissonances but it is not really a very dissonant work and the superb use of rhythm creates an even greater impression

of tonality. It is a good work to play, presenting no technical problems for experienced amateurs and it is without doubt a work which should be heard in concert. The opening movement Vivace sounds like something Mozart might have written if he were living in 1950. There is much movement and running passage work which is always engaging. This is followed by a Larghetto and a Presto which serves as kind of scherzo. It has a strong pulse and one can hear the influence of Shostakovich. Then comes a Lento which is very free in tempo. The rhythm of the opening theme to the finale, Vivace, is as important as the thematic material. Very effectively done.



**Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885)** was a German composer who was also a leading German pianist for a number of years, as well as an important teacher numbering Max Bruch among his many students. Hiller studied with the foremost pianist of the time, Johan Nepomuk Hummel, who was also a composer of the first rank. Hiller’s **String Trio in C Major, Op.207** was not published until after

Hiller’s death. It has not been reprinted in the past century and probably for good reason as the thematic material is very dry and quite pedestrian. The work sounds like a homework assignment rather than a work of art. Surprisingly, it was recently recorded on Ars CD 38 491,

**Julius Hopfe (1817-1891)** German composer, conductor and teacher. He wrote two string trios, the first **String Trio No.1 in C Major, Op.41** dates from 1856 and has never been reprinted. The second **String Trio No.2 in g minor, Op.69** has received modern reprints from Amadeus Verlag and Edition Silvertrust. Neither have been recorded. Not only is it well written, but it is a fine-sounding work which presents no technical difficulties. It is a workman like trio good to play though no great masterpiece of the repertoire. The first movement, Allegro, has appealing lyrical themes. The Scherzo, molto vivace which follows is good enough but it is the trio which makes a greater impression. The third movement, Andantino, quasi larghetto is in the style of a song without words. The main theme is in the style of a Legend while the middle section has a lovely canon duet between the viola and violin. The lively, jovial finale, Allegro ma non troppo, is full spirited. It can be played by those with only a modest technique and is well-written for the three instruments.



**Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837)** was Mozart’s only fulltime student and generally acknowledged to be the greatest pianist before Liszt. He was a fine composer whose works suffered in comparison to his contemporary Beethoven only because he did not blaze a new trail or attempt to scale the immortal heights.

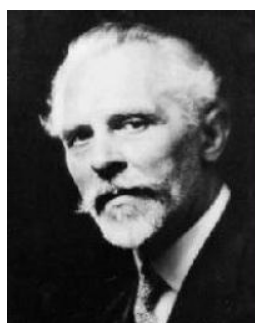
Among his works at death were found two trios apparently for 2 violas and cello. They remained unpublished until Edition Peters brought them out in 1958 in a version for violin, viola and cello. They appear to be from the first decade of the 19th century and are really fine works not to be missed by any trio group. They present no technical difficulties, are strong enough for concert performance and treat the instruments as equals. The **String Trio in E flat Major** begins with a formal short introduction, a call to attention, to the opening Allegro con brio. The main theme is classical and its treatment is reminiscent

of Mozart. In the lovely second movement, Adagio cantabile, the music clearly straddles the two periods. The development with the two high voices over the cello pizzicato is particularly striking. The third movement is a Haydnesque Menuetto, while the lively finale, Allegro, is a classical era rondo. The opening Allegro moderato to the second work, **String Trio in G Major**, after an introductory "trumpet call" to order, has for its main theme a light Mozartean melody which is given a bright and elegant treatment. The second movement, Andante, begins in an almost religious vein, but slowly the mood lightens and the second theme is given a playful treatment. A very typically classical Menuetto follows with a wonderful trio which provides a striking contrast. The finale, Rondo alla burlasca vivace, is full of good humor and plays a few musical jokes (on a tune from Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*) on the listener. The E flat trio was recorded on Calig CD 50 876.



**Hyacinthe Jadin (1776-1800)** French composer and pianist. His **Op.2** are a set of three trios. They were dedicated to the famous violinist Rudolphe Kreutzer, but the trios are not written in concertante form and are not a mere vehicle for the violinist, but rather show a good use of all three instruments. They were composed sometime in the mid 1790's, before Beethoven wrote his trios.

There is some confusion over the opus numbers with regard to these trios and a set of three string quartets which also bear the opus number of 2. Unfortunately, this was not at all an uncommon experience during this period when different publishers brought out a composer's works. **Op.2 No.1 in E flat Major** was reprinted by Edition Silvertrust in 2008. The opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, opens calmly. Its main theme is finely nuanced. It seems clear that Jadin had come into contact with Haydn and Mozart as the music and the handling of the material is closer to the early Viennese classics than to what was being composed all around him in Paris. The second movement is a Haydnesque *Minuet*. The heavily accented-rhythmic main section is set off by a more plastic trio. An old fashioned *Sicilienne* serves as slow movement, however, it sounds rather more like a stately minuet rather than an Italian dance. The finale, *Allegro*, opens with considerable forward propulsion and continues at its quick pace without pausing for breath until it finally reaches a lovely, lyrical middle section. These trios were recorded on NCA CD 9912846.



**Joseph Jongen (1873-1953)** Belgian composer. His String Trio Op.135 dates from 1948. The work is entirely tonal, primarily showing the influence of the French impressionists but also with certain elements of neo-classicism and the neo-baroque. The first movement, Allegro ma non troppo starts off like a modern version of Bach but quickly falls into an impressionist mode. The following *Molto espressivo* is slow and sad. The

third movement, *Malinconico*, has a melancholy main theme set off by odd rhythmic episodes. In the finale *Décidé*, once again rhythm more than melody creates the main interest. This is a good modern work which should not be beyond amateur players, but there is not enough contrast between the movements which

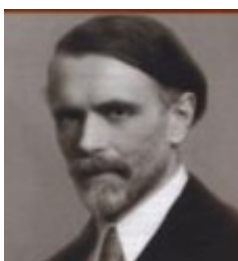
creates a certain monotony. The music is not in print but it was recorded on Dexia CD ADW 7502.



**Pal Kadosa (1903-1983)** Hungarian composer. His **String Trio Op.12** was published by Editio Musica in 1969. It is for all practical purposes an atonal work written in a 12 tone style. There are no recordings.

**Johann Friedrich Kelz (1786-1862)** was a German cellist and composer. His **String Trio in E flat Major, Op.128** was published in 1830 but almost certainly was composed earlier. It opens with an Allegro in rather stately fashion and then becomes livelier as it proceeds, sounding like a classical divertimento. The main theme of the second movement, Lento, begins with a long, singing melody in the cello. Next comes a sprightly Menuetto with two trios. The minuet is Haydnesque in that snippets of the theme are shared by all of the voices which are necessary to complete it. In the first trio, the violin and cello engage in a duet, while the viola is given the pretty, landler-like second trio. The fourth movement is a dignified Adagio, a somber processional. A second Menuetto, also with two trios, precedes the finale. The minuet section is dominated by triplets. In the first trio, which is rather similar to the minuet, the viola takes the lead although the cello occasionally intercedes. The second trio is a traditional German Dance. The finale, Allegretto, is a jaunty, upbeat affair with catchy, appealing melodies.

**Jan Baptysta Kleczynski (1756-1828)** was a Polish violinist and composer. He wrote six string trios, Op.4 which date from 1797. The idiom is that of the Vienna Classical composers, not surprisingly as he was active in Vienna. The style is a mix between concertante and that pioneered by Haydn and Mozart. The part writing is generally quite good and each instrument gets its innings. The trios were recorded in 2013 on two Ate Prealable CDs. It is not in print but at least 3 of the trios are scheduled for new editions in 2014 by Edition Silvertrust.



**Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967)**, the famous 20th century Hungarian composer, wrote a very attractive one movement piece entitled **Intermezzo for String Trio** dates from around 1905, about the time he began his travels to collect folk melody. It abounds with the sounds of real Hungarian folk tunes rather than the ersatz Gypsy music which Austrian and German com-

posers such as Brahms popularized. The one movement Intermezzo is in the character of a relaxed serenade. It was published by Editio Musica. It has been recorded on a number of CDs, including CPO 999 950.

**Oswald Körte (1852-1924)** was a German composer and musicologist. His **Wanderstimmungen** for string trio was published in 1904. It makes no great pretensions and was probably intended for music making at home. It consists of five pieces. The first is entitled "Frisch Hinaus" (Happy to set out), the second is "Wechselnd Leid und Lust" (Sorrow and Joy), the third is entitled "Idylle", the fourth, which is particularly beautiful, he titled "Rauher Weg und Sehnsucht" (The rough path & longing for home). The finale "Glücklicher Heimweg" (Homeward bound

and happy) in which the viola is given a long and important cadenza. This is a work that is fun to play and can be recommended to amateurs. Recently published by Edition Silvertrust, it has not been recorded.



**Franz Krommer (1759-1831)** was a prominent Austrian composer and violinist. His **Grand Trio in F Major, Op.96** dates from 1818 and truly deserves the title "Grand" as it is written on a large scale and is a lengthy work. It has traveled under several names such as Trio No.12 and Divertimento for String Trio. The fact that it is in six contrasting movements clearly brought Mozart's six

movement work for string trio, K.563, to mind, which no doubt accounts for it having at one time been called Divertimento. However, structure aside, the music is closer in spirit to Beethoven where through the use of intense chromaticism Krommer is able to achieve a remarkable degree of suspense from just three instruments. The big, opening movement, Allegro moderato, is characterized by its flowing main theme which is juxtaposed against hurried scale passages. The effect is quite striking. The first Menuetto, an allegretto, is not really a minuet but a closer to a scherzo, full of excitement and forward motion. The charming trio section provides a fine contrast. A lovely Adagio follows. Next follows the second Menuetto, also an allegretto. Dark and thrusting, it, too, exhibits qualities which are more like a scherzo. The penultimate movement, an Andante, anticipates Mendelssohn in that it is an intermezzo, charming and full of grace. But, in the middle, we have a several dramatic interludes which break the calm. The Allegro, which serves as the finale, has a lilting and appealing folk melody for its main theme. But Krommer quickly builds the requisite excitement into the music to make a satisfying ending. It has recently been reprinted by Edition Silvertrust and has been recorded on Vars CD 0098 and Phoenix CD 106

**Carl Matthias Kudelski (1805-1877)** Prussian violinist, conductor and composer. His **String Trio in G Major, Op.32** dates from the 1840's. It is dramatic and exciting and very well written for all three instruments. The trio begins with a slow ominous Andante introduction in the minor, but the main part of the movement, Allegro con brio, is full of verve and forward motion. The second movement, Allegretto con moto, is a clever and fresh intermezzo. A slow movement, Andante, comes next beginning in a dramatic fashion but transforming itself into a valedictory, complete with a dramatic middle section. The riveting finale, Allegro ma non troppo is exciting from start to finish." This work has never been recorded but there is a modern reprint by Edition Silvertrust.



**Peter Lindpainter (1791-1856)** German composer whom Mendelssohn called the best conductor in Germany composed three string trios, his Op.52 Nos.1-3 which were published around 1830. They have not been reprinted probably with some justification. The thematic material is weak and the passage work is often difficult.

**Henri Marteau (1874-1934)** was a French violin virtuoso and composer. His **String Trio in f minor, Op.12** dates from 1907 and shows the influence of Max Reger. The trio begins in a highly dramatic vein, almost bursting the boundaries of chamber



music. However, the second theme is by turns calmer and playful. The second movement is entitled Improvisation and is a kind of 20th century mix of Bach and Handel, serious and deep. The music conjures an image of one the great men improvising at the klavier. Marteau calls the third movement Intermezzo, but this is no intermezzo in the tradition of Mendelssohn. Instead, we have

a lopsided, slinky dance which lumbers along humorously. This is followed by very lovely interlude in which each voice brings forth a verse on a highly romantic song without words. The trio concludes with a Theme and Variations. The theme is bright and cheerful, bring to mind birds chirping away happily. Six compelling variations follow, each quite different in mood and tempo. The trio has been recorded on a Musica Bavarica CD and the parts are available from Edition Silvertrust



**Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959)** wrote two string trios. **String Trio No.1 H136** dates from 1924 but was only published in 2005 by Barenreiter because the score was lost shortly after its premiere and not recovered until then. It is has a great deal of rather harsh dissonance although these are from time to time relieved by very brief interludes of recognizable melody. It is

technically difficult and certainly beyond all but the best amateurs. It has been recorded on Alpha CD 143. **String Trio No.2 H.238** was composed in 1934 and is in two movements. The work is not as dissonant as the First but one could hardly characterize as traditionally tonal or melodic. Again this is a technically difficult work beyond all but the most technically proficient amateurs. It was published by Leduc and then Heugel and has been recorded at least 5 different times.



**Georges Migot (1891-1976)** French composer. His **Trio a cordes** dates from 1945 and was published by Editions Musicales Transatlantiques. It is in five movements, Prelude, Allant, Choral, Allant-allegre, Priere and Modere. It harks back to the Baroque as far as it is a kind of suite.

Polytonality dominates and there is nothing here that could be called a traditional melodic subject, nonetheless, it is an engaging work with many interesting moments. It is rhythmically clear and within the reach of experienced amateurs.



**Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)** French composer. His **Trio a cordes, Op.274** dates from 1947. It is a polytonal work combining elements of neo classical and neo baroque writing. In five short movements, the two movement which make the strongest impression is the Serenade with its pizzicato strumming. Published by Heugel, there are no recordings currently available.



**Ernest Moeran (1894-1950)** was an English composer. The trio dates from 1931 and is in four movements. The work is characterized by its contrapuntal treatment. The opening Allegro giovale is in 7/8 and tricky rhythmically. A short emotional Adagio follows. A ferocious scherzo in 3/8, Molto vivace comes next and



the work concludes with an Andante grazioso which begins gracefully enough but suddenly changes into an energetic and thrusting presto. The trio has been recorded by the Hanson Quartet on LP and the Maggini Quartet on a Naxos CD. The parts, however, are out of print.

**Leonardo Moja** (1811-1888) was an Italian cellist and composer. His **Sonata in d minor for String Trio, Op.22** was published in 1875 but was probably composed several decades before. The Sonata is in two parts, beginning with a lengthy Larghetto introduction. The main part of the work is a tuneful Allegro moderato. The entire work has the aura of a genial Italian serenade and here and there, hints of Paganini with his use of Italian vocal melodic writing. It has not been recorded but the parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.



**Roderich von Mojsisovics** (1877-1953) was an Austrian conductor and composer. His Serenade for **String Trio in A Major, Op.21** dates from 1908. It is in one movement. All of his themes are interesting, especially the calm and lyrical second theme and the lengthy slow episode is quite inspired. While this is a good work, his use of

chromaticism requires experienced players. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust, but it has not been recorded.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756-1791) Mozart's **Divertimento in E flat Major K.563** is quite possibly the most famous string trio ever composed and considered by many people also as the finest ever written. It has served as the model for many other works. It does not require discussion here except to say that every trio group, indeed, every chamber music fan, ought to play at sometime. It has always been available in more than one edition and there have been and are dozens of recordings. Much less better known are the **Four Preludes and Fugues K.404a**. These were taken from six in which Mozart wrote the Preludes and transcribed the fugues from the Well Tempered Clavier of J.S.Bach. These are available from G. Schirmer and have received several recordings. More recently Franz Beyer edited a movement of a trio begun but not completed by Mozart **Streichtriosatz (String Trio Movement) in G Major, K. anhang 66 (K.562e)**. It dates from 1788 and was put aside to either complete the opera *Così fan tutti* or the above-mentioned Divertimento. Published by Amadeus Verlag and recorded on RBM CD 6.3116. It is quite good and certainly worth hearing or playing.



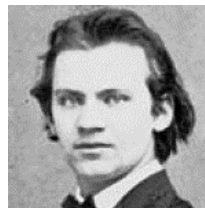
**Paul Müller-Zurich** (1898-1993) Swiss composer and conductor. His **String Trio** dates from 1950 but was only published in 1984 by Amadeus Verlag. It is polytonal sometimes dissonant but not harshly so. It is in four movements: Molto tranquillo, Allegro ritmico, Andante tranquillo and Vivace. It is not technically difficult and can be played by experienced amateurs with little difficulty. It has not been recorded.

**Ernst Naumann** (1832-1910) German composer and musicologist. Naumann's **String Trio in D Major, Op.12** dates from 1883. This is an above average work which combines classical style and some of the influence of Beethoven with the

language of the mid romantic movement. The spirited opening movement, Allegro, recalls the atmosphere of Beethoven's Op.18 Quartets. This is followed by an energetic scherzo and more relaxed trio section. The third movement, Lento espresso, has warm, romantic melodies for its thematic material while the finale, Allegro assai, always makes a fine impression by virtue of its fresh ideas and inventiveness, not to mention excellent part-writing. Parts are available from Amadeus Verlag and Edition Silvertrust. It was recently recorded on a Querstand CD.

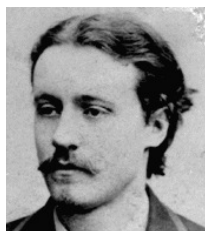


**Vaclav Nelhybel** (1919-1996) Czech composer who emigrated to the United States in 1962. His string trio **4 Miniatures for 3 Strings** was published in 1967 by General Music Publishing. Although a work full of dissonances, it frequently gravitates toward tonal centers and is very cleverly written with many pleasing effects. The four movements are Scherzino, Allegro marcato, Adagio and Vivace. By no means hard to play, this is a work which, unlike many others from the same period, will appeal to listeners and players who are not put off by some dissonance. The official Nelhybel website states it was recorded on LP but there are no CD recordings.

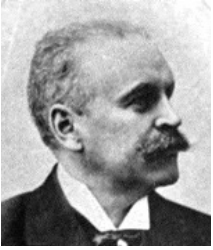


**Franz Neruda** (1843-1915) was a Czech cellist and composer. His **Musikalische Märchen, Op.31** dates from the 1870's and was also composed for clarinet, viola and cello. It is quite likely that Neruda had Schumann's Op.132 Märchenerzählungen for clarinet, viola and piano in mind when he wrote this work and though originally composed for clarinet, viola and cello, Neruda simultaneously wrote a violin part so that the standard string trio could perform it, hence making the possibility of concert performance more likely, not to mention that a wider audience would be available to purchase the music. There are nine movements, some quite short, others of medium length. Altogether, they make a substantial work, the length of a large scale string trio. Of course, any of the movements would make a fine encore and a program could be put together by simply including a selection of three or four. The movements are quite evocative, each with a different mood, but overall there is a wistful atmosphere to the music. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust but it has not been recorded.

**Ingatius de Orellana** (1866-1931) was a British conductor, violinist and composer. He composed a **String Trio in c minor** in 1888. It combines elements of Haydn (!) with romantic expression. There is no recording but the parts are available from Edition Silvertrust



**Hubert Parry** (1848-1918) was an English composer. His **Two Intermezzi for String Trio** were composed in 1886. The first is a somewhat sad and reflective Lento espressivo. The score is rich and at times it almost sounds as if it is a string quartet rather than a trio performing. The second intermezzo is a genial and lovely. Allegretto and sounds more like one would expect such a movement to sound. It has an updated Mendelssohnian quality. They have been recorded on both LP and CD. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.



**Richard von Perger (1854-1911)** Austrian composer and conductor. His 1888 **String Trio in d minor, Op.12** is a first class work. Though the influence of Brahms, Perger's own originality was such that there is much here that Brahms would never have thought of. The passionate mood of the opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, is established immediately by the main theme. The charming second subject is tonally rich. The second movement, *Presto*, is a spirited scherzo with a finely contrasting, slower trio section. A somber slow movement, *Largo*, follow. In the middle section the violin and cello engage in a fetching question and answer duet. The lively finale, *Allegro vivace*, begins explosive fashion. A second theme is equally powerful and it is only the third, *tranquillo*, which reduces the tension. A highly effective coda tops off the work. This work is strong enough for the concert hall but can be recommended to amateurs as well. Recently reprinted by Edition Silvertrust, there is no recording.



**Heinrich Aloys Präger (1783-1854)** Dutch/German Composer, violinist and virtuoso guitarist. He had a gift for melody and could write effectively. He wrote a great deal of chamber music none of which appears to have received reprints within the past century. It awaits rediscovery. Certainly at least one of his **Three Grand Trios Op.42 Nos.1-3** deserves to be republished. There is no recording.

International. It combines various styles such as polytonality and neoclassicism. It is a tonal work in four movements, *Allegro non troppo espressivo*, *Moderato*, *tempo di minuetto*, *Cancion*, *andante espressivo* and *Rondo scherzoso, allegro giocoso*. Both works are recorded on Urtext CD #149

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**Franz Alexander Possinger (1767-1827)** was an Austrian composer. Two of his **Op.36 String Trios Concertants** have been recorded on a Capriccio CD. There is no modern edition. They were composed sometime between 1790 and 1805. The structure and clarity or the writing point to the late classical era but there are also hints of the coming Romantic movement in some of the daring harmonies and fuller writing. The Op.36 trios are very interesting. While the melodies are by no means extraordinary, Pössinger's treatment of them and his development are very noteworthy. Compared to quartet writing of the same period, trios tended to spread the thematic material more evenly between the voices. Pössinger makes the most of this and does so in a rather unique way that few if any others did. There are frequent changes in register which herald in a reversal of roles. For example, the cello will be suddenly yanked out of the bass clef and find itself playing in the lead, but very high in the violin's register, while the latter assumes the function of the bass on its g string. This results tonally in a very closely set, high arrangement and creates a very unusual instrumental timbre. And quick changes in register often make for a separation of more than two octaves between the voices.



**Max Reger (1873-1916)** German Composer. Reger's two string trios must be counted as important contributions to the literature. The first, **String Trio No.1 in a minor, Op.77b** dates from 1904. In it, Reger is clearly moving tonality to its limits and then retreats back into the safe havens of romantic and classical melody. The opening movement begins with a brief, somewhat depressed and worried introduction reminiscent of late Beethoven. Then the tense main theme of the *Allegro agitato* literally explodes. Only briefly does the sun peek out of the clouds but then with the appearance of the lovely, lyrical second theme, all is sunny. The reflective second movement, *Larghetto*, is characterized by a deeply introspective quality. The brilliant third movement, *Scherzo, vivace*, is a humorous take off on the traditional German Dance. In the finale, *Allegro con moto*, Reger quotes a well-known theme from Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* and then dresses it up in mod-



**Felix Petyrek (1892-1951)** Austrian Composer. His **Variationen über Volkslieder** (Variations on Folksongs) was published in 1962 and has remained available. There are four folksongs entitled The song of the three rabbits, The dance under the apple tree based on a Russian folk dance, The moon has gone down and Song of the peddlers.

These are clever, short, primarily tonal works which are cute. Perhaps they could be used as encores. They were published by Doblinger but have not been recorded.

**Johann Pezel (1630-1694)** German composer. Southern Music Company published what they called **Trio in d minor** in 1986. This was taken from a suite for strings, *Musica Vespertina Lipsica* composed in 1669). This is a very easy baroque work in five short movements: *Prelude*, *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, *Gigue*. Never recorded.



**Wenzel (Vaclav) Pichl (1741-1805)** was an Austrian composer and violinist. Among his string trios are his **Six Trios Concertant, Op.7** which date from 1783. The melodic writing is that of the Vienna classical composers but as the title suggests, the style is concertante. They were recorded on a Fermate CD but there is no modern reprint or edition.



**Ignaz Pleyel (1756-1831)** was an Austrian composer. He wrote a large number of trios. Of those that have survived are his Op.10 and Op.11 trios. Both are sets of three. One of the Op.10 was recorded on a CPO CD and the entire Op.11 trios were recorded on a Hungaroton CD. They date from the 1780's and 1790's are in the concertante style. These are pleasant

enough works, though not first rate. Pleyel had a melodic gift but the bulk of the thematic material is generally to be found in the first violin part. The Op.11 trios are available from International and Amadeus music publishers.

**Manuel Ponce (1882-1948)** Mexican composer. He composed two works for string trio. The first **His Petite Dans le Style An-**

ern clothes. The second theme, wayward tonally, provides an beautiful contrast. For good measure, a march is thrown in before the satisfying and jovial finale. It has been published by Bote & Bock as well as Edition Silvertrust. It was recorded on Cadenza CD 800907 and Naxos 8.570785 **String Trio No.2 in d minor, Op.141b** appeared in 1915. The opening *Allegro* begins with a searching melody. Sadness and a sense of loss pervade this music. A second theme is somewhat brighter in mood. The middle movement, *Andante sostenuto*, is a theme and set of variations. The theme is, for Reger, particularly sweet and straight forward. The several variations (we present 2 in our sound-bite) show Reger's inventiveness and technical skill. The lively and upbeat theme of the finale, *Vivace*, harks back to Haydn. Its brilliant presentation is in fugal format. The melancholic second theme makes brief appearance but once before the return of main melody which leads to an exciting finish. Edition Peters and Edition Silvertrust have published this work. It has been recorded on MD&G CD 338 0712



**Anton Reicha (1770-1836)** Austro-Czech composer active in Vienna and Paris. Reicha is primarily famous for his wind quintets. His **Trio in F Major** dates from around 1805 and was republished Wollenweber Verlag in 1988. The trio opens with a lengthy and rhythmically rather fussy Adagio molto introduction. Full of 32nd and 64th notes which are exposed it is by no means easy. The main part of the movement, Allegro vivace is a fugue on two subjects.



**Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814)** Prussian composer. The only chamber music work of his to receive recent publication is his **String Trio in B flat Major, Op.1 No.3**. This was published by Zimmermann Verlag in 1980. Zimmerman does not give the opus number, however I discovered it upon purchasing MDG CD 603 0731 on which it is recorded along with his three Op.4 string trios. They have not been published. It dates from 1778 and is three movements. The style and thematic material is of the sort found in Mozart's violin concertos though not as fine melodically.. The main theme to opening movement, Allegro ma non troppo, is fluent and gracious, flowing along easily. There are several short bursts of solo passages given to each of the instruments. The second movement, is an Andante with four variations. The theme is rather ordinary and the variations straight forward. The finale, Vivace, is much like the opening movement. This trio as well as the Op.4 is workmanlike but like dozens of others from time. It is definitely on a rung or two below similar works by the Wranitzky brothers or Franz Krommer.



**Carl Reinecke (1824-1910)** German composer, teacher, pianist and conductor. One of the superstars of the 19th century, Reinecke's **String Trio in c minor, Op.249** has to be counted as a masterpiece for this combination. Among the greatest of late romantic works for this combination. This string trio is infused with the developments of late, and even Post-Brahmsian, romanticism. The writing is very contrapuntal and original. The dark and brooding opening *Allegro moderato* is painted on a large canvas. It shows a wide range of emotion and

richness of tonality, Reinecke easily and often makes the three voices sound like four. The *Andante* which follows is a theme and set of variations. It is more intimate and trio-like than the preceding movement, beginning with a naive, quiet melody. Our sound-bite is of the energetic, dance-like fourth variation. The very brief third movement, *Intermezzo, Vivace ma non troppo*, is a heavily syncopated scherzo with an interestingly contrasting middle section which illustrates Reinecke employing the new directions of Post-Brahmsian tonality. The big finale, *Adagio, ma non troppo lento,—Allegro un poco maestoso*, begins as a lyrical and highly romantic lied. It has a valedictory quality to it. The thematic material of the *Allegro* is brighter but still densely scored, once again creating a wealth of sound which belies the fact that only a trio is playing. It was reprinted recently by Edition Silvertrust and has been recorded on MD&G CD 634 0841 and Ars 28 491.

**Maurice Reuchsel (1880-1968)** was a French organist and composer. His **String Trio in g minor** was published in 1910. He possesses a fine technique and good creative ideas which he is able to express concisely and without having to resort to redundancy. For the most part, the tonality and harmony adhere to the traditional. In the very individualistic first movement, Allegro non troppo, the pithy main theme is followed by a more lyrical second subject which shows the influence of Ravel. The transitions and modulations are quite interesting. The masterly second movement, Andante sostenuto, is a kind of serenade first sung by the viola to a pizzicato accompaniment. There follows a dramatic middle section and a clever transition back to the serenade. Next comes a spirited and lively Scherzo, Allegretto mosso, complete with a more melodic trio section. The finale begins with a short Adagio introduction in which we hear the theme from the serenade. It leads to the main section, Allegro appassionato, in which the main theme from the first movement reappears. The trio has not been recorded but the parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.



**Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838)** German composer and virtuoso pianist. One of Beethoven's best known students and his first biographer, Ries wrote a great deal of chamber music. Two string trios were recently published for the first time by Accolade Musikverlag. These are styled **Trio in E flat Major, WoO 70 No.1** and **Trio in c minor, WoO 70 No.2**. Ries could write quite effectively and several of his piano trios, piano quartet and string quartets are well-worth reviving. It is probably not an accident that these works remained in manuscript for so long. While much of the thematic material is attractive, virtually none of it is to be found in either the viola or cello parts. There is no recording.

**Sofie Rohnstock (1875-1964)** German composer. Her **String Trio in G Major** is a tonal work with some dissonance. It is in three movements: Con anima scherzando grazioso, Andante and Vivace. For the most part it is a pleasing work and technically not difficult, however, it seems to me that several parts are needlessly complex rhythmically and add nothing. It was published by Thomi-Berg Verlag in 1979. There is no recording.

**Alessandro Rolla (1757-1841)** was an Italian composer, teacher of Paganini and violin and viola virtuoso.-Rolla's works have



been catalogued by Luigi Bianchi and Luigi Inzaghi and now bear BI numbers along with the opus number under which they have traveled for the past 150 years. I have not seen their catalogue so I cannot definitively say how many trios Rolla composed. Some sources say 9 some as many as 18. His best known set of trios are the **String Trio Nos.1-6, Op.1, BI 351, 349,**

**344, 346, 341 and 347.** The Op.1 Trios are entitled Trio Concertante and they are written in the concertante style, that is to say, the melodic material, which may pass from voice to voice, is only in one voice at any given time. While that one voice has the melody, the other two are more or less beating time or playing a kind of supporting harmony. The Op.1 date from around 1800 and were published in 1808. Zimmermann Verlag has published all six in a new edition, Edition Silvertrust published two. I will confine my discussion to what I consider the best two of the set. Op.1 No.1 in B flat Major, BI 351 begins with an Allegro assai. It is in formal 18th century introductory Italian style and leads to the lovely main theme. A brighter second theme is just the sort of thing Paganini often used in his chamber music and concerti. The highly ornamented and finely wrought second movement, Largo ma non troppo, begins rather calmly with each instrument taking its turn in presenting the melody. Slowly the intensity builds. Perhaps nowhere better than in the buoyant finale, Rondo, allegro, can we hear the debt Paganini owed to Rolla. **Op.1 No.6 in G Major, BI 347** begins with an Allegro vivo begins with a sprightly upward figure which is then developed in the typical Italian declamatory style. The music is bright and carefree. Rolla then begins his concertante treatment, giving the violin first solo, then the viola and then the cello. The second movement, Tema con variazione, is a set of four variations which are based on a rather simple but pretty tune. In the second variation the violin and cello engage in a marvelous give and take at breakneck speed. Another variation charms with its pizzicato accompaniment to the violin's racing lines high above. Then suddenly a storm bursts forth. The finale, Rondo, presto, is lively and full of clever interplay between the parts. The trios have been recorded on Hungaroton CD32020-21



**Julius Röntgen (1855-1932)** German composer active in Amsterdam. His **String Trio, Op.76** dates from 1924. The ideas in the first movement, Vivace e giocoso, are cleverly presented. The main theme though not a lyrical, warm melody, sounds good and the plays without any difficulties. The second movement, Un poco Andante, has a noble, aristocratic melody, on the austere side. The charming third movement, Allegretto e scherzando, is in the form of an old-fashioned

Bouree, based on an old Dutch folk song. The very attractive finale is both fresh and inventive. It begins with a Bachian Passepied. There are a series of variations characterized by different tempi, including a heavy fugue, and varying moods. It was reprinted by Edition Silvertrust but has not been recorded.



**Eugene Sauzay (1809-1901)** French violinist, musicologist and composer. His **String Trio in G Major, Op.8** dates from the mid 19th century. It was reprinted by Merton Music. It is in four movements: Moderement, Romance, Minuet and Avec vivacite. He is able to think up an

attractive eight bar melody but is unable to do anything with it except to repeat it a dozens of ways so that the music quickly becomes boring. There is no recording.



**Hermann Schroeder (1904-1984)** German composer. His **String Trio in e minor, Op.14 No.1** was published by Edition Schott in 1933. It is in three movements, Agitato, Adagio, and Allegro. Although a key signature appears in the title, this is not a traditionally tonal work. On the other hand, it is not unrelentlessly dissonant. It is not hard to play and well put together and can be

navigated by experience amateurs.



**Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1950)** was an Austrian composer and founder of the so-called Second Vienna School which practiced 12 tone and atonal music. His **Op.45 String Trio** falls into this category. It is beyond amateur players and though it has been recorded more than once, it is generally not a particularly enjoyable work to listen to.

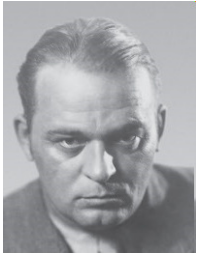
**Franz Schubert (1797-1828)** Schubert wrote one complete trio and a single movement, presumably meant to be the first of another. Neither were published until the end of the 19th century. The single movement has gone by the title of **Trio No.1 in B flat Major, D.471**. It dates from 1816. In the one movement, Allegro, Schubert treats all three instruments equally, unusual for this period. The themes are good though not among his most gorgeous but the whole things is quite well executed. **Trio No.2 in B flat Major, D.571** (the complete trio) was composed in 1817. Surprisingly, it is a step back from the earlier movement. Here, the instruments are not treated as equals. The violin leads in every movement almost all of the time. The viola and cello are left with the role of supporting accompaniment. The opening theme of the first movement, Allegro moderato, is lively and somewhat lyrical but as it is developed rhythmically tricky. The main subject of the Andante which comes next, is attractive and typically Schubertian and all in the violin. The minor section makes has the greatest appeal. The following Minuet is straightforward and unremarkable, however, at last, in the trio section, the melody is taken away from the violin and given entirely to the viola which sings an Austrian Ländler.. The finale, Rondo, allegretto, has attractive themes, again only in the violin. Both works have remained in print from a number of publishers and have been recorded several times.



**William Shield (1748-1829)** was an English composer and violinist. His **Six String Trios were published in 1796**. There is no opus number. The style is that of early Mozart, circa 1776 or so. These are melodic works, written mostly in a concertante style, with each of the instruments getting grateful solos to play. The writing reveals that the composer

was a string player and knew how to write well for these instruments. The trios were recently recorded on a Hungaroton CD. There is no modern reprint but Edition Silvertrust plans to release some of them in 2014.

**Otto Siegl (1896-1978)** was an Austrian Composer. His **Divertimento for String Trio, Op.44** was published by Doblinger in



1926. This is a polytonal work with no fixed tonal bass. It has five movements, Allegro assai, Andante mosso, which is subtitled Canzonetta, Con fuoco, subtitled Scherzo, Molto tranquillo and Toccata. This is not a particularly easy work to play with many hard rhythmic intricacies, enough so that for long stretches the parts of the other voices appear in each part. It is effective and well-written

but in my opinion nowhere near as appealing as his **String Trio in B flat Major, Op.130** which dates from 1944. This is a good modern tonal work. There are some dissonances but they are mild and generally quickly resolved. The first movement, Moderato, has easily identifiable and pleasant themes with an excellent coda. The second movement, an Adagio, is primarily peaceful and reflective. Next comes Variations on a Catalonian Folk Song, (La Filadora). The variations are well done, with different tempi and moods. The lively finale, Molto vivace, is attractive and exciting. Not at all difficult, this is a candidate for the concert hall but also should not be missed by amateurs seeking a nice modern work.



**Leone Sinigaglia (1868-1944)** Italian Composer. Sinigaglia composed his Serenade for String Trio in D Major, Op.33 in 1908. This work belongs in the front rank of string trios, especially for its period. It is full of original ideas and invention and is extraordinarily well-written for the three instruments. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, is written in a clear and charming style, the second

theme is especially beautiful. The second movement, *Intermezzo, allegretto vivace*, is both humorous and uncommonly well-done. The next movement, *Egloga, andante mosso*, serves as the slow movement but also has in the middle a scherzo section. The exciting and very effective finale, *Capriccio, Allegro vivace, ma non troppo*, requires fleet and clean execution. Perfect for the concert hall, but very manageable by good amateur players. There is no recording but parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.



**Nikolai Sokolov (1859-1922)** was a Russian composer. His **String Trio d minor, Op.45** dates from 1910, is in four movements. It begins with an Allegro moderato in which the composer indicates that the tempo will fluctuate. At first the music is rather leisurely but after a while Sokolov quickly changes the tempo. The music has many of the hall-marks of the

Belaiev Circle and Rimsky Korsakov with its light touches. The second movement, Adagio, recalls some of the music of Borodin, while the quirky Andantino capriccioso which follows is a very original sounding scherzo. The finale, Adagio-Allegro, begins with a lengthy, slow introduction in which the cello is given a dramatic solo. The main section is a robust Russian sounding theme, which is suddenly followed by a lyrical, somewhat slower melody. It has not been recorded but parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.

**Willibald Sommer (1846-1935)** was a German composer. He wrote three string trios, Op.3, Op.5 and Op.8. None have been recorded and only **String Trio No.2 in d minor, Op.5**, which

dates from 1899, has received a modern reprint. In it, each voice is given a grateful part to play and the music itself plays without any great difficulty. It is written so well and sounds so good that one does not miss a fourth voice and the thematic material is very skillfully handled. Modulations, variations and the inventiveness of ideas are all well done, fresh and pleasing. One hears that this composer stylistically was influenced by Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven. Trio No.2 begins with an energetic Allegro moderato which also has moments of lyricism. An Adagio with a bustling middle section is followed by a rhythmically fiery Menuetto. The finale opens with a short Adagio introduction before giving way to an Allegro, Polish in style. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust.



**Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915)** Russian composer and teacher. Taneyev wrote three works for string trio but there is only one complete work for violin viola and cello. The **String Trio in D** (no opus dating from 1879/1880) Despite the fact that the parts to this trio have always remained in print, the work is virtually never heard in concert. It is a big work in four movements. The opening *Allegro* is in a romantic

cast but has a hint of the baroque, especially in its middle fugal section. Most unusual is the *Scherzo in contrapunto alla rversa* in which the counterpoint is played in reverse. A short but powerful and elegiac *Adagio* is then followed by a very exciting finale, *Allegro molto*. Without doubt, this trio, with its wonderfully rich part-writing, should be in every string trio group's library. Taneiev's **Trio in E Flat, Op.31** dates from 1910 and was originally written for violin, viola and tenor viola. It has been reprinted by Wollenweber Verlag The publisher recognized early on it would not sell and an alternate cello part was immediately created. It has appeared in this guise ever since. This is another huge and impressive work. Beginning *Allegro con brio*, the trio often sounds more like a quartet because of the rich part-writing. Again there are elements of the romantic combined with the baroque. The *Scherzino, Allegretto vivace* which follows has a delicate but elegant filigree quality to it. An *Adagio espressivo* is a tender and ethereal affair while the interesting finale, *Presto*, shows some of the influence of Beethoven's *Middle Quartets*. The final work for this combination, the **Trio in b minor** dates from 1913. He only completed the first two movements. A forceful and brooding *Allegro*, which though written in late 19th century romantic idiom, nonetheless shows the influence of Beethoven's *Late Quartets*. The pitch remains quite low for much of this very effective movement. It is followed by a sad, albeit not tragic, theme and 7 marvelous variations. Like Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, one can only wonder at the incredible edifice being erected. These two movements can stand alone. All of the trios are available from Edition Silvertrust. The trios were recorded on MD&G CD 634 1003

Anton Webern (1883-1945) was an Austrian composer and prominent member of the so-called Second Vienna School which specialized in 12 tone and atonal music. His Op.6 and Op. Post trio fall into this category. But they are somewhat more interesting to listen to and can be managed by experienced amateur players. They have been recorded and parts are available from Universal Edition.



**Leo Weiner (1885-1960)** Hungarian composer and teacher. Weiner's **String Trio in g minor, Op.6** was composed in 1908. Rightly considered a masterpiece from the time of its premiere is in four movements. The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, is attractive throughout. The rhythmically interesting *Vivace* (a scherzo) which follows is both very lively and gay, while the middle

section features exotic harmonies. The third movement, *Andantino*, is a theme and excellent set of variations. The exciting finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, is a mix of élan and gaiety. This trio, which presents no special technical difficulties, should be appeal to amateurs as well as professionals. It was recently reprinted by Edition Silvertrust and has been recorded on CPO CD 999 950. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust



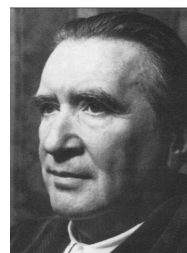
**Julius Weismann (1879-1950)** German Composer. His **String Trio, Op.157a** was composed in the late 1940's. It is entirely polytonal and in four movements: *Allegro moderato*, *Scherzo*, *molto vivace*, *Lento solenno* and *Fuga*. Though well-written and not difficult technically, it is interesting but there is

nothing in particular which makes its stand out from other such works. It was published in 1991 by Tonger Musikverlag and has not been recorded.



**Friedrich Wildgans (1913-1965)** Austrian composer and teacher. His **Drei Kleine Stücke** (Three Small Pieces) for string trio were composed in 1935 and published by Doblinger in 1961. They three movements—*Allegro deciso*, *Andante* and *Allegro con brio* are short. They show the influence and speak the language of Webern who was one of Wildgans' teachers. They

are interesting, much in the same way that such pieces as Webern's are. There is no recording.



**Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876-1948)** was an Italian composer. His **Trio in b minor** dates from 1894 while he was a student. From the first bars of the opening *Allegro*, the fusion of his two national heritages can be heard. The short, moody introduction which becomes the first theme shows the influence of Brahms. This is immediately developed in what might be

called the bright, sunny Italian vocal style of long-lined melodies. A cheerful and large *Larghetto* begins with the violin singing a happy aria over the lower voices. The other voices are given a similar solos as the theme is developed. Wolf Ferrari apparently planned for the trio to have four movements but the *Scherzo* which is the 3rd, concludes the work. The 4th movement was either lost or never composed. This *Scherzo* is unusual and robust. The cello is given the thematic material in the first section. Both rhythmically and tonally the music has the imprint of Rheinberger. One could hardly do better for a teacher of scherzi. The middle section is a lovely Neapolitan tune. In no way does this fetching music sound like a student piece. **String Trio No.2, Op.32 in a** was written in 1945 during one of the

darkest periods of Wolf-Ferrari's life, a time when he nearly starved to death. The opening *Allegro* consists entirely of short episodes in which the agitated and, at times, violent main theme is juxtaposed against a sad and reflective plaint. The beautiful middle movement, *Pastorale, Andante tranquillo*, is simplicity itself. The finale, *Allegro*, is a kind of devil's rondo, quite robust. The second theme is a burlesque, a demonic and disjointed dance, which creates the same mood that Shostakovich sometimes evokes by using such dances. (This is not to suggest, however, that this music sounds like Dmitri's.) A spooky unison tremolo coda concludes this first rate work on a note of despair. The trios were recorded on a CPO CD. The parts to Trio No.2 are available from Thomi-Berg.



**Paul Wranitzky (1756-1808)** Austrian composer, conductor and violinist from Bohemia active in Vienna. His original name before he Germanized it was Pavel Vranicky. He wrote a huge amount of chamber music. No one knows just how many string trios he wrote. From time to time different publishers have reprinted various ones. I only know of two which are in print.

**String Trio No.1 in a minor**, the first of a set of six, was recently published by Daniel Bernhardsson. It is one of the composer's earliest published works dating from the 1780's. It is in four movements: *Allegro*, *Poco adagio*, *Minuetto* and *Allegretto*. It is tuneful and well-written as is most of his music. Although written in concertante style, it is a relatively simple work most likely aimed at the amateur market. Most of the interest is in the violin part, however, the viola and cello do get a few solos. A far better work is his **String Trio in D Major**, which was published by Medici Music Press in 1983. One of a set of six, presumably the best, which were published in 1790. This is a far better work and a worthy representative of the Vienna Classical Period. It is only in four movements—*Allegro moderato* and *Rondo*, *presto assai*, The melodies are attractive and more evenly split between the voices. Technically, this is not a hard work, except for the cello part in the first movement which has several passages in thumb position.



**Eugene Ysaye (1858-1931)** Belgian violin virtuoso and composer. His string trio is entitled **Le Chimay** and dates from 1927. It is a lengthy one movement work. Ostensibly tonal but with no real identifiable melodies. A strident work showing French impressionist influence but not its beauty. Not in print but recorded on Dexia CD ADW

7502.



**Bernd Zimmermann (1918-1970)** was a German composer. His **String Trio** dates from 1944 and was recorded on a Cadenza CD. The parts are available from Schott. The style is polytonal but not atonal. The trio shows some influence of Bartok but is quite original, expressing considerable dramatic passion, not surprisingly as it was written toward the end of the Second World

War. It is engaging to hear and while not easy within the range of experienced amateurs.

(Continued from page 2)



ets composed by piano virtuosos exhibited a dominant piano part and thus tended toward the piano concerto in chamber format. Examples include the two piano septets by Friedrich Kalkbrenner's, his Op. 15 of 1814 and his Op. 132 of 1835 as well as Ignaz Moscheles' Op. 88 of 1833, which enjoyed a fair amount of popularity for several decades after its appearance, particularly in England where Moscheles had been quite popular. During the second half of the nineteenth century composers lost interest in the septet genre, either because the piano quartets and quintets of Schumann and Brahms had established themselves as the models for representative genres of piano chamber music with larger numbers of instruments or because tastes changed and the combination of piano, winds, and strings was no longer appealing to the chamber music concert-going public.

Alexander Fesca (1820-1849) published his first piano septet in 1842. He was only twenty-two years old at the time but already had reached the high point in his career as a pianist and composer. His father, Friedrich Ernst Fesca (1789-1826) had been concertmaster to the Grand Duke of Baden and had earned esteem as a composer with his string quartets and quintets as well as with his symphonies. Alexander, born in 1820, received his first instruction in music from his father. At the age of eleven he performed in public for the first time in his native Karlsruhe. He continued his studies at the Royal Academy of the Arts in Berlin in 1834, with his teachers there including Karl Friedrich Rungenhagen (1778-1851) and Wilhelm Taubert (1811-91) After completing his studies, Fesca returned to Karlsruhe in 1838, where he devoted himself to composition. The following year, he began his first major concert tour. In the meantime a number of compositions by him had been published, including his Op.8 Piano Sextet, composed when he was 16.. It subsequently became, during his lifetime, his most famous work of all. In 1842, he was appointed chamber virtuoso at the court of Prince Carl Egon von Fürstenberg in Braunschweig. Unfortunately, he already began to suffer from the same lung ailment that had plagued and ultimately killed his father at the age of 37. His works, which heretofore had met with critical acclaim started to receive negative reviews from various critics, among them Schumann, who accused Fesca of merely courting the public's favor by composing salon pieces for piano, although he was kinder in his reviews of Fesca's second and third piano trios. His lung ailment became fatal and Fesca succumbed to it in Braunschweig in 1849. He was only 28 years old. Despite his short life, he composed over sixty works with opus numbers, and hundreds, mostly lieder, without. Among his works with opus are two piano septets, a piano sextet, six piano trios and four string quartets.

**Piano Septet No.1 in c minor, Op.26** was published 1842. No.2 came shortly thereafter. Both works were also published at the same time in an arrangement for piano quartet. The two septets exhibit similarities: and in a manner not to be expected from their genre: The instrumentation with piano, oboe, horn, violin, viola, violoncello, and double bass is identical, but that is not all that they have in common. The sequence of movements in both works adheres to the same structure—a fast movement, a slow movement, a scherzo or minuet, and fast finale. The title markings of the first two movements of each septet, *Allegro con spirito* and *Andante con moto*, are also identical. Further, we find that the first movements of both works begin with a march-like unison theme in fortissimo. Despite all of these similarities, however, the dramatic texture is considerably different in the two works. The finale of the first septet returns to the first movement in theme and expression, thus lending the work a sort of cyclical unity. The last movement of the second septet, however, begins with a moderately fast, dance-like tune.



The first movement of the Septet No.1 begins in striking fashion with the above-mentioned unison opening. See example on the left. Then a transition elaborating a fragment of the first subject descending in second initially by the oboe

steps follows in the unusual key of the major parallel, E flat major. This theme is intoned and then taken over by the violin on its repetition. (see example below)



**ANDANTE**  
con moto.

in Es. Solo.

10

The following Andante con moto in E major has an elegiac horn cantilena as its first subject (example on left.

and a second subject alternating between staccato-scherzando in the piano and the lyrical cello song.

138

A Scherzo. Allegro vivo begins with sounds nimbly scurrying along in stylized hunting horn tones. Here there is an underlay of bouncy pizzicato basses as metrical sources of impetus. The Trio consists of a cello cantilena extending over one hundred measures and at times supported by the oboe. (See example below)

**TRIO.**

Solo.

The finale /Allegro con fuoco, has the same emotional character as the opening movement and also starts off unisono with a thumping introduction which is suddenly interrupted twice by a baroque sounding oboe recitative. in Adagio tempo and by an Andante section rocking in triplet rhythm with a melody in the oboe borrowed from transitional material of the first movement. (See below example) Both the recitative and the Andante are resumed in the recapitulation with slight instrumental modification.

**FINALE.**

All? con fuoco.

Adagio. Recit.

Andante.

Tempo 1<sup>o</sup> 3

All? con fuoco.

pp rallent.

6 .ff

8 .ff



The transition bears a strong resemblance to parts of the first and second subjects and is presented by the oboe and violoncello. An extended coda concludes the work.

The first two movements of **Piano Septet No.2 in d minor Op. 28**, are quite similar to the First Septet. It begins in unisono fashion (See example below)

**Allegro con spirito. (M.M. ♩ - 138.)**

A transition elaborating the previously expounded material, a lyrical second subject presented by the oboe (example below)

The section concludes with a dominant pedal point consisting of almost forty measures, punctuated by a recitative in the cello and double bass. (See right)

The fetching main theme to the slow movement, *Andante con moto*, is entirely introduced by the cello in a lengthy solo over soft accompaniment. Eventually the others join in this dreamy, peaceful and pastoral idyll. The violoncello figures so prominently in this movement that one wonders if the commissioner was a cellist. (example below)

**ANDANTE con moto.** Solo. *p espress.* *fp* *cresc.* *dimn.*

The third movement, *Tempo di Menuetto*, strikes a very different mood from that of the corresponding movement of Op. 26. The initial theme exhibits an archaic character with its heavy chords and dotted rhythm in the antecedent phrase and an elegiac minor modulation in the consequent phrase. This character recalls more the early minuets of a Gossec than the classical minuets of a Haydn or Mozart. Yet Fesca inserts several very imaginative ideas into this old form, including brief Rossini-esque episode in the trio section. (see below example)

**TRIO.** *p* *cresc.* *ff* *cresc.* *dimn.* *f* *pp* *p dolce.* *tr* *tr* *dimin.* *f* *pp* *ff* *pp*

In the finale, *Allegro moderato*, the piano brings forth the lilting main theme, full of chromatic digressions. When the others join to create a powerful impression the character of the music becomes much more dramatic before Fesca retraces his steps.

**FINALE.** *P dolce* *f* *pp* *tr* *tr*

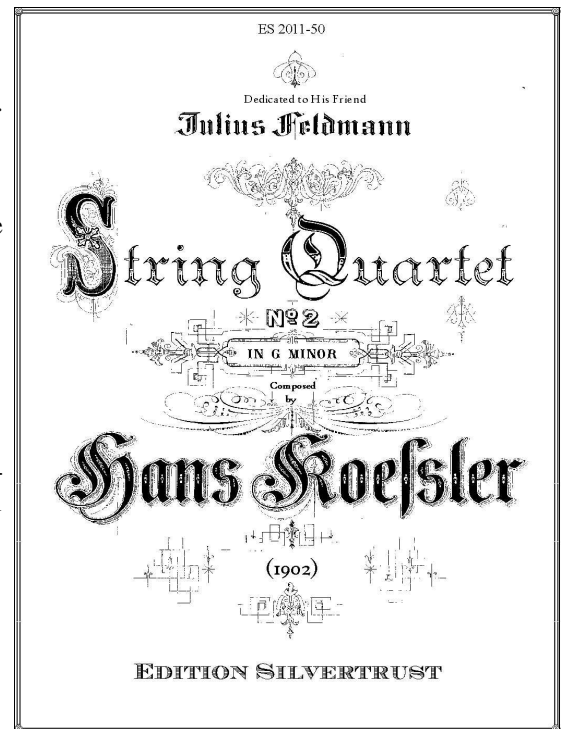
Both of these works are first rate and are sure to bring enjoyment. Given the unusual instrumentation, it is fortunate there are two with the same so you can make an evening of it. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust and both were recorded on a CPO CD.

# Hans Koessler's Chamber Music

(Continued from page 2)

and 'took to the road, that is to say, he decided to travel about, and for the next several years he moved throughout much of southern Germany, eventually settling in the small town of Ansbach near Nuremberg in 1917. The war and the following inflation, however, put paid to the value of his pension and he was all but destitute. In 1920, hearing of his teacher's straitened circumstances, Dohnanyi, who by this time was Director of the Budapest Academy, arranged for Koessler to teach a series of masterclasses in composition, which made it possible for the Academy to pay him a small salary. Koessler remained in Budapest until 1925 at which time he again retired and returned to Ansbach where he died the next year.

It is known that Koessler composed over 100 works, including an opera, symphonies, several choral works, a great deal of lieder, works for piano, organ, and some chamber music, including a violin sonata, two string quartets, a string quintet a string sextet, a piano quintet and a trio for violin, viola and piano. Many, if not most, of his works have been lost or are still sitting in archives or private collections waiting to be discovered. Koessler was notoriously careless about his compositions and did very little to promote them, and only in rare cases did he offer them to publishers. Judging from the few works that we have available to us, this seems a great shame. As far as chamber music goes, up until a few years ago, none of it was available. Now, it is possible to obtain parts to the Second String Quartet, the String Quintet, the String Sextet and the Trio Suite. All of these works, with the exception of String Quartet No.2 have been recorded. One other work, the Piano Quintet in F Major was recorded, from manuscript, but has not been published to date.



Allegro moderato.

I. Violine. *ff energ.* *pp* *dolore* *fp*

II. Violine. *ff energ.* *pp* *fp*

Bratsche. *ff energ.* *pp* *fp*

Violoncell. *ff energ.* *pp* *fp*

It seems that Koessler's first quartet was never published. There is next to no information to had about it. Presumably, a manuscript of it exists somewhere or existed as his only published quartet is known as String Quartet No.2. It is in g minor, and as virtually all of Koessler's works, bears. No opus number. Writing in his Handbook for String Quartet Players, Wilhelm Altmann, the famous critic and scholar, states "Koessler's String Quartet is a highly effective work in the concert hall, but amateurs will also enjoy this eminently playable quartet." In fact, this is a work which belongs in the front rank of quartets from this period. It certainly deserves to be in the repertoire. That it did not enter the repertoire is almost certainly due to the fact that it was not published until 1902, nearly two decades after it was composed. Altmann goes on to say, "Koessler told me that he tried in this work to describe his feelings of leaving his home for a new life and position in Hungary. The first movement, Allegro moderato expresses the struggle between his affection for his German homeland and the lure of Budapest. The second movement, Adagio, brings forth the sadness he felt leaving family and friends behind, while the excitement and whirl of his new life is given vent in the Scherzo which follows. Shortly before the trio section, a dramatic recitative in the cello recalls what he has left behind. The finale is a set of fine variations. In it, again we find expressed his attraction to Hungary with its tinges of gypsy music here and there." The opening to the first movement (see left) is dramatic and aptly expresses the feelings of which he spoke. After the unison opening, the music quickly turns very Brahmsian with its syncopation. There is an incredible sense of some impending fate as the turbulent music builds to a climax, which in fact,

(Continued on page 28)

does not occur. Instead a lighter, somewhat cosmopolitan interlude enters, perhaps representing his opportunity in Budapest. The Adagio opens in equally dramatic fashion with an almost harshness, but this only lasts briefly before a more mellow sadness infuses the music. The downward plunging chromatic opening of the Scherzo is striking and highly original (see right) and leads one to believe that what follows will be a mischievous and perhaps spooky scherzo, but instead the mood quickly changes to good spirits and bustle. One can hear the sense of excitement the young man must have felt as he packed his bags to leave for Budapest. As in the other movements, the finale, which is a theme and set of variations, begins in highly dramatic fashion. The variations which follow are truly superb. Some express great pathos while others are milder and almost gay, though the overall mood remains tinged with sadness. And, as Altmann notes, there are also Gypsy interludes. While inexplicably the work has never been recorded, it is possible to hear some of each of these movements on the Edition Silvertrust website. ([www.editionsilvertrust.com](http://www.editionsilvertrust.com)). Be forewarned, the soundbites are taken from an old tape of amateurs sight-reading and while they do a serviceable job, one cannot in all fairness day that they have done the music justice. I warmly recommend this work to amateurs and professionals. You will not be disappointed. The parts and score are available from Edition Silvertrust.

Allegro comodo. Scherzo.

Allegro appassionato.

Koessler's String Quintet in d minor for 2 Violins, 2 Violas and Violoncello was published a decade after String Quartet No.2 in 1913. It is an outstanding work, without doubt one of the very best in the late Romantic literature. Fortunately, it has been recorded (CPO CD 777 269).

Altmann's description of the Quintet, from his Chamber Music Handbook is worth reproducing.

"Hans Koessler, a kindred spirit of Brahms and a master of composition, published his string quintet in 1913. The work is characterized by its richness of ideas. One's interest increases from movement to movement, although it must be admitted, that it already begins with a very captivating first movement, *Allegro appassionato*. The economy of style is magnificent with not one unnecessary note. The first theme, a swinging, urgent melody, exhibits uncommon strength. (see left) Already one thinks that he cannot follow this with a

second theme of the same strength while at the same time creating the necessary contrast. Yet, that is exactly what he accomplishes. This theme is a lyrical somewhat dance-like folk melody, which begins in a gentle fashion but gradually build to a tremendous climax. The movement is brought to a close with a magnificent coda with an effective use of tremolo in the second viola.

A solemn Adagio comes next and begins in an atmosphere of pious devotion, but soon doubt and anxiety gain the upper hand. The high point comes at the conclusion in which a spirit of peace and holiness are restored. The third movement, a Scherzo, begins with a wanton, and at times, coarse Bavarian melody, the middle sections consists of a gentler, lovely folk tune. Here, the use of tonality is original-sounding and highly effective.

The main theme (see right) to the excellent finale, a well-constructed rondo, is a frolicking affair, with a momentary doff of the cap and a brief Hungarian quote from his friend Brahms. The second theme is more introspective, but with a swing-

Allegretto con moto. (Mit heiterem Übermut.)

ing second part. A third theme brings the first viola to the front with a rich melody. The tonal combination is striking and magnificently executed. In this superb quintet, all of the voices are given good parts which are not only grateful to play but also sound really well. Though a concert hall must, amateurs will also delight in it.” Having played this work many times, I cannot understand how it did not enter the string quintet repertoire. Of course, this may, in part, be due to the fact that one so rarely hears anything other than string quartets or piano trios on chamber music programs. Out of print until recently, the parts and score are now available from Edition Silvertrust

Some time ago, in this journal, Professor Renz Opolis, in his article on String Sextets wrote. “Without doubt, the best unknown late romantic string sextet is the *Sextet in f minor* by **Hans Koessler** (1853-1924). This outstanding work dates from 1902 and unfortunately has never received the attention it deserves. It is multi-faceted and highly original throughout, beautiful sounding and grateful to play. The opening movement begins with a very atmospheric *Adagio non troppo* introduction which is followed by a gradual transition to the tempo of the main section, *Allegro*, with its powerful main theme. (see above. This movement is packed full of lovely melodies. Koessler follows this up with a Hungarian Scherzo and a very melodic trio section. The slow movement, a warm-blooded *Adagio*, has Schumann for an antecedent. The *Finale, Allegro con brio*, is no ordinary finale. It makes incredibly clever use of counterpoint in presenting its high-spirited and at times humorous themes. This is a work not to be missed. “ There is little to add. I realize that string sextets are almost never heard in concert, so I cannot complain than when a quartet ensemble hires an extra violist and cellist to perform a sextet, and it is usually only one, that we only get to hear one of the Brahms sextets. The situation somewhat different among home music makers who do not have to worry about costs and making a profit. Yet, even among amateurs, sextets are not an everyday occasion. Still, if one is lucky enough to have the chance to play sextets every now and one wishes to move beyond the inestimable but inevitable Brahms, the Koessler sextet will certainly richly reward your efforts. At the very least you can listen to it on the same CPO CD on which you can hear the string quintet. The Sextet, like all of Koessler’s chamber music was not in print for the better part of a century, at least outside of Germany, until Edition Silvertrust undertook to make it as much of it as it could find available once again. The parts are available from them.

Speaking of ensembles which are rare, the trio for violin, viola and piano must rank as one of them. Here, the cause is not that it is difficult to assemble a large number of players, but rather because the number of compositions for this combination is quite small. And the reason for that no doubt was because composers felt the lower pitch of the cello lent itself to a tonally more satisfying result. This is not to say that there are no worthwhile works for this combination, there are. Among them Robert Fuchs’ outstanding Piano Trio No.3, Op.115 as well as his Op.57 Fantasy Pieces. Then there are the very fine six (!) trios by Ignaz Lachner. Max Reger, Ernst Naumann, Joseph Jongen, Paul Juon, and Carl Reinecke, to name but a few all wrote fine works for this combination.

Koessler also contributed to this number, his Trio Suite for Violin, Viola and Piano, composed in 1919 and dedicated to his student and benefactor, Ernst von Dohnanyi. It is a first class work, not to be missed by such ensembles looking for a late romantic work for their programs. Wilhelm Altmann, in his Handbook for Piano Trio Players, writes: “The Trio Suite is eminently suitable for performance. Furthermore, given that Koessler composed it when he was sixty six years old, it is astonishing proof of his youthfulness and intellectual vigor. It would be very popular in concert halls if it were to be performed. Koessler, a classicist who considered himself a follower of Brahms, nonetheless surprises us with daring modulations which Brahms himself would never have ventured to write let alone think of. The opening *Allegro* is written on a grand scale with lovely themes--including a very Hungarian dance (see right) and a very effective coda. The second movement, *Romanze*, is filled with sentiment and emotion. Koessler follows this up with a delightful, gay *Gavotte*. The finale, *Vivace*, is full of attractive themes which are warm-blooded and distinctive. The Trio Suite was recorded on Hungaroton CD 32331. Parts are available from Edition Silvertrust

I as I wrote earlier, there is no complete list of works for Koessler. The only other chamber works of his with which I am familiar are a Piano Quintet, said to date from 1913 which was never published, a violin sonata, also not in print, and his Ungarische Tanzweise (3 appealing Hungarian Dance Tunes) for violin and piano, now available from Edition Silvertrust.