



Second Edition

# GUIDE TO THE STRING QUINTET LITERATURE

By

Raymond Silvertrust

Editor of  
The Chamber Music Journal

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# A Guide to the String Quintet Literature

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## Introduction and Preface

The main objective of this guide is to provide both professional and amateur chamber music players, as well as concertgoers, with a practical guide to the string quintet 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 exploring 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.

When it comes to string quintets, it is unfortunate that today's concertgoer is very unlikely to be able to attend a concert entirely devoted to string quintets. In fact, it is rare to hear any string quintet performed in concert. This, of course, is a great pity because some of the finest chamber music ever composed is for string quintet. If one is lucky enough to hear a string quintet performed live, it will be in a concert by a string quartet that has invited a guest violist, or cellist, or bassist to perform one work. The other 2 works on the program will be for quartet. The reason for this is, in part, because there are no permanent string quintets. What is surprising is that when the extra cost of the fifth player is factored in, that only one quintet is played. This may be explained by the fact that permanent quartet ensembles do not wish to take the time to learn very many works which are not part of the string quartet repertoire.

So then, supposing a quintet has been programmed, what will it be? If the fifth player is a violist, the quintet will almost certainly be one of a handful of works: either Mozart's K. 515 in C Major, though more likely K. 516 in g minor, or perhaps one of the 2 by Brahms, Opp. 88 or 111, or maybe the Op. 97 by Dvorak. If the guest artist is a cellist, there will be only one work that you will hear, Schubert's D. 956 in C Major. And if the guest is a bassist, and this is rare indeed, the work will be Dvorak's Op. 77. In 40 years of regular concert-going in Vienna, Salzburg, Munich, Zurich, Amsterdam, London and Chicago, as well as sporadic attendance at several other places, I have never heard any quintets performed live other than those mentioned.

In my guides to the piano trio and string quartet literature, I take issue with the fact that only a few works are regularly presented and with good reason. There are several permanent string quartet and piano trio ensembles, and these are the 2 most commonly programmed ensembles at chamber music concerts. Hence, there are many opportunities to hear other than ultra-famous works. But I cannot make this argument when it comes to string quintets. And I take no issue with the fact that only a few famous quintets are presented: because there are so few opportunities to hear a string quintet performed live in concert, it makes sense to present one of the most famous.

In reality, the only way that the chamber music player, be he or she a professional or amateur enthusiast, is going to become exposed to the string quintet literature is either by playing the works themselves or listening to recordings. If you are not familiar with the string quintet literature, then by all means your first adventures should be to explore the works of Mozart, Brahms, Dvorak, Mendelssohn, Schubert and perhaps Bruckner. But be aware—not

all of the Mozart quintets are masterworks, and neither is Dvorak's first string quintet.

Those who are already familiar with these pieces and who are looking for something new, something fresh and appealing, I hope will want to dip into the wider literature, and it is for these players and listeners that this guide is written. There is 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 that even Beethoven wrote, and I include his string quintets in this category, 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 of chamber music by a composer such as George Onslow, Franz Krommer or Friedrich Gernsheim, whose *métier* was chamber music, sits awaiting to be discovered.

Posterity has forgotten many composers 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 19th century, yet this was the case, at least as far as public performance went. It took 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 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic-era composers, who were well known 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 from 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 1960's, and almost exclusively thanks to the record industry, that the public was able to hear the music of other composers from the Romantic period.

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. For decades during his lifetime and after his death, the quartets and quintets of Franz Krommer were regarded as good as or even better than Haydn's and the best after those of Mozart. And the works of such composers Paul and Anton Wranitzky, and Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf were held in high esteem by men such as Beethoven. They all wrote several very charming works, some of which qualify as masterworks and which would be welcomed by listeners and players alike.

With regard to the more famous works, some of which I have already mentioned, little space is devoted to discussing them other than, in most cases, simply to mention their existence for the

sake of completeness. Much has been written about these works, and there is little, if anything new, that I can add. With regard to atonal and so-called experimental music, we must acknowledge that the listening public has now been exposed to it for more than 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, great as they may be on paper to a musicologist or the student of music theory, these works are not an experience the average listener or player generally wishes to repeat. And for this reason, such works are not included in this guide. 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 people wish to hear is music that can be sung, music which is tuneful.

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 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 the works I unearthed to well-known ensembles currently performing. Additionally, I have served as the editor of and a frequent contributor to *The Chamber Music Journal* for more than 25 years and was the director of the International Cobbett Association for Chamber Music Research for a similar period of time.

Over the years, it occurred to me that a guide such as this was needed by players and possibly by listeners. Guides to chamber music 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 that 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 have 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 comes into play and I make no apology for them. At the same time, unlike late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Viennese music critics, such as Eduard Hanslick, 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.

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 2,000 chamber works available.) So it is with this goal in mind that I offer the reader this work.

I had originally intended to try to include whether a work had been reprinted or was generally available and or had been recorded in recent times, i.e. during my active musical life, beginning ca. 1960. But works go in and out of print, sometimes quickly, as do recordings. And such information for those reading this guide years in the future would no doubt be next to useless. 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 are 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 that I consider to be of merit and which I have found in 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 are 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 especial 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 professionals, some are teachers, and some introduced me to works which I had not known. I must begin with my son and daughter: Skyler Silvertrust and Loren Silvertrust. Both are violinists and together, with an army of violists, cellists and bassists, we have had the chance to dive deeply into the quintet literature. Among those who joined me on this adventure are Gordon Peterson, Morton and 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 and Margaret Evans, Beverly Bloom, Girard Miller, Dr. Maurice Burke, Francis and 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, Lillian Cassey, Joseph Kirschner, Edward Torgerson, Darlene Rivest, Gunther Fonken, George Smith, Alan Garber, Gerda Bielitz, Beverly Kaushagen, Steven Spiegel, Rose Ross, Samuel and Paula Golden, Dr. Iris Cosnow, Frank and 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.

*Raymond Silvertrust  
Riverwoods, Illinois 2018*

## **Preface to the 2nd Edition**

That there is a second edition is due to the generosity of Professor Carolyn Higbie who, of her own accord, approached me and graciously offered to correct all of the hundreds, if not thousands, of errors I left behind in my haste when hurriedly typing the first edition. Even though I proof read the first edition, proof reading your own work is a sure recipe for missing your errors. What's more, I must admit I am not a good proof reader. So, when Professor Higbie, a true chamber music enthusiast, contacted me, I jumped at her offer.

Finally, in addition to the correction of errors and confusing text in the first edition, I have added several new works which, at the time I wrote the first edition, I was either unfamiliar or had not had a chance to play or hear.

*Raymond Silvertrust  
Mettawa, Illinois 2022*

## Origins of the Modern String Quintet

When one speaks of the string quintet, generally one means a work for 2 violins, 2 violas and cello or 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos or less frequently a work for 2 violins, viola, cello and bass. Such quintets are the subject of this guide. There are works for other combinations, perhaps the most common being for 1 violin, 2 violas, cello and bass, but they are extraordinarily rare and nowadays few take it upon themselves to play such rare works. Therefore, this guide will not include such ensembles.

The so-called modern string quintet was essentially a creation of Austrian composers and, more specifically, the Vienna Classical era and its composers. It can be said that Mozart's last 4 string quintets (K. 515, 516, 593, and 611) put the genre on the map and were responsible for its rise to popularity. But there were, of course, string quintets before Mozart's time. Mozart's early string quintets, K. 174 for example, and those of Michael Haydn were modeled after earlier Austrian composers from the 1750's and 1760's, such as Johann Tischer and Franz Aumann, who generally called their works "Divertimenti" or "Notturmi." In these works, the 2 lead voices, the first violin and the first viola, moved in parallel thirds or sixths, the thematic material relied on repetition and the other voices were given simple accompaniment roles. Such works cannot be considered modern string quintets and will be of little interest to today's players and listeners except for their historical interest, and therefore will not be included in this discussion. The Italian virtuoso cellist and composer Luigi Boccherini represents an interesting exception. Working alone, in the ducal and royal courts of Spain, his many string quintets, almost entirely for 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos, can qualify as modern string quintets, but they owe little or nothing to the Austrian and Viennese tradition. Instead, their roots can be found in the earlier Italian 5-part *sinfonia*. Boccherini, unlike Mozart, had no followers. There are no Spanish or Italian string quintets that followed his lead. In fact, there were no other quintets at all by such composers for at least half a century. By contrast, the popularity of Mozart's works inspired the likes of Ignaz Pleyel, Paul and Anton Wranitzky, Joseph Eybler, Franz Krommer and Beethoven to compose string quintets which are indebted to the Austrian and Viennese tradition.

# String Quintets for 2 Violins, 2 Violas & Violoncello



**Alfredo D'Ambrosio (1871-1914)** was born in Naples. His initial studies were at the Naples Conservatory, where he studied violin with Giuseppe Pinto and composition with Enrico Bossi, after which he continued his violin studies with Pablo de Sarasate in Madrid and then with August Wilhelmj in London. He spent most of his life in Nice, where he became a prominent teacher and leader of a well-known string quartet. Several of his works for violin were popularized by violinists

such as Sarasate, Heifetz, Elman, Kreisler and many others. D'Ambrosio also was a prominent arranger and editor, and still is known today for his work in these areas.

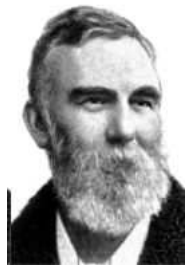
His **Suite for String Quintet Op. 8** appeared in 1906. The work is lighter in nature, and in the best sense of the word salon or Unterhaltungs music. The first movement, Andante, is for the most part gentle in nature, but there is a rather dramatic middle section which provides good contrast. The second movement, Allegro moderato, is a piquant scherzo with a somewhat dry trio section. The beautiful third movement, Andante molto moderato, is subtitled "Berceuse." The finale begins with a slow Maestoso introduction leading to the main section which is almost overflowing in thematic material. There are at least 4 different themes to be heard. The first, Allegro moderato, is light and charming. The lilting fourth subject is particularly impressive. The suite is straightforward and makes a good impression, a pleasure to play, but it requires a violinist with a light touch and elegant technique, and a cellist who has no difficulties in the upper treble regions of the instrument.



**Arnold Bax (1883-1953)** was born in London. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music. Of independent means, he never needed to teach or conduct. He was a fine pianist, but his main interests were composing music and poetry. His strong affinity for Ireland led him to spend considerable time in that country, which influenced his outlook and music. The 1916 Easter Uprising in Ireland and its brutal suppression, which included the execution of several of his friends, was to have a profound influence

upon him. Bax is remembered mostly for his orchestral compositions, but he wrote a great deal of chamber music. His music shows many influences, perhaps the strongest of which is Impressionism.

His **String Quintet** is in one movement, Allegro moderato, and dates from 1933. This is a post-Impressionist work. It is tonal and features some Irish folk tunes, including a jig, but it is fair to say they are not presented in a straightforward way. This is an interesting work but difficult, and cannot be recommended to amateur players.



**Alexander Beaumont (1848-1913)**, was born in the English city of Manchester. There is almost no information to be had about him. He did not earn his living as a composer, but was a professional soldier of independent means. In the few references one finds, he is referred to somewhat disparagingly as Captain Alex S. Beaumont, an amateur violinist and composer. Yet, his works are clearly those of a composer who had formal training. One reference states that he may have

studied privately with William Sterndale Bennett, a professor of composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Throughout the 19th century and during much of the 20th, there has been a strong prejudice against composers who did not need to earn living by music and this may account for why Beaumont is so little known. He was a friend and patron of the important English composer William Hurlstone whose works he helped to publish.

Beaumont's **String Quintet in a minor** was published in 1889, but was most likely composed sometime earlier. It is in 4 movements. The opening Allegro con spirito is a richly scored, full-blooded affair. A lovely Andante cantabile comes next, the main theme to which is an English folk melody. A second section features a poignant and sad dialogue between the cello and first violin. The third movement is a fleet-footed Scherzo, allegro vivace. The finale, an upbeat and rollicking Allegro vivace, concludes the work. With appealing melodies, good part-writing and no technical difficulties, this is a good work which can be warmly recommended to amateur players, best suited for home music making, but perhaps an occasional concert hall airing.

It is sometimes said that **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)** wrote 3 or 4 string quintets. However, the Opp. 4, 103 and 104 are all arrangements of other works. They would not even be worth a mention or known at all if someone else had written them. His only true work for this medium is his **String Quintet in C major Op. 29**, dating from 1801, toward the end of his early period. The first 2 movements are relatively affable and gracious in expression, whereas the final 2 movements are darker and more intense. These final movements are a window to his more mature style. The work opens with a pleasant, Mozartean Allegro. The main theme of the second movement, Adagio molto espressione is lyrical in nature. The Scherzo has a rather annoying, impatient and insistent theme which is constantly repeated. By comparison to other compositions from this time, such as the Op. 18 quartets, this is not up to the mark. The Finale, Presto is rather disjointed and somewhat awkward to play, but the coda is rather effective. This is a decent, a good though not a great work, which has only received the unjustified amount of attention that it has, because it is a work by Beethoven and not someone else. It can be recommended to amateurs but, given the dearth of live quintet performances, can be discarded for this purpose.



**Jan Levoslav Bella (1843-1936)**, for the first 76 years of his life was an Austrian, then spent his last 17 as a Czechoslovak, and today is posthumously a proud son of the Slovak Republic. He was born in the small town of Liptovský St. Mikulas in what was then the Habsburg Empire.

He studied both music and theology locally and was ordained as a priest in 1866. Bella traveled widely in Germany, where he was influenced by the music of Schumann and Liszt. In 1881, he left the priesthood and married, taking a position as City Music Director (Stadtskapellmeister) in Hermannstadt (now Sibiu, Romania), a town with a sizeable German population in what was then part of the Hapsburg Empire or Austria-Hungary. He held this position until he retired in 1921. Although he is virtually unknown today, he was well-known and on friendly terms with many prominent musicians such as Richard Strauss, Liszt, Brahms, and Ernst von Dohnanyi, whose works he championed and performed. Though the bulk of his work consists of choral music, he did not ignore chamber music. Bella was attracted to the German neo-Romantic

school rather than the nationalism and dramatic naturalism of Smetana and Dvorák.

Bella's **String Quintet in d minor**, which appeared in 1868, received high praise. It shows the hand of a composer who was on the cutting edge of the new developments of his own time. The opening movement, *Allegro appassionato*, begins softly with a yearning theme played over a tremolo which creates considerable drama. The lovely second theme, with its echoes of Schubert and Bruckner, quickly rises to an intense dramatic climax, before Bella develops it on a grand scale in the tradition of Schubert's late works. The second movement, a Scherzo, begins in a light and delicate fashion, its fetching melodies effortlessly moving forward like a skater over ice. It is followed by a contrasting trio section. The marvelous *Adagietto* which follows begins in canonic fashion. The heavy theme moves slowly and in a deliberate way, and as it is developed, we hear distant echoes of Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" quartet, also in d minor. The powerful climax is approached in, what was for the time, a very modern fashion, anticipating Richard Strauss by more than 2 decades. The finale, *Presto*, begins somewhat pensively before the first violin breaks loose in a Hungarian flurry. A series of attractive and lyrical melodies successively follows on each other's heels, the last being a particularly striking duo between the violins to a rhythmic accompaniment. This is a first-rate work which does not sound like any of the other quintets from its time. It deserves to be in the repertoire, heard in concert and on the stands of amateurs.



**Adolphe Blanc (1828-1885)** was born in the French town of Manosque. His musical talent was recognized early, and he entered the Paris Conservatory at age 13, first taking a diploma in violin and then studying composition with the composer Fromental Halévy. Although Blanc served for a time as a music director of a Parisian theater orchestra, he primarily devoted himself to composing, and most of his works were for chamber ensembles. During his lifetime, these works were much appreciated by professionals and amateurs alike, and in 1862 he won the prestigious Chartier Chamber Music Prize. Besides the fact that his works are pleasing and deserving of performance, Blanc's historical importance cannot be overestimated. He was one of the very few in France trying to interest the public, then with ears only for opera, in chamber music. He paved the way for the success of the next generation of French composers. Among his chamber works are 3 string trios, 4 string quartets, 7 string quintets (4 for 2 violins, viola, cello and bass or 2 cellos; the other 3 for 2 violins, 2 violas and cello) 15 piano trios, 3 piano quartets, 4 piano quintets and a septet for winds and strings.

Blanc's **String Quintet No. 1 in B flat Major, Op. 15** dates from 1856. The work is in 4 movements. The opening *Allegro* is characterized by lovely, sunny and genial themes. The music simply flows along effortlessly. The *Menuetto allegro* appeals by virtue of its quirky off-beat rhythms which keep both players and listeners on the edge of their chairs. A lyrical *Adagio* comes next, with long-lined, beautiful cantilena melodies. The finale is a rousing *Allegro*, full of good spirits.

**String Quintet No. 2 in C Major, Op. 19** also dates from 1856. It too is tuneful, plays quite easily and can also be recommended to both amateurs and professionals. The opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, features lilting melodies and is followed by a superb Scherzo full of passion and lyrical trio section which provides excellent contrast. The *Adagio* which follows is a lovely salon piece. The jovial finale overflows with thematic material, all of it effective. It is, by turns, full of forward motion, lyrical and sweet.

Blanc began writing string quintets in 1855. His first two quintets were for the so-called standard arrangement of two violins, two violas and cello which appeared in 1856. The following year saw two more quintets but these were for 2 violins, viola, two cellos or cello and bass. With his **String Quintet No. 5 Op. 29 in D Major**, which came out in 1858, he again returned to the standard arrangement. The opening movement, *Allegro risoluto*, has for its main subject a series of quarter notes which create a pounding effect and forward motion with a sent of resoluteness. The second movement, *Menuet, allegretto*, also resolute, is a kind of update French style minuet, but it is too quick to dance to. A nicely contrasting trio section follows. In third place is a charming *Andante* which is in the form of a lovely serenade. The finale, *allegro vivace*, is a lively, toe-tapping affair which dances along effortlessly. This is a workman-like effort. The thematic material is not as compelling as his first two quintets, although it can be recommended to amateurs as it is not at all hard to play.



**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 somewhere around 130 string quintets. Almost all of them are for 2 violins, one viola and 2 cellos. However, however, several publishers also created versions for 2 violas and one cello.

**String Quintet in B flat Major, Op. 39 No. 1, G. 337** is one such work and can be played by 2 Violins, 2 Violas & Cello or 2 Violins, Violas & 2 Cellos or 2 Violins, Viola, Cello & Bass. It is the first of a set of three dating from 1787 and is among his better known quintets. It is in four movements. The charming opening movement, *Andante lento*, begins in with a genial, somewhat stately main theme. The music displays an elegance which is graceful. Next comes a short, very lively *Allegro vivo* which is over almost before it begins. It is interrupted without warning by a *Tempo di Minuetto*. This in turn is suddenly interrupted by a *Grave* section, which cannot really be called a trio. The finale, *Rondeau, allegro non tanto*, has a catchy theme in which the first cello is given the lead. Good enough for concert performance and can be recommended to amateurs.

The **String Quintet in D Major, G. 339** is the last of a set of three dating from 1787. This one is only in three movements. It opens with an energetic but ordinary *Allegro vivo* and is followed by a beautiful *Pastorale*, the best movement of the work. The finale, a *Presto*, is full of twists and turns but the thematic material again is not particularly memorable.

His Op. 60, set of 6 quintets, G. 391-396, were dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte's brother Lucien, who was then serving as the French ambassador to Spain, appeared in 1801. One has to assume that the choice of 2 violas rather than 2 cellos was at the request of the dedicatee. Prior to this, Frederick William II, the cello-playing King of Prussia, had requested quintets for 2 cellos, and Boccherini, himself a cellist, had found that ensemble more to his taste. I rather doubt there is anyone now alive or who lived in the past that was familiar with all of Boccherini's string quintets. I certainly am not.

With regard to the Op. 60 quintets, I am familiar with Nos. 1 and 5. No. 1 is rather pedestrian with nothing to recommend it. However, **Op. 60 No. 5 in C Major** is much better and is worth playing, strong enough to justify concert performance. It is probably the best of the set.

I am also familiar with **Op. 62 No. 1 in C Major, G. 398**. While not as good as Op. 60 No. 5, it too is worth playing and can be recommended to amateurs, but not for concert performance.

Of the more than 120 string quintets that Boccherini wrote, the **String Quintet in D Major, G. 341 "Del Fandango"**



is one of the best known and one of the few that is still occasionally performed in concert. This is almost certainly due to the second movement simply marked *Tempo del Fandango*. This Quintet is the second of a set of six from his Op.40 composed in 1788. Boccherini himself in his own catalog numbered it as Op.40 No.2 but another publisher called it Op.50 No.2.. It is usually played in the 2 cello version but there is a two viola version. The opening Grave, serves as an introduction to the second movement simply marked *Tempo del Fandango*. The Fandango was a traditional dance of the Spanish gypsies, and closely related to what became known as Flamenco dances. Boccherini indicates at one point in the movement in the Cello I part Castagnetto, which literally translates as chestnut wood, but here indicates the use of castanets, something gypsies frequently employed and which are generally made from chestnut wood. They are not often employed by string quintets who rarely add a castanet player. The final movement is a Minuetto with contrasting trio. Highly recommended.

**String Quintet in c minor, Op.37 No.1 or Op.51 No.2, G.377** can be played by 2 Violins, 2 Violas & Cello or 2 Violins, Violas & 2 Cellos. The opus numbers to Boccherini's works are entirely unreliable and have over the years caused tremendous confusion with different publishers giving the same work different opus numbers and in some cases different works received the same opus number. This was the case with this quintet, which was published by several different firms. the only reliable number G.377 is the catalog number given by Boccherini's cataloger Yves Gerard. For much of the 19th century this was one of his more popular quintets. The opening movement as a lengthy, gripping Grave, *molto lento* introduction which leads to the main section an energetic *Allegro assai*. The second movement is a charming *Andantino con innocenza*. A rather typical Boccherinian Minuetto with no tempo marking follows. The finale, is almost, but not quite an exact repeat of it. A good work suitable for concert and home music makers.

**Johannes Brahms (1833-18907)** needs no introduction. His 2 string quintets are among the best known and for good reasons. They are both superb works and are among those which must be a starting point, along with the quintets of Mozart, for those unfamiliar with the string quintet literature. As I indicated in my introduction, I will only bring to the reader's attention such works for the sake of completeness and not discuss them at any length, since I can add nothing more to the voluminous amount which has already been written about them.

**String Quintet No. 1 in F Major, Op. 88** dates from 1882. Of the 2, this is probably the more straightforward in terms of playing difficulty, though it must be said that, like his string quartets, from an ensemble standpoint, neither is particularly easy.

**String Quintet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 111** was completed in in 1890.



**Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)** is one of England's best-known 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers. Born in the English village of Lowestoff, he studied at the Royal College of Music in London. He studied composition with Arthur Benjamin and Frank Bridge.

His **Phantasy Quintet in f minor**, written while he was still at the RCM, won the Cobbett Prize for Chamber Music in 1932. It is in one movement, and in the form of a fantasy, as the rules of the competition required. Most of it is based on a searching, rather moody theme introduced by the cello. The overall impression is of a subtle warmth, with nothing too challenging for the ear. This is a decent work,

not too long; it would do well in concert and is not beyond amateurs.



**Max Bruch (1838-1920)**, at least to violinists, is a fairly well-known composer. His violin concertos still feature regularly in the repertoire. His chamber music, that which was published during his lifetime, is not well known. It consists of a piano trio, 2 string quartets and his Op. 82 Eight Pieces for trio of either clarinet or violin, viola or cello and piano.

After his death, manuscripts of a piano quintet, a string octet and his **String Quintet in a minor, Op. Post.** were discovered. One prominent scholar claimed that these dated from the last few years of Bruch's' life. My own research contradicts this thesis. When one compares his late works, such as the Eight Pieces with the quintets and octet, it is clear that they were not composed during his final years, but in his youth. It seems he returned to them before his death and worked on them a bit, but when one compares them with his works from the 1860's, such as his Opp. 9 and 10 string quartets, it is clear that this is when these works were composed. Though filled with pleasing melodies, there is a lot of needless sawing and most of the thematic material is given to the first violin. Bruch does not make particularly telling or good use of the violas and one wonders why he needed 2. As for the cello, it is merely there to complete the bass line. It must be said that this work is not a very noteworthy addition to the literature for viola quintet and cannot under any circumstances be compared favorably to those by George Onslow, Herman Koessler or Richard Perger, to name but a few which deserve to be revived.



**Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)** was one of the most important symphonists of the 19th century. Chamber music did not really interest him and the idea of composing a string quintet was not his, but was suggested to him by the famous Viennese violinist Joseph Hellmesberger, concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and leader of a famed string quartet of his name.

Bruckner was flattered by the idea and produced a magnificent work, his **String Quintet in F Major**, which dates from 1879. It is unique within the literature. A famous critic commented, "If the only thing Bruckner had ever written for string instruments had been the slow movement to his string quintet, his reputation would have been secured for all time." Its harmonies are unique and characteristic of Bruckner's love of harmonic seconds and half-tones. As a result, the intonation is at times quite difficult to get right, but not beyond experienced amateurs. The first movement, *Gemäßig (moderato)*, entirely avoids the usual *Allegro* mood one expects to find in a first movement. The plastic main theme is full of yearning and developed at great length until the entrance of the lyrical second theme, which conveys almost unimaginable bliss. The second movement, *Scherzo*, is highly synopated though here, as opposed to its appearance in his symphonies, the syncopation is gentler and has a melancholy, contemplative mood to it. The trio section is closely related to the old-style minuet, though it is full of feeling. The slow movement, *Adagio*, takes one directly to heaven. This is music of affirmation and there is no sense of resignation to an inevitable and unwished-for fate. The tonal color is unique, especially when the cello falls silent. The main theme of the finale, *Lebhaft bewegt*, has a staccato motif over an organ-like underpinning. The slower, delightful second theme is a real piece of Austrian folk music and the variations on it are very pleasing. The quintet in many ways re-

sembles Bruckner's symphonic writing and to a great extent resembles a symphony in miniature. This is one of the greats. When the quintet was being rehearsed for its premiere, Hellmesberger felt the second movement, which was a scherzo, was unplayable and asked Bruckner to write a replacement for it. This Bruckner did. The result was an Intermezzo, which was more tuneful and certainly easier to play. It was in this version that the quintet was originally performed. However, few other musicians agreed with Hellmesberger's verdict; ultimately the scherzo was restored, and the quintet was thereafter published and performed with it. For a time, the Intermezzo completely disappeared. However, its excellence was eventually recognized, and this led to its being published after Bruckner's death. In Vienna and elsewhere, it was often performed in string quintet concerts as an encore, especially when the Bruckner quintet was on the program.



**Georg Druschetzky (1745-1819)** was known only to his relatives by his Czech name Jiří Družecký during his lifetime. He was born in Jemníky, a tiny village in what was then the Habsburg kingdom of Bohemia. He studied composition and oboe in Dresden, and spent the rest of his life holding various positions in Austria and a number of German principalities. He composed at least 4 string quintets, one from 1796, the rest

from 1806, which were recorded on a Hungaroton CD around 2005. I am only familiar with them by means of the CD, but I list them here because they are surprisingly good in the typical Haydn-esque vein, though Haydn wrote no quintets. Sometimes these are concertante in style, at other times in the more modern integrated style. I imagine your only chance to play them is if you come across them in some antiquarian shop or library, but they are worthwhile.

The **Op. 97 String Quintet in E flat Major** of **Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)** deserves to be as famous as his Op. 96 "American" string quartet, since it is certainly as good, if not better. It's only because it is a string quintet that one does not often get a chance to hear it in concert, although there are plenty of recordings. It must be ranked as one of the better known of such works, at least by recording, and deservedly so. Every string quintet ensemble should certainly make its acquaintance.

Dvořák's **String Quintet in a minor, Op. 1**, composed in 1861 at which time he was only 20, while a decent work, especially for an early effort, cannot be mentioned in the same breath as the Op. 97.



**Victor Ewald (1860-1935)** was born in St. Petersburg, the Russian capital, and lived most of his life there. At the surprisingly young age of 12, he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he studied cello with the famous virtuoso Karl Davidov and composition with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Nikolai Sokolov. He pursued a dual career as a professor of civil engineering and as a musician. He served for 20 years as the cellist of the famous

Belaiev String Quartet and composed a string quartet which was awarded a prize in a quartet competition whose judges were Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. In addition to the quartet and this string quintet, Ewald wrote 5 quintets for brass instruments, and today, if he is remembered at all, it is for these brass quintets which are often performed and have been recorded several times.

His **String Quintet in A Major, Op. 4**, which was published in 1895, makes a good impression in performance, is clearly written and is a very attractive work which not only belongs in the concert hall, but also in the homes of amateurs who will certainly enjoy it. From the very start of the opening movement, Allegro, we are treated to a winning melody. The main theme appeals by its originality. The second movement, a fleet and dance-like Vivace, is a superb example of what a scherzo can be with its graceful and fetching melody. The Andante, which serves as the slow movement, is full of warmth and in no way contrived. The finale, Allegro, bubbles forth with high spirits and vitality but is not without compelling lyrical episodes. The whole thing is superbly conceived and executed.



Mozart wrote in a letter of recommendation for his good friend and student **Joseph Eybler (1765-1846)**: "*I the undersigned hereby testify that I have found the bearer, Mr. Joseph Eybler, a worthy pupil of his famous master Albrechtsberger, a thorough composer, equally skilled in chamber and church styles, very experienced in compositional technique, as well as an excellent organ and piano player—in short a young musician such as regrettably*

*has few peers.*" And Eybler's reputation and prominence in Vienna were such that the Empress made him Music Master to the Imperial Family in 1801. In 1804 he was promoted to Vice-Kapellmeister, a position he held until 1824, at which time he succeeded Salieri as Imperial Kapellmeister. Eybler held this post until his death. He was, like most of his contemporaries, a prolific composer in most genres. He wrote several string quartets and at least 6 string quintets. Eybler tended to view his quintets in the typical 18<sup>th</sup>-century Austrian tradition as serenades. Unlike his quartets, which strictly follow the classical Viennese prescription set down by Haydn of 4 movements, the quintets generally feature at least 5 and sometimes more movements.

However, his **String Quintet in E flat Major, Op. 5 No. 1**, originally published around 1800, was an exception to this. In 4 movements, the Quintet begins with a rather simple, genial Allegro. At times, the music rises to an orchestral pitch. The second movement is a rather rhythmically unusual Menuetto, allegretto. The trio section features the first viola with a serenade-like melody over a pizzicato accompaniment. The Adagio which comes next also recalls the style of the serenade with its beautiful singing melodies. A lively Vivace concludes the work.



**Friedrich Ernst Fesca (1789-1826)** was born in the German town of Magdeburg. He studied piano and violin with several different teachers, including for a short time Ludwig Spohr. By age 16, he had already obtained a position as a violinist in the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Not long after, he was employed as solo violinist in the Court of Jerome Bonaparte, the King of Westphalia at that time. After this, Fesca lived for a while in Vienna, where he befriended the famous violinist, Ignaz Schuppanzigh, first violinist of the famous Beethoven Razumovsky String Quartet. Fesca's final years were spent working in Karlsruhe along with fellow composer Franz Danzi. He composed in nearly every genre from opera to solo piano works, however, the bulk of his output was chamber music. Carl Maria von Weber, writing of Fesca's chamber music, had this to say: "Mr. Fesca is completely master of whatever he undertakes to express. I am fully convinced of his remarkable talent. His works are carefully written, thoroughly elaborated and richly flavored." Fesca was often hailed as a successor to Haydn and Mozart, though this

is certainly less true of him and his music than of Franz Krommer. Nevertheless, his chamber music was frequently performed on a regular basis until the middle of the 19th century, when it began to disappear. He had 3 string quintets to his credit, **Op. 8 in D Major** dating from 1816, **Op. 15 in E Major** from 1818 and **Op. 20 in B flat Major** from 1821. While I am not



familiar with any of these, I know and have played several of his string quartets, which are rather good. And while there is no guarantee that this is also true of his quintets, I suspect they are worthwhile and perhaps equally as good as his fine quartets. There are no new editions, but if you should come across an old copy, I would think you would certainly want to give it a go.

**Max Fiedler (1859-1939)** was born in the German town of Zittau, Saxony. After studying with his father, he entered the Leipzig Conservatory, where he continued his studies with Carl Reinecke. Fiedler enjoyed a career as both a concert pianist and a conductor. He was widely considered one of the best conductors of his day, the equal of Karl Muck, Felix Weingartner, Artur Nikisch and Hans von Bülow. Most critics of the time regarded him as the foremost interpreter of Brahms, with whom he had a personal relationship. Fiedler primarily wrote orchestral works, but did not ignore chamber music, penning a string quartet and piano quintet, in addition his string quintet.

Dating from 1880, Fiedler's **String Quintet in d minor** is grateful to play. At times, one can hear the influence of both Schumann and Brahms. The opening movement, Allegro, begins with a powerful and energetic main theme. The music, at times lyrical, is full of passion and the development shows Fiedler's excellent compositional technique. The second movement, Andante espressivo, is highly Romantic and deeply felt, complete with a dramatic and restless middle section. Next comes a lively Allegro scherzando with 2 trios, the first march-like, the second more passionate. The finale, Allegro, like the first movement, begins in energetic fashion, but with the second theme, the music turns more lyrical. This quite an effective movement as well. This is a good mid-Romantic era work which would do well in concert, but presents no technical difficulties and should be much appreciated by amateur players as well.



**Emanuel Aloys Förster (1748-1823)** was born in Niedersteine in the province of Silesia which at the time was part of the Austrian empire. Little is known of Förster's musical training other than the fact that he was proficient on the organ, piano, violin, bass and oboe, and that he began composing at an early age. From the several hundred works he composed, it appears that in his early pieces, he came under the influence of

C. P. E. Bach. He was on friendly terms with Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and his later works show their influence. Sometime around 1779, Förster arrived in Vienna, where he remained for the rest of his life working as a teacher of piano and composition. He was also a frequent performer in various Viennese ensembles. From the various concert program posters which survive from that era, we know that his string quartets, of which he wrote nearly 50, were often performed on programs with those of his more famous friends. He wrote 4 works for string quintet, 3 actual quintets—Op. 19 in c minor, Op. 20 in a minor and Op. 26 in E flat Major. The fourth work was entitled *Fantasia and Sonata*.

**String Quintet No.1 in c minor, Op.19** was composed sometime during the 1790s, it was originally published in 1802 in Vienna. It is closer to concertante rather than the by then emerg-

ing polyphonic style of Mozart. But while the first violin is given, as was typical for this time, much of the thematic material, all of the instruments are given solos. The opening Allegro vivace with begins in dramatic fashion and is quite effective. The following Andante, though simple in form is deeply felt and not without melodic charm. A short, typical Viennese Menuetto, allegretto with trios follows. The finale, Poco presto, is fleet footed and entertaining.

Of the 3, perhaps **String Quintet No.2 Op. 20 in a minor** makes the strongest impression. Presumably composed immediately after No.1, it was published at the same time. It is, as far as I know, the only one in a modern edition. The very pronounced themes of the opening movement Allegro vivace, make a very good contrast to each other. A graceful Andante comes next. The sharply pronounced rhythm of the following Menuetto makes the excellent trio stand out all the more. The appealing main subject of the effective finale, Allegro non troppo, is somewhat elegiac and quite original sounding. Förster's quintets bear many similarities to the work of Haydn, though they are not imitative.

**Fantasia and Sonata, Op.25a** which started out life as a work for piano before he arranged it for string quintet. It is a massive work of great length showing the clear influence of J.S. Bach. It has been recorded and apparently performed off manuscript copies. Perhaps by now it has been published. The string quintets are closer to concertante rather than polyphonic style. But while the first violin is given, as was typical for this time, much of the thematic material, all of the instruments are given solos. These quintets can be especially recommended to amateur players who will be sure to enjoy them.

**String Quintet No.3 in E flat Major, Op.26** The opening Allegro vivace of Opus 26 is full of exciting forward motion and a give and take between all of the voices and especially the first violin and cello. The main theme of the following Andante, though simple in form is a lovely folk melody. And though not so marked is followed by a set of variations. A typical Menuetto, allegretto is characterized by rising and falling scale passages. The trio section provides fine contrast The rousing finale, Presto, has the quality of a quick racing ride.



**Eduard Franck (1817-1893)** was born in Breslau, the capital of the Prussian province of Silesia. He was the fourth child of a wealthy and cultivated banker who exposed his children to the best and brightest that Germany had to offer. Visitors to the Franck home included such luminaries as Heine, Humboldt, Heller, Mendelssohn and Wagner. His family's financial position allowed Franck to study with Mendelssohn as a private student in Düs-

seldorf and later in Leipzig. As a talented pianist, he embarked upon a dual career as a concert artist and teacher for more than 4 decades during which he held many positions. Although he was highly regarded as both a teacher and performer, he never achieved the public recognition of his better-known contemporaries such as Mendelssohn, Schumann or Liszt. As fine a pianist as the first 2 and perhaps even a better teacher, the fact that Franck failed to publish very many of his compositions until toward the end of his life, explains in part why he was not better known. Said to be a perfectionist, he continually delayed releasing his works until they were polished to his demanding standards. Schumann, among others, thought quite highly of the few works he did publish during the first part of his life.

Franck's **String Quintet No. 1 in e minor, Op. 15** was composed in 1844, but was not published until 1850. The broad main theme of the big first movement, Allegro non troppo, has the quality of a Legend with its sighing theme which is often pre-

sented in unison. A more vibrant second theme, showing the influence of Mendelssohn, is interspersed. The second movement is a Mendelssohnian Scherzo. Its clever main theme is quite catchy and the use of pizzicato in the trio section is quite telling. The slow movement, *Andante con espressione*, is rather like a sarabande. The general calm of the movement is twice interrupted with restless interludes. The *Prestissimo* Finale shows some rather surprising use, for the time, of polyphony.

**String Quintet No. 2 in C Major, Op. 51** appeared in 1897. Franck composed the work in the early 1870's, but it was not published until after his death, when his son, the composer Richard Franck, submitted it for publication. It is a work which is rich in invention, occasionally showing the influence of Mendelssohn. The opening movement, *Allegro*, begins with a lovely, lyrical melody and is followed by a more passionate second subject. The excellent *Andante* which follows begins in elegiac fashion and has an equally fine second theme which is both warm and inviting. The charming and tonally rich third movement, marked *Menuetto allegretto*, is actually a scherzo. The finale is a theme and superb set of variations. This is a work which is good to play.



**Niels Gade (1817-1890)** was born in Copenhagen and began his career as a concert violinist, later taking a position with the Royal Danish Orchestra. Mendelssohn, who was much impressed by and premiered Gade's first symphony, invited him to teach at the famous Leipzig Conservatory. After Mendelssohn's death in 1847, Gade was appointed director of the Conservatory and conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra. In 1848, he returned to Copenhagen, when war broke out between Prussia and Denmark. In Copenhagen, Gade became director of the Copenhagen Musical Society and established a new orchestra and chorus. He was widely regarded as Denmark's most important composer from the mid-Romantic period. He taught and influenced several Scandinavian composers, including Edvard Grieg, Carl Nielsen and Otto Malling. His own music often shows the influence of both Mendelssohn and Schumann.

Gade's **String Quintet in e minor, Op. 8** appeared in 1846. It has effective thematic material and is grateful to play. The lovely melodies which this work contains are not particularly Nordic, but recall Mendelssohn. A short, warm introduction, *Andante con moto*, is filled with yearning and leads to the main part of the first movement, *Allegro espressivo*, the main theme to which is in the style of a Legend. A lilting second subject is energetic. The slow movement, actually an *Allegretto*, is a song without words, full of fine feeling. The principal subject gives the music the character of a pastorale. A restless, syncopated scherzo, marked *Presto*, comes next. It is passionate. The finale begins with a short, reflective *Adagio* introduction. Here the main theme of the following *Allegro molto appassionato* shows strongly the influence of Mendelssohn. It is catchy and memorable. This work will do well in the concert hall, but above all should not be missed by amateur chamber music enthusiasts.



**Friedrich Gernsheim (1839-1916)** is a composer whose music was held in the highest regard by critics during his lifetime. But Gernsheim had 2 misfortunes which led to his music not obtaining the reputation it might have. The first was to be born within a decade of Brahms—a misfortune because, in what is surely an extraordinary phenomenon, virtually every composer in the German-speaking countries born within a decade either side of Brahms were so

eclipsed by him that their reputation and music all but disappeared when that era was over. Names such as Rheinberger, Reinecke, Kiel, Bruch, Dessoff and Herzogenberg, among many others, come to mind. The second misfortune was that being Jewish, his music was officially banned during the Nazi era, which insured that it would fall into oblivion. It is only now, close to a century after his death, that it is being rediscovered with great delight. Gernsheim, something of a piano and violin virtuoso as a child, was eventually educated at the famous Leipzig Conservatory, where he studied piano with Ignaz Moscheles and violin with Ferdinand David. After graduating, he continued his studies in Paris, getting to know Saint Saëns, Lalo, Liszt and Rossini. Despite his admiration for France and the French, he returned to Germany and held academic and conducting positions in Cologne, Rotterdam and finally Berlin. He used his position as a conductor to advance the cause of Brahms' music. The 2, while not close friends, carried on a correspondence for many years, during which it was clear that Brahms had considerable respect and admiration for Gernsheim's work. This was no mere flattery on Brahms' part, since Brahms only very rarely praised the works of other composers.

Gernsheim's **String Quintet in D Major, Op. 9** was published in 1868. In the Romantic style, it shows that Gernsheim was abreast of the advances which had been made by Brahms. He was a master of form and able to create episodes of great beauty. Here is a work that will certainly be effective in the concert hall, but it is also a work which should not be missed by amateurs, who will surely enjoy it tremendously. The opening movement, *Allegro*, immediately begins with a warm and very lyrical melody. The charming second theme is also lyrical, but nonetheless provides a fine contrast with what has come before. The lovely second movement, *Allegretto moderato*, is a cross between an old-style minuet and an intermezzo. The trio section, *molto vivace*, provides a great surprise and contrast of the sort of which Cherubini uses in his quartets. Next comes a deeply felt *Andante espressivo* with a stormy middle section. The tonal beauty is magnificent. The finale, *Allegro molto vivace e con fuoco*, dispenses with the warm, lyrical melodies found in the preceding movements and is primarily filled with rhythmically pronounced, fleet, exciting themes which are highly effective.



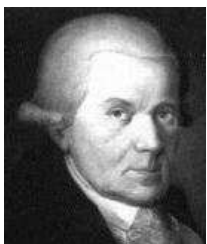
**Peter Hänsel (sometimes spelled Haensel, 1770-1831)**, sometimes spelled Haensel, was born in the town Leppe in what was then Prussian Silesia. He was trained as a violinist and worked in Warsaw and St. Petersburg before obtaining employment in Vienna where he studied composition with Haydn during the 1790's. Other than the 2 years he spent in Paris during 1802-03, his entire adult life was spent in Vienna, working as a violinist and composer. He devoted himself almost exclusively to the genre of chamber music, writing nearly 60 string quartets, 6 string trios, and 4 string quintets: No. 1 in G Major Op. 9, No. 2 in C Major Op. 13, No. 3 in E flat Major Op. 15, and No. 4 in F Major, Op. 28.

**String Quintet No. 1 in G Major, Op. 9** from 1803 is the only one which has been recorded. The first movement, *Allegro maestoso*, is rather ordinary, often very busy and with too much first violin. The second movement, *Adagio e cantabile*, makes a strong impression with its deeply felt themes. The third movement is a Haynesque *Menuetto*, typically Viennese, not at all bad, although perhaps a little dated for 1803. The lively finale, a toe-tapping *Allegro*, also recalls Haydn. Again, there is too much first violin and not enough use made of the violas.

By consensus, his **String Quintet No. 4 in F Major, Op. 28** from 1815 was considered the best and received some

attention after his death. It begins with a pastoral *Allegro non troppo* in which the violas present an attractive subject. The second movement is a warm *Adagio e cantabile* with a dramatic middle section which is impressive. The third movement, an *Allegro* in the form of a scherzo, shows that Hänsel has learned something from Beethoven. The finale, *Allegro*, is a kind of chorale.

While these are not bad works, they cannot in my opinion stand up to the many fine quintets from the same period by Franz Krommer, whose themes are much more memorable and whose use of all the voices is far superior to that of Hänsel.



**Michael Haydn (1737-1805)** was the younger brother of Joseph Haydn, who never did write a string quintet. Michael received the same musical training as his brother in Vienna and eventually settled in Salzburg, where he obtained the position of music director. Like most composers of the time, Michael wrote a lot of music, but none of it seemed to get the attention which Joseph's received. Michael

wrote 5, some say 6, works for a string quintet consisting of 2 violins, 2 violas and cello. However, he dubbed only one of these "Quintetto." The others all bear titles such as "Notturmo" or "Divertimento." Most date from around the early- or mid-1770's. They have been recorded and a few have received modern editions. They are pleasant but eminently forgettable, because the thematic material is entirely ordinary, which is why Michael's music never achieved the recognition which his brother's did. They show the influence of the Mannheim school of the Stamitzes, but even the Stamitzes had stronger thematic material. I have played 2 of these and heard all of them, and cannot recommend them as being worth the time or effort to play.



**Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1843-1900)** was born in the Styrian provincial capital, the Austrian city of Graz. He studied composition with Otto Dessoff, the conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic. He held various important positions, serving as director of the Leipzig Bach Verein and professor at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. Among his many students, Ethyl Smyth can be counted. A friend and admirer of Brahms, he was a

staunch supporter and promoter of Brahms' music with which his own music bore much in common. As a result, he was sometimes attacked as nothing more than a pale imitation of Brahms. But it must be admitted that Herzogenberg's music is absolutely first-rate, original and fresh, notwithstanding the influence of Brahms. Much of his chamber music falls into the masterwork category and Brahms might well have wished he had written some of it. Toward the end of his life, Brahms, who was not in the habit of praising other composers publicly, wrote of Herzogenberg, whom he had often harshly criticized, "Herzogenberg is able to do more than any of the others."

Herzogenberg's **String Quintet in c minor, Op. 77** dates from 1892. It is characterized by its breadth of conception and its utilization of the tone colors. The first movement, *Allegro appassionato*, is a stormy piece of character painting, full of beautiful thematic material. The second movement, *Poco adagio*, is a theme and set of finely wrought variations based on a folk tune. A ghostly Scherzo follows. One hears whispers and innuendo. The muted trio section lightens the mood. The finale begins with a passionate *Adagio ma non troppo* introduction and leads to an *Allegro tranquillo*, the spirited, march-like main theme to which is also a folk melody. An excellent choice for concert or home.



**Hermann Hirschbach (1812-1888)** was born in Berlin. His given name was "Hermann," but he signed himself "Herrmann." Hirschbach led a multi-faceted life. He initially studied medicine, but switched to music when he was 20, studying the violin, composition and musicology. He was a prolific composer and was intensely interested in chamber music, writing some 13 string quartets, 4 string quintets, a septet, an octet, 2 clarinet quintets and several

other pieces. He wrote extensively on music and was a leading music critic, working closely with Robert Schumann, who was not only impressed by Hirschbach's chamber music, but also by his musical criticism, so much so that he invited Hirschbach to collaborate with him in the publication of the influential *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. If this were not enough, Hirschbach was considered one of the leading European chess players of the mid-19th century. Schumann wrote glowingly of Hirschbach's chamber music which he thought was a successor to Beethoven's Late Quartets and akin to the path Berlioz was taking. And he admitted that Hirschbach's early quartet entitled "Life Pictures for String Quartet" influenced his own Op. 41 efforts.

Hirschbach's **String Quintet No. 1 in c minor, Op. 2** was composed in 1836 and was, as the opus number indicates, one of his first ventures into composition.

**String Quintet No. 2 in g minor, Op. 39** came 22 years later, in 1858. There is no denying that the music is arresting, dramatic and very effective. But at the same time, it must be admitted that this is not traditional chamber music nor did Hirschbach intend it to be. He intended his music to be tone poems conveying poetic pictures. The first violin dominates affairs and the part it is given seems to me to be unnecessarily difficult. While the other instruments are not ignored, their parts too are often quite tricky and hard to pull off. Nor can one say this is a conversation between 5 voices in a normal sense. There are no new editions, but original editions are readily available.

I am not familiar with the last 2 quintets, assuming they exist; I have not been able to find any information about them.



Today, the name of **Franz Anton Hoffmeister (1754-1812)** lives on only because of his close friendship with Mozart, who named his K. 499 D Major string quartet after him in recognition of all the money Hoffmeister had given him. Few people are also aware that he became a famous music publisher; his firm is known to us today as Edition Peters. Hoffmeister arrived in Vienna at age 14 from

western Germany intending to study law. Like so many before and after him, he was lured away by the siren song of music. He decided on a career as a composer and, like most of his contemporaries, was a prolific one. We know from contemporary accounts that his music was held in high regard and those who have had the opportunity to play or hear it usually agree that there is much of value to be found therein.

Hoffmeister wrote at least 7 string quintets. Sometime around 1787, he published a set of **Six String Quintets, Op. 23**. All are in 3 movements and follow a fast—slow—fast pattern, with the exception of No. 3 which starts with an *Andante*, then a Menuetto and *Allegro*.

**String Quintet in B flat Major, Op. 62**, though with a higher opus number (which unfortunately in Hoffmeister's case is not particularly indicative of when written), appeared in 1785. The fact that it is in 4 movements certainly would lead one to suspect that the opus 23 quintets were composed several years before 1787. I have played a great deal of Hoffmeister's chamber music—duos, trios and quartets—but have not had the pleasure

of either playing or hearing his quintets. But if the quartets are anything to go by, Hoffmeister was clearly a talented composer whose style closely resembled Haydn and Mozart, in some cases so much so, that one would think that one of the 2 had written it. There are no modern editions, but earlier editions can be found.



**Otto Hohlfeld (1854-1895)** was born in the Thuringian town of Zeulenroda. He pursued a career as a violin soloist before becoming the concertmaster of the Darmstadt Symphony Orchestra. Besides a number of works for the violin, he wrote some chamber music which briefly attracted some attention.

His **String Quintet in F Major, Op. 1**, published in 1876, was one of these. He

knows how to write for strings, but his melodic material is, in my opinion, rather ordinary and, though at times quite pleasant, not particularly memorable.

**Bernard Hopffer (1840-1877)** was born in Berlin and studied music there at Kullak's Academy. He had considerable success as an opera composer, and his symphonies and choral works enjoyed a degree of popularity in Germany while he was alive.

His **String Quintet in b minor, Op. 7** appeared in the year of his death. This is an appealing work, good to play and hear, but it must be admitted that it strongly recalls various works of other composers, particularly Schubert. The opening movement, *Allegro con fuoco*, definitely brings to mind Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" quartet. In the lovely second movement, *Andante sostenuto e cantabile*, we hear echoes of Max Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 and Schubert's *Fantasie* for piano. A Scherzo comes next, and here one feels Schubert's E flat Piano Trio hovering about the background. The effective finale, *Allegro animato*, brings Schubert's a minor Quartet No. 13 to mind. Plagiarism? No, but these strong influences certainly take away from the feeling of originality the work might otherwise have had.



**Anselm Hüttenbrenner (1794-1868)** was already an accomplished pianist and composer, when he went to Vienna in 1815 for advanced studies with Antonio Salieri. It was there that he struck up a lifelong friendship with his fellow student Schubert, a friendship which was particularly close during the few short years that Hüttenbrenner remained in Vienna. While it cannot be claimed that Hüttenbrenner was

exactly well-known during his lifetime, certainly he was not unknown. Today, his name only survives because of his connection with Schubert and Beethoven. But during his lifetime, Hüttenbrenner was respected both as a composer and pianist. He wrote a considerable amount of music including 8 symphonies, a number of operas and over 200 songs. His chamber works consist of 2 string quartets, a string quintet and several sonatas. Hüttenbrenner's chamber music undeniably bears a resemblance to that of Schubert. Is this because he merely copied the style of his friend? Actually, the answer is that each influenced the other. A "cross-pollination" of ideas was taking place. The 2 were school fellows and close friends who spent hour upon hour with each other, talking and carousing, showing and performing their new works. We know that Hüttenbrenner gave Schubert the idea for "Death and The Maiden," both the song and the string quartet. And there must have been other instances as well.

Hüttenbrenner's **String Quintet in c minor** has no opus number, but most likely was composed a few years before 1820. The first movement, *Andante con moto*, has a diffident melody, delivered in part by the first violin and in part by the cello. For much of the movement, these 2 voices are involved in a constant con-

versation, which because of the difference in pitch, creates a continual sense of drama. This was a technique also employed by Schubert during this period. The delightful *Allegro con spirito* which follows is an early Viennese scherzo, very Schubertian. Hüttenbrenner uses 2 trios, each of them quite lyrical and providing fine contrast. An *Andante* comes next. The theme is mildly sad and reflective. Here again, we find a technique, the tremolo, used by Hüttenbrenner to create drama, which Schubert subsequently used in his late works. The opening theme to the finale, *Allegretto moderato*, with its dotted rhythm creates an exciting sense of forward motion. The second subject is no less impressive, bursting forth in highly dramatic fashion. This is an excellent work from the early Romantic era. Very Viennese—one could even say that this is a quintet very much like what Schubert would have written had he chosen to write one during this period.



**Philippe Jarnach (1892-1982)** was born in the French town of Noisy-le-Sec. He studied piano and composition at the Paris Conservatory and then privately with Ferruccio Busoni. He taught at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik and later founded and served as director of the Hamburger Musikhochschule. Kurt Weill was among his many students.

Jarnach's **String Quintet Op. 10** appeared in 1920 and was dedicated to Busoni. Though nominally tonal, it cannot be said the work is in any fixed key. And yet, one can hear the Bachian influence which Busoni had on Jarnach. At times, it is almost as if Jarnach was trying to compose a work that Bach himself might have written, had he been alive in 1920 and had assimilated all that had come before. There is a slow introduction, a prelude, which Jarnach entitles *Präambulum*. The bulk of the work is a theme and set of 7 variations given some of the same names one finds in the suites of Bach: *Sinfonia*, *Melodram*, *Giga*, *Aria*, *Recitativ* and *March*, *Choralspiel* and *Double Fugue*. The quintet, with the exception of the impressive and very Bach-like *Aria*, lacks any sense of passion. The other movements are impressive in the way they are constructed, but are not always easy to play, not only rhythmically but also because of the intonation difficulties that they present. The quintet, though hardly a "barn burner," nonetheless would make a good impression in concert. It cannot really be recommended to the bulk of amateurs, except those of considerable experience and technical accomplishment.



**Heinrich Kaminski (1886-1946)** was born in the German town of Tiengen. He studied at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, thereafter pursuing a career as a teacher and composer. Among his students was Carl Orff.

His **String Quintet in f sharp minor** (putatively) dates from 1916. This is a polyphonic work which cannot be recommended to amateur players because of intonation and rhythmic difficulties. Speaking from experience, I can say that this is not even a work which can be easily sight-read by professional players, although, having heard it in concert, I can say that it makes a strong impression by virtue of its originality. It has moments of great beauty, perhaps heightened by the stretches that are not so. Kaminski subsequently arranged the work for orchestra.

**Moritz Käsmayer (1831-1884)** was born in Vienna and spent his entire life there. He studied at the Vienna Conservatory after which he served as a violinist in the Vienna Philharmonic and later as Director of Ballet Music for the Austrian Imperial Court Opera. He mostly composed chamber music, the most famous of



which are his “Humorous and Contrapuntal Volkslieder” or Folk Songs for String Quartet, which appeared in 13 separate volumes, each containing 4 folk songs from different nations or parts of Austria. He also wrote 5 string quartets and his **String Quintet in A Major, Op. 8** which appeared in 1859. Although an orchestral violinist for much of his career, Kässmayer

also played and performed a great deal of chamber music, and it is no surprise that he knew how to write well for string instruments. The opening Allegro is by turns graceful and lyrical with a very interesting development section. The heavily ornamented Adagio which follows is deeply felt and makes a strong impression, however, it is by no means easy to play. Next comes a dance-like Scherzo with nicely contrasting trio. The effective finale, Allegro agitato, beguiles by virtue of its beautiful and charming melodies. This is a good work which can be recommended both to amateurs and for concert performance.



**Hans Koessler (1853-1926)** is a master composer who wrote some of the most outstanding music that you have never heard. Koessler was born in Waldbeck in upper Bavaria. He studied organ and composition with Joseph Rheinberger in Munich. He held a number of positions in Germany before finally taking up the position of Professor of Organ, Composition and Choral direction at the Music Academy of Budapest in the early 1880's. He stayed there until his retirement in 1908.

Bartók, Kodály, Dohnanyi, Leo Weiner and Imre Kalman were all among his many students and he was widely regarded as the finest teacher of composition in Austria-Hungary during the 1890's and the first part of the 20th century.

Koessler's **String Quintet in d minor** dates from 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 and 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 Koessler 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 by 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 section consists of a gentler, lovely folk tune. Here, the use of tonality is original-sounding and highly effective. The main theme to the excellent finale, a well-constructed rondo, is a rollicking affair, with a momentary doff of the cap and a brief Hungarian quotation from Koessler's friend Brahms. The second theme is more introspective, but with a swinging 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 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. It's the equal of Brahms' quintets and a lot easier to play.



It has always amazed and puzzled me how the string chamber music of **Franz Krommer (1759-1831)** has in modern times virtually disappeared. His works are the equal of those of Haydn and some of Mozart's as well, even the best of them. He was born in the town of Kamnitz, then part of the Habsburg Austrian Empire (today Kamenice in the Czech Republic). It had a mixed population of Germans and Czechs, and, though bap-

tized František Vincenc Kramář, by the time he was 15, Krommer was using the Germanized version of his name, the name by which he became known to the world. Krommer was one of the most successful composers in Vienna at the turn of the 18th century. His reputation was attested to by the fact that his works were frequently republished throughout Germany, England, France, Italy, Scandinavia and even the United States. According to several contemporary sources, he was regarded with Haydn as the leading composer of string quartets and as a serious rival of Beethoven. Krommer was not only an outstandingly good violinist, but also one of the best-loved composers, as witnessed by the number of copies of his works which have been printed and gone through several editions. Here is but one contemporary assessment: “Mr Krommer boasts such a wealth of original ideas, wit, fire, novel harmonic turns that he will easily attract and capture the attention of quartet lovers now that Haydn's name is no longer to be found in the list of new published works.”—*Neues historisch-Lexikon der Tonkünstler. (The New Historical Dictionary of Composers, 1805)*. Krommer came to Vienna around 1785. For the following 10 years he held appointments at various aristocratic courts in Hungary. He returned to Vienna in 1795, where he remained until his death, holding various positions including that of Court Composer (Hofmusiker) to the Emperor, Franz I, an enthusiastic quartet player. Krommer was the last composer to hold this august title, and one of his duties was accompanying the Emperor on his various campaigns, so that he could relax in the evenings playing quartets. There are more than 300 compositions which were at one time or another published, much of which is chamber music. It is hard to know exactly how many, because Krommer's works have not been definitively catalogued. To further complicate the problem is the fact that different publishers would publish the same work, but with a different opus number. For example, Krommer's Op. 8 quintets were published in 2 books of 3 for a total of 6 works by the Parisian publisher Sieber. However, the German publisher Andre published the last 3 of these quintets as Op. 11. Hence, various sources give different numbers, but it is safe to say that Krommer wrote more than 70 string quartets, approximately 30 string quintets with 2 violas, a number of quintets for flute and strings, also some for clarinet and strings, and oboe and strings, not to mention many works for winds alone. I will discuss those with which I am familiar and which my firm has recently published. While not all of Krommer's quintets are masterworks of the classical era, some are, and I have come across none which are bad. All are fun to play, have appealing melodies and good part-writing. Telling use is generally made of the cello and a technically accomplished violinist is a must.

Krommer's first are the **Op. 8 String Quintets**, a set of 6, which date from 1797. They gained instant popularity and helped to make his name. They are historically important because they show what an important contemporary of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven was doing. The only Viennese viola quintets of any import prior to these were Mozart's, since Haydn never wrote one. Op. 8 was composed before Beethoven's first set of quartets and even before all but one of his string trios. Krommer's music is original—it does not sound like an imitation

of Haydn or Mozart. In fact, it sounds like no one else. Particularly interesting is his use of chromaticism. All 6 of the Op. 8 quintets are well worth playing.

**String Quintet No.1 in B flat Major, Op. 8 No. 1**

opens with an attention-grabbing, fetching Allegro con brio followed by a lovely Andante, a theme with variations, with a nicely contrasting section in the minor. The third movement is an archetypal Viennese Menuetto with a lovely Austrian Ländler trio section. The finale is a toe-tapping Rondo full of good spirits.

**Krommer's String Quintet No.2 in E flat Major, Op. 8**

**No. 2** begins with an appealing Mozartean Allegro moderato, with lovely melodies and fine part-writing. Next comes an Allegretto which Krommer entitles Romanza. It is a theme and nicely executed variations. The third movement is a Haydnesque quick-step Menuetto with contrasting trio in which the first viola and first violin present a typical Austrian Ländler. The finale, though with no tempo marking, is clearly a bustling Allegro.

**String Quintet No.3 in G Major, Op.8 No.3**

is the third of a set of six completed in 1797. It is in four movements. It opens with an upbeat and genial Allegro vivace. The Adagio which follows is a Haydnesque a theme and set of variations. The third movement, Menuetto allegretto is a typical Viennese quick step Menuet. The finale, though with no tempo marking, is clearly a playful, bustling Rondo, allegro

**Krommer's String Quintet No.4 in F Major, Op. 8 No.**

**4** (also listed as Op. 11 No. 1) was the most famous of the set and was performed regularly during the first half of the 19th century. It opens with a charming Allegro moderato in which the second violin and violas are given the responsibility for introducing the main theme. Particularly striking is the syncopation in the lower voices upon the introduction of the second subject. In the following Menuetto allegro, the cello delivers the first half of the main theme which is then completed by the first violin. The use of the cello is particularly original. The trio is a real Austrian Ländler. The lovely melody is entrusted to the first violin while the others provide the accompaniment. It is so vivid and well done that one can easily imagine country musicians strumming the tune while young peasant couples dance. The third movement, Andante, though not so marked, is a theme and set of variations. The theme is entirely presented by the cello which is given a lengthy solo. Each variation is nicely executed and provides excellent contrast. Again, there are several Ländler episodes. The finale begins in extraordinary fashion with a substantial, operatic Adagio introduction in which the first violin is given a gorgeous aria of some urgency. The introduction finally melts away.

**String Quintet No.5 in c minor, Op.8 No.5**

is the fifth of a set of six completed in 1797. It is in four movements. It opens with a pounding Allegro con brio full of excitement. A thrusting and energetic Menuetto allegro follows characterized by its upward passages. The trio brings some relief but not as to the tempo. The third movement is a lovely Andante. The theme is a simple but lovely tune. The Hungarian sounding finale, Presto, though not so marked is a theme a set of variations.

Some 20 years passed between the Op. 8 and the **String Quintet No.15 in E flat Major, Op. 70** which came out in 1817. Krommer gave the work the title "Grand" Quintet and it is, in fact, one of his most substantial in this genre. For a start, it is in 5 movements, rather than the usual 4. The opening Allegro has a rather stately march-like aura and at times a Mozartean orchestral quality. The second movement, Menuetto allegretto, is dominated by its triplet rhythm which is set off against a lovely lyrical melody. The melodic trio section has telling interplay between the upper 3 voices. Next comes a Haydnesque Adagio quasi andante which, though not so marked, has several variations on the main subject. Rather than concluding the work with a fourth movement, Krommer inserts a fetching Alla Polacca full of life and energy. While one might think he could not top such excitement

in the finale, an Allegro, he does so. However, not all at once. The music gets off to a genial start which seems a let-down after the Polacca, but soon the pace quickens and the intensity rises to an almost orchestral level and the music plunges ahead, full of forward drive.

**String Quintet No.16 in D Major, Op. 80**

dates from around 1815. Written on a huge scale in 5 movements and full of appealing melodies and original touches, it is not hard to see why Krommer's music was immensely popular during his lifetime and was known throughout Europe and even in North America. The first movement, an Allegro, begins with a stately introduction with upward scale passages before the introduction of the lovely main theme which is passed from voice to voice. The second movement is a warm and romantic Adagio. The original-sounding third movement, a Minuetto, allegretto, is noteworthy not only from its fine use of chromaticism but also for its telling use of pizzicato. The trio section is a gorgeous Austrian country Ländler of which Krommer was a master. Before the finale, Krommer place a catchy and playful Andantino, allegretto. The finale, a rollicking Allegro, concludes this fine work.

**String Quintet No.20 in d minor, Op.100 No.1**

was the first of a set of three completed in 1819. Like so much of his music, it is full of catchy melodies, unusual use of rhythm and original touches, which make it easy to see why his music was immensely popular during his lifetime and was known throughout Europe and even as far away as the United States, going through several editions. The set was dedicated to the Austrian Emperor Franz I with whom Krommer was on friendly terms and regularly played string quartets and other chamber music. The first movement, an Allegro moderato, begins with a series of ominous unisono chords. The rest of the movement is full of forward motion and much energy. The lovely second movement, Andante, has a fetching main theme full of charm, initially introduced by the first violin over the pizzicato accompaniment of the others. Though not so marked, the movement is actually a set of interesting and contrasting variations of the theme. In third place is Viennese Minuetto allegretto with a pounding subject for the main theme. The trio section is even quicker, unusual for a trio section. The finale, Allegro moderato con scherzo, is a real tour d'force, full of excitement and toe-tapping melodies. A very fine work full of memorable melodies.

Krommer's appealing **String Quintet No.21 in B flat Major, Op. 100 No. 2** was completed in 1819. Like so much of his music, it is full of catchy melodies, unusual use of rhythm and original touches. The first movement, an Allegro vivace, begins with a unisono march-like short introduction before the first violin states the lovely vocal main theme which is played over this accompaniment. There follows a conversation between the first violin and the cello. Several surprises appear with dramatic episodes and Mozartean elements in the violas. The second movement, Andante, has a simple melody and is clothed with a jaunty accompaniment in the lower voices. The arresting, unisono pounding rhythm in the Minuetto, allegretto which comes next immediately captures the listener's attention. It is bright and in the major, while the contrasting trio section is in the minor. In the finale, Allegro moderato, once again, Krommer's unusual use of a syncopated rhythm immediately brings attention to it. The main theme could have been written by Mozart himself. In fact, the whole movement is a kind of tribute to Wolfgang.

**String Quintet No.22 in G Major, Op.100 No.3**

was the third of a famous set completed in 1819 when he was 60 years old. It was dedicated to his friend, the Emperor of Austria Franz I, with whom he regularly played string quartets and quintets. The first movement, an Allegro moderato, features a deliberate, heavily accented downward scale as its main theme. The second subject, has a touch of the storm and drang to it and is also quite rhythmic. The second movement, Adagio, though



not so marked, is a theme and set of variations. In the Scherzo which comes third, a downward, accented passage is again the main theme. The trio section, melodically provides a good contrast but is also quite accented. The last movement is simply marked Finale with no tempo indication, but it is clearly a lively Mozartean allegro, full of appealing chromaticism.

**String Quintet No. 24 in F Major, Op.106 No.1** is the first in an excellent set of 3 quintets, one of many sets which were extraordinarily popular. It was completed in 1824. The work opens with a playful Allegro moderato, with the chirpy theme being tossed about from voice to voice a la Haydn. A lovely, cantabile Adagio, full of sentiment, follows. The third movement is a quixotic, offbeat and rhythmically unusual Menuetto, allegretto. A hard-driving finale, Allegro assai, full of forward motion and excitement, brings the quintet to a close.

**String Quintet No.25 in E flat Major, Op.106 No.2** is the second of a set of three quintets, one of many sets which were extraordinarily popular. Completed in 1824, they were played throughout Europe and even as far away as America. The work opens with a playful Allegro moderato, which begins with a responsive duet between the cello and first violin. Soon all join in this rousing, upbeat piece which boasts many original touches. The second movement, Andante moderato, though not so marked is a theme, first heard in the lower voices, and a set of interesting variations. The theme is from the popular French melody *Vivre Henri Quatre*, which celebrated the crowning of Henri of Navarre, who ended the wars of religion, as King of France. The third movement is a Haydnesque Menuetto, allegretto in which finds some rather amusing, quixotic, offbeat rhythmic effects along with a lyrical trio. The finale is an appealing Allegretto.

**String Quintet No.26 in C Major, Op.106 No.3** is the last of a set of three quintets, one of many sets which were extraordinarily popular. The work opens with a bright, Mozartean Allegro moderato. The second movement, Andante moderato, has for its main theme a long-lined melody given out by the first violin. There are several gripping dramatic climaxes which hold the attention. Next comes a Menuetto allegretto which has Haydn as its antecedent but while still harking back to the Vienna Classical era, there are already elements of the early Romantic period. The finale is an exciting Rondo, presto, hard driving and energetic.

Another very fine set of 3 is Krommer's **String Quintet No. 27 in C Major, Op.107 No.1** is the first of the set finished in 1825. The set was dedicated to Prince Moritz (Maurice) von Dietrichstein, remembered for being the tutor of Napoleon's son, but he was also an avid music lover who served as Director of the Imperial Theater and Music Library. The marking to the first movement, Allegro con spiritoso, begins with a fetching melody introduced by the first viola and then taken up and developed by the first violin. Much excitement follows with the occasional doff of the cap to Mozart. Next comes a bright Andante moderato, which is more in the nature of an allegretto. The third movement is an energetic Menuetto with contrasting trio. The lively finale, Allegro, tops off what is a very appealing work.

**String Quintet No. 29 in E flat Major, Op.107 No.3** is the last of the set. The marking to the first movement, Allegro spiritoso, perfectly describes the mood. It opens with 3 big chords which lead to sections of exciting drama, full of forward motion and appealing melody. The second movement, Andante, though not so marked, is a theme and set of variations. The cello alone, accompanied by the second viola, gives forth the theme. The variations which follow are interesting and effective. A clever Minuetto, making excellent use of all 5 voices, and a lyrical trio come next. The dashing finale recalls the finale to Mozart's K. 387 string quartet. The theme first presented in unison is then reproduced in canonic fashion as the music gradually picks up speed and excitement.



**Adolf Lindblad (1801-1878)** was born in the Swedish town of Skänninge. He took piano and flute lessons from local teachers before entering Uppsala University, where he studied composition and harmony. He then went to Berlin to continue his studies with the well-known composition teacher Carl Zelter. A fellow student was Felix Mendelssohn and the 2 struck up a friendship which lasted throughout Mendelssohn's life. Upon his return to Sweden, Lindblad devoted himself to composition and teaching, opening a music school which he ran for most of his life. He became well-known as a music teacher and eventually secured a position as teacher to the king's children. The income from this allowed him time to compose. His specialty was the art song or lieder of which he composed over 200, earning him the title of "the Swedish Schubert." But he did not ignore other genres including chamber music and penned some 10 string quartets, 2 string quintets, several instrumental sonatas and a piano trio. Lindblad's music shows the influence of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and as a result sounds like that of the late Classical and early Romantic eras.

He composed his **String Quintet in F Major** around 1828. There are records of it having been performed the following year, however, it was not commercially published until 1885, some 7 years after his death. The opening movement, an Allegro, is a bustling affair, full of energy, but the thematic material is on the thin side, especially for the length of the movement. The Adagio which follows is unremarkable, rather old-fashioned and Lindblad resorts to the device of using a fugue to cover the lack of compelling melody. Next comes a Scherzo, rather ordinary again with some dry thematic material. The finale, Allegretto vivace, shows some promise and is the strongest of the 4 movements. On the whole, one must admit that this work leaves no lasting impression. To paraphrase Shakespeare, there a lot of sound and fury which amounts to nothing. With so many other worthwhile candidates from this era, I see no reason to spend time with this one.



**Johan Lindegren (1842-1908)** was the son of an impoverished farmer from southern Sweden and was never really able to make a living as a composer. For much of his life, he eked out what money he made from directing the chorus of the Royal Stockholm Opera and by composing salon music to order which others signed. Despite his commercial failure, his technical mastery was nonetheless eventually recognized by the Swedish academic establish-

ment, and he taught at several schools including the Royal Conservatory in Stockholm.

His **String Quintet in F Major** dates from 1870 and may be his only chamber music composition. Published in 1907, it is a massive piece lasting over 35 minutes in 4 movements. There is an incredible wealth of musical ideas to be found in this quintet which makes rather good use of the violas. The opening Allegro non troppo begins in a genial vein. An exciting, but brief second theme appears twice. Occasionally, there is a French feel to the music, which surprisingly sounds 30 years ahead of its time. Next comes a Romans-Andantino poco allegretto. It begins in a straightforward fashion, but turns out to quite unusual and full of atmosphere and bizarre effects. This is highly original writing. The third movement, Adagio con devosione, is long because it is painted with broad themes on a large scale. The effective finale, Allegro vivace, is full of fugues and other devices that show off the composer's technical mastery.



**Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)** was born in the Czech town of Polička. He studied violin briefly at the Prague Conservatory, but was expelled for failure to diligently pursue his studies and from then on studied privately. During WWI, he worked as a teacher and then served as a violinist in the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1923 he emigrated to Paris and became a pupil of Albert Roussel. When France was invaded by Germany, he emigrated to the United States, settling in New York, where he continued composing and taught at the Mannes College of Music. Among his many students was Alan Hovhaness. In 1953 Martinů returned to Europe. He wrote 3 works for string quintet.

His first was the **String Quintet H. 164**. It was not given a number by him; it dates from 1927 and was composed during the first part of his time in Paris. The subsequent 2 quintets are known as Nos. 1 and 2 respectively and date from 1933 and 1944 and bear H numbers of H. 229 and H. 298. I am not familiar with either. H. 164 is in 3 movements and is tonal in the sense of being polytonal. The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, is highly dramatic: torrents of violent, stormy energy pour out from the first measure. It is powerful but difficult to play. The middle movement, *Largo*, begins quietly with a duet played by the violas. Slowly, tension is built to an intense climax before the temperature slowly dies down. The finale, *Allegretto*, unlike the preceding 2 movements which are in the minor, is in the major and is a light-hearted, neo-Baroque sort of dance. The middle section is a polyphonic fugue, and the work ends with a hymn-like theme. This is an excellent work, but it does require good players.



**Joseph Mayseder (1789-1863)** was born in Vienna. He began to study the violin at an early age and was quickly recognized as a child prodigy and was therefore turned over to the most famous violinists and teachers then in Vienna—Paul and Anton Wranitzky and Ignaz Schuppanzigh. He also studied composition with Emanuel Aloys Förster. At the age of 21, Mayseder was appointed concertmaster of the Vienna Court Opera

and subsequently was appointed soloist of the K. und K. (Royal and Imperial) Orchestra, which he later conducted. He was not only considered one of the finest violin soloists of his day, but he also chaired Vienna's leading string quartet. In addition to this, he was a respected composer, mainly of chamber music, whose works achieved great popularity not only in his lifetime, but right up until the First World War. He was a sought-after teacher and the famous soloist Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst was numbered among his students. Mayseder has 5 string quintets to his credit, Opp. 50, 51, 55, 65 and 67. Having read over the quintets, of which I have only performed one, I can still say that the first violin part requires either a player of professional caliber or an amateur of the very highest technical ability. It seems likely that Mayseder performed that part himself in concerts. In some ways, these quintets resemble miniature operas, at least in spirit.

**String Quintet No. 2 in a minor, Op. 51** can be said to be typical of the final 3 quintets. Of note is the fact that there is a bass part so that the work could be performed as a sextet if so desired. However, it adds very little if at all to the work, except of course to give it a deeper resonance. The quintet dates from around 1835 and is in 4 movements. The work opens with an exciting *Allegro agitato*, which is stormy and dramatic, capturing the listener's attention immediately. A short, bucolic *Andante* interlude, reminiscent of Rossini, interrupts affairs but as it comes to a peaceful close, an *Allegro* explodes upon the scene like a cloudburst. The music is thrilling and operatic in manner,

full of compelling melody. The second movement, a lovely *Adagio*, is primarily calm and lyrical, providing a respite from the turbulent first movement. Next comes a bumptious, hard-driving *Scherzo* with a charmingly contrasting trio section. The work is topped off with a breathtaking *Allegro vivace* full of excitement from start to finish. There is no doubt that if this work were given in concert, it would bring the house down.

**Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)** wrote 2 string quintets, Op. 18 and Op. 87. Because he is one of the greats, these works have always remained in print and have received many recordings. But if the truth be told, **Op. 18** is not a very good work. There is way too much sawing in the accompaniment, and the melodic material, though at times telling, is for the most part rather thin; much of it sounds like it was written at the piano, hence the sawing coming from the pianist's left hand. This is not the case with **Op. 87** which is a fine work and well worth becoming acquainted with. As it has been reviewed by many, there is no need for me to write more about it.



*"To Whom it May Concern: This is to certify that Ernst Mielck of Vyborg, Finland, has been my private pupil from October 1895 to May 1896. Under my direction, he addressed himself to score reading, exercises in the art of orchestration, and the detailed formal analysis of the works of the masters, demonstrating a profound understanding."*—Max Bruch.

**Ernst Mielck (1877-1899)** was born in the Finnish (now Russian) province of Karelia in the town of Viipuni (Vyborg). His father's family were merchants and had emigrated from Germany. After studying piano locally, he continued his studies in Berlin, both at the Stern Conservatory with Robert Radecke and privately with Max Bruch. Always in poor health, he died young of tuberculosis but not before composing a symphony, a string quintet and a string quartet, all of which were premiered to critical acclaim.

His **String Quintet in F Major, Op. 3** dates from 1898. It is well written with appealing melodies and presents no technical difficulties. The main subject of the opening movement, *Allegro*, is original sounding due to its use of rhythm. The second movement is a piquant *Scherzo* in which the cello is given a rather charming accompaniment. There is a graceful contrasting trio section. A deeply felt and at times dramatic *Adagio cantabile* serves as the third movement. The finale, *Vivace*, is lively. It is certainly a worthwhile work which can be recommended to amateur groups.

Now we come to **Mozart (1756-91)**. Of his 6 string quintets, only one is ever performed in concert, Quintet No. 4 K. 516 in G minor. However, I would also draw your attention to Quintet No. 3 K. 515 in C Major which is every bit as fine, if not better. Quintet No. 5 in D Major, K. 593 and No. 6 in E flat Major, K. 614 are also good works, but do not rise to the level of K. 515 and 516, which must be ranked among the very finest written. No. 1 in B flat Major, K. 174 is an early work and is more in the nature of a divertimento from Mozart's Italian period. And No. 2 in C minor, K. 406 is a retread of a work originally for winds, although it is interesting and worth a look. These works have all been discussed and analyzed many times and do not require any further comment from me.

**Paul Müller-Zürich (1898-1993)** was born in the Swiss city of Zürich. His original name was merely Paul Müller, but because Müller is such a common German surname, he added the place of his birth to distinguish himself from others with the same name. He studied at the Zürich Conservatory with Volkmar Andreae



and then in Paris and Berlin with Philipp Jarnach. Müller-Zürich pursued a career as composer and teacher at his alma mater. His music during the first part of his life was influenced by the late Romantic writers, but later adapted elements of the neo-Baroque and polytonal styles.

His **String Quintet in F Major, Op. 2** dates from 1919. In the opening movement, the Allegro is full of drama, but a little tricky with its time signature frequently changing from 4/4 to 3/4 and back again. The slow movement, Adagio espressivo, is noble in sentiment and has a quicker and more lighthearted middle section. Third comes an Allegretto which is a charming minuet with a very finely contrasting trio agitato. The main section of the finale is march-like, while there is a misterioso middle. Certainly this is a candidate for the concert hall, but it will be beyond all but the most experienced amateurs who have an ear for the structural independence of the 5 voices.



**Josef Mysliveček (1737–1781)** was born in Prague and, like his father, became a master miller before studying music with a number of teachers, first in Prague and then in Venice. Unlike most composers of that era, Mysliveček refused to work directly for any noble, prelate, or ruler and earned his living solely through teaching, performing, and composing. From 1763 on, he mainly lived in Italy, where he

became a highly successful composer of opera. He wrote in virtually every genre and must be counted among those composers who made important contributions to the formation of late eighteenth-century Classicism. Mysliveček's Op. 2 string quintets were almost certainly the earliest string quintets for 2 violas ever published. Additionally, he was a pioneer in the composition of music for wind ensemble, the outstanding examples of which are his 3 wind octets. His violin concertos are generally considered the finest composed between 1730 and 1775. He was also one of the most gifted symphonists. Mysliveček provided Mozart, with whom he was a close friend, with significant compositional models for the symphony, the concerto, for serious Italian opera and for chamber music. Mysliveček's compositions evoke a gracious, diatonic style typical of Italian classicism. His best works are characterized by melodic inventiveness, logical continuity, and a certain emotional intensity that may be attributable to his dynamic personality. Like most composers of this era, he was by necessity prolific. He has at least 14 string quintets to his credit, but only 3 ever seem to have been published.

These are his **Op. 2 String Quintets** which date from 1767 and comprise the first three quintets of set of six, The last three were not published. From their structure, we can hear that they are clearly of the new type of chamber music which began to emerge during the third quarter of the 18th century. They use a typical Italian sonata form. The melodies and harmonies surely had an influence on the chamber music which both Haydn and Mozart were producing during the decade of the 1770's and beyond. For this reason, as well as the fact that they are the first known example of the modern viola quintets, these works are of great historical importance. But beyond this, the melodies are attractive and the movements well-constructed.

**Ernst Naumann (1832-1910)** was born in the German town of Freiberg in Saxony. He studied music at the Leipzig Conservatory with Moritz Hauptmann and Ernst Friedrich Richter and made his name primarily as an organist, editor and conductor. He

served as Kapellmeister of Jena from 1860 until his death 50 years later. His compositions were not numerous and many of them are chamber music. His chamber music consists of a string trio, a string quartet, 2 viola quintets, a nonet and a trio for piano, violin and viola.

**String Quintet No. 1 in C Major, Op. 6** appeared in 1862. This is a decent work, with touches of Mendelssohn. There are no real technical problems, but nothing really stands out to make it particularly memorable. It is not a candidate for concert and, given so many other works which deserve attention, including his second quintet, I cannot recommend it.

**String Quintet No. 2 in E flat Major, Op. 13** appeared in 1880. The opening movement, Allegro con brio, from its opening bars is lively and fleet. This is followed by a more lyrical and very attractive second subject. Both the development and the coda are quite effective. The second movement, Moderato, though not so marked, is an Intermezzo with a scherzo for a middle section. Next comes an almost religious-sounding Andante con espresso, the middle section to which is more energetic and agitated. The finale, Presto con fuoco, conveys the racing excitement of the hunt. The entire thing is quite effective. This is a quintet which will appeal to home music makers, but also deserves to be heard in the concert hall.



**Sigismund Neukomm (1778-1858)** was born in Salzburg. He studied composition with Michael Haydn. There were further studies in Vienna with Joseph Haydn. Neukomm held a number of positions, including music director at St. Petersburg's German theatre. He traveled widely throughout Europe and even visited Brazil, where he popularized the works of Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Mozart. Neukomm's compositional output is large. He

wrote several operas, masses, oratorios, songs, and works for piano solo, as well as chamber music. During his lifetime, he and his music were widely respected, and he was regarded as being in the front rank of those composers from the Classical era, after Haydn and Mozart. Despite the fame he achieved during the first half of the 19th century, his name and works fell into obscurity because he outlived the Classical era by 50 years. This is a fate which might well have happened to Mozart had he lived so long. Certainly had Neukomm died before 1815, his reputation would have remained intact. Neukomm wrote 6 string quintets—3 for 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos; and 3 for 2 violins, 2 violas and cello. The latter are remarkable in that he attempted to write program music long before this practice became commonplace. These 3 works were all composed in Paris between 1812-13, only 3-4 years after Joseph Haydn's death.

**L'amante abandonnée** (The Abandoned Lover) is in 3 movements. Each represents a different state—Being in love, Unfaithfulness and, finally, Despair at having been unfaithful. The first movement, entitled "Amour," tonally describes all of the highs and lows of being in love—flirting, desire, arousal and the threat of disappointment. The music is graceful and elegant. The second movement, "Infidélité," is a theme and set of variations based on the French folksong, "I can hear the flute of my fickle shepherd." Neukomm uses some very creative harmonies here. In the finale, "Désespoir," the desperation of one whose lover has been unfaithful is well characterized by the allegro agitato. A programmatic work, fun to play, not at all hard, it can be recommended to amateurs and perhaps in concert as a curiosity.

**Une Fête de Village en Suisse** (A festival in a Swiss Village) was composed during Neukomm's sojourn in Brazil between 1816 and 1821, when he was attached to the royal court of Joao VI. It was there that he met the famous Brazilian surgeon Manoel Alvares de Carvalho, who was a royal counselor and

personal doctor to the queen. A friendship was struck up between the 2 men, perhaps because Alvares had been educated in Portugal and Neukomm had spent some time there as well. In any event, Neukomm dedicated the work to Alvares. It is programmatic music, much in the way that Beethoven's Sixth Symphony was. Neukomm himself provided program notes: "FIRST MOVEMENT The music begins by giving a picture of the sunrise. All of nature awakens. The stag gathers his herd brood, the birds sing and the echoes of their songs reverberate, proclaiming in a thousand voices a beautiful day and the wonder of nature. As the sun rises, one and all are brought to life by its rays. SECOND MOVEMENT Now all of the villagers head to the church to celebrate the festival of the patron saint. THIRD MOVEMENT Now it's noon time, the sky is brighter and the heat is becoming oppressive. Soon clouds gather in the sky, darkening the air, and a terrible thunder storm follows. And then it passes, the clouds scatter, and the sun in its magnificence shines again. FOURTH MOVEMENT The towns people gather together on the village green, joking and playing. With the rising din, joy and happiness spread throughout the crowd. At last, the people begin dancing, but they are interrupted by cowherds' songs and shepherds blowing their horns to bring their herds home. Then, the dancing begins anew but soon the vesper bells ring out, clanging 3three times, calling the pious villagers to evening prayers. The dancing and frolicking comes to an end as the towns people return to their homes, their hearts filled with the happy memories of the celebration."



**Ludvig Norman (1831-1885)** was born in Stockholm. He studied at the Leipzig Conservatory shortly after it was founded by Mendelssohn. His composition teachers were Julius Rietz and Moritz Hauptmann, his piano professor was Ignaz Moscheles. A prolific composer, he also enjoyed a career as a pianist, conductor and teacher. Among his many pupils was the prominent composer Elfrida Andrée. Norman com-

posed in a wide variety of genres, and chamber music was an important part of his oeuvre, among which there are 2 piano trios, a piano quartet, a piano sextet, 5 string quartets, a string quintet, a string sextet and a string octet. It is not hard to hear the influence of both Mendelssohn and Schumann in Norman's works, since both were regarded as gods by his teachers.

Norman's **String Quintet in a minor, Op. 35** dates from 1875. The first movement, *Allegro energico*, is just that, energetic but the thematic material is rather ordinary. The *Andante sostenuto con molto sentimento* is well constructed and sounds good, but again the melodic material, while acceptable, is not particularly memorable. In third place is an *Allegretto con moto*, a kind of dance. There's nothing bad about it, but again the material lacks that quality which makes you want to play it again. The finale, *Allegro appassionato*, begins with a slow introduction, complete with violin cadenza a la Mendelssohn Op. 13, which is well done and creates the expectation of what is to come, but this expectation is not realized. Certainly not for the concert hall and while there is nothing wrong with the work, I cannot say it is worth the time of amateurs.



**Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)** achieved international recognition as a composer and even today is regarded as Denmark's most important 20<sup>th</sup>-century composer. For many years his symphonies were widely performed. Unfortunately, this was not the case with his fine chamber music. Nielsen was born on the island of Fyn (Funen), the seventh of 12 children. His father was a painter by trade, but he also played the violin and cornet, and as a result was much in demand as a village musi-

cian. Nielsen exhibited a talent for music at an early age. His father suggested he study a wind instrument so that he might pursue the career of a musician in a regimental band. Nielsen followed this path briefly, but decided he wanted to study violin and to compose. With the financial help of friends, he was able to attend the Royal Conservatory in Copenhagen, where he studied with Niels Gade.

His **String Quintet in G Major** dates from 1888. Although it has no opus number, we know that he began work on it immediately after composing his somewhat better-known "Little Suite" which was Op. 1. The quintet was performed a number of times in the decade after he wrote it and then forgotten until a year before he died, when Nielsen dedicated to a friend. It was not published during his lifetime, which almost certainly is the reason that this fine work is seldom ever heard and has only been recorded once or twice. Yes, it is not at all representative of his later style, but so what. Does the fact that Beethoven's Op. 18 quartets sound nothing like his late quartets mean they are worthless? Of course not, and this quintet is a very worthwhile work, deserving of concert performance and the time of amateur players as well. The opening movement, *Allegro pastorale*, is somewhat misnamed. The main theme is a heroic, upbeat melody, full of energy. A lovely, very romantic *Adagio* comes next. The main theme unfolds slowly like a flower in time-lapse photography. The third movement, *Allegro scherzando*, is playful and full of nervous energy and a little bit edgy, foreshadowing some of his later works. The finale, *Allegro molto*, is full of youthful exuberance and forward motion. This is an altogether satisfying work.



It is hard to believe that a composer whose chamber music Schumann and Mendelssohn ranked with that of Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn could fall into obscurity. Perhaps no composer more than **George Onslow (1784-1853)**, illustrates the fickleness of fame.

Onslow was born and lived his entire life in France, the son of an English father and French mother. His 36 string quartets and 34 string quintets were, during his own lifetime and up to the end of the 19th century, held in the highest regard, particularly in Germany, Austria and England, where he was regularly placed in the front rank of composers. His work was admired by both Beethoven and Schubert, the latter modeling his own 2-cello quintet (D. 956) on those of Onslow and not, as is so often claimed, on those of Boccherini. Publishers such as Breitkopf & Härtel and Kistner were among many which competed to bring out his works. Such was Onslow's reputation that he was elected to succeed Cherubini as Director of the prestigious Académie des Beaux-Arts, based on the excellence of his chamber music and this, in an "Opera Mad France," which had little regard for chamber music. However, after the First World War, his music, along with that of so many other fine composers, fell into oblivion and until 1984, the bicentennial of his birth, he remained virtually unknown. Since then, his music, to the delight of players and listeners alike, is slowly being rediscovered, played and recorded. Onslow's writing was unique in that he was able to merge the drama of the opera into the chamber music idiom perfected by the Viennese masters. Of his 34 quintets, only 6--the first 3 and the last 3--are for 2 violas, rather than 2 cellos or cello and string bass. While the other 28 were published and have a viola part which replaces the first cello, this was for the purpose of sales. I will discuss those works in the section for quintets with 2 cellos. Onslow's first 3 viola quintets were his Op. 1 which dates from 1807. Only the second of these has received a modern edition, which I will discuss.

**String Quintet No. 2 in E flat Major, Op. 1 No.2** is typical of Onslow's early style. Though this is an early work, it is already in every sense a mature work which makes a strong impression. A short Largo introduction leads to the main movement. It gives little indication of what is to come, namely a very powerful main theme. The second movement, *Andante con variazione*, makes good use of all 5 voices with a set of very clever and well-done variations, based on a simple but warm theme. A Menuetto allegro comes next. The main section combines grace with power, while the trio, by the use of changes in dynamics, is both charming and effective. A fine finale tops off the work. This quintet is without doubt one of the very best string quintets to be written up to this time (1806) and can be recommended both for concert and home.

Good though the Op. 1 quintets are, Onslow's last 3 are far better, 2 qualifying as masterpieces. **String Quintet No. 32 in d minor, Op. 78** was completed in 1849 and upon its publication in 1851 became immensely popular. It is not hard to understand why. The opening movement, *Allegro pathetico e moderato*, begins in a quite leisurely fashion with a moody and foreboding melody in the first viola. But slowly tension begins to build until at last a dirge, full of pathos, breaks out. The second movement, a Beethovenian Scherzo, is one of the most exciting scherzos Onslow, or anyone else for that matter, ever wrote. At last, the listener is allowed to catch his breath: a peaceful *Andante affettuoso* follows. The simple, opening measures are without guile. This is followed by a very beautiful and lyrical melody. The exciting finale, *Allegro molto vivace*, brings this wonderful masterpiece to a rousing conclusion. This quintet must be included in the class of masterworks.

The same can be said for **String Quintet No. 33 in c minor, Op. 80**, which was completed in 1850 and was, upon its publication in 1852, an immediate success. When you hear it, it's not hard to understand why. The opening movement, *Allegro grandioso*, begins with a dramatic chromatic theme of triplets. The second subject is a lovely lyrical melody. The second movement, *Scherzo molto vivace*, begins with a fast-moving, hard-driving main theme, which leaves neither listener nor player a chance to catch their breath. The military march of the trio section seamlessly changes the tempo from 3/4 to 2/4. The third movement, *Andante sostenuto*, is a quiet pastorelle of great beauty. The incredible finale, again *Molto vivace*, is a true "moto perpetuo," brilliantly executed from start to finish. This is, without doubt, one of the most exciting string quintets in the literature.

**String Quintet No. 34 in E Major, Op. 82**, Onslow's last work for strings, was completed in 1850, not long after his previous quintet, Op. 80. It was not published, however, until after his death in 1853. It is essentially different in character than either Op. 78 or Op. 80. It is in the major: its mood is primarily bright, and right from the opening melody of the *Allegro grazioso*, one hears a Mozartean sunny lyricism. There is grace, elegance and good taste all bound up in this lovely music. The second movement, a *Scherzo molto vivace*, could not be more different. It bursts forth without any preparation, quickly driving forward with great impulsiveness. The trio section not only provides a fine contrast, but is quite unusual. The melody is only short notes against a guitar-like pizzicato accompaniment in the cello, which soon takes over as the main melody. The *Andantino* which follows is characterized a deliberate stateliness. As the dynamic increases, it takes on the aura of a processional. The second theme, quite Romantic, is a delicate duet between the first violin and the cello. The upbeat finale, *Allegro molto vivace*, is full of clever effects and radiates a sense of good feeling. This is a fine work, but perhaps because of its key and happy mood is not quite as compelling as the previous two.



**Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918)** was born in Bournemouth, England. As far as music went, he received some lessons on the piano as youth, but did not formally study it. He was educated at Eton and Oxford, and, though he showed an extraordinary aptitude for music, he took a degree in law and modern history, since his father wanted him to have a career in commerce. From 1870 to 1877, Parry worked in the insurance industry, but he continued his musical studies, first with William Sterndale Bennett, and later with the pianist Edward Dannreuther, when Brahms proved to be unavailable. After leaving the insurance industry, Parry became a full-time musician and during the last decades of the 19th century was widely regarded as England's finest composer. In the 1890's, he became director of the Royal College of Music and was appointed Professor of Music at Oxford. He helped establish classical music at the center of English cultural life. As head of the Royal College of Music, he taught, among others, Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge and John Ireland. His music shows the influence of Bach and Brahms. After hearing a performance of Brahms' first string quintet, Parry was motivated to write one himself.

Parry's **String Quintet in E flat Major** was composed in 1884, revised in 1902 and finally published in 1909. Much as he admired Brahms, there is not much if anything which sounds like Brahms, a good thing since there have been so many composers who wrote Brahms-like works. The opening *Allegro animando* is not particularly animated, but genial and somewhat on the tender side. After 2 loud chords, attention grabbers, an upbeat *Allegro molto*, which serves as a scherzo, follows. The chords return to herald the more lyrical and slightly melancholy trio section in the minor. The third movement, *Andante sostenuto*, is calm and peaceful, bucolic. The finale, *Vivace*, bustles along, English in mood, but not terribly compelling. A decent work, but certainly not a great one.

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**Richard von Perger (1854-1911)** was born in the Austrian city of Graz. He studied composition in Vienna with several teachers, including Brahms, whose influence can often be felt in his music. His career was divided between composing, conducting and teaching. He served as director of the Rotterdam Conservatory and later the Vienna Conservatory, as well as the Wiener Singverein (Vienna Choral Society) and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. He wrote in most genres and his chamber music, in particular, was held in high regard.

Perger's **String Quintet in D Major, Op. 10** was finished in 1886 and there is no doubt that this is a work heavily influenced by Brahms. In 3 movements, it opens with a big Brahmsian *Allegro ma non troppo*. The main theme is effective and convincing; other themes are closely related and give the feeling that the movement has gone on for longer than necessary. The middle movement, *Allegretto vivace*, is charming and zesty, with several themes, again some very Brahmsian. The finale is 2 movements in one or perhaps one big movement with 2 sections. It opens with a long *Largo e sostenuto* introduction which could be considered a short slow movement. This leads to a magnificent *Allegro* full of brilliant passage work, quite effective but not particularly easy to pull off. All in all, it is a very good work, which perhaps could be considered as Brahms' Third.

**Johann Friedrich Peter (1746-1813)** was born in the Dutch town of Heerendijk to German parents who were active in the

Moravian Church. He was educated in Holland and Germany, and emigrated in 1770 to what soon became the United States. He was active in the Moravian Church, and virtually all of his compositions, more than 100, are for the church, except 6 string quintets which bear no opus number. They date from 1789 and are basically in the Baroque style with no apparent knowledge of later developments such as those by the Mannheim composers, let alone Haydn or Mozart. The works are totally unremarkable, and playing or performing them can only be justified on historical grounds, since they appear to be the first string quintets written in North America, albeit not by a native born American.



It is interesting to note how once honored and popular composers sometimes all but entirely vanish. The leading critic of the time F. J. Fétis, writing of Ignaz Pleyel, noted: "No composer ever created more of a craze than Pleyel. He enjoyed a universal reputation and dominated the field of instrumental music for more than twenty years. There was no amateur or professional musician who did

not delight in his genius." **Ignaz Pleyel (1757-1831)** was born in the Austrian town of Ruppersthal. He began his studies with Jan Baptist Vanhal and then with Haydn, who, along with Mozart, considered Pleyel extraordinarily talented. Mozart is said to have called Pleyel the "next Haydn" and Haydn saw to it that his star pupil's works, primarily chamber music, were published. Pleyel's reputation quickly spread, and he obtained the position of Kapellmeister (Music Director) at one of Hungary's leading courts. Later he moved to Strasbourg, where he worked with Franz Xaver Richter and settled there. During the French Revolution, he moved to London, but later returned to France and became a French citizen. In 1795, he founded a publishing firm which bore his name. It became one of the most important in France, publishing the works of Beethoven, Hummel, Boccherini, Onslow, Clementi, Dussek and many others. In addition, Pleyel founded a well-known piano manufacturing company which also bears his name. Pleyel and his music were quite famous during his lifetime. In England, for a time, his music was more popular than that of Haydn.

Like all composers of the time, Pleyel was extraordinarily prolific, writing over 600 works, a huge number by any standard except that of Mozart or Haydn. However, while Pleyel lived longer than Mozart, he stopped composing by his mid-30's. Among these many works, which are mostly chamber music, some 13 string quintets are known. Pleyel's oeuvre has now been catalogued by Rita Benton and his works go by Ben numbers rather than opus numbers. The known string quintets have Ben numbers of 271-279, 283-285, and 287. There may, of course, be more. Until recently there were no modern editions, however, as of late (2018) the International Pleyel Society has begun making modern editions which can be bought online. I am familiar with a half-dozen of the 13 quintets, **Ben 271-273** and **277-279**. What I have to say of the 6 can most likely be taken as applying to all 13. They each have 3 and not 4 movements, and follow a fast-slow-fast pattern. The music sounds like a cross between Haydn and Mozart. They were all composed between 1780 and 1790 and are worthy representatives of the Viennese Classical tradition. Although they are well-written, sound good and are interesting, they are not by any means to be compared to those of Mozart. On the whole, they are better than those of the Wranitzky brothers and on a par with Hoffmeister's, but not as good as Krommer's. And while I cannot recommend them for concert performance, amateurs who enjoy the Viennese Classics will certainly enjoy playing these works.



**Gunter Raphael (1903-1960)** was born in Berlin and studied at the Berlin Hochschule with Robert Kahn and Arnold Mendelssohn. He taught for many years at the Leipzig Conservatory.

He wrote one string quintet, the **String Quintet in f sharp minor, Op. 17**. It dates from 1926. It is in 4 movements—Molto agitato, Adagio, Molto vivace, and Allegro con fuoco—

which are played without interruption. The work is difficult for this reason alone, since both the players and listeners need more stamina than they are accustomed to nowadays. From the players' standpoint, intonation is also a problem. The work is just tonal; it sounds perhaps like what Schumann or maybe Brahms might have written if they were alive in the 1920's. The quintet deserves to be heard in concert, but is beyond all but the very best amateurs.



**Prince Heinrich XXIV Reuss of Köstritz (1855-1910)**, was born in the Prussian town of Trebschen. The Reusses were a large old German noble family with several branches and literally dozens of princes called Heinrich. There was even another Prince Heinrich XXIV, but he was "of Greiz"—hence the need for the lengthy name. Our Prince Reuss after initially studying music with his father, who had

been a student of Carl Reissiger, took a law degree. However, subsequently he devoted himself to music, studying composition privately with Heinrich von Herzogenberg, who introduced him to Brahms. Although Brahms never formally gave lessons to Reuss, according to the prince, he gave the young composer numerous suggestions and considerable help which, as far as Reuss was concerned, almost amounted to the same thing. Though not a prolific composer, he did pen 6 symphonies, as well as a considerable amount of chamber music, including 5 string quartets, 2 string sextets, 3 piano trios, a piano quartet, a piano quintet, a string quintet and instrumental sonatas. His style can be an amalgam of Brahms, Herzogenberg and, to some extent, Dvorák and Mendelssohn. His works were premiered to critical acclaim and were held in high regard for many years before disappearing from the repertoire after the First World War.

His **String Quintet in F Major, Op. 4** dates from 1887. It is a warm-blooded work that is enjoyable to hear, but also comfortable and well-written for each part. One must note the excellence of the technique which in no small part approaches that of Brahms. The first movement begins Allegro moderato but soon the tempo picks up. The jovial and bustling main theme is followed by a more lyrical and serious second subject. The magnificent thematic material well justifies the movement's substantial length. In the Scherzo which comes next, we hear echoes of Mendelssohnian elves' dances, as well as tinges of Hungarian folk music. Next comes a praiseworthy Romance, Andante con moto, which brings Mozart to mind. The finale, Allegro non assai, begins with a very fresh main subject, then the more rhythmic second theme, which receives a Beethovenian treatment, offers a good contrast. A fleet stretto brings this fine work to a close. This is a first-rate work which makes a handsome addition to the string quintet literature. It deserves performance in the concert hall, but also can be warmly recommended to amateur players.

**Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger (1839-1901)** was born in Vaduz, the capital of Liechtenstein. At the age of 5, young Joseph was given piano and organ lessons from a local teacher. His talent was immediately discovered and was of such a substantial nature that with the help of a scholarship he was sent to the Royal Con-



servatory in Munich, where he studied with Franz Lachner, one of Schubert's close friends and an important composer in his own right. Rheinberger, who remained in Munich for the rest of his life, was in great demand as an organist and choral master. He eventually became conductor of the important Munich Choral Society and served as voice coach at the Royal Opera, where he got to know Wagner. He also taught at the Royal Conservatory

where he held the position of Professor of Composition for nearly 40 years. Remembered today only for his organ compositions which are considered the most important ever written after those of Bach, during his lifetime Rheinberger was a much-respected composer, generally ranked after Brahms and Wagner as the most important living German composer. Furthermore, he was also generally regarded as the leading teacher of composition during most of his lifetime. Among his many students were Humperdinck, Wolf-Ferrari, George Chadwick and Wilhelm Furtwängler. Rheinberger composed the **String Quintet in a minor, Op. 82** in 4 movements in 1874. Upon its premiere, the leading critic of the day wrote: "This Quintet is a highly individual and profound composition, rich in good ideas and powerful timbre effects." I can say with complete confidence that it is as good or better than any string quintet from the Romantic era. The opening movement, Allegro, begins in a Mendelssohnian fashion with a fleet but hard-driving main theme. The wonderfully contrasting second theme is both lyrical and quieter, but ingeniously holds on to the rhythmic features of the first theme. The excellent coda is introduced by an original "trumpet" call. The second movement, Adagio molto, has for its main subject a highly romantic lied. The excellent accompaniment is unique and quite original. The middle section consists of a powerful and passionate interlude. In the Scherzo vivace which follows, we find a highly rhythmic dance melody as the main theme while the trio brings a lovely, lyrical duet. Both the main theme and the second theme of the fiery, Hungarian-flavored memorable finale, entitled *Rhapsodies non troppo mosso*, are absolutely magnificent and are treated in a highly individualistic fashion. A masterpiece, and yet it plays so well and at the same time presents no real difficulties for amateurs.



Today, **Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838)** is primarily remembered as a friend and student of Beethoven, as well as his first biographer. However, during his lifetime and for much of the 19th century, Ries was remembered as a fine composer and virtuoso pianist. He showed musical promise from an early age, studying both violin and piano with his father, and the cello with Bernhard Romberg. In 1801, he went to Vienna to study with Beethoven. He studied piano and composition with him for nearly 5 years. Thereafter, Ries concertized throughout Europe for a number of years before settling in London and then finally retiring in Frankfurt. He wrote a considerable amount of music, including several piano concertos and a large quantity of chamber music which was for many years often performed and well thought of. Ries composed 4 viola quintets—opp. 37, 68, 167 and 171.

**String Quintet No. 1 in C Major, Op. 37** dates from 1809. It is dedicated to Ignaz Schuppanzigh, then one of the most famous violinists in Vienna, whose quartet premiered all but the last 5 of Beethoven's string quartets. Thus, it is no surprise that the first violin part requires a player of very high ability. Also, the cellist must be no slouch. The thematic material of the big opening Allegro is rather ordinary, especially in view of the movement's length. Though shorter, the same could be said of

the material in the Andante. The scherzo, Allegro molto vivace, however, is quite good, as is the concluding Allegro.

Two years later in 1811, Ries finished **String Quintet No. 2 in d minor, Op. 68**. It was dedicated to the violin virtuoso Andreas Romberg and his cousin, the cello virtuoso Bernhard Romberg. As might be expected, those parts are rather demanding. I have not played or heard this work, so I am no position to comment further.

Sixteen years later in 1827, Ries completed his **String Quintet No. 3 in a minor, Op. 167**. I have only examined the parts and can only say that it was composed with virtuosi in mind.

In 1833, Ries produced his **String Quintet No. 4 in G Major, Op. 171**. The effective opening Allegro is Beethovenian. The unusual second movement, Scherzo, allegro, alternates between the scherzo—which is often interrupted by brief episodes of an elegiac Andante—and a deeply-felt Adagio. Next comes a fine theme and variations. In the finale, Allegro molto vivace, quasi presto, Ries brings back all of the themes from the previous 3 movements, which in and of itself was rather unusual for the time. Of the 4 quintets, it is this one which is most deserving of your attention.



**Franz Ries (1846-1932)** was born in Berlin where his father, the younger brother of Ferdinand Ries and a leading violinist in that city, was his first teacher. He subsequently studied at the Paris Conservatory with Vieuxtemps and Massart. After graduating, he enjoyed a career as a soloist until nerve damage in his hand forced him to abandon it. Subsequently, he worked as a composer and music publisher.

His **String Quintet in c minor, Op. 28** appeared in 1878. In the first movement, Allegro poco agitato, the excellent and somewhat stormy main theme is immediately introduced by the cello. The music has an elegiac quality, a little reminiscent of Beethoven's "Coriolanus Overture." It is cleverly written and quite beautiful. Next comes a Mendelssohnian intermezzo, Vivace. There is a tender second theme which provides a fine contrast and a livelier middle section. The third movement, Andante, is a set of finely put together variations based on a funeral theme. These variations provide a wonderful rhythmic contrast to each other and bring to mind those in Schubert's d minor quartet ("Death and the Maiden"). The exciting finale, Allegro assai, is stormy and passionate. It is especially to be recommended to amateurs, since the composer quite obviously has a superb knowledge of how to write for strings.



**Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894)** was one of the great piano virtuosos of the 19th century with a technique said to rival that of Liszt. He also gained renown as a composer and conductor. Rubinstein was one of those rare concert virtuosos whose contribution to music went far beyond performing. In 1862, he founded the St. Petersburg Conservatory and served as its first director. His efforts in developing Russian musical talent were perhaps the greatest of any single individual.

Not only did he introduce European educational methods, but he also established standards that were as rigorous as any conservatory in Europe. While Rubinstein's compositions were extremely popular during his lifetime, after his death they were criticized because they showed "no Russian influence" and were viewed as derivative of prominent European contemporaries, especially of Mendelssohn. Despite the fact that commentator after commenta-

tor has repeated this assertion, almost as if it were a litany, it is nonetheless not entirely accurate. Although he was not part of the so-called emergent Russian national school led by Rimsky-Korsakov, it is not true that there is no Russian influence to be found in his music. Rubinstein was a prolific composer writing in nearly every genre. Chamber music figures prominently amongst his works. He wrote 10 string quartets, at least 5 piano trios, a string quintet and a string sextet as well as several other chamber works.

His **String Quintet in F Major, Op. 59** was completed in 1859. This quintet, like so many of his other fine works, was ignored after his death, largely because he was only remembered as one of the greatest pianists of all time. That is a shame, because this is a fine work with appealing melodies and good part-writing, and not overly difficult to play. The work begins with a short Lento introduction in the minor, leading to a passionate and restless Allegro non troppo with echoes of Mendelssohn. The second movement, Allegro, is a charming intermezzo. A beautiful Andante assai with a dramatic middle section comes next. In the finale, the cello is given the privilege of introducing the memorable main theme. This is a first-class quintet which can be recommended for concert or home.



**Max von Schillings (1868-1933)** was born in the German town of Duren. He attended the Conservatory in Cologne. After graduating, he worked primarily as a teacher, composer and theater director. He was primarily known as a composer of opera and is remembered today for his opera *Mona Lisa* which achieved world-wide fame before the First World War. He wrote 2 chamber works—a string quartet and a string

quintet.

His **String Quintet in E flat Major** was completed in 1917. It is written in an updated Wagnerian fashion. The opening movement Mäßig bewegt begins with a yearning theme of some beauty, but there follow several dramatic and almost harsh episodes which are riveting. The second movement, Sehr getragen, is dirge-like and features a dour fugue in its middle section. The Schnell und lebendig which comes next is a hard-driving and very effective scherzo. The finale, Kräftig bewegt und fest, is hard to describe because of its fluctuating moods and is the least accessible of the 4 movements. There is much thrashing about and some pretty edgy harsh episodes. Nonetheless, this is certainly a first-rate work which belongs in concert and can be recommended to very experienced amateurs of good technical ability.



**Nikolai Sokolov (1859–1922)** was born in St. Petersburg and studied at the conservatory there under Rimsky-Korsakov. He became one of several composers, mostly students of Korsakov such as Glazunov and Borodin, who came to be known as the Belaiev Circle, named after the important Russian music publisher, M. P. Belaiev. These composers dedicated themselves to creating a “Russian School” (i.e. Russian-

sounding). Sokolov eventually became a professor at the Petersburg Conservatory, where Alexander Tcherepnin and Dmitri Shostakovich were among his many students. He wrote music for the ballet and orchestra as well as chamber music, including 3 string quartets. Today, if he is known at all, it is for his contributions to a collection of short pieces for string quartet by the composers of the Belaiev Circle. The collection came to be known as “Les Vendredis.” It commemorated the chamber music concerts and banquets which took place most Friday evenings at the mansion of the publisher Belaiev. All of the pieces in the collection were specifically composed for those Friday evening concerts.

The **Serenade for String Quintet, Op. 3** was in fact dedicated to Belaiev, a keen amateur violist, and intended as a present. As in the famous B-La-F string quartet (a composite work by Rimsky-Korsakov, Liadov, Glazunov and Borodin), the Serenade uses the same 3 notes, which in the French rendering spell out Belaiev's name. The beautiful one-movement work achieved considerable popularity and was later arranged by Sokolov in a version for 10 to 12 strings.



**Louis Spohr (1784-1859)**, also known as Ludwig, was born in the German city of Braunschweig. From early childhood, he showed a great aptitude for the violin. He studied with the virtuoso violinist Franz Anton Eck in St. Petersburg and ultimately became one of the leading violinists in the first half of the 19th century. But from the very beginning, Spohr wanted to become more than just a violin virtuoso. Hard work and talent allowed

him to become a leading conductor, a highly regarded composer and a famous violin teacher. As a conductor, he pioneered the use of the baton and introduced the practice of putting letters into parts to aid rehearsal. Violinists should be forever grateful to him not only for his fine concertos, but also because he invented the chin rest. Spohr wrote in virtually every genre, not the least being chamber music. He composed some 36 string quartets, 7 string quintets, 5 piano trios, 4 double quartets and several other chamber pieces. During the 1830's, he bemoaned his lack of ability on the piano and said that he would gladly trade a year's salary to be able to play the piano well. Spohr was truly a great man of many skills (mountaineer, hiker, painter et al.), and nothing, if not determined. The 7 viola quintets are hardly ever played. I have never heard a public performance of these either. In general, the 2 violas enrich the harmonization in these works, although the first viola does get to play some important solos, often in response to an initial statement by the first violin. The other instruments are sometimes required to execute prominent and not particularly grateful passages, sometimes quite unexpectedly.

The first two quintets came out in 1814. They are **String Quintet No. 1 in E flat Major, Op. 33** and **String Quintet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 33**. No. 2 is more interesting than No. 1. As with all the quintets, the first violin part, though demanding technically, does not require a violinist of Spohr's ability. The first movement is beautifully written in a flowing style. The Scherzo is very original, with daring leaps, and the trio is a model of gracious tranquillity. In the theme and variations of the Andante all instruments play important roles. Compared to this quintet, Op. 33 No. 1 has a significantly more soloistic first violin part.

**String Quintet No. 3 in b minor, Op. 69** appeared in 1827. The finale, a Rondo, is noteworthy and is in fact a barcarole, with the cello describing a gondola's motion, but the rest is rather pedestrian.

The first movement of **String Quintet No. 4 in a minor, Op. 91** from 1834 has such intonation difficulties because of chromaticism in all parts that further investigation into the rest of the work is discouraged. Although the Larghetto which follows has considerable charm, intonation difficulties crop up in the middle section. The mazurka-like Minuet is a study in contrast between forte and piano phrases. The finale is not particularly memorable for all of the difficulties it imposes.

The 1839 **String Quintet No. 5 in g minor, Op. 106** is probably the best of the bunch, although it does not qualify as a great or even first-class work. The first movement proceeds in a dramatic and declamatory manner, in a stately tempo with rich sonorities, and a stirring conclusion. The Larghetto is full of sentiment. A dramatic and forceful Scherzo comes next. The fi-



nale, Pastorale, is also captivating.

The most notable movement of the 1845 **String Quintet No. 6 in e minor, Op. 129** is the Scherzo with its staccato passages in the first and second violins and first viola, always preceded by explosive chords. The finale, a whirlwind Presto, is also rather good.

In 1854, Spohr's final quintet came out. **String Quintet No. 7 in g minor, Op. 144** is a big work. The slow movement, Larghetto, is full of noble sentiment, but the writing is too dense to be effective. The somewhat depressed Minuetto which comes next is more effective. The finale is a genial affair, pleasant but not particularly memorable.

Spohr was a great man and considered a great violinist, but his strength was in being able to quickly play chromatic passages full of awkward trills. This technique was not really in the mainstream and appears too frequently, in virtually all of his chamber music. Without doubt, there are many entertaining and even very good movements in these works, but they are uneven, and it is hard to credit him with writing 4 really effective movements in one work. Amateurs of some ability may wish to examine the quintets, but I cannot recommend them for concert performance.



**Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)** was born in Dublin. He took a Classics degree at Cambridge University and then went to the Leipzig Conservatory, where he studied composition with Carl Reinecke, followed by stint in Berlin where he studied with Friedrich Kiel. While abroad, Stanford met Brahms and became an admirer. The once high reputation that Stanford enjoyed all but disappeared after the First World War, when tastes changed and Romanticism was for a time discredited. Stanford's importance in the realm of British chamber music cannot be overestimated. He almost singlehandedly jumpstarted the British repertoire. Among his many students were Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, Frank Bridge, Ernst Moeran, Arthur Bliss and Percy Grainger.

Stanford's **String Quintet in Op. 85 in F Major** was intended for performance by the famous violinist Joseph Joachim and his string quartet. It dates from 1903. The opening Allegro to the Quintet begins with a buoyant theme, full of warmth and richly written. While one occasionally hears the influence of Brahms, Stanford's writing is more transparent and not as heavy. The middle movement, Andante, after a short introduction, gives way to a lovely viola solo. The second theme is clearly taken from an Irish folk melody. A powerful and rhythmically restless middle section presents a lament. Critics have suggested that this string quintet is in 3 movements because Stanford modeled its structure along the lines of Brahms' first string quintet. However, there really are 4 movements: Stanford chose to combine the scherzo, an Allegretto, with the finale, an Allegro, into one movement. The 2 are linked together by the larger structure of a theme and set of variations. The Allegretto gives the theme, also of Irish origin; the finale serves as the last and biggest variation. Though certainly no masterwork, it is nonetheless a good work with appealing melodies and good part-writing.

**Johan Svendsen (1840-1911)** was born in Oslo. His father was a music teacher, and Svendsen learned both the violin and clarinet from him. By the time he finished school, he was working as an orchestral musician, and occasionally made short concert tours as a violinist. In Lubeck, on one of his tours, Svendsen came to the attention of a wealthy merchant who made it possible for him to study from 1863-67 at the Leipzig Conservatory. He began his studies with Mendelssohn's favorite violinist, Ferdinand David,



but problems with his hand forced him to switch to composition, which he studied with Carl Reinecke. Afterwards, Svendsen worked primarily as a theater director and conductor. He achieved considerable fame as the latter and, during the last 20 years of the 19th century, was considered the leading Scandinavian conductor. All of Svendsen's chamber music was written while he was at the Leipzig Conservatory, yet these works were not then, and should not now, be considered student works. Svendsen was regarded, by general consensus, as one of the most talented students then at the Conservatory. His works won prizes and received public performances to acclaim.

The **String Quintet in C Major, Op. 5** was completed in 1867 and published the next year. The opening movement has a substantial Andante introduction which builds tension and introduces the weighty main theme. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the Andante changes into an Allegro. A lighter second theme has a Nordic sea flavor. The big second movement, Tema con Variazione, is the quintet's center of gravity. The theme is a pretty, somewhat melancholy folk tune. The magnificent treatment of this theme given in the several superb variations which follow has always attracted attention and high praise. The finale, Allegro, is built around a dance theme, perhaps a Norwegian folk dance. It becomes faster and faster, while building in tension. The lyrical and gentler second subject also has Nordic tinges about it. This quintet, with its lovely melodies, effective string writing and easy playability can not only be recommended to amateurs, but also for concert performance.



**Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915)** is one of the greatest Russian composers from the last half of the 19th and early 20th centuries and probably the one whose music is the least known in the West. In Russian concert halls, one always finds a bust of Taneyev alongside those of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Tchaikovsky. Sadly, the fame of this outstanding composer has not spread beyond his homeland.

Taneyev came from an aristocratic family that patronized the arts and when Sergei's talent became apparent, his father sent him to the newly-opened Moscow Conservatory at the age of 10. His main teachers there were Nicolai Rubinstein for piano and Tchaikovsky for composition. Although he became a brilliant pianist, Taneyev opted for a career as a composer and teacher, and soon became a professor at the Conservatory. His fame both as a teacher and as a composer quickly spread. Among his many students were Glière, Rachmaninov, Gretchaninov, Scriabin and Medtner.

Taneyev's **String Quintet in C Major, Op. 16** was completed in 1905 and dedicated to the memory of the famous Russian chamber music publisher and benefactor M. P. Belaiev. It is a work of almost symphonic proportions. The first movement, Allegro sostenuto, is predominantly serious. The magnificent first theme is rhythmically unique, the lyrical second theme is full of pain. The third theme tries to strike a somewhat more friendly mood. The contrapuntal work in this movement is of the highest art. The noble main theme of the Adagio espressivo which follows is a serious melody, while the middle section has a lighter air tinged with joy. The lovely third movement, Allegretto scherzando, is full of many different tempi and is very close at points to a mazurka. The finale, Vivace e con fuoco, is thematically related to the opening movement—spirited and full of superb writing, topped off by an outstanding fugue at the end. Among

the best late Romantic string quintets, this first-class work deserves concert performance and should be attempted by experienced amateurs as well.



**Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)** is one of England's most important 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers. He was born in the small village of Down Ampney in Gloucestershire and was educated at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music, where he studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford. Subsequently, he studied with Max Bruch in Berlin and Ravel in Paris. Vaughan Williams was able to establish his own distinctive voice early on and his quintet, though it shows some French influence, is unmistakably recognizable as his.

though it shows some French influence, is unmistakably recognizable as his.

The **Phantasy Quintet** dates from 1912 and was dedicated to William Wilson Cobbett who had created and endowed a famous competition. (The Cobbett Competitions were designed to encourage the younger generation of British composers to write chamber music. The rules of the competition provided an alternate format—the old English Fancy or Fantasia from the time of Purcell—to the traditional 4-movement work which had developed from Haydn onwards.) The opening Prelude begins with a lovely viola solo eventually answered by the first violin. The melody is pentatonic. The second movement, a Scherzo, starts with the cello and is quite unusual with its asymmetrical rhythm and ostinato. Perhaps there is a vague aura of Ravel. Next comes an Alla Sarabanda. It is a *lento* played entirely muted and without the cello, who rejoins the proceedings in the finale, *Burlesca*, which appears to be based on folk song and brings with it echoes of the first movement. This is a unique work. There are no others which sound like it and it always makes a strong impression.



**Wenzel Heinrich Veit (1804-1864)** was born in Reprnitz, at the time a German town in the Bohemian part of the Habsburg Empire. Until recently, he was ignored by the Czechs who have suddenly claimed him as one of theirs and have "baptized" him with the Czech version of his name—Vaclav Jindrich Veit. Veit attended Charles University in Prague and studied law. He pursued a dual career of lawyer and judge as well as composer, mostly in Prague, although

for a short time he held musical directorships in Aachen and Augsburg. Although he wrote a symphony, most of his works are either for voice or chamber ensembles, including 4 string quartets and 5 string quintets which were highly praised by Robert Schumann. The reason Veit and his music were ignored by the Czechs was twofold: first, because he was an ethnic German, but Veit was not a German nationalist. On the contrary, he supported an independent Bohemia, took the trouble as an adult to master the Czech language and wrote many songs in Czech using Czech folk melodies. The second reason his music was ignored was that it did not sound Slavic enough, but this ignores the time in which he wrote, which was before the Czech national awakening. The Wranitzkys, Krommer, Vanhal and many others all moved to Vienna and there is nothing particularly Slavic about their music either, but now they all have been repatriated as Czechs in good standing. They, however, were at least ethnic Czechs. But the truth with regard to Veit is that he was the most important Bohemian writer of chamber music before Dvorák. And he did use Czech folk music in some of his works. What is unfair is that now, even English sources (such as Wikipedia) wrongly refer to him by the Czech version of his name, a name he never used and which does not appear either on his baptismal certificate or gravestone. But music surmounts petty nationalism and we can

all enjoy his fine compositions.

Veit composed 5 string quintets which generally appeared as either for 2 violas or 2 cellos. They are **String Quintet No. 1 in F Major, Op. 1** dating from 1835, **Quintet No. 2 in a minor, Op. 2** from 1837, **Quintet No. 3 in G Major, Op. 4**, **Quintet No. 4 in c minor, Op. 20** from 1845 and **Quintet No. 5 in A Major, Op. 29**, which dates from 1851.

I am unfamiliar with all but the last one, **String Quintet No. 5 in A Major**. It is beautifully written, sounds good and is grateful to play, since it is well written for each instrument. The quintet opens with an appealing and attention-getting *Andante con moto* introduction leading to the main section, an *Allegro* that begins with a hunting fanfare and is followed by a doughty main subject. For contrast, there is a lovely, lyrical second subject. The second movement, *Adagio*, opens with the cello in the lead. The music is a cross between a romance and a funeral march. In the third movement, marked *Allegro* (*Märchen*—a fairytale), Veit shows himself to be a forerunner of Dvorák and other Czech composers by his use of a *dumka*. There is a nicely contrasting *Allegro molto* trio section. The finale, *Allegro molto*, is a kind of whirling tarantella. A good work which can be recommended to amateurs and perhaps for a concert performance.

**Jean Vogt (1823-1888)** was born in the German village of Gross Tinz. He was a piano virtuoso, and his own music was influenced by Mendelssohn.

His **String Quintet in a minor, Op. 66** dates from 1863. The opening movement has for its main theme an elegiac melody, good, but there is not enough other thematic material to justify its length. An *Andante con moto* is a kind of Mendelssohnian *intermezzo*. The scherzo, *Allegro molto quasi presto*, is good and the finale, *Allegro con brio* is also effective. No great difficulties here—a decent work, but not for the concert hall, however, amateurs may well enjoy it.



**Felix Weingartner (1863-1942)** was born in Zara, Dalmatia, today's Zadar, Croatia, to Austrian parents. In 1883, he went to the Leipzig Conservatory, where he studied composition with Carl Reinecke. He also studied privately with Franz Liszt in Weimar. Weingartner was one of the most famous and successful conductors of his time, holding positions in Hamburg, Mannheim, Danzig, Munich, Berlin and Vienna, where he succeeded Gustav Mahler as Director of the Imperial Opera. Despite his demanding career as a conductor, Weingartner, like Mahler, thought of himself equally as a composer and devoted considerable time to composition. He wrote several symphonies, numerous operas, some instrumental concertos, and a considerable amount of chamber music, including 4 string quartets, a piano sextet and a string quintet. Additionally, he wrote a great number of vocal works and instrumental sonatas. Though many of his works originally achieved a fair amount of acclaim, they quickly disappeared from the concert stage. Only in the past few years has their excellence been rediscovered.

His **String Quintet in C Major, Op. 40** dates from 1906. The opening *Allegro con brio* has a weighty and vigorous main subject, followed by an equally vigorous subsidiary theme. Very delicate and graceful is the second subject, around which there plays a charming accompaniment figure. This is a highly effective movement throughout. The second movement, *Allegretto grazioso*, is in the form of an updated Rococo dainty minuet. The lively and fleet trio, which is repeated twice, is in the form of a 2-step dance and provides a superb contrast. The following movement, *Molto agitato e passionato*, is a recitative, in which the first violin is given the lead. It is succeeded by a simple, naïve air,

the following movement, *Molto agitato e passionato*, is a recitative, in which the first violin is given the lead. It is succeeded by a simple, naïve air,

which is skillfully and ingeniously varied. A big, magnificent finale, *Allegro e marcato deciso in c minor*, begins with a passionate melody. It contains a kind of chorale, and, after reaching a brilliant climax, closes consolingly with an *andante* in the major mode, soft and mainly tender in character. This is a superb work. There is nothing at all like it in the quintet literature and there is no question it would triumph in the concert hall, and experienced amateur players also should not miss the chance to play it.



**August Winding (1835-1899)** was born in the Danish town of Tars on the island of Lolland. As a boy, he studied piano locally before entering the Leipzig Conservatory, where he studied piano with Anton Ree and composition with Carl Reinecke. He completed his composition studies with Niels Gade and continued his piano studies with the famed virtuoso Alexander Dreyschock. He enjoyed a European career as a concert pianist, and served as a teacher and professor at the Royal Danish Conservatory. Among Winding's chamber music compositions are a piano quartet and a string quintet.

The **String Quintet in D Major, Op. 23**, which dates from around 1885. Premiered in Copenhagen and then in Germany to great acclaim, it has inexplicably, along with so many other fine works, disappeared from the concert halls of today. The work is in 5 movements. The first movement, *Allegro grazioso*, is filled with lovely, long-lined melodies, much lyricism and effective dramatic climaxes. The lovely second movement, *Allegretto*, is subtitled *Intermezzo*. It is in the tradition of a Mendelssohnian song without words and has nicely contrasting canonic middle section. The middle movement, *Andante Largo*, has for its main theme a somber, stately folk tune. A somewhat stormy middle section with Hungarian overtones interrupts the calm of the main section. Next comes a wonderful *Scherzo*—fleet, yet elegant. The celebratory finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, is an energetic, jovial romp. The quintet has no technical difficulties and almost plays itself. The part-writing is quite good and each of the voices is given interesting material to play. I warmly recommend the piece not only to amateurs, but feel that professionals would do well to bring it to the concert hall.



**Alexander Winkler (1865-1935)** was born in the Russian city of Kharkov (today Kharkiv in the Ukraine). He studied piano and composition locally and then in Moscow and St. Petersburg. He continued his studies in Paris and Vienna before returning to Kharkov, where he taught piano for a number of years before being appointed to a professorship at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Sergei Prokofiev was among his many students. In 1924, Winkler emigrated to France and served as director of the Conservatory in Besançon.

Winkler's **String Quintet in e minor, Op. 11** appeared in 1906. The beautiful first movement, *Molto moderato ed espresso*, has a somewhat elegiac melody for its main theme. The second subject is dominated by its rhythm and has a Russian flavor. A fleet and highly effective *Scherzo, allegro vivace*, serves as the second movement. The attractive middle section, *poco tranquillo*, has a melancholy air to it. The first viola is given the responsibility for developing the somewhat heroic main theme of the impressive third movement, *Andante semplice*. In the finale, *Allegro con brio*, the superb technique of the composer is on display. The movement begins with a short, plunging introduction which leads to an exciting and magnificent fugue. The themes are full of rich possibilities and well executed. This quintet can be recommended for concert performance, and to amateur ensembles



Born in Venice, **Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876-1948)** was the son of a German father and an Italian mother. Throughout his life, he felt torn between the 2 cultures, uniting in himself the deep-felt German seriousness of purpose with sunny, Italian *bel-canto* melody. His father was a painter, and initially Ermanno wanted to follow in his footsteps. However, after studying painting in Rome and Munich, he enrolled in the Royal Conservatory there and studied composition with Joseph Rheinberger. He spent the rest of his life between Munich and Venice, never entirely satisfied in either place. This tension was, however, an important source of creativity for him. Wolf-Ferrari enjoyed his greatest success while still rather young, winning international fame for several of his operas between 1900 and the First World War. He served as Choral Director in Milan and later became the director of the Marcello Music Academy in Venice and taught at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. The First World War created an emotional crisis in that his "two fatherlands" were fighting on opposite sides. He chose to live in neutral Switzerland for the duration. Though mainly known for his operas, he was quite fond of chamber music and wrote a fair amount including 2 piano trios, a string quartet, a string quintet and several instrumental sonatas.

His **String Quintet in G Major, Op. 24** dates from 1942. From this you might think that it would be if not atonal, at least polyphonic, but you would be wrong. This is a work which could have been written, from a thematic standpoint, in 1885 with a few minor harmonic exceptions. At the time, Wolf-Ferrari was living in the Austrian village of Alt-Aussee in rather straightened circumstances and perhaps this made him look back rather wistfully to the past. In 4 movements, the work opens with a lovely engaging *Allegro assai quasi presto*. The *Larghetto* which comes next is a cross between a precious lullaby and bird warbling. A whirling, racing *Prestissimo* follows. It is a nervous phantasmal *scherzo*, a tour de force. You could not imagine a more contrasting trio section: otherworldly, lovely and sedate, it might be comforting music at a funeral parlor. A Brahmsian *Molto mosso* concludes this outstanding work. A superb choice for the concert hall and not to be missed by amateur players.



**Paul Wranitzky (1756-1808 Pavel Vranický** in the Czech form) was born in the town Nová Ríše (then Neureisch) in Moravia. At age 20, like so many other Czech composers of that period, he moved to Vienna to seek out opportunities within the Austrian imperial capital. Wranitzky played a prominent role in the musical life of Vienna. He was on friendly terms and highly respected by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven who preferred him as the conductor of their new works. Writing about Wranitzky's chamber music in the last part of the 19th century, the famous Belgian critic and musicologist Fetis recalled: "The music of Wranitzky was in fashion when it was new because of his natural melodies and brilliant style...I recall that, in my youth, his works held up very well in comparison with those of Haydn. Their premature abandonment of today has been for me a source of astonishment." Wranitzky was, as so many of his contemporaries, a prolific composer. His chamber works number over 100. Although some scholars believe that Wranitzky studied with Haydn, there is no proof of this. But there can be no question that he studied and was influenced by Haydn's quartets. Like Haydn, Wranitzky's chamber music writing went through many stages of development beginning with the pre-classical and evolving to the finished sonata form of the late Vienna Classics. The majority of Wranitzky's quartets and quintets are set in the three-movement format of the Parisian *quatuor concertant*. In

these works he explored the emerging Romantic style with (for the time) daring harmonic progressions, theatrical gestures, and virtuoso display. Most sources state that he wrote some 18 string quintets, all for 2 violas, in addition to some arrangements he made of his wind quintets.

**String Quintet No.13 in F Major, Op.29 No.1** is the first of a set of three dating from 1794 and were first published by André in Offenbach. Although the quintets do not bear a dedication, they may have been written with the cello-playing King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm II in mind. He had previously written a set of six string quartets for the King the year before. In any event, the cello part is more prominent than was normal for that period. While Haydn and Mozart raised the cello to an almost equal voice within their works for the King, they avoided giving it virtuoso solo passages. Wranitzky, however, perhaps because he never really abandoned the concertante style of composition, did in fact write such solos. The cello is given substantial solos in all three of the movements—the Allegro, the middle movement Adagio and the finale Allegro assai. The solo passages at times go high in its tenor register requiring the use of thumb position—a rarity at the time. Of particular interest is the middle movement which is really two movements in one. It begins and ends adagio, but the middle section is a lively allegro. Its freshness and originality will give great pleasure to chamber music lovers.

**String Quintet No.14 in C Major, Op.29 No.2** is the second of the set. Again the cello is given the same sort of virtuoso solos in all three of the movements: Allegro moderato, Adagio and Allegro di molto. This, too, is worth investigating, especially since Haydn never wrote any string quintets.

**String Quintet No.16 in g minor, Op.38 No.1** is the first of a set of three published in 1795. Unlike the Op.29 quintets, the cello, while given some solos, plays a more traditional role and gets no virtuoso passages. The Quintet is in three movements, the opening Allegro non troppo begins in somewhat leisurely fashion but shortly after a torrent of passion and excitement follows. The middle movement is marked Allegretto but for the most part is closer to an Andante. It features lovely country dance melodies. The finale is a searching Allegro molto. A good work for concert or home.

**String Quintet No.17 in E flat Major, Op.38 No.2**, the second of the set, is also in three movements. The major key gives it a more upbeat, less dramatic feel than Op.38 No.1. the opening movement Moderato has a rather stately subject for its main theme, sounding a bit like Mozart. All of the voices are generously treated. The middle movement is a lovely Adagio non troppo. The finale, Rondo, is a bumpy ride in 6/8 of the sort for which Wranitzky was a master.

**String Quintet No.18 in B flat Major, Op.38 No.3**, the last of the set, unlike the first two, has four movements. The opening movement begins in an orchestral fashion and is a genial, Haydnesque Allegro. The Adagio which follows is calm and stately, but Wranitzky inserts a surprise in the form of a playful Allegretto in the middle of things. The Adagio then returns to end this interesting and original movement. In third place is a typical Viennese Menuetto with a lovely Austrian Ländler for the trio section. The finale is a boisterous Rondo. A good choice for concert and home.



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

in Vienna. His musical talent became evident at an early age, and he was enrolled at the Conservatory of the Society of the Friends of Music when he was 13 years old. There he studied piano and composition. He was greatly influenced by Brahms, who at the time was serving as President of the Gesellschaft. Not much later, Zemlinsky also met Arnold Schoenberg. The 2 became close friends. Zemlinsky gave Schoenberg lessons in counterpoint, thus becoming the only formal music teacher Schoenberg would have. By 1900, Zemlinsky was firmly established as an important, though not a leading, musical figure in Vienna. He worked both as a composer and conductor. However, though he did well, he was unable to achieve the major success he had hoped for and therefore left for Prague in 1911. In Prague, he held the important post of opera conductor of the Deutsches Landestheater until 1927. He became well-known as a perceptive interpreter of Wagner, Bruckner, Mahler and Schoenberg. In 1927, he moved to Berlin to take up a position as a conductor of a major opera house. In 1933, he returned to Vienna where he remained until 1938, before emigrating to New York.

Zemlinsky began work on his **String Quintet in d minor** in 1894. Simultaneously, he was working on a symphony, a string quartet and a trio for clarinet, cello and piano which became his Opus 3. By 1896 he had only completed 2 movements of the quintet. Sketches to the 2 final movements are said to have existed but were lost and have yet to surface. After completing the second movement, he put the quintet down and did not return to it, and after meeting Schoenberg, under whose influence he fell, his style completely changed and he apparently did not wish to compose in what had become to those of the Second Vienna School, old-fashioned music. The opening movement, Allegro, is written on a large scale. It is dramatic, passionate, stormy and turbulent, and often comes close to breaking the bounds of chamber music and rises to a feverish almost orchestral pitch. There are many contrasting, lyrical episodes which are sweet and warm. The second movement, Prestissimo, mit humor, appears to have been conceived as the quintet's scherzo. It is lively, exciting and genial. It, too, at times pushes the boundaries of chamber music and inches toward the orchestral. Even though there are only 2 movements, the scale on which the quintet was written has made it as long as a standard 3- or 4-movement work. Powerful and effective, good for concert or home.

# String Quintets for 2 Violins, Viola & 2 Cellos

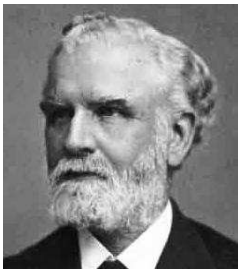
## String Quintets for 2 Violins, Viola, Cello & Bass

The so-called standard string quintet ensemble was for 2 violins, 2 violas and cello and was frequently referred to as a Viola Quintet. However, several composers, either primarily or exclusively, such as Luigi Boccherini and George Onslow, wrote for an ensemble consisting of 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos. This combination was often referred to as a Cello Quintet. Very few composers wrote string quintets which were only intended for an ensemble of 2 violins, viola, cello and bass. As to these works, quite often, publishers with a view to increasing their sales, would ask the composer to add a second cello part or do it themselves. This would then allow the work to also be played as a Cello Quintet. To help the reader immediately determine whether a work is a standard Cello Quintet or one with cello and bass, Vc & Kb for a work originally intended for that combination. I will also note whether it is possible to play the latter as a Cello Quintet.



**Alfredo D'Ambrosio (1871-1914)** was born in Naples. His initial studies were at the Naples Conservatory, where he studied violin with Giuseppe Pinto and composition with Enrico Bossi, after which he continued his violin studies with Pablo de Sarasate in Madrid and then with August Wilhelmj in London. He spent most of his life in Nice, where he became a prominent teacher and leader of a well-known string quartet. Several of his works for violin were popularized by violinists such as Sarasate, Heifetz, Elman, Kreisler and many others. D'Ambrosio also was a prominent arranger and editor, and still is known today for his work in these areas. Besides numerous works for violin, including 2 concertos, he wrote an opera *Pia de Tolomei*, a ballet *Ersilia*, a string quintet and a string quartet.

His *Suite for String Quintet (Cello Quintet)* appeared in 1900. It is clear that the composer intended to write music in a lighter vein, more in the nature of French salon music. The opening movement, *Andante*, is languid and saccharine—perhaps good for daydreaming or as background music, but not a real attention getter. A playful *Allegro moderato* serves as a cutesy scherzo. Next comes a supine, dreamy *Andante molto moderato*. The *Suite* concludes with a serious *Andante moderato* introduction, which then leads to the main section, an impressive *Allegro moderato*. The work is well-written for all the voices, is pleasing to play and hear. Certainly, amateurs will enjoy it.



**Christian Barnekow (1837-1913)** was born in Copenhagen, the son of a Danish nobleman. His musical talent was discovered early, and he was given piano and organ lessons. The pressure put on him to be a great virtuoso led to a nervous breakdown and the end of a plan for such a career. Instead, he turned to composition. He was most comfortable writing for smaller ensembles and besides a trio, wrote a string quartet, a string quintet, 2 piano quartets, a piano quintet, a piano sextet and several art songs.

Barnekow's *String Quintet in g minor, Op. 20 (Cello Quintet)* dates from 1905. The opening movement is a powerful *Allegro non troppo*, full of passion. It is followed by a pleasing *Andante* and then an *Allegro grazioso* which is clearly a descendant of Mendelssohn through Gade. Finally, an orchestral-sounding

*Allegro risoluto* serves to conclude the work. It sounds good and is not hard to play. Amateurs will enjoy it, but it is not really a candidate for the concert hall.



When Paganini, the foremost virtuoso of his time, heard the young **Antonio Bazzini (1818-1897)** perform, he encouraged him to pursue a career as a concert violinist. This Bazzini did, concertizing throughout Europe for many years. Today, Bazzini is remembered as one of Italy's greatest violinists and the composer of the fiendishly difficult encore piece, "Ronde des Lutins" (Dance of the Goblins), however, in his time, Bazzini's chamber music and his operas were greatly esteemed. At the very height of his fame, Bazzini gave up the career of a concert virtuoso to concentrate on composing, trying to renew the Italian instrumental tradition and interest in classical music, which by the mid-19th century was already on the decline. For the next several decades, he based himself in Florence and Milan, where he not only taught and composed, but as a conductor introduced the masterpieces of the Austrian and German repertoire to Italian audiences.

Bazzini's *String Quintet in A Major (Cello Quintet)* dates from 1866. The opening *Allegro* is full of appealing melodies and clever effects. An *Adagio appassionato* follows with a particularly noteworthy, animated middle section. Next comes a lively *Scherzo*, quasi presto. The finale also is attractive and features a fine fugal section. Bazzini knew how to write for strings and, like many of his Italian compatriots, had a fine gift for melody, which is quite apparent in this work. It can be warmly recommended to amateurs and for concert performance.



**Wilhelm Berger (1861-1911)** was born in Boston, but returned to Germany with his family within a year of his birth. He grew up in Bremen, where he received his first lessons in voice and piano. A scholarship allowed him to study with the famous composition teacher Friedrich Kiel in Berlin at the Hochschule für Musik. After graduating, he held several teaching positions, including that of Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy. He also served as director of the famous Meiningen Court Orchestra. Berger, though his compositions had won many prizes and were often performed, did not quickly achieve the fame he deserved. Highly respected by the cognoscenti, he never promoted or advertised himself with the wider musical public, as did several others. Fame finally did start to come, but just at the moment of his death, when he was starting to be regarded, along with Max Reger, as Germany's most important successor to Brahms. Unfortunately, the First World War and its aftermath led to a total lack of interest for many decades in nearly all Romantic composers, and the reputation of those who were less well-known, such as Berger, never really recovered.

His *String Quintet in e minor, Op. 75 (Cello Quintet)* dates from 1899 and won the Beethoven Society of Bonn Prize. Berger uses the 2 cellos very skillfully to create wonderful tonal beauty. The other parts are also well served by the composer. The first movement, *Allegro con passione*, opens straightaway with the pleasing principal subject; this soon gives way to a powerful secondary theme, which in turn makes room for a graceful, lyri-

cal third melody. The somewhat archaic-sounding main subject of the second movement, *Vivace scherzando*, is presented in fugal form with delightful humor and skill. Next comes an *Adagio* with a melody of nobility and distinction. It is developed with the utmost of delicacy. In the finale, *Molto vivace*, the main theme is a heavily accented melody which resembles a tarantella. This is a first-class work and a definite candidate for the concert hall. Amateurs who can handle Brahms will definitely find this work to their taste.



**Adolphe Blanc** (1828-1885) was born in the French town of Manosque. His musical talent was recognized early and he entered the Paris Conservatory at age 13 first taking a diploma in violin and then studying composition with the then famous composer Fromental Halevy. Although for a time, he served as a music director of a Parisian theater orchestra, he primarily devoted himself to composing and most of

his works were for chamber ensembles. During his lifetime, these works were much appreciated by professionals and amateurs alike and in 1862 he won the prestigious Chartier Chamber Music Prize. Besides the fact that his works are pleasing and deserving of performance, Blanc's historical importance cannot be underestimated. He was one of the very few in France trying to interest the public, then with only ears for opera, in chamber music. He paved the way for the success of the next generation of French composers. Among his chamber works are three string trios, four string quartets, seven string quintets—four for 2 violins, viola, cello and bass or two cellos, the other three for 2 violins, 2 violas and cello—fifteen piano trios, three piano quartets, four piano quintets and a septet for winds and strings.

The **String Quintet No.3 in D Major, Op.21 (Vc & Kb or 2 Vc)** dates from 1857 and was dedicated to Achille Gouffé, principal bassist of the Paris Opera Orchestra. It was George Onslow, the most important French composer of chamber music the generation before Blanc, who had made this combination popular and Gouffé was also the dedicatee of one of Onslow's most popular quintets. In three movements, the Quintet begins with an *Allegro moderato*. The first violin introduces an uplifting and fetching melody soon to be joined by the cello. The telling use of the bass is evident when the second more rhythmical subject is introduced by the cello and bass in octaves. The middle movement, *Menuet, Moderato, quasi andante*, begins in a relaxed mood. Its main theme is rather classical in style, like those of the Viennese Masters. The trio is actually more lively than the minuet with the lower voices given several opportunities to duplicate the quick running passages in the higher voices. The finale, *Allegro*, is full of good spirits and charm. From start to finish, Blanc reveals not only his gift for melody but also his mastery of string writing, perhaps no surprise as he was a first class violinist and chamber music performer. In this *Allegro*, Blanc gives a doff of his cap to Beethoven when he produces his second theme which recalls the finale of the third Rasumovsky Quartet, Op.59 No.3. Of course Blanc's treatment is rather different and original. This work can be warmly recommended to amateurs and the occasional concert performance.

**String Quintet No.4 in E flat Major, Op.22 (Vc & Kb or 2 Vc)** was composed in 1857 immediately after he finished his third string quintet. It is for the same combination—2 Violins, Viola, Cello and Bass or 2 Cellos. The opening movement, *Allegro risoluto*, begins with a robust subject which pushes ahead full of energy. The second movement, *Andante quasi adagio*, consists of a folk melody which is used as the theme for a set of three big variations. Next comes another *Allegro risoluto*, marked *Menuet*, but it really more in the form of a thrusting *Scherzo* with lovely

contrasting middle section. One fetching theme after another can be found in the finale, *Allegro*. Though a decent work suitable for amateurs, I do not think it strong enough to encourage concert performance.

**String Quintet No.7 in E Major, Op.50 (Vc & Kb or 2 Vc)** was composed in 1866. Here the bass is used more independently than in his prior quintets. The opening *Allegro* races along, full of wonderful melody, a truly lovely affair. The *Andante quasi adagio* is a good example of why Blanc won the Chartier Chamber Music Prize. Each voice is beautifully melded into a seamless whole in this song like movement. The *Scherzo tarantelle, allegro vivace* is the kind of scherzo at which Blanc excelled. Fleet, headlong, exciting, it has everything you could ask for in this kind of movement. The finale begins with a substantial *Andante maestoso* introduction, a little mysterious is slowly builds tension and leads to the main section *Allegro moderato* but not before a big violin cadenza. The *Allegro moderato* is forceful, but upbeat and full of forward motion as well as full of excitement. A first class work which should be heard in concert. Amateurs who take it up need accomplished players, especially the first violin, but it is worth it.



**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 somewhere around 130 string quintets. All but 12 are for 2 violins, one viola and 2 cellos. It is highly doubtful that anyone other than Boccherini ever played all of his 118 cello quintets. I certainly have not and,

given so many other options, I will only discuss a few here which I believe deserve your attention. The opus numbers to Boccherini's works are entirely unreliable and have over the years caused tremendous confusion, with different publishers giving the same work different opus numbers and, in some cases, different works receiving the same opus number. It was only with the definitive catalogue of Boccherini's works by Girard that some order has finally been established.

**String Quintet in E Major, Op. 11 No. 5, G. 275 "Ladykillers" (Cello Quintet)** is perhaps the best known and one of the few that is still occasionally performed in concert. This is almost certainly due to its *Menuetto*, which serves as the third movement. During the 19th century in France, Germany, Austria and England, there was at one time a Boccherini minuet craze and the minuet to Op. 11 No. 5 was singled out from among the others and appeared not only by itself, but in all sorts of arrangements and eventually became known as "The Celebrated Minuet." Certainly, it is the most famous of all the minuets that Boccherini wrote. And this no doubt contributed to its use in the popular 1955 British film *The Ladykillers*, starring Alec Guinness and Peter Sellers. This quintet in E Major is the fifth of a set of 6 from Boccherini's Op. 11 composed in 1771. (It was known throughout much of the 19th and 20th centuries as Op. 13 No. 5.) It is in 4 movements. The opening *Andante mosso, amoroso*, is entirely muted, which keeps the mood subdued throughout. Next comes an *Allegro con spirito* in which each of the cellos is given attractive solo passages. With its pleasing lilting melodies, it is easy to see why the third movement became the so-called "Celebrated Minuet." Adding to its uniqueness is the fact that it, too, is entirely muted. The finale, *Rondo, andante*, though not a *presto*, has swinging feel to it which moves the music along with ease. This is a fine work, and not just the third movement, with good part-writing for all. The lovely, flowing melodies and rhythms are typical of Boccherini. The quintet is suitable for both concert and home performance.

**String Quintet in D Major, 11 No.6, G.276 "Bird Sanctuary" (Cello Quintet)** Of the more than 120 string quintets that Boccherini wrote, a set of six published in 1771 contained several of his best known string quintets. The String Quintet in D Major, G.276 or Op.11 No.6, the work number under which it was published, is without doubt one of the best known. That is probably because in it, Boccherini tried to imitate the sounds of the rare and exotic birds in the collection of the Infante of Spain in whose employ Boccherini was. He also attempts to create the sounds of shepherds' pipes and hunting horns. These effects led to the quintet having the nick name Aviary or Bird Sanctuary. The work opens with an Adagio introduction and immediately the chirping of birds can be heard, and again in the main section Allegro giusto. The second movement, subtitled Shepherds and Hunters is also an Allegro. The third movement is a tempo di Minuetto and the first movement is used as finale.

**String Quintet in d minor, Op.13 No.4, G.280 (Cello Quintet)** By 1900, all but perhaps a dozen or so of his quintets had been forgotten and were no longer played. Among those which had not disappeared is Op.13 No.4. It is the fourth of a set of six dating from the mid 1770s. It is in three movements and has, with regard to his quintets, two unusual features. First, it is in the minor while most of the quintets are in the major. And second, the final movement is in the form of an extended fugue. The opening Allegro with subdued melody accompanied by rich harmonic support. The music flows along effortlessly. The second movement, Andante sostenuto, begins as a lovely serenade in concertante form, sung at first, entirely in the first violin. Soon other voices are given the chance to further develop the musical ideas. The finale, Allegro giusto, is as already noted, in the form of an extended fugue. Quite lively, it has a definite baroque aura to it

**String Quintet in D Major, Op.18 No.2, G.284 (Cello Quintet)** It is the second of a set of six dating from 1774. It is in four movements, which from this period, was in itself unusual as his quintets had mostly been in three movements. Another feature of the work which is rather unusual is the trio section to the minuetto. Roughly four times longer than the minuet, it is actually a trio in that both violins are tacet for the entire section making it a trio for the viola and two cellos, each of which receives a generous solo. For this reason, the quintet was known for many years by the nickname Trio Concertante. The opening movement, Allegro assai, begins in a robust fashion with all of the voices bringing out the energetic main theme. The music displays an elegance which is fleet-footed. Next comes an deeply felt Adagio which has its roots in the Baroque. The third movement is a typical Menuetto with the aforementioned unusual extended trio section. The work concludes with another Allegro assai which like the opening movement is energetic and robust.

**String Quintet in C Major, G. 324, "La Musica Notturna delle Strade di Madrid," (Cello Quintet)** It includes the famous "La Ritirata di Madrid," which is the last movement. It is one of only 2 programmatic works Boccherini composed. It was not published until several years after his death, in part because Boccherini told his publisher, "The piece is absolutely useless, even ridiculous, outside Spain because the audience cannot hope to understand its significance nor the performers to play it as it should be played." Within Spain itself, during his lifetime, the work became quite famous in arrangements which Boccherini made for piano quintet and also for string quartet and guitar, in which version it has perhaps become best known. Boccherini actually provided the publisher with program notes. "La Musica Notturna delle Strade di Madrid"—The Night Music of the Streets of Madrid—was an attempt to recreate what residents of the Spanish capital could expect to hear each night. First there was the Ave Maria of the main church, in which the instruments imitate the tolling of the church bell. Then comes the Minuet of

the Blind Beggars, to be played pesante. The cellists are directed by Boccherini to take their cellos upon their knees and strum them, imitating a guitar. This is followed by another slow section, The Rosary, not to be played strictly in time. Then there is what Boccherini sarcastically termed the Passacaglia of the Street Singers, Los Manolos. These were lower-class loudmouths vulgarly dressed. The movement is not a passacaglia, but imitates the way Los Manolos sang, which the Spanish called passacalle, meaning to pass along the street, singing to amuse oneself. Last comes La Ritirata di Madrid (The Retreat of the Military Night Watch of Madrid), which by itself, achieved a certain degree of notoriety. It imitates the coming and going of the Military Night Watch, bringing the curfew and closing down the streets. Boccherini wrote, "One must imagine sitting next to the window on a summer's night in a Madrid flat and that the band can only be heard in the far-off distance in some other part of the city, so at first it must be played quite softly. Slowly the music grows louder and louder until it is very loud, indicating the Night Watch are passing directly under the listener's window. Then gradually the volume decreases and again becomes faint as the band moves off down the street into the distance." This is a very interesting work, though by no means typical Boccherini, and deserves to be heard in concert; it is not at all difficult to play and will please amateurs.

**String Quintet in B flat Major, Op.39 No.1, G.337 (Vc & Kb or 2 Vc)** It is the first of a set of three dating from 1787 and is among his better known quintets. What is unusual about this set, judging from his manuscript, is that that Boccherini intended these three quintets to be played by a cello and bass rather than two cellos. It is in four movements. The charming opening movement, Andante lento, begins in with a genial, somewhat stately main theme. The music displays an elegance which is graceful. Next comes a short, very lively Allegro vivo which is over almost before it begins. It is interrupted without warning by a Tempo di Minuetto. This in turn is suddenly interrupted by a Grave section, which cannot really be called a trio. The finale, Rondeau, allegro non tanto, has a catchy theme in which the cello is given the lead. It can be played with 2 cellos.

**String Quintet in F Major, Op.39 No.2, G.338 (Kb & Vc or 2 Vc)** It is the second of a set of three dating from 1787 and is among his better known quintets, in part because it calls for a bass in place of the second cello, although it can also be performed by two cellos. It is in four movements. The charming opening movement, Allegro vivo, ma non presto, has a very catchy, upbeat dance-like tune for its main theme, which is rather memorable. Like much of his music, it is elegant and graceful. The second movement, Adagio non tanto, is on the sad side, but not funereal, Here pizzicati in the lower voices provide the rhythmic underpinning. Next comes a stately Menuetto which is interspersed with several quick allegro episodes. The rousing finale is also marked Allegro vivo, ma non presto and is full of energy. An excellent work, one of his best.

**String Quintet in D Major, Op.39 No.3, G.339 (Vc & Kb or 2 Vc or 2 Vla)** It is the last of a set of three dating from 1787. Also, each of these quintets came with an viola part which was a substitute for Cello I, allowing it to be played as a standard viola quintet. Unfortunately, the bass part to this quintet seems to have been lost. Unlike the first two quintets, this one is only in three movements and not in four movements. It opens with a very energetic Allegro vivo and is followed by a beautiful Pastorale. The finale, a Presto, is full of twists and turns.

**String Quintet in D Major, Op. 40 No. 2 G. 341 "Del Fandango"** was composed in 1798. The work is in 3 movements and begins with a gentle Pastorale. It is followed by a ceremonious Allegro maestoso. The quintet became famous due to its third and final movement, Grave assai, Fandango, hence the title. The second cello is instructed to put down their bow and grab a set of

castanets to replicate the dance, which generally has 2 dancers toe tapping a series of intricate and fancy footwork. They each wait their turn, vying for the more eye-catching movements. When done properly, this quintet, which is not particularly noteworthy, except for its last movement, is a real crowd pleaser.

**String Quintet in c minor, Op.37 No.1 or Op.51 No.2, G.377 (Cello Quintet or 2 Vla)** The opening movement is a lengthy, gripping Grave, *molto lento* introduction which leads to the main section an energetic Allegro assai. The second movement is a charming Andantino con *innocenza*. A rather typical Boccherinian Minuetto with no tempo marking follows. The finale, is almost, but not quite an exact repeat of the first movement, this time with a shorter Grave introduction followed by an exciting Allegro assai.



**Giovanni Bottesini** (1821-1889) was born in the northern Italian town of Crema. His first music lessons were from his father a professional clarinetist and composer. He studied violin locally and applied for a scholarship to the Milan Conservatory and might have pursued a career as a violinist but for the fact that there were no openings for violinists, only one for a bass player. He hastily

took up the bass and won the scholarship. His talent was such that after graduating he was able to embark on a solo career and soon became known as the Paganini of the Double Bass. He traveled widely not only throughout Europe but he also visited the United States and briefly served as principal double-bass in the Italian opera at Havana. Apart from his triumphs as a performer, Bottesini was a conductor of European reputation, and conducted at several important opera houses including the Théâtre des Italiens in Paris as well as the Lyceum Theatre in London. He was chosen by Verdi to conduct the first performance of *Aida*. Besides several operas and many works for double bass, he composed several string quartets as well as a number of quintets for string quartet and double bass. His works for bass remain standard repertoire for accomplished double bassists to this day.

Bottesini wrote his **Gran Quintetto in c minor, Op.99 (Vc & Kb)** in 1858 while sojourning in Naples. It was dedicated to his friend Saverio Mercadante, who had written a string quintet for Paganini. The opening movement, Allegro moderato, begins in dramatic fashion, with the first violin singing a fetching operatic melody. This subject goes through extensive and interesting development. A heavily accented, pounding Scherzo serves as the second movement. A gentler trio section provides a nice contrast. The Adagio which follows is a combination of relaxed, delicate, long lined melodies, which in the middle are suddenly interrupted by a storm-like, highly dramatic, powerful episode. The finale, Allegro con brio, begins with a series of downward plunging passages creating a sense of urgency before the appearance of a march-like, triumphant theme. This is an exciting work which is sure to make a hit if brought into the concert hall.



**Giuseppe Cambini** (1746–1825) was born in the Italian town of Livorno. Surprisingly little is known of his life—surprising, given that he and his music were immensely popular in Paris during the 1770's and 1780's, where he was then living. Much of what we know of Cambini's early life comes from his own account, which he almost certainly embellished. He claimed to have studied the violin with Filippo Manfredi and that he was the violist in a quartet which included Pietro

Nardini on first violin and Luigi Boccherini on cello. Cambini

made Mozart's acquaintance in Paris when the latter was touring there, but most likely did know Haydn who he claimed was a friend of his. Cambini emigrated to Paris in the early 1770's. There, his music was extremely well received, and he began cranking out works with great rapidity. He wrote more than 80 symphonies, 14 operas and 150 string quartets, as well as numerous trios, quintets, etc. One might almost conclude that he had a factory full of elves working away for him. Nonetheless, several of his works are not only historically important, but interesting enough to stand on their own. It is not at all clear how many cello quintets he composed. I have a recording of 3 of these quintets in my possession in which one quintet is labeled No. 23. They are all in 3 movements and follow a fast-slow-fast pattern. They are written in an Italianate concertante style with some Mannheim school touches. They are pleasant enough but are by no means candidates for the concert hall. I have not played or seen any music, although there are some modern reprints.



**Georgy Catoire** (1861-1926) is generally considered the father of Russian modernism. He was born in Moscow to a French noble family which had emigrated to Russia in the early 19th century. Although fascinated by music, he studied mathematics and science at the University of Moscow, graduating in 1884. After graduation, however, he decided to devote himself to music. His early compositions showed the influence of Tchaikovsky, who described Catoire as talented, but in need of serious training. Eventually, Catoire was to study composition with Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov, Arensky and Taneyev. In 1916, he was appointed Professor of Composition at the Moscow Conservatory, a position he held for the rest of his life. Catoire wrote several treatises on music theory, which became the foundation for the teaching of music theory in Russia. His composition style was a synthesis of Russian, German and French influences—Tchaikovsky, Chopin, César Franck, Debussy and Richard Wagner were the chief influences. From them, Catoire developed a highly personal and original idiom. His championing of Wagner is partially responsible for the fact that his works are relatively unknown today. Rimsky-Korsakov's circle disliked Wagner's music intensely and did little to promote it. This resulted in its being barely known in Russia. They also shunned Catoire's music because he was a Wagnerite.

His **String Quintet, Op. 16 (Cello Quintet)**, which tonally was advanced for its time, was composed in 1909. It is a highly individualistic and original work which sounds like little else being written at the time. The opening movement, Allegro moderato, begins in a hesitant fashion, but builds in intensity and drama, while weaving a very rich and complex harmonic texture. The second movement, Allegro molto e agitato, presents a restless and searching mood in the main theme. Here Catoire gives an excellent illustration of his careful compositional technique as he takes his time in raising the temperature, which eventually catches fire. A slow movement, Andante non troppo, follows. With its mysterious and gossamer character, it is perhaps the most unusual of movements, since it takes the listener into a quiet, haunted world of shadows. The exciting finale, as its title—Allegro impetuoso—indicates, has an impatience to it which almost rises to the level of violence. From the opening notes, the music dramatically explodes. However, Catoire juxtaposes it with a lovely lyrical second theme. It is a major work which can be recommended to professionals and top-notch amateur players.

**Luigi Cherubini** (1760-1842) was born in Florence. He studied at the conservatories in Bologna and Milan, and remained in Italy until 1788, when he moved to Paris, where he lived for the rest of his life. He made his name as a composer of opera, but by 1805





Parisian tastes had changed and the heavy, serious operas that he, Gluck and others had been writing fell out of fashion. Cherubini then turned to religious and instrumental music. He served as director of the Paris Conservatory from 1822 until his death and was regarded as one of France's leading musicians. Beethoven considered Cherubini the greatest living composer of drama, while Cherubini was perhaps the only important composer in France who held Beethoven to be the greatest genius of the day. Perhaps no other contemporary composer studied Beethoven's Middle and Late Quartets as did Cherubini, who both admired and understood them.

His **String Quintet in e minor (Cello Quintet)** was composed in 1837 a few years before his death, but first published in 1890. It is surprisingly fresh and original. Of note is the fact that the second cello is particularly well-served, and for once is given a part almost equal to that of the first cello. The work begins with a slow, suspenseful, unisono introduction, Grave assai, which is followed by an exciting Allegro comodo. The main theme of this Allegro is a catchy Italian opera melody. The following Andante has for its main theme a melody which is at once simple, but also deeply felt. Variations follow. Next comes a lively and piquant Scherzo where rhythmic triplet figures dominate the proceedings. The muted trio section is particularly fine. The exciting finale, Allegro, is dominated by its thrilling main theme, which is expertly developed and appears in several different appealing guises. This quintet must be included in the front rank of works for this combination.

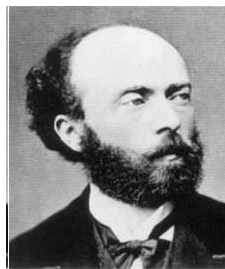


**Félicien David** (1810-1876) though widely known in his home country for his spectacular operas, filled with exotic music, elsewhere is virtually unknown. Born in the south of France in the town of Cadenet, his early musical education took place there, but much of what he learned was through self-study of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. David also wrote chamber music, something in which French audiences

showed little curiosity during the first half of the 19 century. But by mid century, thanks to the pioneering efforts of George Onslow and Louise Farrenc, this was starting to change. David composed three piano trios, at least four string quartets

His **Les Quatre Saisons (Vc & Kb or 2 Vc)** is a series of works for 2 violins, viola, cello and bass. Les Quatre Saisons came into being because a violinist friend of David's, Jules Armingaud, who gave regular Thursday evening chamber music concerts (soirées), encouraged the composer to bring something for his quintet to one of these evenings. David did so. Armingaud was so delighted that he insisted David bring more. David then hit upon the idea of composing six works for each season's evening concerts. Hence, there were six works for the Soirées de Printemps or Spring Evening Concerts and so forth for each season. Le Quatre Saisons was composed over the two year period of 1842-1844. When Mendelssohn invited David to visit him in Germany in 1845, David brought the manuscripts of Le Quatre Saisons with him and showed them to Mendelssohn, who was delighted by them. These charming works were intended for intimate evening chamber music concerts in the salon. To increase sales, David's publisher insisted on a 2nd Cello part in lieu of bass.

Born in Leipzig, **Felix Otto Dessoff** (1835-1892) studied music at the renowned Leipzig Conservatory with Ignaz Moscheles, Moritz Hauptmann and Julius Rietz, all of whom were among the foremost teachers of the day. Dessoff made his name as a con-



ductor and was widely regarded as one of the very best of his time. By 19, he was a theater director in Düsseldorf and a mere 5 years later was offered a guest position with perhaps the premiere theater of his time, the Vienna Court Opera House. In Vienna, he became good friends with Brahms and later was to premiere several of that composer's orchestral works. Although Dessoff had composed some works during the 1850's and early 60's, he gave up composing when his career as a conductor blossomed. In 1878, he again decided to compose and produced 2 fine works of chamber music.

The **String Quintet in G Major, Op. 10 (Cello Quintet)** dates from 1879. Brahms visited Dessoff just about the time the quintet was coming to completion. Dessoff showed it to him, and Brahms praised it lavishly. Not only was this unusual for Brahms, but especially so where a work sounded very Brahmsian, which is certainly the case with this quintet. Someone who did not know that Brahms himself never published a work for this combination of instruments, would certainly guess that this piece was composed by Brahms, not Dessoff. The opening Allegro con fuoco begins with an energetic and rhythmically muscular theme which has a very Brahmsian flavor to it. The writing is very assured and well-executed. The second movement, Andante sostenuto, begins calmly with a mood of inward reflection. The deep responses given by the cellos create a sense not quite of mourning, but certainly of heaviness. Then, suddenly, passion is inserted into the mix with a melodic motif right out of one of Brahms' own string quintets. Next is an Allegretto grazioso: again the marvelous use of the 2 cellos gives the dance-like movement a dignity and weight that prevents it from becoming a light scherzo. In the attractive and buoyant finale, there is none of Brahms to be heard as the music bounces along with great verve. Certainly, Brahms fans will rejoice in a work of this quality which is so infused with the spirit of the great master. Brahms himself recognized that what Dessoff had written was no mere imitation, but a masterly creation which fused Brahmsian musical language with Dessoff's own original melodies and treatment.



**Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf** (1739-1799) was born in Vienna and was recognized as a child prodigy on the violin and became one of the great violin virtuosos of the 18th century. The first part of his life was spent as a touring virtuoso and, especially in Italy, he enjoyed many triumphs. The second half of his life was spent as a composer and music director at various aristocratic courts. His output was voluminous

and he is generally regarded after Mozart and Haydn as one of the most important representatives of the Vienna Classical era. Originally, his music showed the influence of the Italian composers, but as time went by, his familiarity with the compositions of Mozart and Haydn greatly changed his compositional style. He knew both men personally and the 3 of them sometimes performed string quartets in Vienna: Dittersdorf played first violin, Haydn second violin, Mozart viola and Vanhal played cello. In 1789, Dittersdorf visited the cello-playing King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm, and presented him with a set of 6 string quintets for 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos. Dittersdorf was not the first composer to present works to the king: Haydn, Mozart and Ignaz Pleyel, among others, had all presented string quartets to Friedrich Wilhelm. Dittersdorf's quintets seem to be the only example of quintets for 2 cellos given to the king and, with the exception of those by Boccherini, are among the earliest quintets for 2 cellos. Of the 6 which Dittersdorf composed, 2 have received

modern editions; the editors apparently felt these were the strongest of the set.

**String Quintet in C No. 3 Major Kr. 187 (Cello Quintet)** is the third of the set. Dittersdorf seemed partial to the 3-movement format. In this quintet, he eliminates the minuet. In all 3 movements—Allegro molto, Andante con moto (a theme and set of 4 variations)—the first cello is given several opportunities to present the expressive melodies—and a traditional Allemande. Although pleasant, there is no reason to play this work. The same can be said for **String Quintet No. 6 in G Major, Kr. 190 (Cello Quintet)**



**Ignacy Feliks Dobrzynski (1807-67)** was the son of a kapellmeister to a Polish count who held much the same responsibilities that Haydn did for the Esterhazys. Training from his father and experience with the count's orchestra provided Dobrzynski's early musical education. Later he went to the Warsaw Conservatory and studied piano and composition with Josef Elsner. While he achieved only moderate success in his native Poland, in Germany, his works were highly praised, and critical reviews in newspapers, such as those in the influential city of Leipzig, were very favorable.

**String Quintet No. 1 in F Major, Op. 20 (Cello Quintet or 2 Vla)** dates from the late 1830's. We need not look beyond its dedication "a Monsieur George Onslow" to determine the inspiration and model that must have served for Dobrzynski. Onslow was the best-known composer of works for the genre at this time, since Schubert's great quintet still lay undiscovered. The first movement, Allegro moderato, stylistically shows an affinity with the music of Spohr, especially in the lovely melodic writing. Particularly admirable is the way Dobrzynski makes excellent use of his second cello, a technique he learned from studying Onslow's double cello quintets. This is a very engaging and well-executed movement that holds the listener from start to finish. It is followed by a Minuetto, Allegro moderato, in the early Romantic style. The main theme is graceful and elegant, and has a vague Polish flavor to it. The third movement, Andante, Doloroso ma non troppo lente, begins with a mournful introduction leading to a gorgeous melody which serves as the main theme. The finale, Vivace assai, is a polacca: very melodic and full of energy, it provides a suitable conclusion to a very good quintet. It should be noted that the first cello part is fairly difficult.

**String Quintet No. 2 in a minor, Op. 40 (Cello Quintet)** was published in 1848 but could well have been written earlier. The first cello is entrusted with the presentation of the lyrical and somewhat sad main theme to the opening Allegro espressivo e sentimentale, before the others join in. The second theme is of a very different sort, direct from the Italian opera of the time. Strangely, it reminds one of the lovely cello melody in the trio of the third movement of Verdi's quartet, then yet to be composed! The lovely slow movement, Andante cantabile ed espressivo, also seems to take Onslow for melodic inspiration. Both cellos are used to maximum advantage in presenting the theme. The very dramatic and stormy interlude is also a page right out of Onslow's book, but again, this is not imitation, and this first-rate writing can clearly stand on its own. A somewhat aggressive and angry Minuetto, allegro impetuoso, follows. The cello parts are every bit the equal of the violins, if not more important. Here, we find an excellent trio, full of contrast and mood. The first cello sings a lovely tune to the pizzicati of the other voices—very effective. In the finale, Agitato presto, the aura of Onslow hovers over the exciting and finely wrought movement. This quintet is quite a good work. It could be presented in concert and certainly will appeal to amateurs.



Encouraged by his father to pursue a musical career, **Johann Justus Friedrich Dotzauer (1783-1860)** studied the piano and violin before eventually choosing the cello as his main instrument. His talent was clear to all early on, and he began giving concerts by the time he was 15. A few years later, he was serving as a cellist in the court orchestra of Meiningen. Eventually he was able to obtain the prestigious position of solo cellist in the Royal Orchestra at Dresden. His playing dazzled all who heard it, and his skills as a teacher resulted in what became known as the "Dresden school" of cello performance. Dotzauer concertized to much acclaim throughout Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and France, continuing to perform in public right up until his retirement in 1850. Many of his students became famous cellists in their own right and include such names as Friedrich Grützmacher, Bernhard Cossmann and Julius Goltermann. Dotzauer's compositions for the cello are still performed and his pedagogical writings for the cello are frequently used in the classroom, however, his many excellent compositions in other genres unfortunately have fallen into oblivion, although during his lifetime this was certainly not the case.

His **String Quintet in d minor, Op. 134 (Cello Quintet)** dates from 1834. The opening Allegro of this string quintet begins with a short dramatic and powerful introduction which leads to the lyrical main theme. The second theme is a duet between the first cello and first violin. The Minuetto which follows is not a true minuet, but a scherzo with a beautiful trio. The slow movement, Poco Adagio, is based on a simple folk melody which Dotzauer clothes in lovely harmonies and an original development. The finale, Allegro spiritoso, is full of forward motion unexpectedly interspersed lyrical melodies. Here, we have a work which approaches the excellence of Onslow.



**Felix Draeseke (1835-1913)** was born in the German city of Coburg. He began composing at an early age and subsequently entered the famous Leipzig Conservatory where he studied composition with Julius Rietz and piano with Ignaz Moscheles. However, his musical outlook was shaped and influenced by the so-called New German School of which Liszt and Wagner were the leading proponents. He held several teaching positions in Switzerland and Germany, eventually settling in the city of Dresden and a few years later began teaching at the Dresden Conservatory. Draeseke wrote in nearly every genre, and his works were frequently performed during his lifetime. Liszt was a champion of many of Draeseke's compositions and helped them gain publication.

His **String Quintet in F Major, Op. 77 (Cello Quintet)** dates from 1901. The opening movement, Langsam und düster, begins slowly. The yearning tonalities are at times post-Wagnerian. One definitely feels the influence of Beethoven's Late Quartets, and this is true for all of the movements. The following Scherzo is restless and energetic. The austerity of the melodic material keeps the mood on its somber pitch. The third movement, Langsam und getragen, is deeply elegiac. There is a universality to the way the thematic material is presented. This is a very impressive movement. The finale, Langsam und düster; rasch und feurig, begins almost in the same mood as the third movement ends but then brightens, becoming rather jovial. It ends rather gently. The complexity of the thematic material sometimes requires careful listening to grasp. It is by no means an easy work to play, nor can it be said to be in anyway uplifting. To the contrary, while some have hailed it as a masterwork or the

first order, others have found it the work of a depressed and defeated spirit and unnecessarily difficult. I can say this: it would not be fair to make up your mind after only one reading.

**Alexander von Dusch (1877-1939)** was born in the German city of Karlsruhe. He studied composition with Felix Draeseke and Vincent d'Indy, and pursued a dual career as a state civil servant and composer.

His **String Quintet in a minor, Op. 3** appeared in 1903. The first movement, *Mäßig bewegt*, is a cross between an elegy and a funeral march. The slow movement is a theme and variations, very nicely done. A lively scherzo, *Rasch und leicht*, comes next and immediately leads to the finale, *Energetisch*, which is by turns lilting and lyrical. Not at all hard to play, it can be recommended to amateurs.

Probably the most famous work for 2 violins, viola, cello and bass is by **Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)**, his **String Quintet in G Major, Op.77** from 1888. A fair amount has been written about it in the standard reference sources and I do not think it is necessary for me to discuss it here other than to add that it is a good work though it is not among either Dvorak's very best or those for this genre. Nonetheless, it should not be ignored. It does occasionally get performed and amateurs will enjoy it play it. It is not particularly difficult and the bass is given a good part.



*"I the undersigned hereby testify that I have found the bearer, Mr. Joseph Eybler, a worthy pupil of his famous master Albrechtsberger, a thorough composer, equally skilled in chamber and church styles, very experienced in compositional technique, as well as an excellent organ and piano player—in short a young musician such as regrettably has few peers."* So wrote

Mozart in a letter of recommendation for his good friend and student, **Joseph Eybler (1765-1846)**. And Eybler's reputation and prominence in Vienna were such that the Empress made him Music Master to the Imperial Family in 1801 and in 1804 he was promoted to Vice-Kapellmeister, a position he held until 1824, at which time he succeeded Salieri as Imperial Kapellmeister. He held this post until his death. He was, like most of his contemporaries a prolific composer in most genres. He wrote several string quartets and at least six string quintets. Eybler tended to view his quintets in the typical 18th century Austrian tradition as serenades. Unlike his quartets, which strictly follow the classical Viennese prescription set down by Haydn of 4 movements, the quintets usually feature at least five and sometimes more movements.

His **String Quintet in D Major, Op.6 No.1** was originally published in 1801 and was for the peculiar instrumentation of Violin, 2 Violas, Cello & Bass. The standard ensemble had 2 Violins, 2 Violas and Cello. Eybler substitutes a bass for the second violin which reveals his fondness for the overall deeper sound produced by an ensemble of one soprano voice, two altos, a tenor and a bass. His concertante treatment of the parts allowed him to give both violas as well as the cello, and not just the violin, long soloistic passages. Edition Silvertrust has published a version for 2 Violins, Viola, Cello and Bass. The second violin part replaces the second viola. Although it is in six movements, it is not the massive work one might expect. Eybler does not burst the borders of chamber music and writes to scale. The charming opening theme to the *Allegro moderato*, based on a turn is very Mozartean in flavor. A Menuetto with two trios comes next. The difficult melodic material of first trio is given over to Viola I. The second trio, a polacca, presents a challenge for the Cello to the accompaniment of the violas and bass whilst the violin is tacit. In the lovely *Andantino* which follows, Eybler dispenses with his

concertante style to create a finely crafted piece of integrated harmonic writing. The listener knows he is in the realm of the serenade as the opening notes to a second Menuetto (*allegretto*) are sounded. It is a canon. Again, there are two trios. The entire first trio features the Second Viola with a beautiful singing solo which is not at all hard to play. At last, in the second trio, the Violin is given a chance to shine, but not without the help of the First Viola. It is in the following *Adagio* that the Violin is treated as the leading actor, the lover beneath the window sill of his beloved. Long *sostenuto* melodies are woven seamlessly together leading *attacca* to the superb concluding *Allegretto* which is a set of variations on this typical Austrian folk dance. Good for amateurs.



**Franz Xaver Gebel (1787-1843)** was born in the Silesian town of Furstenau, not far from the provincial capital of Breslau. Not a great deal is known about his life prior to his emigration to Moscow in 1817, where he spent the rest of his life. It is known, however, that prior to this, he studied composition with the Abbe Vogler and Johann Albrechtsberger in Vienna. It is also known that he served as a director of prominent theaters in Vienna and Lemberg before departing for Moscow, where he was lured by the promise of a high-paying job. By this time, he had already composed several operas, some string quartets and works for winds. In Moscow, Gebel worked as a teacher as well as an orchestra director. Among his many students was Nicolai Rubinstein. During Gebel's Moscow years, he composed 4 symphonies, operas, many songs, several string quartets and 8 string quintets, all for 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos. In Russia, Gebel made a considerable name for himself, and his works were respected and often performed. Borodin praised and was particularly fond of the string quintets, often playing the second cello part. Glinka also praised Gebel's chamber music, as did the famous violinist Heinrich Ernst.

The quintets are thought to have been composed between 1830 and 1842. Several have received modern editions. **String Quintet No. 1 in e minor, Op. 20 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)** dates from around 1830. The main theme to the opening movement, *Allegro*, is characterized by an unusual 2-measure rhythmic phrase before the lyrical part of the melody is given. Gebel follows this technique throughout the movement, interspersing powerful rhythmic figures between lovely long-lined melodies. The second movement, a thrusting and energetic *Scherzo, allegro molto*, is followed by a beautifully contrasting trio section in which the first cello gives the lovely theme high in its tenor register. The slow movement, *Adagio ma non troppo*, is very different in mood from the preceding 2 movements. Calm and reflective, it reminds one of the slow movements found in Beethoven's Op. 18 string quartets, which Gebel had introduced to musical audiences in Moscow. The finale, *Allegro agitato*, features a struggle between 2 contrasting themes—the first powerful and almost harsh, the second lyrical with hints of destiny.

**String Quintet No. 6 in E flat Major, Op. 25 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)** dates from the late 1830's. The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, begins with a buoyant and appealing lyrical melody which is passed from voice to voice. A second theme, also lyrical, has a vocal quality typical of Italian opera of the time. The second movement is a lively *Scherzo*, characterized by its heavily accented rhythms and forward motion, while the theme of the trio is calmer and expresses a sense of yearning. The main theme to the *Adagio* which comes next takes rather a long time to unfold, hesitant and mysterious. One hears the influence of Beethoven. The pleasing finale, *Allegro*, opens in boisterous fashion. The music is light and airy, having an almost Mozartean quality to it.

**String Quintet No.8 in B flat Major, Op.27 (Cello Quintet)** Although the quintets were thought to be composed between 1830 and 1842, String Quintet No.8 was not published until 1862, some 20 years after the composer's death. The first seven were published by the Russian publisher Lehnhold but this quintet was published by the German firm of Schubert in Hamburg. It is thought that the virtuoso cellist and composer Carl Schubert (1811-1863) was instrumental in bringing this work to his music publisher brother's attention. Carl was active in Russia and not only knew Gebel but also had performed several of his quintets in concert. The first movement, *Allegro agitato*, does not begin in a very *agitato* fashion. But after some opening pizzicatti, a rather upbeat and playful main theme is brought forth. It is buoyant and appealing, at times quite lyrical. The melody is nicely handled and passed from voice to voice. An even more playful second theme recalls Italian light opera music. The second movement, *Adagio espressivo*, begins rather lugubriously with a somewhat dark and brooding funereal melody. Next comes an energetic, almost frantic, nervous and heavily accented *Scherzo allegro*. The finale begins with a lengthy, ominous *Andante* introduction which serves to build tension. But the main section, *Allegro*, though one might have expected a stormy, turbulent affair, is actually a triumphant, jovial march. This is a first rate work. A quintet which makes a fine addition to the repertoire of quintets for two cellos. In the concert hall it will delight audiences and will make an excellent selection for groups planning an evening of cello quintets.



**Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936)** was born in St. Petersburg, the son of a wealthy book publisher. He began studying piano at the age of 9 and started composing not long after. Mili Balakirev (founder of the Russian nationalist group "The Mighty Five") brought Glazunov to the attention of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov in 1879. Korsakov, who immediately recognized the boy's talent,

took him on as a private student. Glazunov's progress was so fast that within 2 years, Korsakov considered Glazunov more of a junior colleague than a student. Between 1895 and 1914, Glazunov was widely regarded as Russia's greatest living composer. His works include symphonies, ballets, operas and 7 string quartets, in addition to various instrumental sonatas. An evening for cello quintets is not often planned, but when it is, the Schubert is always played.

Along with it, the quintet most often selected to fill the evening is the **String Quintet in A Major, Op. 39 (Cello Quintet)** by Glazunov, which was completed in 1890. The appealing first theme of the opening movement, *Allegro*, is first stated by the viola alone. The somewhat slower second subject is also very melodic. In fact, the whole is illustrative of Glazunov's superb ability to achieve great tonal beauty. An exciting coda brings the movement to a close. The main part of the second movement, *Scherzo*, is quite entertaining, especially with its effective use of pizzicato. The contrasting melody of the middle section has a halting rhythmic quality, and the coda presents a surprise. The highly romantic *Andante* which follows is quite sentimental. Its middle section is a bit livelier. From its first notes, the finale, *Allegro moderato*, exudes its strong Russian tonal color with its powerful, driving main theme. Even the slower middle section is infused with Slavic melody. This excellent work is always a pleasure to play and to hear.

**Carl Goldmark (1830-1915)** was born in the town of Keszthely in Austria-Hungary. His early musical training was at the conservatories in Sopron and Odenburg. His father then sent him to Vienna, where he briefly studied violin under 2 of the better-



known teachers, Leopold Jansa and Joseph Böhm. As a composer, however, Goldmark was largely self-taught. World-wide fame came to him with the performance of his opera *The Queen of Sheba*. He wrote in most genres and many of his other compositions, such as his violin concerto and the *Rustic Wedding Symphony*, were quite popular during his lifetime and for several years thereafter. His chamber music was well-thought of and also received concert performances while he was alive, but sadly disappeared from the concert stage after his death. Brahms was to become a good friend, but Goldmark's chamber music does not show much of that composer's influence. Rather, one sometimes hears an interesting mix of Mendelssohn and Schumann, often seasoned with lively Hungarian gypsy melodies.

Goldmark's **String Quintet in a minor, Op. 9 (Cello Quintet)** dates from 1870 and is certainly one of the best in the literature. The opening *Allegro* reveals fresh invention and wealth of imagination; here the composer's characteristic tendency to oriental coloring already appears. The first theme, full of pathos, and the meditative second theme provide an excellent contrast. There is also a third theme—all 3 are splendidly developed. The end of this movement is particularly beautiful, and the skillful interweaving of the parts makes a deep impression. The deeply emotional second movement, *Andante con moto*, shows the influence of Mendelssohn. The third movement is a gay *Scherzo*. The finale begins in a funereal vein with a substantial *Andante sostenuto* for an introduction. But the main part of the movement, *Allegro*, is lively and high-spirited.



**Théodore Gouvy (1819-1898)** was born into a French-speaking family in the Alsatian village of Goffontaine which at the time belonged to Prussia. As a child, he showed no significant talent for music and after a normal preparatory education was sent to Paris in 1836 to study law. While there, he continued piano lessons and became friendly with Adolphe Adam. This led to further music studies in Paris and

Berlin. Gouvy, drawn toward pure instrumental music as opposed to opera, set himself the unenviable task of becoming a French symphonist. It was unenviable, because the French, and especially the Parisians, throughout most of the 19th century were operamad and not particularly interested in pure instrumental music. It was this distain for instrumental music in general which led to Gouvy living the last third of his life almost entirely in Germany where he was much appreciated. During his lifetime, his compositions, and especially his chamber music, were held in high regard and often performed in those countries (Germany, Austria, England, Scandinavia and Russia) where chamber music mattered. But in France, he never achieved real acclaim. Gouvy was universally acknowledged for being a master of form and for his deft sense of instrumental timbre. Mendelssohn and Schumann were his models, and his music developed along the lines one might have expected of those men had they lived longer. Virtually all of Gouvy's works show that he was a gifted melodist whose music is a joy to hear.

Gouvy's **String Quintet in G Major, Op. 55 (Cello Quintet)** dates from 1869. There are not so many string quintets for this combination, so it is not at all unlikely that Gouvy may have had Schubert's on his mind and there is a certain affinity between the 2 works. The lovely first movement, *Allegro*, is characterized by particularly fine writing. The main theme is a beautiful *Idyll*. The second movement, *Andante con moto*, provides an excellent contrast to the preceding movement. It is akin to a sad ballad or a

legend. The music is doleful with a funereal quality to it. With the third movement, *Allegro con brio*, which serves as the scherzo, jovial spirits return. In the genial finale, *Allegretto vivo*, both themes, though lyrical, are lively. There are many extraordinarily fine episodes of great tonal beauty in this winning movement. This quintet will find friends wherever it is played. And there is no reason why it should not also be heard in concert.

**Eduard Herrmann (1850-1937)** was born in the German town of Oberrottweil. He began studying the violin locally and later in Berlin at the Royal Academy of Music where he was a student of Joseph Joachim. He also studied composition. He enjoyed a career as a concert violinist and served for several years as concertmaster of the Hamburg Opera Orchestra and of the Imperial Russian Orchestra in St. Petersburg before emigrating to New York in the 1880's. In New York, he established himself as prominent violin teacher and leader of a string quartet. For many years he served as the lead violin editor for the New York music publisher G. Schirmer. His editions of many of the major violin concertos are still in use. He was also a highly successful arranger whose arrangements were for many years quite popular. Hermann's compositions are mostly chamber music and include 3 string quartets, a string quintet, a sextet for winds and piano and a string trio.

His **String Quintet in G Major, Op. 31 (Cello Quintet)** appeared in 1911. It is more in the nature of a divertimento or lighter music. The main difficulties it presents players are the changes in time signatures and modulations. The first movement begins with a pizzicato introduction leading to the main section, *Moderato*, which is in the form of a march. In the middle section, there is a contrasting slow canonic episode. This is followed by an *Andante sostenuto* full of warm sentiment. Next comes an *Allegretto*, a charming and graceful intermezzo. The work concludes with a pleasant theme and variations. Amateur players who can handle the heretofore-mentioned difficulties will enjoy this work.

I have found a few references in old German sources to a string quintet for 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos by **Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837)**, Mozart's only full-time student, the only one who lived with him and one of the most important piano virtuosos and teachers of all time, as well as a prominent composer. The quintet is referred to as Hummel's Op. 13 and described as a pleasant and effective 3-movement work showing Mozart's influence. However, I have been unable to find any reference to it in modern sources. If you come across it, please contact me.



**Hugo Kaun (1863-1932)** was born in Berlin and received his musical education there, studying composition with Friedrich Kiel at the Royal Prussian Academy of Music. In 1887, he moved to the United States and settled in the city of Milwaukee, where he lived for 13 years. Milwaukee had a large German-American population, and Kaun taught at the Milwaukee Conservatory. He acquired quite a reputation as a composer, since several of his works were premiered by the Chicago Symphony under the direction of his friend Theodore Thomas who had founded the orchestra. Kaun returned to Berlin in 1900, where he remained for the rest of his life, teaching and composing. His style is late Romantic and shows the influences of Brahms, Bruckner and Wagner. He wrote a fair amount of chamber music, including 4 string quartets, a string quintet, an octet, 2 piano trios, and a piano quintet.

His **String Quintet in f sharp minor, Op. 28 (Cello Quintet)**. It dates from 1893, is extremely well-written and sounds good. The first movement opens with a serious *Largo* introduc-

tion whose theme will be heard in the main section, *Allegro appassionato*, as well as the coda. The main subject is quite plastic and dramatic. The charming second subject is lighter. The Scherzo which follows is in the form of an unusual grotesque dance. The wonderfully melodic and graceful trio section has a clever use of pizzicato as an accompaniment. A lovely, warm *Adagio* serves as the third movement. The highly dramatic finale, also an *Allegro appassionato*, is full of power and energy. This is a superb work of only standard difficulty, deserving concert performance and can be warmly recommended to amateurs as well.



**August Klughardt (1847-1902)** was born in the German town of Köthen in Saxony-Anhalt. After studying music locally, Klughardt began to earn his living by conducting. He served in several locales, including Weimar, where he worked from 1869 to 1873. There, he met Franz Liszt, who was very important for his creative development. While influenced by Wagner

and Liszt, Klughardt did not by any means entirely adopt the ideology of their New German School, refusing to write tone poems and instead concentrating on symphonies and chamber music. The influence of Robert Schumann, and to a lesser extent Brahms, certainly is equally important. Klughardt's failure to whole-heartedly adopt Lisztian principles led to his being labeled as a conservative composer. Klughardt received considerable recognition as composer and won many distinctions, but today, sadly, his music, with the exception of one or two pieces, is entirely forgotten.

His **String Quintet in g minor, Op. 62 (Cello Quintet)**, composed ca. 1890, is a fine work. It is not only an outstandingly well-written piece, but it also sounds good and attracts one by the strength of its invention. And it is in no way beyond experienced amateur players. The outer movements show a strong Hungarian or gypsy influence. The first movement, *Moderato*, begins with a short fanfare which immediately leads to a Hungarian cadenza in the first violin. The somewhat elegiac main theme is especially beautiful. The second subject reflects Hungarian tonal colors. The whole movement could perhaps be styled a tribute to Brahms. The second movement, *Andante*, is a set of effective variations on a very simple but lovely theme. The third movement, *Allegro moderato*, is a distant relative of the minuet. The main theme recalls a similar movement in Brahms' Op. 51 No. 2 string quartet. Of great interest is the trio section, a canonic episode between the first cello and the first violin. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, immediately flashes its Hungarian tonal color. This and the magnificent second subject make it every bit as effective as the Hungarian finale to Brahms' Op. 25 piano quartet. A fiery coda, which recalls the opening movement, brings the work to a close.



**Franz Lachner (1803-90)** was born in Rain am Lech, a small Bavarian town, and trained in Munich. He is the older brother of Ignaz, who also composed chamber music. In 1823, by winning a musical competition, Lachner was awarded a position as an organist in a church in Vienna. In Vienna, he met Schubert: "We two, Schubert and I, spent most of our time together sketching new compositions. We were the closest of

friends, mornings performing for each other and discussing in depth every imaginable topic with the greatest of candor." It should come as no surprise then, that Schubert influenced Lachner's musical compositions more than anyone else. Lachner left Vienna in 1834 and returned to Munich where he remained the rest of his life, serving as conductor of the Royal Bavarian Or-

chestra from 1834 to 1868. He also held the position of Professor of Composition at the Royal Conservatory. Lachner's chamber music was much admired and often performed. Mendelssohn was fascinated by it and Schumann called Lachner the most talented composer in southern Germany. Writing 20 years later, Tchaikovsky noted that Lachner had to be placed near the pinnacle of fine composers.

The **String Quintet in c minor, Op. 121 (Cello Quintet)** appeared in 1866 and is a pleasure to play, without any especial technical problems. It cannot be denied that there is a certain greatness about it. The main theme to the opening movement, Allegro moderato, has a pleading, almost tragic quality to it. The music is superbly developed and even at one point has a magnificent fugal section. The whole thing is quite effective. The following Andante con moto is based on a simple melody. The music is contemplative but not without dramatic interludes. The spacious Scherzo, allegro assai, and its contrasting trio are both essentially dominated by rhythm, though they are not without charming melody. The finale begins with a short, atmospheric Andantino introduction before leading to the excellent main section, Allegro assai, which is extremely effective. Recommended for concert and home.



**Ernst Levy (1895-1981)** was born in the Swiss city of Basle. He studied at the conservatory there under Hans Huber and Friedrich Klose. He pursued a career as a piano soloist, composer and teacher and taught at several institutions in the United States including the New England Conservatory of Music.

His **String Quintet in c minor (Vc & Kb or 2 Vc)** dates from 1916 is in eight short movements, the whole quintet lasting just over 20 minutes. It cannot be said that the quintet is traditionally tonal, it is certainly less tonal than either the neo-classical and neo-baroque movements of the 1920's which came later. However, it is clear that Levy also rejected the atonality of Schoenberg and the Second Vienna School. He combines abrasive harsh tonalities with short bursts of traditional melody which is made all the more intensely beautiful by comparison to the rest. I do not think this work would do very well in concert although it may appeal to some amateurs who like music which is pushing tonalities to the outer limits. Technically speaking it is not overly difficult.



**Witold Maliszewski (1873-1939)** was born in the town of Mohyliv-Podilskyi, then part of Russian Poland, now located in Ukraine. His initial studies were at the Imperial Conservatory in Tiflis (now Tbilisi) with Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov. He then attended the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he studied with Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. In 1908, he obtained the position of conductor of the Odessa Symphony Orchestra. He was active in Odessa until 1920 and was a founder and first director of the Odessa Conservatory. Due to the Russian Revolution, Maliszewski moved to Warsaw in 1920, where he held several positions, including Professor of Composition at the Warsaw Conservatory. He composed in most genres, and his chamber music was held in particularly high regard, winning several competition prizes.

His **String Quintet in d minor, Op. 3 (Cello Quintet)** appeared in 1904. This quintet is sure to be of interest with its beautiful melodic ideas, which are cleverly and artistically presented. The composer shows a fine feeling for creating gorgeous tonalities and has written grateful parts for each of the instruments which present no great technical difficulties, so that it can be warmly recommended for performance, even to amateurs. Classi-

cal in feel, it is in the middle movements, Andante and Scherzo, that the composer uses Russian folk melodies. The main theme of the opening Allegro is genial and appealing, while the second charms by virtue of its piquant rhythm. There is an extensive development which, despite its length, holds the listener's interest. The second movement, an atmospheric Andante sostenuto, has the feel of a Legend and employs tonal combinations that are of great beauty. If this were not enough, there is a particularly impressive middle section. Next comes a Scherzo, which is a fleet Russian folk dance. The lovely and melancholic trio section is a slower Andantino. A magnificent finale, Allegro risoluto, tops off this excellent quintet. The splendid main subject is powerful and full of forward energy. A canonic second theme is noteworthy for its unusual rhythm and is followed by a broad, aristocratic, lyrical melody. Another good choice for home or concert performance.

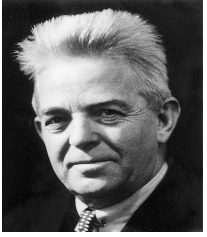


**Frank Martin (1890-1974)** was born in the Swiss city of Geneva and studied piano and composition at the conservatory there and privately with Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. He followed a career as a teacher and conductor both in Switzerland and abroad. His **Rhapsodie (Vc & Kb)** dates from 1935. Martin was impressed by Schoenberg's 12 tone system and used it but not quite like Schoenberg did.

The Rhapsodie which is four sections might be termed approachable atonality. Harsh and angular, it is nonetheless interesting and I think would hold an audiences attention in concert. This is not a work for amateurs.

**Heinrich Molbe (1835-1915)** was the pseudonym of Heinrich von Bach, a prominent Viennese lawyer whose 3 brothers—Alexander, Eduard and Otto—were nonetheless all better known than he. He was born in the village of Unterwaltersdorf in lower Austria outside of Vienna. His father, an important jurist, sent him, as he had the other brothers, to the University of Vienna to study law. Alexander, the eldest and most famous of the 4, served as Imperial Chancellor to the Emperor Franz Joseph from 1848-1850. Eduard entered the imperial civil service and was a governor of several Habsburg provinces, while Otto became a composer and eventually director of the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Heinrich, while at the University of Vienna, studied composition privately, as did his brother Otto, with Simon Sechter, the famous professor of composition and theory at the Vienna Conservatory. Heinrich also entered the imperial civil service and briefly served as the Governor of the Fiume and Trieste Province, then in Austrian possession. Though he could claim to be a professionally trained musician, he apparently felt that being known as a composer would be detrimental to his legal and imperial civil service careers, and hence composed under a pseudonym. He was a fairly prolific composer, writing nearly 400 works, including some 200 art songs and 140 chamber works.

Molbe's **String Quintet in B flat Major, Op. 44 (Vc & Kb)** appeared in 1896. To its credit, it is not at all difficult to perform. The melodic material of the quintet unmistakably identifies the composer as an Austrian and recalls the elegance and grace of Schubert. In structure, the quintet follows the Classical example. The first movement, Allegro ma non tanto, has for its main subject a rich melody. In the Adagio molto espressivo which follows the main theme has a sense of deep feeling which cannot be denied. Next comes a Scherzo, Allegro molto risoluto, characterized by its rhythm, and complete with a Ländler-like trio section. The finale begins with a Largo e molto espressivo introduction which leads to the main section, Allegro vivace. The main theme makes a good impression and the piquant second subject is even more appealing. A good work, best for home.



**Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)** achieved international recognition as a composer and even today is regarded as Denmark's most important 20th century composer. For many years his symphonies were widely performed. Unfortunately, this was not the case with his fine chamber music. Nielsen was born on the island of Fyn (Funen), the seventh of twelve children. His father was a painter by trade, who also played the violin and cornet and as a result was much in demand as a village musician. Nielsen exhibited a talent for music at an early age. His father suggested he study a wind instrument so that he might pursue the career of a musician in a regimental band. Nielsen followed this path briefly but decided he wanted to study violin and to compose. So with the financial help of friends, he was able to attend the Royal Conservatory in Copenhagen where he studied with Niels Gade.

His **Andante Lamentoso, subtitled Ved ed Ung Kunstners Båre (At the grave of a young artist)** was composed for the funeral of the brother of his good friend Bodil Neergaard. Her brother Oluf Hartmann, the grandson of the composer Emil Hartmann and the great grandson of the composer J.P.E. Hartmann, was a talented painter. It is not funereal. Chordal and densely written it produces a huge volume of tonal and was subsequently orchestrated by the composer. Not difficult to play, it makes a good impression



Schumann and Mendelssohn ranked the music of **George Onslow (1784-1852)** with that of Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn. Perhaps no composer better illustrates the fickleness of fame than Onslow. He was born and lived his entire life in France, the son of an English father and French mother. His 36 string quartets and 34 string quintets were, during his own lifetime and up to the end of the 19th century, held in the highest regard, particularly in

Germany, Austria and England where he was regularly placed in the front rank of composers. His work was admired by both Beethoven and Schubert, the latter modeling his own 2-cello quintet (D. 956) on those of Onslow and not, as is so often claimed, on those of Boccherini. Publishers such as Breitkopf & Härtel and Kistner were among many which competed to bring out his works. Such was Onslow's reputation that he was elected to succeed Cherubini as Director of the prestigious Académie des Beaux-Arts, based on the excellence of his chamber music and this, in an "Opera Mad France," which had little regard for chamber music. However, after the First World War, Onslow's music, along with that of so many other fine composers, fell into oblivion and until 1984, the bicentennial of his birth, he remained virtually unknown. Since then, his music, to the delight of players and listeners alike, is slowly being rediscovered, played and recorded. Onslow's writing was unique in that he was able to merge the drama of the opera into the chamber music idiom perfected by the Vienna masters.

Above all else, Onslow was known for his 34 quintets of which 28 are for 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos. He also started creating bass parts to replace the second cello if desired, after hearing the bass virtuoso Dragonetti take the part of the second cello during a performance of his tenth string quintet. From that point on, there was always a bass part, except for his last three quintets which were only intended for 2 violas. And while there were bass parts for quintet numbers 10 to 31, the bass parts to some of these have either disappeared or are for other reasons currently unavailable. To the best of my knowledge, there are no sources which have ever discussed more than one or two of these works and, while I am not going to discuss all of his 28 quintets intended for 2 cellos or cello and bass, (His six viola quintets Opp.1, 32-34,

are discussed in the preceding section) I will deal with the ones which I feel are the most deserving of your attention.

Onslow's **String Quintet No. 4 in g minor, Op. 17 (Cello Quintet)** in many ways made his name for him, especially in Germany and England. When it was published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1822, a year after it was completed, critics placed him in the front rank of chamber music composers and called him the equal of Beethoven, Spohr, the Romberg's and Ferdinand Ries. The work achieved great popularity and was often performed during his lifetime. The opening movement, Allegro spiritoso e espressivo, begins with a haunting melody full of yearning and charm. The second movement, Menuetto, allegro, with its thrusting themes and forward motion is much closer to a scherzo. A lovely, lyrical Andante cantabile comes next. The finale, Allegro vivace, is a real "barn burner" which races along in breathless fashion.

**String Quintet No. 6, Op. 19 in e minor (Cello Quintet or 2 Vla)** was published in 1822 and helped to confirm Onslow's reputation throughout Germany and Austria, where it became very popular. The opening Allegro, after a brief introduction, begins with a march-like theme. The somewhat sad second subject is more lyrical, but retains a hint of the march. This movement is a good example of Onslow's unmatched ability to combine martial themes with more lyrical subjects. The second movement, a Minuetto, shares the same somber mood as the preceding Allegro. The flowing theme, passed from voice to voice, gives off the aura of a trickling stream. The slower trio section, though more lyrical, does little to dissolve the hovering clouds. The exciting finale, also an Allegro, begins softly with a nervous, almost frantic theme. Tension is built by the use of a more lyrical subject against the pulsating rhythms in the other voices. This quintet is characteristic of Onslow's early middle period and is certainly one of the best string quintets written up to 1821.

**String Quintet No. 8 in d minor, Op. 24 (Cello Quintet or 2 Vla)** was composed in 1824. At first, little attention was paid to it, however, by 1830, it had entered the standard repertoire and remained a favorite for several decades thereafter. In Germany, musical critics hailed it as "a superior composition by this fine composer." Until the end of the 19th century, one could find it regularly on programs with such works as quintets by Mozart, Mendelssohn and Beethoven. The opening movement, Allegro, begins with a haunting melody given out by the first cello. Soon the others join in. The second movement is a turbulent and stormy Menuetto, marked impetuoso. A theme and lovely set of variations follow. An exciting finale, Allegro vivace, rounds out this first-rate work.

**String Quintet No.10 in f minor, Op.32 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb or 2 Vla)** Although the first 3 of Onslow's string quintets were for the standard 2 violins, 2 violas and cello, thereafter, his quintets, with the exception of his last three, were for 2 cellos and one viola. At the premiere performance of String Quintet No.10, which took place in London, the second cellist failed to show up. The audience grew restless waiting and begged Onslow, who was sitting with them, to take the part of cello II. Though he was an excellent cellist, he felt unprepared and did not wish to ruin the maiden performance. The famous bass virtuoso Dragonetti was also in the audience and people began shouting, let Dragonetti take the part. At first, Onslow refused, saying the bass would make it too heavy and ruin the effect. However, he eventually gave in and allowed Dragonetti, who sight-read the part, to play. To his surprise, he was delighted with the effect and thereafter always included an alternate bass part in lieu of cello II. He also added an alternate viola part in lieu of the first cello allowing the work to be performed as a viola quintet as well. It dates from 1827. The work begins with a substantial Largo introduction which at first creates a sense of foreboding and tension but then turns more lyrical and romantic. The main sec-

tion, Allegro, is restrained but has the unmistakable Onslow forward drive and excitement. The Andante which follows is mostly calm and singing, but there are several turbulent interruptions. Third is one Onslow's hard driving scherzos which Onslow titles Menuetto, allegro impetuoso. A minuet it is not, impetuous it certainly is, full of energy and excitement. The finale, Allegro agitato, bursts forth, racing at high speed, with hardly a moment for a breath. This is another of Onslow's fine string quintets.

**String Quintet No. 11 in B flat Major, Op. 33 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb or 2 Vla)** dates from 1828. Although the opening movement is marked Allegro con brio, the opening bars to the quintet proceed in a rather genial fashion. However, Onslow introduces several downward quick chromatic runs. And, in fact, the rest of the movement is dominated by lively passages which are deftly passed from voice to voice. The second movement, Andante mesto, begins quietly. The first half of the main theme is somber, almost funereal, while the second part expresses a sense of pleading. In the development, long scale-like passages are used to telling dramatic effect. The third movement is marked Minuetto non troppo presto. This is really a misnomer, since the movement is a fleet-footed scherzo in which there is a tremendous sense of forward motion, as in a wild race. After the breathless third movement, the finale, Allegro grazioso, almost sounds relaxed. The main theme has a definite measured quality but then, almost without warning, this melody is interrupted by long cascades of racing passages which match those of the other movements in their energy and excitement.

**String Quintet No. 12 in a minor, Op. 34 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)** dates from the composer's middle period. It was completed in 1829 and immediately published, whereupon it became immensely popular. It is not hard to understand why. The opening movement, a big and fecund Allegro, begins with the first cello stating the appealing and somewhat slow and yearning main theme. Immediately, the tempo picks up as the others join in. The second theme is equally charming and the conclusion quite exciting. The second movement, although marked Menuetto, is actually a somewhat pounding, chromatic scherzo. The contrasting trio is a simple, but lovely folk dance. Next comes an Adagio espressivo, which serves as the slow movement. A gorgeous, valedictory melody is played over an accompaniment of soft pizzicati. Gradually, we hear a heavenly duet in the form of a chorale. This is some of the finest chamber music writing to be found in the entire literature, almost the equal of the slow movement in Schubert's quintet. In the wonderful middle section, the second cello (bass) comes into its own with very telling chromatic passages. The finale, Allegro non troppo presto, begins with a bright, virtuosic theme over a very effective pizzicato accompaniment. The quintet is brought to a memorable finish with a thrilling coda.

**String Quintet No. 13 in G Major, Op. 35 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb or 2 Vla)** dates from the composer's middle period. It was completed in 1829, shortly after his 12th quintet. The huge opening movement, Allegro spirituosissimo, opens with a series of powerful chords which eventually lead to the exciting first theme, largely consisting of rising and falling scale passages. The lovely second subject is one of those elegant and grateful melodies that Onslow could toss off at a moment's notice. The second movement, a fleet Minuetto, allegro moderato, is at once playful and haunting with wonderful exchanges between the highest and lowest voices. The Andante cantabile which follows appears to be based on a beautiful French folk melody. The mood is pastoral and peaceful. But Onslow finally interrupts this bucolic reverie with a brief, though stormy middle section. The finale, a Presto, begins in a light and playful vein and is characterized by the various voices chasing after each other.

If you are exploring the Onslow cello quintets, you will no doubt come across **String Quintet No. 15, Op. 38, known as**

**"The Bullet." (Cello Quintet or 2 Vla)** It is a programmatic work which describes how Onslow was accidentally shot in the head by a hunter, while he was in the woods. He nearly died and each movement of the quintet describes what occurred. Unfortunately, in my opinion, it is not among his better works, and I do not recommend it as being worth your time.

**String Quintet No. 16 in E Major, Op. 39 (Cello Quintet or 2 Vla)** dates from 1830 and is the last work from the composer's middle period. It enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the 19th century and was often performed. Both the quality of the music and the originality of the melodies make this a fine work. The Largo introduction to the first movement, Allegro spirituosissimo, is particularly effective with the interplay between the first violin and second cello. One is further impressed by the beautiful style, the charming detail and nobility of the Adagio grandioso which comes next, while the offbeat character of the main theme to the third movement, Menuetto allegretto, with its echo effect is particularly striking. The finale, Allegretto, is also full of noteworthy accompaniment effects.

**String Quintet No. 17 in b minor, Op. 40 (Cello Quintet or 2 Vla)** dates 1831 and is the last work from the composer's middle period. It enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the 19th century and was often performed. It was dedicated to the violinist Johann Friedrich Eck (1767-1838) who had been active in Paris while Onslow had been studying there with Anton Reicha around 1808. Eck had been leader of the famous Mannheim Orchestra, was the teacher of Louis Spohr and had enjoyed a solo career. The work is in b minor, which was an unusual choice for Onslow and one which his models, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven generally avoided. The opening Allegro risoluto is exciting and very dramatic, featuring some virtuosic passages in the first violin part. The second movement, marked Menuetto presto, is not a minuet but a rousing scherzo, hard driving and full of forward motion and rhythmic shocks. Next comes an Adagio cantabile in which the thematic material is only revealed like a slow motion video of a flower unfolding. The finale, Allegretto, has a wayward melody over which the first violin and then the others play rapid passages which create a nervous mood.

**String Quintet No. 19 in c minor, Op. 44 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb or 2 Vla)** dates from 1831. It is certainly one of Onslow's most exciting quintets. After its publication, it was, like so many of his others, performed by several well-known players and always to great acclaim, more than holding its own against quintets by Mendelssohn and Beethoven which sometimes appeared on the same program with it. The quintet begins with a lengthy Lento introduction which slowly builds tension and leads to the main section of the first movement, Allegro spirituosissimo, with its hard-driving rhythm and tempo, full of what one critic has called the "élan terrible of the French Revolutionary style." The excitement created by the first movement is not lessened by the Minuetto, allegro impetuoso which comes next. More like a scherzo than a minuet, it is only in the trio section, which is repeated twice, that long-lined cantabile melodies replace the energetic and fast-moving minuet. The third movement, Andante con moto, quasi allegretto, is not your typical andante, but a fierce march. The finale, Vivace ed agitato, might almost be called a moto perpetuo as the music races along right from the start to the final measures without let up.

**String Quintet No. 20 in d minor, Op. 45 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb or 2 Vla)** dates from 1832 and is also among Onslow's most exciting quintets. The opening movement is a substantial Allegro grandioso which begins rather slowly and in sinister fashion with a solo in the second cello (bass) part. As the others join in, there are sudden dynamic and chromatic shifts which create considerable excitement. Next comes a Minuetto, presto. This is no minuet, but an explosive affair with hard-driving forward motion. No one could dance to this! The third



movement is a lovely Andante cantabile. The finale, though titled Allegro innocente, does not sound particularly innocent with its thundering sudden outbursts of passion interspersed with quieter, but brooding episodes.

**String Quintet No. 21 in g minor, Op. 51 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb or 2 Vla)** dates from 1834. It is, without question, one of Onslow's most exciting and best works. The opening measures of the first movement, Allegro impetuoso, set the tone immediately, creating a great sense of excitement. But rather than develop this pregnant theme, Onslow moves quickly on to the lyrical and more relaxed second subject. The third theme grows seamlessly out of the second and returns then to the first theme which opened the movement. The excitement created by this movement is only heightened by a breathtaking and superb Scherzo, presto which follows. It is a breakneck ride over a mysterious landscape without a moment's chance to catch a breath. Only in the lovely trio section, which has a chorale quality, does the pace slacken. In the slow movement, Andante non troppo lento, which comes next, we have the cello and viola taking the lead in presenting a lovely and calm folk melody. There are 2 dramatic sections which disturb the mood before order is restored. The exciting finale, Presto agitato, bursts forth, demanding the listener's attention and holding it from start to finish. The powerful first theme is counterbalanced by a sad cantabile melody which only appears on occasionally briefly.

**String Quintet No.22 in E flat Major, Op.57 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)** Onslow's 22nd String Quintet dates from 1836. It is without question one of his most exciting and one of his best works. It was dedicated to the prominent French violinist Eugen Sauzay. After its publication, it was performed by several well-known players and always to great acclaim, more than holding its own against such quintets by Mendelssohn and Beethoven which sometimes appeared on the same program with it. The opening bars of the first movement, Allegro non tanto vivace, begins in quite unusual fashion with a series of pizzicatti answered by chords in the lower voices. The movement proceeds genially but gathers momentum as several series of arpeggio triplets are passed from voice to voice. The cello, from time to time reintroduces the pizzicatti heard in the opening bars. The second movement, Adagio, begins in a very solemn, almost funereal mood with the cello opening affairs. The dark mood remains throughout, at times rising to a painful lament and then sinking back into a quiet lyricism. The Scherzo, allegro which follows begins with an energetic downward plunging theme creating instant excitement. The mood oscillates between playful and frantic. There is a nicely contrasting, wayward trio. The finale, Allegro grazioso pastorale, begins in the fashion of a barcarolle, with a gently rocking accompaniment over which a lovely and delicate melody is softly played. All is peaceful and calm as one would expect in a pastorale. But eventually a more thrusting episode interrupts, however it quickly becomes rather elegant and graceful rather than slashing.

**String Quintet No.23 in a minor, Op.58 (Cello Quintet or Vc and Kb)** dates from the beginning of his late period. It was completed in 1836 and immediately published whereupon it became immensely popular. It is not hard to understand why. The opening movement, Allegro non tanto vivo, begins with a series of ominous, powerful chords leading to the main theme, a yearning subject which is then followed by a lively, somewhat nervous theme complete with several fetching chromatic runs. A third theme of destiny follows. In the Adagio sostenuto which comes next, the bass (2d cello) is given the first few bars alone. A series of beautiful, lyrical melodies follow. The middle section has a march-like accompaniment to the violin's dramatic lead. Eventually, the bass comes forward to develop this ominous mood. The third movement, although marked Menuetto, allegro impetuoso, is actually a scherzo, full of dramatic, pounding, downward

plunging chromatic passages. There is a 'dancing through the daisies' contrasting trio. The finale, Allegro non tanto vivace, is full of nervous energy and hard driving forward motion throughout. A thrilling and exciting movement of the sort for which Onslow was justly famous.

**String Quintet No. 26 in c minor, Op. 67 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)** was composed in 1844. It was dedicated to his friend Henri Gouffé, who was considered the leading bass player in France. Gouffé, together with the famous French instrument maker Bernadel, introduced the 4-stringed bass into France and helped invent the brass-wound string which doubled the brilliance of the instrument. So it is perhaps fair to assume that Onslow probably intended the work to be played with bass rather than a second cello, though as always, he included a second cello part. Onslow opens the work with a Lento Introduzione which serves to slowly build tension. The main theme of the Allegro grandioso which follows has a subdued but nonetheless martial, almost march-like quality to it. The second subject is a compelling, lyrical melody. The following Scherzo is powerfully resolute, quite good of the sort of which Onslow was a master. A soft, naïve and delicate melody serves as the main theme of the Andante which follows. A march and then a stormy section complete it. The lovely, lilting main theme of the finale, Allegretto quasi allegro, is melancholy and full of longing. In the following development section, Onslow uses chromaticism to telling effect to create increasing tension.

**String Quintet No. 27, Op. 68 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)** was completed in 1845. The opening movement, Allegro grandioso, begins with an attention-getting downward chromatic passage which leads to the dramatic and powerful main theme. A second theme is lyrical and more relaxed. A slow movement, Adagio cantabile, comes next. Bamberg noted that he had attended a performance of this movement where "it had the effect of calming an unsettled audience to the point of speechlessness." The main theme is peaceful and reflective and extremely well harmonized. After this interlude of peacefulness, Onslow gives his audience a shock to its system with an exciting and stormy Scherzo, allegro impetuoso. The finale, Allegretto, begins in a relaxed fashion with a genial melody in the cello, but Onslow imperceptibly builds speed into the music and soon it is sailing along at a rather brisk pace.

**String Quintet No.28 in g minor, Op.72 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)** was composed in 1847 and dedicated to his friend Louis Casimir Ney, one of the leading violists of the time. It was published simultaneously in Paris by the Brandus and in Leipzig by Kistner, two of leading music publishing houses in Europe. The opening movement begins with a powerful, serious and stately Adagio introduction which leads to the main section, a moody somewhat melancholy Allegro moderato which alternates between exciting and lyrical episodes. The highly romantic second movement, Adagio cantabile begins with a lovely viola solo rising into its highest register. There is a hint of sadness. The third movement, entitled Menuet, is actually no minuet as Onslow marks it, Impetuoso and what we have is hard driving, thrusting and energetic music. A contrasting fleet footed and lighter trio section provides good contrast. The finale, Vivace, opens with a series of powerful chords which eventually lead to a whirling and exciting main section

**String Quintet No.29 in E flat Major, Op.73 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)** was composed in 1847 and dedicated to his friend Auguste-Antoine Guerreau a violinist who often played quintets with Onslow and was a member of the Gouffe Quintet named after Achille Gouffe, one of the leading bass players of the day. It was published simultaneous in Paris by the Brandus and in Leipzig by Kistner, two of leading music publishing houses in Europe. It opens with a lively Allegro moderato in which the bass is given generous opportunities to shine. The magnificent second

movement, *Larghetto doloroso*, is full of pathos and emotion. Third is a playful *Scherzo*, *Allegro non troppo presto* with a mild contrasting trio section. The finale, *Vivace*, is also bright and full of excitement.

**String Quintet No. 30 in e minor, Op. 74** was composed in 1847. The work begins with an impressive *Allegro grandioso*. It is a vast movement containing 2 widely contrasting subjects. The first theme is hard-driving and dramatic, while the second is more lyrical and harmonically rich. The second movement is a poetic *Menuetto*, characterized by its use of dotted rhythms. Next comes an *Andantino grazioso*. A joyful and imaginative finale, an *Allegro* full of dynamism, rounds off this fine work, certainly one of Onslow's best quintets.



**Carl Gottlieb Reissiger (1798-1859)** was born in the Prussian town of Belzig. He originally attended the famous Thomasschule in Leipzig, since his father intended him to be a priest, however, his extraordinary musical talent was recognized, and he was encouraged to pursue a musical career. His initial studies were with Johann Schlicht, Bach's fifth successor as Cantor of the Thomasschule. Subsequently, Reissiger went to Vienna and studied with Salieri. An early opera attracted Carl Maria von Weber's attention and Reissiger went to Dresden, eventually succeeding Weber as Music Director of the Dresden Court Orchestra, a post he held until his death. Wagner worked under Reissiger, a leading conductor of German opera, for nearly a decade. Reissiger premiered Wagner's first opera. A prolific composer, as most composers of that time were, Reissiger penned works in virtually every genre. His works show the influence of the Viennese masters, in particular Schubert and Beethoven.

His **String Quintet in G Major, Op. 90 (Cello Quintet)** was composed in 1830. The quintet can be especially recommended to amateurs since it presents no difficulties, sounds good, plays well and has good part-writing. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, has a gentle pastoral quality to it. In second place is a very fetching and effective *scherzo*, *Presto*. Then comes a pleasing *Andante con espressione*. The finale, *Allegro*, is a jovial dance-like *Rondo*.



Today, **Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838)** is primarily remembered as a friend and student of Beethoven, as well as his first biographer. However, during his lifetime and for much of the 19th century, Ries was remembered as a fine composer and virtuoso pianist. He showed musical promise from an early age, studying both violin and piano with his father, and the cello with Bernhard Romberg. In 1801, he went to Vienna to study with Beethoven. He studied piano and composition with

him for nearly 5 years. Thereafter Ries concertized throughout Europe for a number of years before settling in London and then finally retiring in Frankfurt. He wrote a considerable amount of music, including several piano concertos and a large quantity of chamber music which was for many years often performed and well thought of. In 1830,

Ries composed a programmatic work for cello quintet, his **Souvenir d'Italie, Op. 183 (Cello Quintet or Vc & Kb)**. It is in the final 2 movements that one hears echoes of Italy. The opening *Allegro* does not particularly remind one of that country, but it is nevertheless a very effective movement. It is followed by an atmospheric *Adagio mesto* and then an Italian-sounding *scherzo Allegro scherzando*. Echoes of Italy are also heard in the finale, *Allegro*. This is an interesting, but uneven work which might

interest amateurs, though there are several difficult technical passages which add nothing to the music.



**Bernhard Scholz (1835-1916)** was born in the German city of Mainz. He studied piano with Ernst Pauer and composition with Siegfried Dehn. He first taught at the Munich Conservatory and was court Kapellmeister in Zürich and Nuremberg, and served as the director of the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, a post he held until 1908.

Scholz's **String Quintet in e minor, Op. 47 (Cello Quintet)** was composed in 1878 and dedicated to Johannes Brahms. It was awarded a prize by the Chamber Music Society of St Petersburg. Rather good use of the second cello is made. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, features 2 impressive themes, one of them giving the music the feel of a Legend. The *Scherzo* which follows is a cross between a mазurka and a waltz. The third movement, *Andante espressivo*, is a warm-blooded romance. A fleet *Allegro vivace* closes this rather good quintet which plays well and is not difficult. It certainly can be recommended to amateur groups who should enjoy it and perhaps also for concert performance.

The **String Quintet in C Major, D. 956 of Franz Schubert (1797-1828)** has been called by some the greatest piece of chamber music ever written. Others have confined themselves to saying it is simply the best cello quintet ever written. Whatever the case, everything of importance that could possibly be said about this work has been. And I need add nothing other than to say that if you have a cello quintet ensemble at the ready, this is the one work, the first work you should play.



**Carl Schuberth (1811-1863)** was born in the German town of Magdeburg. He studied cello with Friedrich Dotzauer and became a touring soloist, but also taught and served as the music director of St. Petersburg University. Schuberth composed 2 cello quintets.

**String Quintet No. 1 in D Major, Op. 15** appeared in 1846. The first violin and the first cello must be of professional proficiency. It is pleasing in parts and can be provisionally recommended to players of a highly technical level, but there are too many other works which deserve your attention before coming this one, and thus I do not think it is worth your time. The same can be said of **String Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 24 (Cello Quintet)** which was completed in 1852.



**Ethel Smyth (1858-1944)** overcame the constraints of her middle-class English background by open rebellion. Taught piano and theory as ladylike accomplishments, she became so concentrated in her studies that her family deemed them unsuitably intense and stopped her lessons. The teenaged Ethel went on a protracted and progressively more severe strike, finally confining herself to her room and refusing to attend meals, church, or social

functions, unless her father would send her to Leipzig to study composition. After 2 years, the embattled Mr. Smyth gave in, and Ethel went to Leipzig, where she studied with Heinrich von Herzogenberg and got to know Brahms, whom she admired greatly, and Grieg, among others. Back in England, she obtained recognition mostly for her public works such as her *Mass in D Major* and her opera *The Wreckers*. Eventually she was raised to the rank of Dame, not only for her musical work, but also for her political activities: she was one of Britain's leading suffragettes

during the first part of the 20th century.

Smyth's **String Quintet in E Major, Op. 1** dates from 1883. Though designated as Opus 1, it was hardly her first composition, just the first to which she wished to give an opus number. The 5-movement work is concise in form and has convincing, tuneful melodies. She knew how to write for string instruments. The opening *Allegro con brio* features 2 fresh and appealing themes. The development is well done and interesting. This is followed by a charming *Intermezzo*, *Andantino poco allegretto*, wherein the composer makes particularly telling use of *pizzicato*. A magnificent *Scherzo*, full of humor and with a lyrical trio section, comes next. The fourth movement, *Adagio con moto*, is full of religious piety, while the finale, *Allegro molto*, which begins with a pretty fugue, has for its main theme a sweet and deeply felt melody. This quintet can be recommended for concert as well as to amateurs.

Little information can be found about **Bernhard Willibald Sommer (1846-1935)**. Apparently, he supported himself working as a farmer and salesman, but he must have received musical training, since it is known that he was an excellent violinist. During the last decades of the 19th century, Sommer's chamber music enjoyed considerable popularity, especially among amateur players.

His **String Quintet in B flat Major, Op. 12** came out in 1900. The opening movement, *Allegro non tanto*, no doubt intentionally, brings Schubert's cello quintet to mind. A Beethovenian *Adagio non tanto* follows and one wonders if Sommer had Ludwig's "Pathétique" Piano Sonata in mind. An excellent *scherzo*, *Allegro*, comes next. The last movement begins with a short *Adagio* introduction which leads to the main section, a lilting and lyrical *Allegro moderato*. Tuneful, well-written and not difficult to play, this work can be especially recommended to amateurs.

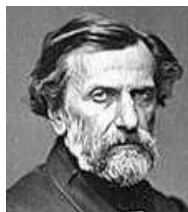


**Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915)** is one of the greatest Russian composers from the last half of the 19th and early 20th centuries and probably the one whose music is the least known in the West. In Russian concert halls, one always finds a bust of Taneyev alongside those of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Tchaikovsky. Sadly, the fame of this outstanding composer has not spread beyond his homeland. Taneyev came from an aristocratic family that patronized the arts and when Sergei's talent

became apparent, his father sent him to the newly-opened Moscow Conservatory at the age of 10. Taneyev's main teachers there were Nicolai Rubinstein for piano and Tchaikovsky for composition. Although he became a brilliant pianist, Taneyev opted for a career as a composer and teacher, and soon became a professor at the Conservatory. His fame both as a teacher and as a composer quickly spread. Among his many students were Glière, Rachmaninov, Gretchaninov, Scriabin and Medtner.

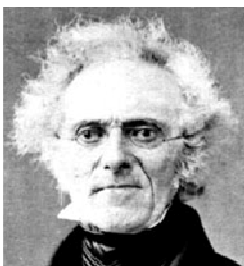
Taneyev's **String Quintet in G Major, Op. 14** dates from 1904. The first movement, *Allegro con spirito*, almost symphonic in tone, is filled with spirited and appealing melodies. The middle movement is a highly effective *Vivace con fuoco*. It features a very energetic main theme, while the equally spirited second theme is, both in its rhythm and melody, of Slavic origin. The huge finale, *Tema con variazione*, consists of the *andantino* theme and 9 extensive variations. It is an excellent example of Taneyev's extraordinary technique and art. This is one of the very best works of its sort—highly recommended both for concert performance and to amateur players.

Today, **Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896)** is only remembered as the composer of the opera *Mignon*, one of the most successful



French operas written during the last half of the 19th century. He was born in the French city of Metz where his parents were music teachers. They prepared him to become a musician and by age 10 he was already an excellent pianist and violinist. In 1828, he entered the Paris Conservatory while at the same time continuing his piano studies privately with the famous virtuoso pianist Kalkbrenner. In 1832, he won the Conservatory's prestigious composition prize, the *Prix de Rome*, which allowed him to travel to and study in that city for a year. He took with him a love for Mozart and Beethoven but once in Rome became an ardent admirer of the Italian cantilena and melodic tradition. It was during his Italian sojourn that he wrote all of his chamber music--a piano trio, a string quintet and a string quartet.

His **String Quintet in F Major, Op.7** dates from 1835. It is in three movements and reflects his enthusiasm for opera, which at that time, at least in Paris, meant the operas of Rossini. There are beautiful melodies in abundance which are given rather simple accompaniment in the other voices. The energetic opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, immediately appeals with its fetching melodies and clever passage work. The middle movement, *Andante*, is in the form of a romance. Gorgeous thematic material though not particularly interesting accompaniment as far as chamber music goes. The finale, marked *Scherzo*, is a beautiful fast waltz which would be right at home in the salon or in cafes. Though by no means a candidate for the concert hall, it is a lot of fun to play and hear. Not at all difficult, amateurs should look into it.



**Eugène Walckiers (1793-1866)** was born in the Belgian town of Avesnes-sur-Helpe. He studied flute with Jean-Louis Tulou and composition with Anton Reicha in Paris. Most of his compositions included the flute. He wrote a great deal of chamber music, including trios with flute and cello, flute quartets, piano quintets with flute and so forth. These compositions were admired by Rossini,

Meyerbeer and other prominent contemporaries of Walckiers and were much in demand during his lifetime. Toward the end of his life, he concentrated on chamber music works for strings or strings and piano. Among these are four quintets for 2 violins, viola, cello and bass or two cellos.

**String Quintet No.1 in a minor, Op.90 (Vc & Kb or Cello Quintet)** was dedicated to the famous French bassist Achille Gouffe and was completed in 1852. As you might expect, the bass receives quite a lot to do, certainly more than it normally would have.

**String Quintet No.2 in c minor, Op.94 (Vc & Kb or Cello Quintet)** dates from 1862) Walckiers was on friendly terms with the French composer George Onslow whose chamber music, especially his string quintets were quite popular throughout Europe. Most of Onslow's quintets were for 2 cellos and not 2 violas. However, after hearing a performance of one of his quintets in which the famous bass virtuoso Dragonetti took the part of the second cello, Onslow started writing quintets for either two cellos or cello and bass. No doubt, it was this which gave Walckiers the idea to write a string quintets which could be played by cello and bass or two cellos. He dedicated the quintet to the memory of his friend George Onslow. The opening movement begins with a slightly ominous *Adagio* introduction which leads then to a very lovely, melancholy *Moderato espresso*. The second movement is an energetic and strongly accented *Scherzo allegretto* with a contrasting and somewhat orchestral sounding

trio section. Next comes a deeply felt *Andante religioso*. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, begins with a dance, vaguely Spanish sounding, with an echo effect. Later there is a noble *maestoso*, perhaps a tribute to his friend Onslow. A good work for concert and well as home music makers.

**String Quintet No.3 in G Major, Op.103 (Vc & Kb or Cello Quintet)** was also composed in 1862. It was dedicated to Charles-Ferdinand Lenepveu a composer and professor at the Paris Conservatory.

**String Quintet No.4 in A Major, Op.108 (Vc & Kb or Cello Quintet)** was completed in 1866 and dedicated to Emile Magrin a prominent French hypnotist. The lovely opening movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, is genial and flows along in an uneventful fashion at times recalling the brighter music of Onslow. The second movement, *Minuetto moderato*, has a vague Spanish sound to its sad main melody. Third is a peaceful and reflective *Andante cantabile*. The bright finale, *Allegro*, dances along full of playful energy. A solid work but not as memorable as No.2



**Joseph Miroslav Weber (1854-1906)** was born in Prague. He studied violin and organ there, and enjoyed a career as a solo violinist and conductor, holding posts in Thuringia, Prague, Wiesbaden and Munich.

His **String Quintet in D Major** was composed in 1898 for a competition held by the Prague Chamber Music Society. It won first prize. It is a tonally beautiful work which is grateful to play. Central European Romanticism is blended

with Bohemian melody and rhythms much as one finds in the works of Dvorák and Smetana. Perhaps the quintet might be styled as program music since Weber gave each movement a separate title. The first movement is the longest and bears the intriguing title "As the Herr Professors would want to compose." It certainly strongly hints at the tensions between academics and more freethinking composers at the time. The title must surely be sarcastic, since the music is far from dry and academic. To the contrary, it is highly Romantic and free in form. The second movement, subtitled "Youthful high spirits," is a Scherzo, where in Weber demonstrates his mastery of rhythms. His use of the exciting *Obkročák* dance rhythm, laced with drones and chattering, is particularly telling. Next comes a highly expressive slow movement, an *Adagio* which bears the subtitle "Longing for the Fatherland." The aria given to the cello is especially touching and generates delicious warmth. The finale, a *presto* bearing the title "In the Countryside," recalls some of what has come before, especially in the scherzo. This quintet is program music in the best sense of the word and not only will it make an excellent selection with which to end a concert, but it should be very appealing to amateurs as well.



**Anton Wranitzky (1761-1820)** Antonin Vranický in Czech) was born in the Moravian town of Neureisch in the Austrian Habsburg Empire, today Nové Říši in the Czech Republic. He was the younger half-brother of the composer Paul Wranitzky, who was the better known of the two, although both were in their time fairly well-known, especially in Vienna but also throughout Europe where their music was often performed. Anton's first music lessons were from Paul. He studied philosophy in Olmütz

(Olomouc) and subsequently from 1778 to 1782 jurisprudence and music in Brunn (Brno). After that, he followed his brother to Vienna, where starting in 1783, he took composition lessons from

Mozart, Haydn and Georg Albrechtsberger. A talented violinist, he worked as a freelance musician until 1790 when he was hired by Prince Lobkowitz, the patron of Haydn and Beethoven, and eventually became Kapellmeister or Music Director of the Prince's orchestra. In 1807 he became the orchestra director of the Imperial Court Theater and in 1814 he became conductor in the Theater an der Wien. He knew all of the major musical figures in Vienna and was often engaged by Beethoven to conduct premieres of his symphonies. Wranitzky wrote in most genres and left some 60 works of chamber music, most for standard ensembles such as the string quartet or string trio. The string quintet had no standard ensemble, but the two most common forms were for 2 violins, 2 violas and cello or 2 violins, viola and 2 cellos. However, a few composers such as Franz Krommer, Joseph Eybler and the Wranitzky brothers were fascinated by the possibilities of a richer sonority that a Violin, 2 Violas and 2 Cellos offered and several works for this combination were composed but by comparison to other formats, not a huge number. Such works came into being in many cases because the composer would be commissioned to write for an existing group. It is thought that Wranitzky's **Op.8 String Quintets**, a set of three, were composed for such a combination then extant in Prince Lobkowitz's service. They date from around 1800 and originally for violin, 2 violas and 2 cellos, a rare combination by today's standard. Hence, a second violin part was created to take the part of the second viola. I am unfamiliar with Op.8 No.1

The **String Quintet in g minor, Op.8 No.2 (Cello Quintet)**. The opening *Allegro ma non troppo* has a Haydnesque *Sturm und Drang* quality to it. A lovely *Adagio* comes next and is followed by a typical Viennese *Menuetto*. The finale is a lively, typical *Allegro rondo* in 6/8

**String Quintet in E flat Major, Op.8 No.3 (Cello Quintet)** The opening movement is held together by bustling scale passages distributed between the instruments, while the second movement surprisingly is not slow but of moderate tempo. However, the lengthy *Adagio* introduction to the finale is particularly striking.



**Vasily Zolotarev (1872-1964)** was born in the Russian city of Taganrog. He studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Rimsky-Korsakov and Mily Balakirev. He taught at the Moscow Conservatory for a number of years and then in the Belarusian Academy of Music in Minsk. He composed in most genres and was especially fond of chamber music. Through Rimsky-Korsakov, Zolotarev became part of the so-called

Belaiev Circle, named for those composers, mostly Korsakov's students, whose music Belaiev published. All of Zolotarev's early chamber music was published by Belaiev. During the first half of his career, Zolotarev devoted himself almost entirely to the writing of chamber music, in which he displays great mastery, knowledge of the chamber style, thematic inventiveness and a good grasp of form.

The **String Quintet in f minor, Op. 19 (Cello Quintet)** is dedicated to Belaiev's memory and was composed in 1905 the year after Belaiev's death. The big, serious opening, *Andante ma non troppo e con tristezza*, is a poignant lament. Eventually, a contrasting middle section, *poco piu mosso*, briefly lightens the mood, before the dirge returns with even greater intensity. Here, one hears echoes from the *Andante con moto quasi Allegretto* movement of Beethoven's Op. 59 No. 3, but it should be remembered that the Op. 59 are the Razumovsky Quartets which have Russian themes, so perhaps Zolotarev was not quoting Beethoven, but a Russian folk melody. The music is quiet throughout. Real Russian folk melody can be heard in the Scherzo, *allegro ma*

non troppo, which comes next. The main section is original sounding and quite charming, while the contrapuntal trio section has a dance-like theme. The next movement, Andante, is a kind of intermezzo which begins with an introductory fugue based on the main theme of the first movement, followed by a genial Allegretto grazioso. The quintet concludes with a massive, magnificent finale: it has an Allegro introduction leading to an Allegro ma non troppo whose chief theme is march-like. Many changes of mood and tempo follow, including a beautiful, lyrical interlude and a triumphant march section. Then comes a section reminiscent of the coronation scene from Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* with its powerful Russian hymn. This is a superb work which makes excellent use of both cellos. It deserves concert performance and can be warmly recommended to amateurs as well.

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