



# GUIDE TO THE STRING TRIO 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 trio literature. But it is a special type of guide which up until now has not existed in English—a guide which can be used as an aid to help explore the wider world of chamber music, most of which in my experience, is virtually unknown to professional musicians as well as the listening public. However, this guide is by no means a mere compilation or an encyclopedia of works, nor is it an academic treatise which analyzes how a composer actually wrote his music.

It is unfortunate that today's concertgoers are presented with the same works over and over again. As far as chamber music concerts go, most of them are by string quartets or piano trios. One almost never hears string trios performed in the concert hall. This can be explained by the fact that there are virtually no permanent string trios in existence performing regularly before the public. In most cases the only reason why a string trio concert will be programmed is because it is cheaper than having to pay for a quartet. But if on the off chance one does get to hear a string trio concert, and by this I mean a trio for violin, viola and cello, I can almost guarantee that the selection will be from one of half a dozen works: Mozart's Divertimento, K. 563, Beethoven's Op. 9 or occasionally the Op. 8 Serenade, and Dohnanyi's Op. 10 Serenade. If the trio is for 2 violins and viola, which generally only happens when a string quartet presents such a work, it will either be the Kodaly Trio or Dvorák's Terzetto.

So, unfortunately, the reality is that the only way one is going to hear a string trio is either through the medium of records or by playing the music themselves. Given this guide's main objective, little attention will be expended on the famous works mentioned above. Instead, it will concentrate on lesser or unknown pieces which also deserve our consideration. Besides, entire books have been devoted to many of these famous works, for example, Beethoven's chamber music and there is little, if anything, of importance to be said on the subject by anyone writing today. Hence, this guide will only list such works for the sake of completeness. Having said this, if the reader is new to the string trio literature, certainly, the place to begin is with those works already mentioned.

With regard to atonal and so-called experimental music, such works will not be included. The players and listeners have now been exposed to these works 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, these works, great as they may be on paper to a musicologist or the student of music theory, are not an experience the average listener generally wishes to repeat.

The reader has the right to inquire as to the qualifications that the writer brings to his or her task. I have had the opportunity to play several times a week and have regularly performed chamber music for the past 40 years, mostly in amateur groups, but occasionally as a member of a professional or semi-professional ensemble. Along the way, I developed a love of the broader chamber music literature to which I was first exposed through the

medium of phonograph records. To my chagrin, years of concert-going made clear that I was unlikely to ever hear such music performed live, either because the professionals did not know of the music or because the music was unavailable. When I realized this state of affairs, I undertook to obtain some of the music I had heard on disk so that at least I could play it. To this end, I began to search music stores, antiquarian dealers and libraries both in America and Europe. Later, I used my briefly held position as chamber music critic for a classical music radio station to further the cause of lesser-known, but fine chamber music by encouraging many of the groups passing through our city to examine them. I have, on occasion, sent copies of some of these works I unearthed to well-known ensembles currently performing. Additionally, I have served as the editor of and a frequent contributor to *The Chamber Music Journal* for more than 25 years and have headed up 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 marvelous and mammoth Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music is just that, an encyclopedia, not a practical handbook that the performer, whether professional or amateur, can rely upon in navigating the literature.

Despite the fact I recognized the need for a different kind of guide, I did not initially consider the possibility of undertaking it myself until a number of my chamber music friends and colleagues, after regularly hearing me complain that 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 come into play and I make no apology for them. At the same time, unlike late 19th-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 Cyclopedica, 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.

As I started writing this guide, I had originally intended to try to include whether the work had been reprinted or 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. That said, I stopped including this information about midway through.

While it is arguable that there is no point in discussing works which the player is unlikely to ever get a chance to play, I have, nonetheless, included many such works which I consider to be of merit and which I have found 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, I have played through more string trios than probably most. Among those who joined me on this adventure are Gordon Peterson, Morton & Lura Altschuler, Henry Coretz, Eric Eisenstein, Kathleen Tumminello, Richard Sherman, Jean Mielke, Thalia Collis, Kristen Wilkinson, Dr. Prof. Hugo Zeltzer, Willi Boskovsky, Walter Willinlganz, Herman Essak, Thomas & 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, Edward Torgeson, Siegfried Moysich, Carl Fox, Dr. Bernard Resnick, Mordy Rhodes, Lillian Cassey, Joseph Kirschner, Gunther Fonken, George Smith, Alan Garber, Gerda Bielitz, Beverly Kaushagen, Steven Spiegel, Rose Ross, Samuel and Paula Golden, Dr. Iris Cosnow, and Frank

and Paula Tachau.

*Raymond Silvertrust*  
*Riverwoods, Illinois 2015*

## **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*

# The String Trio-A Very Brief History

Since around 1800, string trios for violin, viola and violoncello have been considered the standard format. However, prior to 1800, it could be argued that the standard string trio was for the combination of 2 violins and violoncello. More of these were written than for any other combination. The composer who wrote the most important of such trios was Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805). He composed more trios for this combination than that for violin, viola and cello. There were contemporaries of Boccherini, such as Felice Giardini (1716-1796) who wrote more of the latter, but they were in the minority. The trio for 2 violins and cello can be directly traced back to the Baroque era and that is no doubt why it was the more common of the two formats. But the appearance of Beethoven's 3 Op. 9 trios in 1799 can be said to be the demarcation line, after which the string trio for violin, viola and cello came to be regarded as the norm. So much so, in fact, that after 1800, there were very few trios, and almost none of any importance, written for 2 violins and cello.

Additionally, there have been trios for 2 violins and viola; violin and 2 violas; viola, cello and bass; and perhaps other combinations. Only a handful of works for these other combinations, such as Dvorák's Op. 74 Terzetto and Kodály's Trio for 2 violins and viola, achieved any success, although there are others such as Sergei Taneyev's Op. 21 and Robert Fuchs' Op. 61 Trios for 2 violins and viola which are very fine and deserve to be heard and played.

## String Trios For Violin, Viola and Violoncello

**Walther Aeschbacher (1901-69)** was a Swiss composer and conductor. His **String Trio, Op. 21** is in 4 movements. It is quite effectively written in what might be called a neo-baroque. It is entirely tonal, but with many episodes of wayward dissonances which are, however, always resolved. This is an excellent work which would make a suitable entry on a concert program. It presents no real technical difficulties.



**Feodor Akimenko (1876-1945)** was a Russian composer who studied with Rimsky-Korsakov and after the Russian Revolution settled in France. His **Op. 7 String Trio in C Major** dates from 1900. Unlike the works of most of Rimsky-Korsakov's students, it does not sound Russian or even Slavic. It shows some French influence, some influence of Scriabin. What melodies it has are on the austere side. It is not an easy work to play, not because it is technically difficult, but because it is not only hard to stay together, but also is difficult to achieve a clean ensemble sound.



**Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736-1809)** was born in the Austrian town of Klosterneuburg not far from Vienna. He studied organ at the famous Melk Abbey. Through diligent work, he became perhaps the leading expert of counterpoint in his time and as a result became one of the most sought after teachers in Europe. Among his many students were Ludwig Beethoven, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Ignaz Moscheles, Anton Reicha, Ferdinand Ries, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Joseph Eybler and Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart. Besides teaching, he held several important posts as an organist, including to the Imperial Court in Vienna. Like most of his contemporaries, he was a prolific composer, writing numerous works for piano and organ as well as chamber music, including 28 known string trios. In addition, he wrote several influential theoretical works on harmony and counterpoint.

His **String Trio in C Major, Op.9 No.1** is the first of a set of six which were published in 1795 by Andre in Offenbach. However, not only from the early opus number but also and more importantly from the style, these trios most likely date from the late 1760s, just after the baroque trio sonata started to go out of fashion. The opening movement, Moderato, is a theme and set of six variations. The middle movement, marked Menuetto and vivace, would have been quite unusual for the time, given the tempo marking and certainly not a minuet which could be danced to. The finale is an energetic Allegro.

**String Trio in A Major, Op.9 No.2** is the second of the set. While the first trio only had three movements, this trio consists of four movements and begins with a moderato. The second movement, marked Menuetto, poco vivace, would have been quite unusual for the time, given the tempo marking and certainly not a minuet which could be danced to. Next comes anthem the finale, which is marked Moderato and which begins in canonic form.

**String Trio in F Major, Op.9 No.3** is the third of the set. The work opens with an engaging, Allegro Moderato. The middle movement, marked Menuetto, allegretto, is fairly extensive and a cross between the baroque and emerging classical eras. The finale is an exciting Presto.

The trios are pleasant enough with good part-writing and not difficult. As such they can be recommended to amateurs and students but they have no place in today's concert halls except perhaps when given in a historical context by a composer who was an important teacher.

**Franz d'Alquen (1804-1877)** was born in the German town of Arnsberg in the province of Westphalia. He and his pianist brother Friedrich, who is somewhat better known, emigrated to London around 1830 where he remained the rest of his life. His **String Trio in C Major** which was brought out by the London publisher Robert Cocks & Co. in 1850 a year after it was composed, is an example of this kind of composition. It is well-written for all 3 voices, has appealing melodies and presents no technical difficulties. The trio opens with a somber Lento introduction which leads to a genial Allegro moderato. The second movement, a lyrical Andante cantabile, is full of charm and has a vocal quality. Next comes a brisk Allegro scherzo with a nicely contrasting trio section. The finale is an effortlessly flowing Allegro grazioso.



**Nikolai Amani (1872-1904)** was a Russian composer who was a student of Rimsky-Korsakov. His **Op. 1 String Trio** was published in 1900 and republished in 1988. Rimsky-Korsakov's influence is not evident and this is not a Russian sounding trio. It opens with a melancholy Allegro moderato introduction. The main part of the first movement, Allegro, is characterized by agitation and unrest. The second movement, Andante, has a vocal quality based on a simple melody. The Intermezzo, allegro scherzando, which follows, is perhaps the most memorable of the 4 movements. The folk melodies sport a charming and inventive accompaniment. The lively finale, Rondo, allegro molto, has a fleet-footed main theme and 2 good lyrical secondary subjects. The tonalities are akin to what Central European composers were writing about this time. The trio does not present any technical difficulties and is not hard to play. A reasonably good work.



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

The cover page to his Op.8 string trios, which were published by the Paris firm of Pleyel would indicate, along with the style of the music and opus number that these trios were composed sometime during the 1780s. **Trio No.1 in e minor, Op.8 No.1** is in three movements. The opening Allegro moderato is lively. The middle movement is a warm Adagio and the finale is a toe-tapping Allegro. A Haydnesque work with good part-writing and worthwhile thematic material. Of standard difficulty. It could be an option for amateurs or advanced students for a concert choice.



**Volkmar Andreae (1879-1962)** was a Swiss composer, conductor and Director of Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra for almost half a century. His **String Trio in d minor, Op. 29** dates from 1919. This is a very valuable addition to the string trio literature which presents no great technical difficulties. In each of its 3 movements, the main theme of the first movement, Allegro moderato, makes an appearance, each time

treated inventively so that the music remains fresh. This trio can be recommended for concert performance and also to amateurs.

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

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)** wrote 5 trios. The first, dating from 1791, is **Op. 3 in E flat Major**. It has the same number of movements, basically in the same order and is in the same key as Mozart's K. 563 Divertimento for string trio. There seems little doubt that it served as Beethoven's model. The 6 movements are Allegro con brio, Andante, Menuetto allegretto, Adagio, Menuetto and Allegro. This is quite a good work and can be considered a full-fledged work from his so-called Early Period; it is the equal of the other trios as well as the Op. 18 String Quartets and shows him in complete command of his material. It deserves to be heard in concert occasionally.

His second trio is the **Op. 8 Serenade in D Major**. It also dates from 1797. It is in 6 movements—Marcia, Allegro-Adagio; Menuetto, Allegretto; Adagio-Scherzo; Allegretto alla polacca; Andante quasi allegretto; and Marcia, allegro. This is an interesting work for a number of reasons. It is clearly a work intended for concert performance, a show piece. The Marcia, with which he opens and closes the work, is quite unusual. The placement of a scherzo within the confines of a slow movement is also very original as is the inclusion of a Polacca. It should be noted that the technical demands are perhaps the greatest of any of the trios, though they cannot be styled as excessive. It is the only trio, other than Op. 9 No. 3, in which the cello is asked to play, albeit briefly, in thumb position (once in the Polacca). This is a one-of-a-kind work.

In 1798, the most famous set of trios was published, his Opus 9. There are 3 in the set. The first, **Op. 9 No. 1 in G Major**, in my opinion, is the most effective and the best of the set, however, the general consensus seems to be otherwise and has favored the third. No. 1 opens with a soft and suspense-filled Adagio introduction which leads to the exciting Allegro con brio. The conclusion (coda) to this movement is one of the most exciting in the literature as the violin and cello answer each other over the pulsing 16<sup>th</sup>-note double stops in the viola. If the violist doesn't sound urgently excited with its relatively unexciting part, the effect is entirely lost. The second movement is a masterly Adagio, *ma non tanto e cantabile*; the E Major key makes intonation a bit problematic here. A bumptious Scherzo is followed by the *pièce de résistance*, a wonderful Presto, which must fly like the wind but must not sound hurried. The ending always brings the house down. Technically this trio makes no special demands.

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

**Op. 9 No. 3 in c minor** is the only one of his trios one ever hears in concert. Admittedly, there are few string trios performing before the public these days. It is generally held to be his best, but as I have said, I would put it second. The opening movement, Allegro con spirito, is exciting but by no means easy to make sound so. I think the thematic material is carried along more by the key than any intrinsic excellence. It cannot be denied

that the Adagio con espressione is magnificent. The material is very rich and the rhythmic patterns intricate. It is in this movement that the cello once again ascends, albeit briefly, into thumb position. The Scherzo, allegro molto e vivace which follows is a hard-driving, forward-thrusting affair which is very exciting, but again requires good ensemble players to achieve this. The finale, to my mind, though by no means bad, is the weakest of the movements and not as exciting as either the opening movement or the scherzo, nor can it compare to the thrilling ending of Op. 9 No. 1. Its playful pianissimo ending, clever though it is, is somewhat of an anti-climax.



**Jørgen Bentzon (1897-1951)** was born in Copenhagen. He studied composition with Carl Nielsen at the Royal Danish Conservatory and then with Sigrid Karg-Elert in Leipzig. He also took a degree in law and pursued a dual career as a composer and lawyer, active in Danish politics as they applied to the study of music..

His **Divertimento for String Trio** was composed in 1921 while he was studying with Carl Nielsen. Although in one movement, there are three sections. It opens with a powerful Allegro. This is followed by a diffident Adagio played with mutes on. Another Allegro then follows to conclude. The work is tonal in the way that Carl Nielsen's later works are and Nielsen's influence can be heard throughout. The trio does not present any unusual technical difficulties and can be recommended for concert performance and to experienced amateur players.



**Hermann Berens (1826-1880)** was a German composer who lived most of his life in Stockholm. He composed a set of 3 string trios, his Op. 85, in 1871. These are a valuable addition to the repertoire, being one of the few sets of trios from the mid-Romantic era. The one problem one finds is various bouts of pianistic writing that require very dexterous string players to bring off. That said, these trios are certainly worthwhile.

**Op. 85 No. 1 in D Major** is the weakest of the set, though not without its good points. An example of the pianistic writing can immediately be found in the opening bars to the first movement, Allegro vivace. The main theme contains a set of 16<sup>th</sup>-note flourishes that are suited more to the piano than strings. The thematic material is not strong enough to hide this problem. The second movement, Andante Maestoso, is a Schumannesque funeral march with rich, deep sonorities. Pizzicato is also used to telling effect. A charming minuet, Allegro non troppo, comes next. There is a chirpy, updated Mozartean feel with a contrasting trio section of slightly darker hue. The main subject to the Rondo-finale, Allegro non troppo, is graceful and elegant. However, the fast downward-plunging and upward-rocking passages are clearly pianistic and do not sit well with strings, especially the lower voices. The coda, though exciting, is not that easy to put together.

**Op. 85 No. 2 in c minor** is the best of the set. The trio takes its inspiration from Mendelssohn whose influence can be heard especially in the coda to the exciting first movement, Allegro agitato. This coda brings to mind *The Hebrides Overture*. It is followed up by a lovely pastoral Andante con moto. The third movement, Allegro patetico, is full of forceful forward propulsion. The naive trio section provides a striking contrast and features a sweet country dance melody. The exciting finale, Allegro vivace, is sure to please any audience which gets the chance to hear it, but pianistic writing makes it hard to bring off, especially in the lower voices. The ending is quite well done.

**Op. 85 No. 3 in F Major** might well have been called Grand Trio for it is truly written on a large scale. The opening

Allegro is a huge movement brimming with ideas which Berens effectively presents. It begins quietly, almost like a pastorale. As the first theme is developed, momentum is gradually added. By the time the theme is fully elaborated, things are really moving along. A second theme has a whimsical feel. This in turn leads to a lyrical melody, given in turn to each voice and played against an effective pulsating accompaniment. If this were not enough, suddenly a brief but wild, turbulent episode, which gives the feel of the sea, bursts forth. When the storm clouds clear, an uplifting chorale is sung against a quiet pizzicato accompaniment. The poignant second movement, Andante, has a heavy, solemn dirge-like air. The mood of the Halloween-like Allegro scherzando which follows could not be more different. It is a nervous, fidgety scherzo rushing here and there. The slower and lyrical trio section provides fine contrast. The finale, Allegro e con brio, wastes no time getting going. It explodes out of the starting gate full of energy. Again, there are episodes of pianistic writing which create ensemble headaches for string players, but these are much less prominent than in the 2 preceding trios. Once again there is an effective conclusion.



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



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



**Antoine Bessems (1806-1868)** was a Flemish composer. His **String Trio in E flat Major, Op. 90** was published in 1866, but despite its late opus number, it was almost certainly composed some decades earlier. Judging from its style, one might well conclude it was composed in the 1820's or 1830's. The work, which Bessems called "Grand Trio," is, for its time, quite substantial and in 5 movements. Bessems displays an excellent understanding of the instruments and writes quite well for each of them. The huge opening movement begins with a solemn and stately *Grave* introduction, which immediately captures the listener's attention. The main part of the first movement is a lively and upbeat *Allegro vivo*. Next comes a muscular *Scherzo*. A charming *Andante con moto*, somewhat in the form of a serenade, with simple but lovely melodies follows. Bessems surprises by inserting a *Tempo di Menuetto* rather than proceeding directly

to the finale. This is an old-fashioned traditional minuet. The finale, *Allegro*, begins in rousing style, but soon we hear the influence of Rossini and the introduction of Italian vocal-type melodies.

**Adolf Binder (1845-1900)** was an Austrian composer. Little is known about him. His **String Trio in C Major, Op. 1** was published in 1900, however, judging from the music, it seems unlikely that it was composed then, but rather several decades before, since it is written in a mid-Romantic era idiom. This is a solid, well-written, 4-movement work which can be heartily recommended to amateurs. It opens with an *Adagio* introduction which creates suspense. The main movement, *Allegro moderato*, has a bravura quality, somewhat Mendelssohnian. The second movement, *Allegro scherzando* with its trio, is cute, but it is the *Adagio* that follows which makes the strongest impression, being lyrical and dramatic. It is interspersed with *Allegro molto* interruptions which add further to its interest. The finale, *Molto allegro*, has much of the same quality as the opening movement.

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



**Adolphe Blanc (1828-1885)** was born in the French town of Manosque. His musical talent was recognized early and he entered the Paris Conservatory at age 13. After graduating, 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 wrote 3 string trios,

**String Trio No.1 in G major, Op.25** dates from 1850's. It is in four movements and begins with an *Allegro* with a stately opening theme which harks back to the classical era. The writing is fluent and the melody flows easily. Next comes a *Scherzo* with trio. The scherzo is quite interesting with its off beat rhythm and use of *appoggiaturas*. The trio section is a lovely serenade with a strumming pizzicato accompaniment. The third movement, marked *Fantasia*, starts with a viola solo in which the first half of the theme, a folk melody, is stated. It is finished by the violin. The entire second phrase is sung by the cello. It is a very loose set of variations, though not so marked. The cello opens the finale, *allegro moderato*, with a theme which is subsequently dominated by a triplet figure which eventually plays an



important role in the exciting conclusion to the trio. This is a worthwhile addition to the repertoire for trio ensembles. An effective choice for a concert program and fun to play at home.

**String Trio No. 2 in A Major, Op. 41**, which dates from 1860, is perhaps the best of the three. It opens with a charming Allegro moderato. The second movement, Allegro vivace scherzo, makes a stronger impression with its unusual rhythm and lyrical trio section. Better yet is the slow movement, Adagio religioso, with its noble themes and somber atmosphere. Best of all is the finale, Rondeau espagnol. It may well be that Bizet borrowed the themes from this movement for his opera *Carmen*, written some 15 years later. The rhythms and even the creation of a guitar sound through the clever use of pizzicato are superbly done. This work could be performed in concert.

**String Trio No. 3 in f minor, Op. 48** was composed around 1848 but was not published until nearly 20 years later. So it may have been composed before No. 2 but given a higher opus number because it was published after it. It opens a graceful Allegro moderato and is followed by a stately minuet with contrasting trio. The third movement is based on a simple but lovely melody. The finale, Allegro vivo, is full of excitement and makes a fitting conclusion to the trio. Another good work that could make an effective choice for a concert program and which can be recommended to home music makers.



**Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805)** was an Italian composer and virtuoso cellist who lived most of his life in Spain serving as composer to the royal court. He composed over 70 string trios, most for 2 violins and cello rather than violin, viola and cello. However, he did write at least 12 for the latter combination. Virtually all his trios were published in sets of 6.

The first and best known for this combination is his **Op. 14, G. 95-100**. These have remained in print off and on since they were first published in 1772. They all have either 3 or 4 movements. These works were clearly intended for concert performance, perhaps, judging by the difficulty of the cello part with its extensive use of thumb position, with Boccherini on the cello. No. 1 has 3 movements and is sometimes known as his "Great" trio. The first 2 movements of No. 1 are excellent, although the last falls off in interest. No. 2, the only trio set in the minor, is perhaps the best of the group; each of its 4 movements maintains interest throughout. It is still strong enough to be programmed in concert. Each of No. 3's 4 movements is pretty average; the thematic material is not particularly memorable. This is also true of the opening movement to No. 4, however, the last 2 movements are quite good. No. 5 is one of the stronger trios in the set while only the middle movement of No. 6's 3 movements is at all memorable.

The other set of 6 trios for violin, viola and cello, **Op. 47, G. 107-112**, appeared in 1793. They are all in 2 movements and nowhere near as ambitious as the earlier set. They appear to be more on the order of "Hausmusik," intended for home music making. They present no serious technical problems; the cello part, which was intended for the cello-playing Prussian King Frederick William is far more manageable.

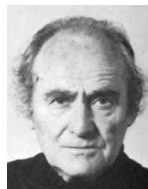


**Alexandre Boëly (1785-1858)** was a French composer and organist. His **Op. 5** set of 3 trios was first published in 1808 and appeared to be modelled after and sound a great deal like Beethoven's Op. 9 trios, although each of them is written on a much larger scale. **Op. 5 No. 1 in D Major** is the biggest of the 3. The size and scope of the opening Adagio introduction to the first movement are truly extraordinary.

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

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

**Op. 5 No. 3 in g minor** is in some ways the most interesting and also the least interesting and weakest of the set. Like Beethoven Op. 9 No. 3, it is the only one written in the minor, but the thematic material is perhaps the least interesting. On the other hand, it sounds the least like Beethoven and has the most challenging cello part of the 3.



**Hans Melchior Brügk (1909-99)** was a German composer and teacher. He primarily composed choral works. His **String Trio in D Major, Op. 11** was published by Simrock in 1963. It is in 3 movements—Allegro vivace, Adagio (a theme and set of variations) and Vivace. It is tonal, but mostly not in the traditional sense with many long episodes of dissonance. But these are always resolved. Rhythm plays a greater role than the thematic material. The Vivace is particularly appealing. It presents no unusual technical difficulties and can be handled by amateurs of average ability.



**Ole Bull (1810-1880)** was born in the Norwegian city of Bergen. He became a famous violin virtuoso and composer. As a boy he studied violin with his mother and local teachers, but was largely self-taught, although some scholars believe he may have had some violin lessons from Heinrich Ernst, another violin virtuoso. Bull is thought to have composed at least 70 works, most of which are now lost. The most famous of those which have survived is **Sæterjentens Søndag** (generally translated in English as the Dairymaid's or Shepherdess' Sunday and surprisingly in French as Solitude on the Mountain and in German as the Longing of the Dairymaid). The work, which became tremendously popular, was originally for violin and piano, but was quickly made into a song and then given many different arrangements. One of the best was for string trio by the Norwegian composer Johan Svendsen (1840-1911).



**Giuseppe Cambini (1746-1825)** was born in the Italian town of Livorno. Surprisingly little is known of his life, given that he and his music was 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 stud-

ied 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. He made Mozart's acquaintance in Paris when the latter was touring there but most likely did know Haydn whom 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, fourteen 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.

His **Op.2 Trios** were certainly not his second work. It was the opus number given to them by his first publisher. Another publisher years later assigned the Op.33. Unlike many of his other works which he cranked out at great speed to satisfy demand, these trios were carefully put together around the time Cambini moved to Paris. They were designed to serve as an introduction for the Parisian public in an attempt to interest them in his works. Amateur players in Paris, the main market for composers, were not interested in complex works, but desired works which were easy to grasp, elegant, having cantilena qualities and galant characteristics. These are the very qualities which can be found in the Op.2 trios, which are written in a concertante style, in which each voice receives solos. These are pleasant works, good enough for concert as well as home music makers.



**Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842)** was born 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 in 1817 wrote that he considered Cherubini the greatest living composer.

Cherubini's **String Trio No.1 in G Major** was originally one of several teaching works he contributed to the *Solfèges pour servir à l'étude dans le Conservatoire de Musique*. This was a massive two volume set of exercises and pieces for singing students created toward the end of the 18th century. It was so valuable that it became famous throughout France where it is still used today. There were several contributors, including Cherubini who produced 15 such works, including two three part solfeggi. A solfeggio is a singing exercise in which the names of the scale, sol and fa are used instead of text. This method, based originally on polyphonic singing, is still used at the Paris Conservatory for both singers and instrumentalists as it is thought that instruments are merely an extension of the voice. It is still in print, though not in its entirety, and parts of it are even available online. This three part work by Cherubini is numbered 83 in the second volume. It was arranged for string trio. The work begins *Lento*, severe and deeply felt. The second movement, *Allegro moderato*, is an upbeat fugue. The part writing is excellent and is an example of why Cherubini was, during his lifetime, universally held in high regard.

**String Trio No.2 in C Major** begins *Allegro moderato* which alternates with a *Lento*. The second movement, *Moderato*, is lively and pleasant. The finale is a Fugue, played *presto*. Again, the part writing is excellent.



**Henry Cowell (1897-1965)** was an American composer and teacher. Edition Peters published his **7 Paragraphs for String Trio** in 1966 which was composed in 1925. 7 short movements, each different—basically not tonal.



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

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



**Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739-99)** was an Austrian composer and violin virtuoso. His **Divertimento in D Major, Krebs 131** is a short 3-movement (*Andante*, *Menuetto* and *Presto*) work, which, judging from how it sounds, was composed in the 1770's. It has the typical sound of Mozart and Haydn from that period, i.e. the early Vienna Classical-era sound. All 3 instruments are well treated. Not technically hard.



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

with a relatively short march. So does Dohnányi. Beethoven's movement marking is *Marcia. Allegro*. So is Dohnányi's. Traditionally, of course, a march has a contrasting trio section which serves as the middle portion of the movement, after which the march reappears and is used to conclude the movement, either with or without a coda. Beethoven follows this procedure. Dohnányi does not. Instead, he compresses the 21-measure march into 5 bars by means of representing the original 16<sup>th</sup>-note runs that lead to the main dotted rhythm of the march into a run of only 3 notes while retaining the dotted rhythm. This compression creates a heightened tension which is missing in the original march. Rhythmically, Dohnányi's *Marcia*, unlike Beethoven's, is not a straightforward affair. Instead, it is complicated and requires precise and intricate ensemble playing with each voice having to enter at rather unexpected times. There is not much tonality to this march: it's not to say that it is atonal, merely that the melody is slight. However, the theme of the middle section, entrusted entirely to the viola and cello, is quite powerful. Post-Brahmsian in tonality, it is a wailing lament. At this point, it is impossible to know that Dohnányi will return to use it as a coda in the final movement. In the second movement, *Romanza*, to the

off-beat pizzicati in the violin and cello, the viola has a long solo, a kind of folk melody. Contrast is provided in the brief, somewhat quicker middle section. Beethoven follows his Adagio with a Menuetto, allegretto before inserting a scherzo. Dohnanyi, not feeling himself slavishly beholden to Beethoven's model, skips the minuet and uses a Scherzo, vivace for his third movement. The playful main theme is introduced in a fugal fashion. The theme bears some similarity to that used by Dukas in the middle of his *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. The fourth movement, Andante con moto, is a theme with a set of 5 variations. This is the most serious movement of his Serenade. The theme, which all 3 instruments present together, is reflective and elegiac in nature and full of harmonic surprises. These carry over into the variations which are one of the most extraordinary sets ever composed and characterized by a very high degree of craftsmanship. The main theme of the finale, Rondo, is only a short kernel of 4 measures. It is frenetic and full of nervous energy. Although it begins as an entirely independent theme, as the movement progresses, it starts to bear a distant relationship to the thematic material in the opening movement. But then, without any warning, the coda, marked L'istesso Tempo, offers up the lyrical theme of the march from the first movement in the violin, echoed by the cello, against the inexorable drumming rhythmic figure in the viola. The effect is quite dramatic not only because of the sudden interjection of a lyrical theme, but also because the tempo slows down despite the marking, since Dohnanyi shifts to notes of longer value. Hence Dohnanyi not only brings the work to a powerful close but also, by reintroducing the theme from the first movement, does it in a way which approaches that of the traditional classical serenade. Although there are some technical difficulties, they are not insuperable, and every string trio party should make this work's acquaintance.



**Johann Justus Friedrich Dotzauer (1783-1860)** was a German cello virtuoso and composer. He wrote a huge amount of chamber music, much of it quite appealing; however, virtually none of it has been republished since the 19th century. His **Grand Trio in E flat Major, Op. 57** is a concertante style work which makes technical demands on all of the parts, especially the cello.



**Johannes Driessler (1921-98)** was a German composer and organist. His **String Trio Op. 1 No. 2** was published by Barenreiter Verlag in 1953. This 4-movement work (Molto Adagio, Alla marcia, Allegretto moderato and Allegro vivace) is mostly dissonant but not repellingly so. There is tonal resolution and several tonal passages. Excellent part writing and not at all difficult technically—this can be considered a worthwhile work.



**Julius Eichberg (1824-1893)** was a German composer and violinist who emigrated to the U.S. and founded and directed the Boston Conservatory of Music. His **5 Skizzen, Op. 23** (5 Sketches) for String Trio were first published in 1857. The first movement, Allegro spiritoso, as the marking suggests, is spirited and full of forward motion. A pastoral Andante quasi allegretto follows. Eichberg subtitles the middle movement Waldnacht—forest night. It is darkly hued but certainly not gloomy. This is followed by a sprightly movement titled Märchen, an archaic spelling of the word Märchen, meaning fairy tales. The finale, Vivace, is also given a title, Genuesischen Ständchen—a Genoese Serenade. Perhaps Eichberg should have entitled this work Suite for String Trio, for that is what it is. It makes a fine

mid-Romantic era choice for a concert program. It presents no technical difficulty and should certainly appeal to amateurs.



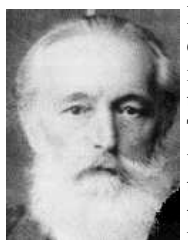
**Georges Enescu (1881-1955)** was a Romanian composer, violin virtuoso, conductor and teacher. He wrote a short, one-movement work entitled **Aubade**. It dates from 1899 but has been republished by Editura muzicala. Based on a Romanian folk tune, it sounds like a song sung to guitar accompaniment—charming morsel.



**Joseph Eybler (1765-1846)** was an Austrian composer, a student and good friend of Mozart. Published in 1798 as “Grand Trio,” the **String Trio Op. 2 in C Major** in 5 movements is no slight work. It clearly takes Mozart's own great string trio, Divertimento K. 563 as its model. After an introductory Adagio comes a rollicking Allegro written in concertante style, much like K. 563. Each voice is given a rather substantial chance to shine and the writing is more grateful for the 2 lower voices who are not asked to try and duplicate what the violin has just played before them. A well-crafted Andante, not in concertante style, follows. Next comes a typical Austrian ländler, which serves as the main theme to the Menuetto allegro which features 3 charming and contrasting trios. This is a very fine movement in the noble tradition of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century serenade. A short Adagio, in which the violin is *tacet*, comes next. This somber interlude in the lower 2 voices is an ingenious ‘palette cleanser’ which provides just enough contrast from the preceding minuet so that the taste of the melodically delicious finale, Rondo, is not lost. It is a bouncing, joyful affair which brings this satisfying work to a close. This trio deserves performance in the concert hall where it will undoubtedly bring pleasure to its audience and it should certainly not be missed by any amateur trio party.



**Jean Françaix (1912-97)** was a French composer. His **String Trio** dates from 1933. It is one of the more important 20<sup>th</sup>-century string trios. In 4 movements, its style is firmly neo-Classical. The opening Allegretto vivo is a lively yet intimate. All 3 voices are muted. The viola is entrusted with a theme which spells, in German notation, Bach in reverse (the notes B, C, A, B-flat corresponding to HCAB). A lively scherzo follows. In the songlike Andante, once again muted voices are employed. The violin plays soloist to the lower voices. The finale, Vive, is full of effervescent drive, but ends surprisingly softly, though, fading away. A work for the concert hall, it is by no means beyond experienced amateur players.



**Robert Fuchs (1847-1927)** was an Austrian composer. His **String Trio in A Major Op. 94** is an important work and one of the best from the late Romantic period. It dates from 1910. This was, for the time, a fairly modern sounding work, completely tonal but certainly showing that Fuchs, who was then 63 was not immune to the advances in tonality that composers such as Bruckner, Mahler and the post-Brahmsians had made. By and large, this trio sounds no less modern than Dohnanyi's. The fresh main theme of the first movement, Allegro moderato, is immediately attractive. The slow movement, Andante espressivo, consists of very melodious variations on a Scottish folk-song *O cruel was my father*, perfect in design and simple in

character. A richly chromatic Minuetto serves as the third movement. A bright, energetic trio is placed in the middle. It has a bit of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century freneticism one later hears in neo-Classical music and surely the roots of those who stuck with tonality can be seen here. The last movement contains a slow introduction, an Allegretto piacevole with a fugato opening and a really thrilling Allegro vivace.



**Hans Gál (1890-1987)** was an Austrian composer who fled the Nazis and emigrated to Scotland. His **Trio, Op. 104** was published by Simrock in 1974. It was originally scored for viola d'amore, however, the unlikelihood of it being performed with that instrument led to a viola part being made. It is in 3 movements and tonal to the extent that there are identifiable themes and resolution to what are dissonances. The big third movement, a theme and set of variations, is especially well done. A well-written, good modern work.



**Moritz Ganz (1806-68)** was a German cellist and composer. His **Grand Trio in D Major, Op. 8** was composed in the 1830's. Although it is not a candidate for the concert hall, it is suitable for amateur performance and recitals. It is written in an early Romantic idiom. All 3 instruments are well handled and given many opportunities to present the thematic material.



**Joseph Gehot (1756-1820)** was a Belgian violinist and composer. He wrote a considerable amount of chamber music. Among his string trios are his **Op. 1 Nos. 1-6** from 1781 and his **Op. 5 Nos. 1-6** from sometime during the same decade. The style varies from concertante to the more modern structure used by Haydn and Mozart. The music sounds quite a lot like Boccherini with occasional echoes of the early Vienna Classical School—straightforward and fun to play for home music making.



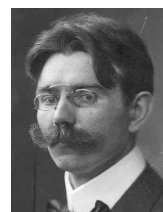
**Felice Giardini (1716-96)** was an Italian composer and violin virtuoso. He wrote 18 string trios for violin, viola and cello, in 3 sets of 6, **Opp. 17, 20 and 26**. Of these, the only set to remain in print is the **Op. 20 Nos. 1-6**. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Editioni Zanibon reprinted these as a set and included **Op. 17 No. 2**, which they mislabeled. The trios combine the so-called "Style Gallant" with the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century classicism of J. C. Bach, the Stamitzes and the Mannheim School. In the "Style Gallant," the writing emphasizes the soloistic qualities of the instruments, rather than the integrated writing of all 3 parts to create a whole, which J. C. Bach and the Mannheim composers pioneered. One can hear the roots of early Mozart and Haydn. In these trios, the roles and importance of each instrument are constantly varied. While the viola is often the glue between the violin and the cello, at times it becomes the soloist. The cello covers the entire range of its registers, hopping from deep in its bass to high in its tenor. Giardini generally, but not always, employs a fast-slow-fast pattern to each movement, using then-popular dances such as the Tedesca and the Scozzese (the German and the Scottish dance prototypes). Each of the trios is in 3 movements and can be recommended.



**Benjamin Godard (1845-97)** was a French composer and violinist. In 1872, he composed **Morceaux, Op. 5** for string trio. These consist of 4 programmatic pieces. These finely put together, charming movements are beautiful and in no way difficult to perform. They are so lovely, that chamber music players will certainly want to play them. The first movement is entitled Ballad and is a Vivace. Next is an Allegretto entitled Dans le Bois. This is followed by a slow movement, Rêve, Andante quasi adagio. The finale, an Allegro is simply entitled, Scherzo.



**Carl C. P. Grädener (1812-83)** was a German composer. His **String Trio in G Major, Op. 48** was composed in 1864. It must be considered a cut above the average; it is well-written for the instruments and uses the ensemble to good advantage. Mendelssohn serves as an inspiration to some extent. There is an intense Lento introduction leading to a compelling Allegro molto moderato. Of note is the fine accompaniment to the main theme of the second movement, Un poco vivace, a minuet. A lovely Adagio, perhaps reminiscent of a Mendelssohnian song without words, serves as the slow movement. The finale, Allegro vivace, ma non troppo, combines a light-hearted theme with more lyrical elements. The coda is an exciting stretto in which the theme from the first movement reappears. This trio is strong enough to be programmed in concert but also well within the range of the average amateur player.



**Joseph Haas (1879-1960)** had his **Divertimento for String Trio in D Major, Op. 22** published in 1909. Like Beethoven's Op. 8 Serenade for String Trio, Haas' Divertimento is in the best tradition of such works. It is intended to be entertaining and amusing, and certainly succeeds in this. Each of the 5 tightly written movements is fresh and inventive. But one must note that this is not merely "light music," for it shows the composer's complete grasp of chamber music style, understanding of tonal beauty and how to combine the 3 instruments to their best use. In the first movement, In gemässigttem Marschtempo mit Humor (in a moderate march tempo with humor), the use of humor is cleverly executed and never obvious or overdone. The inspired main theme is appealing and far above the ordinary. The second movement, Capriccio, is marked very lively and light, and is in fact fiery and piquant, while the beautiful, brief middle section provides a striking interlude. Next is an attractive minuet, Graziös, nicht zu rasch (graceful and not too quick) in the rococo style. The slower trio section is also quite appealing and lovely. This in turn is followed by a Romance, Sehr ruhig und mit viel Ausdruck (very calm and with much expression). The finale, Sehr lebhaft and humorvoll (very lively and humorous), is a rondo. As the title suggests, it is full of unaffected humor and fine touches. This trio would make a fine program selection for the concert hall and is truly a "tasty morsel" for amateurs.



**Peter Hänsel (1770-1831)** was a German composer and violinist active in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Paris. He was a student of Haydn and assimilated the master's late style in which he more or less composed throughout his life, though adding some of the modifications of early Romanticism. He wrote a great deal of chamber music, virtually all of it out of print. His last 3 works, numbered by

Hänsel himself as **Op. 40 Nos. 1-3**, are for string trio. They date from 1830 and remained in manuscript until the first two were published in the late 20th century.

**Op. 40 No. 1 in F Major** is a substantial work in 4 movements. It opens with a tuneful Allegro, but which could be improved by some judicious cuts. Next is a charming Andante con moto which is a set of variations. This is followed by a Classical-style Minuetto, allegro with trio. Here the material is mostly given to the violin. The finale, Presto, though it has appealing melodies is also overly long.

**Op. 40 No. 2 in g minor** on the whole is the stronger of the 2 works. The opening Allegro con fuoco is quite exciting, however, the bulk of the melodic material is to be found in the violin part, at least more than one might expect from this period. Again, the movement would benefit from cuts, but the thematic material is more compelling and does not make this such a glaring problem. The second movement is marked Menuetto, allegro. In the trio section, the viola is given the chance to lead throughout. The third movement, Andante, is again a theme and set of variations. The cello presents the appealing melody by itself, rising into its treble register. The variations which follow are quite well done. The finale, Vivace, although effective, is overly long with too much of the material going to the violin. Still, this is a good work which can be recommended to amateurs.



**Charles Haubiel (1892-1978)** was an American composer and teacher. His **String Trio in d minor** was published in 1958 by Elkin. The fact that it is in a key signature is somewhat misleading. An Adagio introduction is tonal and presents a promise of things to come. The main movement, Allegro con trio, is angular and mostly dissonant, at times quite harshly so. An Allegro con spirito which follows is a scherzo, also angular, more tonal but not particularly melodic. The finale is an Allegro, where sandwiched between long slices of dissonance is an appealing tonal episode. It is well-written and not overly hard.

**Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)** of course is, after Mozart, the most famous composer from the Vienna Classical era. He wrote a lot of trios, mostly for baryton, viola and cello, since his employer, Prince Esterhazy, was a baryton player. The only trios that he wrote for violin, viola and cello that have remained in print are his **Op. 53 String Trios**, a set of 3. These are charming, but slight, 2-movement works. The violin dominates, but they are not written in concertante style. They are pleasant to play and offer no technical difficulties. They have been reprinted a number of times and can be recommended to amateurs looking for program works.



**Michael Haydn (1737-1805)** was the younger brother of Joseph Haydn. Michael received the same musical training as his brother in Vienna and eventually settled in Salzburg where obtained the position of music director. Like most composers of the time, he wrote a lot of music but none of it seemed to get the attention of that which Joseph's received. He wrote over 500 works and gave as

many as one hundred and fifty titles as such as Notturmo or Divertimento. Most of his works were not published during his lifetime but circulated in copies made from his manuscripts.

The oldest known copy of the manuscript of the **Divertimento in C Major, MH 27** can be found in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. Scholars are not sure when the work was composed. The earliest estimate is around 1760 which seems unlikely. Others put it around 1790. The style is that of the Mann-

heim School of Stamitz which suggests a date in the 1770s or early 1780s. On the other hand, it is in four movements Allegro moderato, Adagio, Menuetto and Finale, presto, rather than three which was favored by the Mannheim composers. What is particularly interesting is that the manuscript shows the work can be played by violin, viola and cello or violin and 2 cellos, or violin cello and bass. It is a charming work not at all difficult.



**Swan Hennessey (1866-1929)** was an American composer whose father was Irish. His **Petite Trio Celtique Op. 52** dates from 1921. As the title suggests, the work is relatively short, consisting of 4 movements. The first,

Allegro, bears the subtitle in Irish style and indeed sounds like an Irish dance. The second movement, Moderato, is subtitled in the style of Brittany while the last two movements, Andante and Allegro, are in an Irish style. Easy to play, program music of no great depth.

**Eduard Herrmann (1850-1937)** was a German violinist and composer. His **String Trio in g minor, Op. 39** is in a post-Romantic style. The opening Allegro moderato begins with the viola introducing a somewhat dark, yearning melody over the cello cross-string accompaniment, which gives the music considerable spaciousness. The middle movement, an Adagio, is in the form of a lovely romanza. The finale, Allegretto, begins with an introduction of bright arpeggios before the viola enters with the main theme, quickly taken up by the violin. It dates from 1920.



**Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1843-1900)** wrote 2 first-rate string trios worthy of concert performance. Both were composed at the same time in 1877. The first is **String Trio No. 1 in A Major, Op. 27 No. 1**. The opening subject to the first movement, Allegro, is bright, graceful and syncopated. The second theme is equally cheerful, but somewhat broader and sounds especially well in the

viola and cello. The Andante which follows begins with a beautiful folk melody, slow and lyrical, while the middle section is quicker and somewhat turbulent. Next comes an Allegretto, which for its main theme has a kind of "Shepherd's Lament" which quickly morphs into a rustic peasant's dance. The mood of the finale, Allegro, is similar to that of the first movement, mostly bright and graceful. Toward the end, the writing becomes almost orchestral which is quite an accomplishment for just 3 voices.

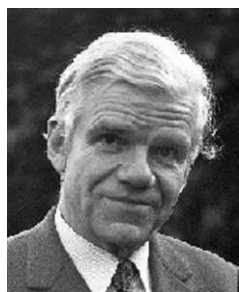
The second, **String Trio No. 2 in F Major, Op. 27 No. 2**, begins with the cello, all by itself, quietly introducing the first theme pizzicato. The bowed version is presented thereafter by the viola. When the violin enters, it becomes clear that this is a fugue, after which the theme receives canonic treatment. The second theme is dark, more chromatic and so intricately woven into the fabric of the first that it is hard to hear where one begins and the other ends. The Andantino which follows has the same format as the slow movement of the 1st Trio: a lied presented entirely by the violin and again followed by a piu mosso section, the theme to which has the quality of a barcarole. These rolling 16th notes eventually become accompaniment to a cello melody. A Tempo di Minuetto comes next. It begins with an old-fashioned and somewhat dry melody of the sort to which 18<sup>th</sup>-century French aristocrats might dance. The second strain, partially in minor, is more robust. The trio section, rather than being slower, is marked Piu vivo. Its lovely melody is sung by the violin and then later appears in the cello as part of the coda. It is accompanied by the striking use of bariolage in the other voices. The very fine finale, Allegro vivace, begins with a truncated fu-

gal version of the energetic first theme. The second is more lyrical and quite exotic and oriental-sounding.



**Willy Hess (1906-97)** was a Swiss composer and important Beethoven scholar. His **String Trio in G Major, Op. 76** was published in the 1970s. This is a wonderful work written in neo-Romantic style. It opens with a slow, somber introduction that has a jazz feel to it, and leads to a playful, upbeat and bright Allegro giocoso. The second movement is a theme and set of 6 variations, each very different from the other. The sixth is a very

clever fugue. The third movement, *Deutscher Tanz*, is a very well-done modern version of an alla tedesca minuet. The finale, *Rondo*, begins with a Grave introduction which repeats the theme from the opening movement before changing into an Allegro grazioso which has much the same mood as the opening Allegro giocoso. Here is an excellent work, strong enough for concert performance, but within the ability of even players of modest technical accomplishments.



**Kurt Hessenberg (1908-94)** was a German composer and teacher. His **String Trio, Op. 48** was published by Edition Schott in 1954 and has remained in print. This is a work with no fixed tonality and yet in a very modern way tonal. It has many dissonances, but it is not really a very dissonant work and the superb use of rhythm creates an even greater impression of tonality. It is a good work to play, presenting no technical problems for exper-

enced amateurs, and it is without doubt a work which should be heard in concert. The opening *Vivace* sounds like something Mozart might have written, if he were living in 1950. There is much movement and running passage work which is always engaging. This is followed by a *Larghetto* and a *Presto* which serves as kind of scherzo. It has a strong pulse and one can hear the influence of Shostakovich. Then comes a *Lento* which is very free in tempo. The rhythm of the opening theme to the finale, *Vivace*, is as important as the thematic material. Very effectively done.



**Ferdinand Hiller (1811-85)** was a German composer who was also a leading German pianist for a number of years, as well as an important teacher, numbering Max Bruch among his many students. Hiller studied with the foremost pianist of the time, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, who was also a composer of the first rank. Hiller's **String Trio in C Major, Op. 207** was not published until after his death. It has not been reprinted in the

past century and probably for good reason, since the thematic material is very dry and quite pedestrian. The work sounds like a homework assignment rather than a work of art.

**Julius Hopfe (1817-91)** was a German composer, conductor and teacher, born near the German town of Heldrungen. His father, a preacher, intended him to have a career in the ministry, so Julius was able to pursue musical studies first at his gymnasium, then at the University of Berlin and the Berlin Akademie der Kunst, obtaining a degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He became a prominent and influential piano pedagogue and also a conductor, all the while composing. He composed in most genres and was, during his lifetime, greatly appreciated for his chamber music. Among his chamber music works are 7 string trios, only 2 of which were

ever published, 3 piano trios, 2 piano quartets, 2 nonets, 2 octets, 4 string quintets, 4 septets and several string quartets.

Hopfe's **String Trio No. 1 in C Major, Op. 41** appeared in 1856 and was dedicated to 4 military officers who formed the Berlin Officers Music Society. It is in 4 movements—Allegro; Andante grazioso quasi Allegretto; Scherzo, allegro molto vivace; and Fughetta, allegro. It is well written with all the parts being treated more or less equally. The tuneful melodies and lack of any technical challenges make this unprepossessing trio an excellent concert or competition choice for young players.

**String Trio No. 2 in g minor, Op. 69** is not only well written, but it is also a fine-sounding work which presents no technical difficulties. It is a workman-like trio, good to play, though no great masterpiece of the repertoire. The first movement, Allegro, has appealing lyrical themes. The Scherzo, molto vivace which follows is good enough, but it is the trio which makes a greater impression. The third movement, Andantino, quasi larghetto is in the style of a song without words. The main theme is in the style of a Legend while the middle section has a lovely canon duet between the viola and violin. The lively, jovial finale, Allegro ma non troppo, is full-spirited. It can be played by those with only a modest technique and is well-written for the 3 instruments.



**Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837)** was Mozart's only fulltime student and generally acknowledged to be the greatest pianist before Liszt. He was a fine composer whose works suffered in comparison to his contemporary Beethoven only because he did not blaze a new trail or attempt to scale the immortal heights. Among his works at death were found 2 trios apparently for 2 violas and

cello. They remained unpublished until 1958 when a version for violin, viola and cello was printed. They appear to be from the first decade of the 19th century and are really fine works not to be missed by any trio group. They present no technical difficulties, are strong enough for concert performance and treat the instruments as equals.

The **String Trio in E flat Major** begins with a formal short introduction, a call to attention, to the opening Allegro con brio. The main theme is Classical and its treatment is reminiscent of Mozart. In the lovely second movement, *Adagio cantabile*, the music clearly straddles the 2 periods. The development with the 2 high voices over the cello pizzicato is particularly striking. The third movement is a Haydnesque Menuetto, while the lively finale, Allegro, is a Classical-era rondo.

The opening Allegro moderato to the second work, **String Trio in G Major**, after an introductory "trumpet call" to order, has for its main theme a light Mozartean melody which is given a bright and elegant treatment. The second movement, Andante, begins in an almost religious vein, but slowly the mood lightens, and the second theme is given a playful treatment. A very typically Classical Menuetto follows with a wonderful trio which provides a striking contrast. The finale, *Rondo alla burlesca vivace*, is full of good humor and plays a few musical jokes (on a tune from Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*).



**Hyacinthe Jadin (1776-1800)** was a French composer and pianist. His **Op. 2** is a set of 3 trios. They were dedicated to the famous violinist Rudolphe Kreutzer, but the trios are not written in concertante form and are not a mere vehicle for the violinist, but rather show a good use of all 3 instruments. They were composed sometime in the mid-1790's, before Beethoven wrote



his trios. There is some confusion over the opus numbers with regard to these trios and a set of 3 string quartets which also bear the opus number 2. Unfortunately, this was not at all an uncommon experience during this period, when different publishers brought out a composer's works. **Op. 2 No. 1 in E flat Major** opens calmly with an Allegro moderato. Its main theme is finely nuanced. It seems clear that Jadin had come into contact with Haydn and Mozart as the music and the handling of the material is closer to the early Viennese Classical style than to what was being composed all around him in Paris. The second movement is a Haydnesque Minuet. The heavily-accented rhythmic main section is set off by a more plastic trio. An old-fashioned Sicilienne serves as slow movement, however, it sounds rather more like a stately minuet rather than an Italian dance. The finale, Allegro, opens with considerable forward propulsion and continues at its quick pace without pausing for breath until it finally reaches a lovely, lyrical middle section.

**Op.2 No.2 in G Major** is the second in the set. The dotted rhythm of the main theme to the opening movement, Allegro, gives the music a rather bouncy feel. The middle movement is a bright Menuet which clearly reflects then current French rather than Austrian tastes. The trio section is the minor is slower and somewhat sad. The finale, an Allegro, sounds a bit like Haydn which seems to suggest that Jadin was familiar with the work of that master.

**Op.2 No.3 in F Major** is the last of the set. The opening movement, Allegro, easily sounds as if it had been written by Haydn. Most scholars now believe that Jadin was familiar with the music of Haydn and Mozart. Jadin places a short Menuetto second. Of interest is the fact that the trio section, an allegro, is faster than the minuet itself which is an andante. The third movement, Adagio, shows considerable imagination with its extensive pizzicato accompaniment in the cello. The finale, Rondeau, allegro, though not so marked is a lively Polacca.



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

Molto espressivo is slow and sad. The third movement, Malinconico, has a melancholy main theme set off by odd rhythmic episodes. In the finale, Décidé, once again rhythm more than melody creates the main interest. This is a good modern work which should not be beyond amateur players, but there is not enough contrast between the movements which creates a certain monotony. The music is not in print, but it was recorded on Dexia CD ADW 7502.



**Pál Kadosa (1903-83)** was born in the town of Léva, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and now Levice in Slovakia. He studied piano and composition with Zoltán Kodály at the Budapest Academy of Music and subsequently pursued a career as a composer and teacher, eventually becoming a professor at the Academy. Among his many students were György Kurtág, Andras Schiff and György Ligeti. Kadosa's compositions from his first

period are a combination of Bartók and post Bartokian styles. The **Op. 12 String Trio** dates from around 1929. In 3 movements, it opens with a searching, somewhat strident Allegro. The

middle movement, Andante, is muted and has a sad, somewhat elegiac quality. The finale, Presto, is an energetic, nervous fugue. This is an interesting and engaging modern work. It deserves to be heard in the concert hall, and experienced and diligent amateurs will also enjoy its originality.



**Johann Friedrich Kelz (1786-1862)** was a German cellist and composer. His **String Trio in E flat Major, Op. 128** was published in 1830 but almost certainly was composed earlier. It opens with an Allegro in rather stately fashion and then becomes livelier as it proceeds, sounding like a Classical divertimento. The main theme of the second movement,

Lento, begins with a long, singing melody in the cello. Next comes a sprightly Menuetto with 2 trios. The minuet is Haydnesque in that snippets of the theme are shared by all of the voices which are necessary to complete it. In the first trio, the violin and cello engage in a duet, while the viola is given the pretty, ländler-like second trio. The fourth movement is a dignified Adagio, a somber processional. A second Menuetto, also with 2 trios, precedes the finale. The minuet section is dominated by triplets. In the first trio, which is rather similar to the minuet, the viola takes the lead, although the cello occasionally intercedes. The second trio is a traditional German dance. The finale, Allegretto, is a jaunty, upbeat affair with catchy, appealing melodies.

**Jan Baptysta Kleczynski (1756-1828)** was born in the Austro-Bohemian town of Freistadt (now known as Karviná and in the Czech Republic). He was trained as a violinist and composer, but with whom and where is not known, although some scholars believe it was in the Austrian part of what had been Poland, possibly in Lvov (Lviv) or Krakow. He worked as a musician at various Hungarian courts before coming to Vienna in 1795 where he remained for the rest of his life. He served as a violinist in the Imperial Court Orchestra and the prestigious Imperial Theater Orchestra, eventually becoming its director. As one of Vienna's more prominent musicians and conductors, he would have known and been known to Haydn, Beethoven, Krommer, the Wranitzky brothers, and all the other leading musicians then in Vienna.

**String Trio No. 1 in C Major, Op. 4 No. 1** is the first in a set of 3 published simultaneously in 1797 by Offenbach in Germany and Leopold Kozeluch's Musikalische Magazin in Vienna. Written in the Viennese Classical style of the period, what sets these trios apart from other contemporary works, with the exception of Mozart's, is the part-writing. The lower voices are very generously treated. The style is a blend of the older concertante fused with the new integrated approach pioneered by Mozart and Haydn. The first movement, Allegro moderato, begins by exuding a gentle elegance, more characteristic of a Classical minuet than an allegro. However, as the music proceeds, the pace quickens and becomes livelier. The second movement, Andante moderato, is modeled on the approach that singers of the time took, often breaking the rhythm and adding ad lib embellishments. The finale, Rondo, allegro, has 3 sections. Once things get going, the viola introduces a characteristic Polish dance rhythm, giving the music a faintly Polish flavor.

**String Trio No. 2 in G Major, Op. 4 No. 2** is the second in a set. Written in the Viennese Classical style of the period, what sets these trios apart from other contemporary works, with the exception of Mozart's, is the part-writing. The lower voices are very generously treated. The style is a blend of the older concertante fused to the new integrated approach pioneered by Mozart and Haydn. All of Kleczynski's trios begin with a rousing riveting introduction, much like Rossini overtures. The Second Trio is no exception and perhaps is the most sensational

of all, quoting the opening bars to Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3, K. 216 in the same key. This was almost certainly no coincidence, since Klezycynski was working and active in Vienna when Mozart was also there. Most scholars believe the introduction to be a kind of tribute to Mozart. The second movement, Poco andante con variazione, is a theme and set of 3 variations with each voice having a chance to lead. The lively finale, Rondo, allegro, is bright and upbeat, evoking the mood of a scherzo.

**String Trio No. 3 in C Major, Op. 4 No. 3** is the last of a set. Again, written in the Viennese Classical style of the period, what sets these trios apart from other contemporary works, with the exception of Mozart's, is the part-writing. The lower voices are very generously treated. The style is a blend of the older concertante fused to the new integrated approach pioneered by Mozart and Haydn. The first movement, Allegro maestoso, as in the first trio, begins in a genial, elegant way. Then through quick rhythmic passages things pick up. The beautiful second movement, Menuetto grazioso, is particularly striking with its long cello solo in the trio section. The finale, Rondo, allegro, is bright and sunny.



**Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)**, the famous 20<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian composer, wrote a very attractive one-movement piece entitled **Intermezzo for String Trio**. It dates from around 1905, about the time he began his travels to collect folk melodies. It abounds with the sounds of real Hungarian folk tunes rather than the ersatz Gypsy music which Austrian and German composers such as Brahms popularized. The one-movement Intermezzo is in the character of a relaxed serenade.



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



**Franz Krommer (1759-1831)** was a prominent Austrian composer and violinist. His **Grand Trio in F Major, Op. 96** dates from 1818 and truly deserves the title "Grand," since it is written on a large scale and is a lengthy work. It has travelled under several names such as **Trio No. 12** and **Divertimento for String Trio**. The fact that it is in 6 contrasting movements clearly brought Mozart's 6-movement work for string trio, K. 563, to mind, which no doubt accounts for it having at one time been called **Divertimento**. However, structure aside, the music is closer in spirit to Beethoven where through the use of intense chromaticism Krommer is able to achieve a remarkable degree of suspense from just 3 instruments. The big, opening movement, Allegro moderato, is characterized by its flowing main theme, which is juxtaposed against hurried scale passages. The effect is quite striking. The first Menuetto, an allegretto, is not really a minuet but a closer to a scherzo, full of excitement and forward motion. The charming trio section provides a fine

contrast. A lovely Adagio follows. Next follows the second Menuetto, also an allegretto. Dark and thrusting, it, too, exhibits qualities which are more like a scherzo. The penultimate movement, an Andante, anticipates Mendelssohn in that it is an intermezzo, charming and full of grace. But, in the middle, we have several dramatic interludes which break the calm. The Allegro, which serves as the finale, has a lilting and appealing folk melody for its main theme. But Krommer quickly builds the requisite excitement into the music to make a satisfying ending.

**Carl Matthias Kudelski (1805-77)** was a Prussian violinist, conductor and composer. His **String Trio in G Major, Op. 32** dates from the 1840's. It is dramatic and exciting and very well written for all 3 instruments. The trio begins with a slow ominous Andante introduction in the minor, but the main part of the movement, Allegro con brio, is full of verve and forward motion. The second movement, Allegretto con moto, is a clever and fresh intermezzo. A slow movement, Andante, comes next, beginning in a dramatic fashion but transforming itself into a valedictory, complete with a dramatic middle section. The riveting finale, Allegro ma non troppo, is exciting from start to finish.



**Peter Lindpainter (1791-1856)** was a German composer whom Mendelssohn called the best conductor in Germany. He composed 3 string trios, his Op. 52 Nos. 1-3 which were published around 1830. **String Trio in D Major, Op. 52 No. 1** is the first of the set of three which appeared in 1830. If sales are any indication, they enjoyed a fair amount of popularity among the home music making market. The

opening movement, Allegro maestoso, opens in ceremonious manner with a series of downward plunging triplet passages which dominate the rest of this turbulent movement. A bump-tious, somewhat thrusting Menuetto with a dance-like Ländler trio section follows. The third movement, Andante con moto, is mostly calm and reflective although it is occasionally and suddenly interrupted by violent, short stormy interludes. The trio is concluded by an exciting, galloping Rondo. Unfortunately, the writing is uneven in that the thematic material varies from very effective to rather ordinary and at times a bit weak. The passage work is often difficult. Having said this, it is still a worthwhile representatives of the late Classical Viennese era but require fairly accomplished players from a technical standpoint.



**Matthew Locke (1621-1677)** was born in the English town of Exeter where he received his early musical education. He became a central figure in 17th century English music. He served as Director of the King's Violins, Organist to the Queen, wrote music for several successful stage works, wrote an important book on music theory and was a prominent teacher, Henry Purcell being among his many students. Today, Locke is mostly remembered for his consorts, the term he used for a grouping of pieces. The best known of these is the Little Consort, an assortment of short pieces aimed at children and beginners, the Broken Consort, an assortment for various groupings of instruments and not just one type of ensemble, and the Flat Consort, which dates from 1661 and consists of 24 dances in a series of five suites for three instruments: tenor, alto and bass viols. It is believed that it takes its name from the fact that there are an unusual amount of flat notes. **Suite No. 1** is in six movements: Fantazie, Courante, Fantazie, Saraband, Fantazie and Gigg. Within most of the movements, there are several sections which provide contrast by virtue of their tempo changes. This Suite, as well as its companions, is historically important and leads directly to the



era of Bach, Abel, Handel and others. It is clearly an example early chamber music,



**Henri Marteau (1874-1934)** was a French violin virtuoso and composer. His **String Trio in f minor, Op. 12** dates from 1907 and shows the influence of Max Reger. The trio begins in a highly dramatic vein, almost bursting the boundaries of chamber music. However, the second theme is by turns calmer and playful. The second movement is entitled Improvisation and is a kind of 20<sup>th</sup>-century mix of Bach and Handel, serious and deep.

The music conjures an image of one of the great men improvising at the klavier. Marteau calls the third movement Intermezzo, but this is no intermezzo in the tradition of Mendelssohn. Instead, we have a lopsided, slinky dance which lumbers along humorously. This is followed by a very lovely interlude in which each voice brings forth a verse in a highly romantic song without words. The trio concludes with a Theme and Variations. The theme is bright and cheerful, bringing to mind birds chirping away happily. Six compelling variations follow, each quite different in mood and tempo.



**Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)** wrote two string trios. **String Trio No. 1 H. 136** dates from 1924 but was only published in 2005 by Barenreiter, because the score was lost shortly after its premiere and not recovered until then. It has a great deal of rather harsh dissonance, although these are from time to time relieved by very brief interludes of recognizable melody. It is technically difficult and certainly beyond all but the best amateurs. It has been recorded on Alpha CD 143.

**String Trio No. 2 H. 238** was composed in 1934 and is in 2 movements. The work is not as dissonant as the first, but one could hardly characterize it as traditionally tonal or melodic. Again, this is a technically difficult work beyond all but the most proficient amateurs.



**Georges Migot (1891-1976)** was a French composer. His **Trio a cordes** dates from 1945 and was published by Editions Musicales Transatlantiques. It is in 6 movements—Prelude, Allant, Choral, Allant-allegre, Priere and Modere. It harks back to the Baroque as far as it is a kind of suite. Polytonality dominates and there is nothing here that could be called a traditional melodic subject, nonetheless, it is an engaging work

with many interesting moments. It is rhythmically clear and within the reach of experienced amateurs.



**Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)** was a French composer. His **Trio a cordes, Op. 274** dates from 1947. It is a polytonal work combining elements of neo-Classical and neo-Baroque writing. In 5 short movements, the movement which makes the strongest impression is the Serenade with its pizzicato strumming.

**Ernest Moeran (1894-1950)** was an English composer. The trio dates from 1931 and is in 4 movements. The work is characterized



by its contrapuntal treatment. The opening **Allegro gioiale** is in 7/8 and tricky rhythmically. A short emotional **Adagio** follows. A ferocious scherzo in 3/8, **Molto vivace**, comes next. The work concludes with an **Andante grazioso** which begins gracefully enough, but suddenly changes into an energetic and thrusting **presto**.

**Leonardo Moja (1811-1888)** was an Italian cellist and composer. His **Sonata in d minor for String Trio, Op. 22** was published in 1875, but was probably composed several decades before. The Sonata is in 2 parts, beginning with a lengthy **Larghetto** introduction. The main part of the work is a tuneful **Allegro moderato**. The entire work has the aura of a genial Italian serenade with hints of Paganini in his use of Italian vocal melodic writing.



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

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91)**. Mozart's **Divertimento in E flat Major K. 563** is quite possibly the most famous string trio ever composed and considered by many people as the finest ever written. It has served as the model for many other works. It does not require discussion here except to say that every trio group, indeed, every chamber music fan, ought to play it sometime. It has always been available in more than one edition and there have been and are dozens of recordings.

Much less known are the **4 Preludes and Fugues K. 404a**. These were taken from 6 in which Mozart wrote the preludes and transcribed the fugues from the Well Tempered Clavier of J. S. Bach. These are available from G. Schirmer and have received several recordings.

More recently Franz Beyer edited a movement of a trio begun but not completed by Mozart—**Streichtriosatz (String Trio Movement) in G Major, K. anhang 66 (K. 562e)**. It dates from 1788 and was put aside to either complete the opera *Cosi fan tutti* or the above-mentioned Divertimento.



**Paul Müller-Zurich (1898-1993)** was a Swiss composer and conductor. His **String Trio** dates from 1950, but was only published in 1984 by Amadeus Verlag. It is polytonal, sometimes dissonant, but not harshly so. It is in 4 movements: **Molto tranquillo**, **Allegro ritmico**, **Andante tranquillo** and **Vivace**. It is not technically difficult and can be played by experienced amateurs with little difficulty.

**Ernst Naumann (1832-1910)** was a German composer. His **String Trio in D Major, Op. 12** dates from 1883. This is an above-average work which combines Classical style and some of the influence of Beethoven with the language of the mid-Romantic movement. The spirited opening movement, **Allegro**, recalls the atmosphere of Beethoven's Op. 18 Quartets. This is followed by an energetic scherzo and more relaxed trio section. The third movement, **Lento espresso**, has warm, romantic melodies for its thematic material, while the finale, **Allegro assai**, always makes a fine impression by virtue of its fresh ideas and inventiveness, not to mention excellent part-writing.



**Vaclav Nelhybel (1919-96)** was a Czech composer who emigrated to the U. S. in 1962. His string trio **4 Miniatures for 3 Strings** was published in 1967 by General Music Publishing. Although a work full of dissonances, it frequently gravitates toward tonal centers and is very cleverly written with many pleasing effects. The 4 movements are Scherzino, Allegro marcato, Adagio and Vivace. By no means hard to play, this is

a work which, unlike many others from the same period, will appeal to listeners and players who are not put off by some dissonance.



**Franz Neruda (1843-1915)** was a Czech cellist and composer. His **Musikalische Märchen, Op. 31** dates from the 1870's and was also composed for clarinet, viola and cello. It is quite likely that Neruda had Schumann's Op. 132 Märchenerzählungen for clarinet, viola and piano in mind when he wrote this work and though originally composed

for clarinet, viola and cello, Neruda simultaneously wrote a violin part so that the standard string trio could perform it, hence making the possibility of concert performance more likely, not to mention that a wider audience would be available to purchase the music. There are 9 movements, some quite short, others of medium length. Altogether, they make a substantial work, the length of a large-scale string trio. Of course, any of the movements would make a fine encore and a program could be put together by simply including a selection of 3 or 4. The movements are quite evocative, each with a different mood, but overall there is a wistful atmosphere to the music.



**Alexander Nikolsky (1874-1943)** was born in the village of Vladykino in Moscow province. When he entered the Moscow Conservatory, he studied composition with Sergei Taneyev and also conducting. After graduating, he worked at various schools as a teacher of choral music, music theory and counterpoint. His **2 Pieces for String Trio Op. 42** were published in 1920; although given the

late opus number 42, they clearly date from his time at the Moscow Conservatory, as evidenced by the fugue which most likely was set by his teacher, the greatest Russian writer of fugues and hence we feel it was composed between 1890 and 1895. This is further evidenced by the fact that the music is mostly secular in nature and has nothing to do with the Orthodox church service. The simple but lovely theme, upon which the variations are based, is straightforward and each of the variations explores a different mood and is given a different treatment. Similarly, the appealing Minuet and Gigue are also simple and straightforward. These pieces make a welcome addition to the scanty late 19<sup>th</sup>-century repertoire for string trio and would do well on any concert program, though they present no technical difficulties whatsoever.

**Ignatius de Orellana (1866-1931)** was born in the town of St. Helier, on the island of Jersey. He studied violin in London and worked as the leader of several London theater orchestras before becoming a conductor of operetta and musical comedies. He was also a composer, though few of his compositions seem to have survived. He wrote the overture to Noel Coward's musical, *Bittersweet*. His **String Trio in c minor** in 4 movements was published in London in the late 1880's. The first, Adagio-Allegro ma non troppo, begins with a slow, gloomy Baroque-sounding introduction. The main part of the movement has a stormy quality and is full of forward drive. The principal subject of the second

movement, Andante cantabile, is a lovely, dignified melody first sung by the viola. Next comes a bright, chirpy Menuetto, quasi allegro. The finale, Allegro, is an energetic, foot-stomping rondo. This pleasant work makes no grand pretensions. Clearly intended to serve as house music, it succeeds admirably in its goal. Well-written, with grateful parts for all and presenting no technical difficulties, this is a work which amateur trios will certainly enjoy.



**Hubert Parry (1848-1918)** was an English composer. His **2 Intermezzi for String Trio** were composed in 1886. The first is a somewhat sad and reflective Lento espressivo. The score is rich and at times it almost sounds as if it is a string quartet rather than a trio performing. The second intermezzo is a genial and lovely Allegretto and sounds more like one would expect such a movement to sound. It

has an updated Mendelssohnian quality.



**Richard von Perger (1854-1911)** was an Austrian composer and conductor. His 1888 **String Trio in d minor, Op. 12** is a first-class work. Though influenced by Brahms, Perger's own originality was such that there is much here that Brahms would never have thought of. The passionate mood of the opening movement, Allegro moderato, is established immediately by the main theme. The charming second subject is tonally rich. The

second movement, Presto, is a spirited scherzo with a finely contrasting, slower trio section. A somber slow movement, Largo, follows. In the middle section the violin and cello engage in a fetching question-and-answer duet. The lively finale, Allegro vivace, begins in an explosive fashion. A second theme is equally powerful, and it is only the third, tranquillo, which reduces the tension. A highly effective coda tops off the work. This work is strong enough for the concert hall but can be recommended to amateurs as well.



**Felix Petyrek (1892-1951)** was an Austrian composer. His **Variationen über Volkslieder**

(Variations on Folksongs) was published in 1962 and has remained available. There are 4 folksongs entitled The song of the 3 rabbits, The dance under the apple tree based on a Russian folk dance, The moon has gone down and Song of the peddlers. These are clever, short, primarily tonal works which are cute. Perhaps they could be used as encores.



**Johann Pezel (1630-94)** was a German composer. Southern Music Company published what they called **Trio in d minor** in 1986.

This was taken from a suite for strings, *Musica Vespertina Lipsica*, composed in 1669. This is a very easy Baroque work in 5 short movements: Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue.



**Wenzel (Václav) Pichl (1741-1805)** was an Austrian composer and violinist. Among his string trios are his **6 Six Trios Concertants, Op. 7** which date from 1783. The melodic writing is that of the Viennese Classical composers but as the title suggests, the style is concertante.



**Ignaz Pleyel (1756-1831)** 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 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, he founded a famous 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.

The 3 **Trio Concertants Op. 11** were published as Pleyel’s **Op. 11** in 1790, but were composed in 1787. Each of these trios has 2 substantial movements. In the **E flat trio**, the opening movement is an Allegro and the finale a Rondo. There is no slow movement. If one listens closely, it is apparent that Pleyel in several instances has the voices imitate the sound of horns, a common practice among Viennese composers, including Mozart, when writing in this key which was a favorite of that instrument.

The **D Major trio** is unusual on several counts. First it begins in 3/4 rather than 4/4 which was standard at that time for opening movements and it begins pianissimo. Most opening movements usually began forte. Finally, the mysterious chromatic opening leads to a development section based on the notes B-A-C-H. The concluding Rondo is a witty parody of the so-called Marsch-Militaire, quite popular during the late 18th century.

The **F Major trio** is in true concertant style but here one finds that the cello, more frequently than one might expect, pushes the violin into the background as does the viola.



**Manuel Ponce (1882-1948)** was a Mexican composer. He composed 2 works for string trio. The first, his **Petite Suite Dans le Style Ancien**, was published by Peer International in 1959, but dates from 1938. It is a Baroque-style suite in 4 movements: Prelude, Canon, Air and Fughetta. Entirely tonal and Baroque sounding with only an occasional modernity—not at all difficult and fun to play. It has been recorded a number of

times.

The **String Trio** dates from 1943 and was also published by Peer International. It combines various styles such as polytonality and neoclassicism. It is a tonal work in 4 movements: Allegro non troppo espressivo; Moderato, tempo di minuetto; Cancion, andante espressivo; and Rondo scherzoso, allegro giocoso.

**Franz Alexander Possinger (1767-1827)** was an Austrian composer. His **Op. 36 String Trios Concertants** were composed sometime between 1790 and 1805. The structure and clarity of the writing point to the late Classical era but there are also hints of the coming Romantic movement in some of the daring harmonies and fuller writing. The Op. 36 trios are very interesting. While the melodies are by no means extraordinary, Pössinger’s treatment of them and his development are very noteworthy. Compared to quartet writing of the same period, trios tended to

spread the thematic material more evenly between the voices. Pössinger makes the most of this and does so in a rather unique way that few, if any others, did. There are frequent changes in register which herald in a reversal of roles. For example, the cello will be suddenly yanked out of the bass clef and find itself playing in the lead, but very high in the violin’s register, while the latter assumes the function of the bass on its g string. This results tonally in a very closely set, high arrangement and creates a very unusual instrumental timbre. And quick changes in register often make for a separation of more than 2 octaves between the voices.

**Heinrich Aloys Präger (1783-1854)** was a Dutch/German composer, violinist and virtuoso guitarist. He had a gift for melody and could write effectively. He wrote a great deal of chamber music, none of which appears to have received reprints within the past century. It awaits rediscovery. Certainly at least one of his **3 Grand Trios Op. 42 Nos. 1-3** deserves to be republished. The trios require technically assured players.



**Max Reger (1873-1916)** was a German composer. Reger’s 2 string trios must be counted as important contributions to the literature. The first, **String Trio No. 1 in a minor, Op. 77b** dates from 1904. In it, Reger is clearly moving tonality to its limits and then retreats back into the safe havens of Romantic and Classical melody. The opening movement begins with a brief, somewhat depressed and worried introduction reminis-

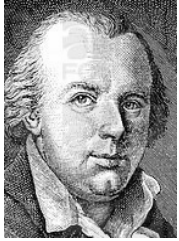
cent of late Beethoven. Then the tense main theme of the Allegro agitato literally explodes. Only briefly does the sun peek out of the clouds, but then with the appearance of the lovely, lyrical second theme, all is sunny. The reflective second movement, Larghetto, is characterized by a deeply introspective quality. The brilliant third movement, Scherzo, vivace, is a humorous take on the traditional German dance. In the finale, Allegro con moto, Reger quotes a well-known theme from Mozart’s *Abduction from the Seraglio* and then dresses it up in modern clothes. The second theme, wayward tonally, provides a beautiful contrast. For good measure, a march is thrown in before the satisfying and jovial finale.

**String Trio No. 2 in d minor, Op. 141b** appeared in 1915. The opening Allegro begins with a searching melody. Sadness and a sense of loss pervade this music. A second theme is somewhat brighter in mood. The middle movement, Andante sostenuto, is a theme and set of variations. The theme is, for Reger, particularly sweet and straightforward. The several variations (we present 2 in our soundbite) show Reger’s inventiveness and technical skill. The lively and upbeat theme of the finale, Vivace, harks back to Haydn. Its brilliant presentation is in a fugal format. The melancholic second theme makes a brief appearance only once before the return of main melody which leads to an exciting finish.



**Anton Reicha (1770-1836)** was an Austro-Czech composer active in Vienna and Paris. Reicha is primarily famous for his wind quintets. His **Trio in F Major** dates from around 1805 and was republished in 1988. The trio opens with a lengthy and rhythmically rather fussy Adagio molto introduction. Full of 32nd and 64th notes which are exposed, it is by no means easy. The main part of the movement, Allegro vivace, is a fugue on 2 subjects. Not a

work for concert.



**Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814)** was a Prussian composer. His **String Trio in B flat Major, Op. 1 No. 3** dates from 1778 and is 3 movements. The style and thematic material are of the sort found in Mozart's violin concertos, though not as fine melodically. The main theme of the opening movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, is fluent and gracious, flowing along easily. There are several short bursts of solo passages

given to each of the instruments. The second movement is an *Andante* with 4 variations. The theme is rather ordinary and the variations straightforward. The finale, *Vivace*, is much like the opening movement. This trio, as well as the **Op. 4**, is workman-like, but like dozens of others from the same time. It is definitely on a rung or 2 below similar works by the Wranitzky brothers or Franz Krommer.



**nor, WoO 70 No. 2.** Ries could write quite effectively and several of his piano trios, piano quartet and string quartets are well worth reviving. It is probably not an accident that these string trios remained in manuscript for so long. While much of the thematic material is attractive, virtually none of it is to be found in either the viola or cello parts.

**Sofie Rohnstock (1875-1964)** was a German composer. Her **String Trio in G Major** is a tonal work with some dissonance. It is in 3 movements: *Con anima scherzando grazioso*, *Andante* and *Vivace*. For the most part, it is a pleasing work and technically not difficult, however, it seems to me that several parts are needlessly complex rhythmically and add nothing.



**Alessandro Rolla (1757-1841)** was an Italian composer, teacher of Paganini and violin and viola virtuoso. Rolla's works have been catalogued by Luigi Bianchi and Luigi Inzaghi and now bear BI numbers along with the opus number under which they have traveled for the past 150 years. I have not seen their catalogue, so I cannot definitively say how many trios

Rolla composed. Some sources say 9, some as many as 18. His best known set of trios are the **String Trio Nos. 1-6, Op. 1, BI 351, 349, 344, 346, 341 and 347**. The Op. 1 Trios are entitled *Trio Concertante* and they are written in the concertante style, that is to say, the melodic material, which may pass from voice to voice, is only in one voice at any given time. While that one voice has the melody, the other 2 are more or less beating time or playing a kind of supporting harmony. The Op. 1 trios date from around 1800. I will confine my discussion to what I consider the best 2 of the set.

**Op. 1 No. 1 in B flat Major, BI 351** begins with an *Allegro assai*. It is in a formal 18<sup>th</sup>-century introductory Italian style and leads to the lovely main theme. A brighter second theme is just the sort of thing Paganini often used in his chamber music and concerti. The highly ornamented and finely wrought second movement, *Largo ma non troppo*, begins rather calmly with each instrument taking its turn in presenting the melody. Slowly the intensity builds. Perhaps nowhere better than in the buoyant finale, *Rondo, allegro*, can we hear the debt Paganini owed to Rolla.

**Op. 1 No. 6 in G Major, BI 347** begins with an *Allegro vivo* using a sprightly upward figure which is then developed in the typical Italian declamatory style. The music is bright and carefree. Rolla then starts his concertante treatment, giving the violin the first solo, then the viola and then the cello. The second movement, *Tema con variazione*, is a set of 4 variations which are based on a rather simple but pretty tune. In the second variation, the violin and cello engage in a marvelous give and take at breakneck speed. Another variation charms with its pizzicato accompaniment to the violin's racing lines high above. Then suddenly a storm bursts forth. The finale, *Rondo, presto*, is lively and full of clever interplay between the parts.



**Engelbert Röntgen (1829-1897)** was born in the Dutch city of Deventer into a German merchant family. He attended the Leipzig Conservatory where he studied violin with Ferdinand David, Mendelssohn's choice for the position of concertmaster of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and composition with Moritz Hauptmann. Engelbert's son Julius became a prominent composer active in Amsterdam. Engelbert himself eventually became concertmaster of the famed orchestra



**Carl Reinecke (1824-1910)** was a German composer, teacher, pianist and conductor. One of the superstars of the 19th century, Reinecke's **String Trio in c minor, Op. 249** has to be counted as a masterpiece for this combination. Among the greatest of late Romantic works for this combination, this string trio is infused with the developments of late, and even Post-Brahmsian, Romanticism. The writing is very

contrapuntal and original. The dark and brooding opening *Allegro moderato* is painted on a large canvas. It shows a wide range of emotion and richness of tonality; Reinecke easily and often makes the 3 voices sound like 4. The *Andante* which follows is a theme and set of variations. It is more intimate and trio-like than the preceding movement, beginning with a naive, quiet melody. Our soundbite is of the energetic, dance-like fourth variation. The very brief third movement, *Intermezzo, Vivace ma non troppo*, is a heavily syncopated scherzo with an interestingly contrasting middle section which illustrates Reinecke employing the new directions of post-Brahmsian tonality. The big finale, *Adagio, ma non troppo lento*,—*Allegro un poco maestoso*, begins as a lyrical and highly romantic lied. It has a valedictory quality to it. The thematic material of the *Allegro* is brighter but still densely scored, once again creating a wealth of sound which belies the fact that only a trio is playing.



**Maurice Reuchsel (1880-1968)** was a French organist and composer. His **String Trio in g minor** was published in 1910. He possessed a fine technique and good creative ideas which he was able to express concisely and without having to resort to redundancy. For the most part, the tonality and harmony adhere to the traditional. In the very individualistic first movement, *Allegro non*

*troppo*, the pithy main theme is followed by a more lyrical second subject which shows the influence of Ravel. The transitions and modulations are quite interesting. The masterly second movement, *Andante sostenuto*, is a kind of serenade first sung by the viola to a pizzicato accompaniment. There follows a dramatic middle section and a clever transition back to the serenade. Next comes a spirited and lively *Scherzo, Allegretto mosso*, complete with a more melodic trio section. The finale begins with a short *Adagio* introduction in which we hear the theme from the serenade. It leads to the main section, *Allegro appassionato*, in which the main theme from the first movement reappears.

**Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838)** was a German composer and virtuoso pianist. One of Beethoven's best-known students and his first biographer, Ries wrote a great deal of chamber music. These are styled **Trio in E flat Major, WoO 70 No. 1** and **Trio in c mi-**

and also a professor of violin at the Conservatory. In addition to this, he served as leader of the Gewandhaus Quartet for many years. It is not known when or why exactly Röntgen composed a **Trio on Ashkenazic Themes**. He himself was not Jewish, but many of his colleagues, such as David, Joseph Joachim and others were. So he may well have had a Jewish colleague in mind, perhaps a cellist, since the cello is given a particularly prominent role. The String Trio on Ashkenazic Themes is in 5 movements: a sad and plaintive Adagio, a gay Gavotta, a playful Scherzino with somber trio, a masterly Improvisata or Improvisation in which the cello or alternatively the violin play very evocative passages and then finally a bright Allegro spirituosissimo. Röntgen's compositional technique are beyond reproach. This work certainly makes an outstanding choice for inclusion on a recital program



**Julius Röntgen (1855-1932)** was born in the German city of Leipzig. His father was a violinist and his mother a pianist. He showed musical talent at an early age and was taken to the famed pianist and composer, Carl Reinecke, the director of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Subsequently he studied piano in Munich with Franz Lachner, one of Schubert's closest friends. After a brief stint as a concert pianist, Röntgen moved to Amsterdam and taught piano there, helping to found the Amsterdam Conservatory and the subsequently world-famous Concertgebouw Orchestra. He composed throughout his life and especially during his last 10 years after he retired. Though he wrote in most genres, chamber music was his most important area. For a long time, it was thought that Röntgen had only composed one string trio, his Op. 76 in D Major which appeared in 1924. But it turns out that Röntgen, a highly prolific composer, wrote string trios throughout a good part of his life, and especially toward the end of it. There are at least 16 that are known of and perhaps more yet to be discovered. Edition Silvertrust has published seven of them but the rest remain in manuscript in the Netherlands Music Institute located in the Hague. Any one of the below works is strong enough for concert performance and can also be warmly recommended to amateurs as they present no real difficulties.

His **String Trio, No. 1 Op. 76** dates from 1924. The ideas in the first movement, *Vivace e giocoso*, are cleverly presented. The main theme, though not a lyrical, warm melody, sounds good and plays without any difficulties. The second movement, *Un poco Andante*, has a noble, aristocratic melody, on the austere side. The charming third movement, *Allegretto e scherzando*, is in the form of an old-fashioned Bouree, based on an old Dutch folk song. The very attractive finale is both fresh and inventive. It begins with a Bachian *Passepied*. There is a series of variations characterized by different tempi, including a heavy fugue, and varying moods. The work is not difficult to play and strong enough to be presented in concert.

**String Trio No. 2 in a minor, "Dvorák,"** was completed in 1918. The subtitle appears on the original manuscript. Dvorák was one of Röntgen's favorite composers and he took for the main subject of the first movement, *Allegro con brio*, the opening bars to Dvorák's violin concerto. This theme dominates the entire energetic and attractive movement and subsequently makes its return in the finale. The middle movement, *Andante grazioso e con molto delicatezza*, is in 2 parts which are constantly being juxtaposed. The first features a dialogue between the 2 upper voices to the cello's pizzicato accompaniment. In the second section, which bears the character of an intermezzo, the cello takes the lead. The finale, *Allegro sciolto*, is a lively affair: the main subject, a hunting melody, is full of energy. Toward the end, the Dvorák motif returns.

**String Trio No. 3 in e minor** was completed in 1919. It

begins almost like a scherzo, but soon devolves into a calmer and more lyrical mood. The second movement, in contrast, is quite energetic, almost frenetic. The middle part resembles a rustic dance. The third movement is subtitled *Een Rondedans om de bruid naar bed te dausan* (A round dance which brings the bride to her bed). This was an old Dutch wedding tradition. The music resembles a lullaby, entirely appropriate since the bride is heading to bed. The trio concludes with a graceful *Allegretto*.

**String Trio No. 4 in D Major, "Walzer Suite,"** also dates from 1919. The Trio was actually given the nickname "Walzer Suite" by Röntgen himself and one finds it written at the top of his manuscript. It is in 6 short movements, each of which resembles a modified Viennese waltz or a rustic peasant dance. First comes a gentle waltz, then a rather relaxed *Ländler*, which is followed a rather rough, almost harsh dance, perhaps an offshoot of a peasant mazurka. The fourth and fifth movements are tonally wayward, languid Viennese waltzes. The finale and most substantial of the 6 movements begins in fugal fashion but eventually morphs into a peasant dance.

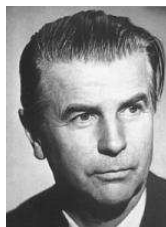
**String Trio No. 6 in f sharp minor** was completed in 1920. The main theme of first movement, *Moderato con moto*, is diffident and searching. A light-footed and fleet scherzo, *Animato e leggiero*, comes next. The music rushes forward with barely a moments rest. It is followed by a melancholy *Poco andante*. The finale, *Agitato e passionato*, is in waltz tempo and recalls the atmosphere one finds in Beethoven's Late Quartets.

**String Trio No. 7 in G Major** dates from 1920. It is in 4 movements and opens with a genial *Allegro piacevole*, relaxed and even a little delicate. It has the air of a folk dance. Next comes a lively scherzo, *Poco allegro e leggiero*. It begins with an almost oriental sounding subject which is created by the rhythm and the wailing tune enunciated in the viola. Next comes a slow movement, *Poco adagio e sostenuto*, filled with lovely long-lined melodies which are passed from voice to voice. The finale, *Allegretto con grazia*, is a jovial affair, energetic and full of good spirits.

**String Trio No. 16 in c sharp minor** was completed in 1930 two years before his death. The first movement, *Andante tranquillo*, is calm, almost gloomy. The mood changes completely with the second movement, *Poco allegretto e grazioso*, a light hearted and genial cross between a scherzo and intermezzo. The third movement, *Lento ma non troppo*, has for its main theme a lyrical melody first given out by the viola. The finale, *Allegro passionato*, as the marking implies is passionate, full of energy and forward motion.



**Eugene Sauzay (1809-1901)** was a French violinist, musicologist and composer. His **String Trio in G Major, Op. 8** dates from the mid-19th century. It was reprinted by Merton Music. It is in 4 movements: *Modérément*, *Romance*, *Minuet* and *Avec vivacité*. He is able to think up an attractive 8-bar melody, but is unable to do anything with it except to repeat it in dozens of ways, so that the music quickly becomes boring.



**Hermann Schroeder (1904-84)** was a German composer. His **String Trio in e minor, Op. 14 No. 1** was published by Edition Schott in 1933. It is in 3 movements—*Agitato*, *Adagio* and *Allegro*. Although a key signature appears in the title, this is not a traditionally tonal work. On the other hand, it is not relentlessly dissonant. It is not hard to play and is well put together and can be navigated by experienced amateurs.



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

**Franz Schubert (1797-1828)** wrote one complete trio and a single movement, presumably meant to be the first of another. Neither was published until the end of the 19th century. The single movement has gone by the title of **Trio No. 1 in B flat Major, D. 471**. It dates from 1816. In the one movement, Allegro, Schubert treats all 3 instruments equally, unusual for this period. The themes are good, though not among his most gorgeous, but the whole thing is quite well executed.

**Trio No. 2 in B flat Major, D. 571** (the complete trio) was composed in 1817. Surprisingly, it is a step back from the earlier movement. Here, the instruments are not treated as equals. The violin leads in every movement almost all of the time. The viola and cello are left with the role of supporting accompaniment. The opening theme of the first movement, Allegro moderato, is lively and somewhat lyrical but, as it is developed, rhythmically tricky. The main subject of the Andante which comes next, is attractive and typically Schubertian and all in the violin. The minor section has the greatest appeal. The following Minuet is straightforward and unremarkable, however, at last, in the trio section, the melody is taken away from the violin and given entirely to the viola, which sings an Austrian Ländler. The finale, Rondo, allegretto, has attractive themes, again only in the violin. Both works have remained in print from a number of publishers and have been recorded several times.



**William Shield (1748-1829)** was an English composer and violinist. He wrote 9 string trios. The first 6 were published in 1796 with no opus number. A second set of 3 came out in 1811. The style is that of early Mozart, ca. 1776 or so. These are melodic works, written mostly in a concertante style, with each of the instruments getting grateful solos to play. The writing reveals that the composer was a string player and knew how to write well for

these instruments. I will confine myself to those with which I am familiar.

**String Trio No. 1 in E flat Major** is in 3 movements and concertante style, showing the influence of the Mannheim School of Johann and Carl Stamitz as well as his friend Haydn. The work opens with an Allegro followed by a Largo. The title to the final movement is quite interesting and shows that Shield was attracted to what was then the exotic. The marking is *Giocoso, alla Sclavonia-Tempo straniera con variazione*—roughly, playful in the foreign Slavonic manner. Actually, it is a modified Polacca.

**String Trio No. 2 in D Major** is in 3 movements and concertante style, showing the influence of the Mannheim School of Johann and Carl Stamitz as well as his friend Haydn. The work opens with a bright Allegro followed by a deeply felt Molto adagio and closes with upbeat Rondeau allegro,

**String Trio No. 3 in A Major** is in 3 movements and concertante style, showing the influence of the Mannheim School of Johann and Carl Stamitz as well as his friend Haydn. The work opens with an Allegro followed by a lively Andante grazioso and closes with stately dance, *Un Giuoco*.

**String Trio No. 5 in C Major** is in 3 movements and concertante style, showing the influence of the Mannheim School of Johann and Carl Stamitz as well as his friend Haydn. The work

opens with an atmospheric Largo e sostenuto and is followed by an inventive Tempo di Ciaccona.

Fifteen years separate the first set of six trios of 1796 and the second set of three which he finished in 1811. During the intervening years between the first and second set of trios, Shield had traveled widely on the continent. And in these trios, one can hear what Shield learned while abroad. For example, in **Trio No.8**, he uses a Siciliano in the second movement. If not the first, certainly one of the first uses by an English composer. Then, in **Trio No.9** the last movement is a waltz. Although by 1811, the waltz had become popular in Vienna and parts of Germany, it did not make its appearance in England until 1812 at which time it was attacked by critics as an “indecent foreign dance.”



**Otto Siegl (1896-1978)** was an Austrian composer. His **Divertimento for String Trio, Op. 44** was published by Doblinger in 1926. This is a polytonal work with no fixed tonal bass. It has 5 movements—Allegro assai; Andante mosso, which is subtitled Canzonetta; Con fuoco, subtitled Scherzo; Molto tranquillo; and Toccata. This is not a particularly easy work to play with many hard rhythmic

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



**Leone Sinigaglia (1868-1944)** was an Italian composer. He composed his **Serenade for String Trio in D Major, Op. 33** in 1908.

This work belongs in the front rank of string trios, especially for its period. It is full of original ideas and invention and is extraordinarily well-written for the 3 instruments. The first movement, Allegro moderato, is written in a clear and charming style, and the second theme is especially beautiful. The second movement, Intermezzo, allegretto vivace, is both humorous and uncommonly well done. The next movement, Egloga, andante mosso, serves as the slow movement but also has a scherzo section in the middle. The exciting and very effective finale, Capriccio, Allegro vivace, *ma non troppo*, requires fleet and clean execution. Perfect for the concert hall, but very manageable by good amateur players.



**Nikolai Sokolov (1859-1922)** was a Russian composer. His **String Trio d minor, Op. 45** dates from 1910 and is in 4 movements. It begins with an Allegro moderato in which the composer indicates that the tempo will fluctuate. At first the music is rather leisurely, but after a while Sokolov quickly changes the tempo. The music has many of the hallmarks of the Belaiev Circle and Rimsky-Korsakov

with its light touches. The second movement, Adagio, recalls some of the music of Borodin, while the quirky Andantino capriccioso which follows is a very original sounding scherzo. The finale, Adagio-Allegro, begins with a lengthy, slow introduction



in which the cello is given a dramatic solo. The main section is a robust Russian-sounding theme, which is suddenly followed by a lyrical, somewhat slower melody.

**Willibald Sommer (1846-1935)** was a German composer. He wrote 3 string trios, **Op. 3**, **Op. 5** and **Op. 8**. **String Trio No. 2 in d minor, Op. 5**, which dates from 1899, has received a modern reprint. In it, each voice is given a grateful part. The work presents no technical difficulty. It is written so well and sounds so good that one does not miss a fourth voice and the thematic material is very skillfully handled. Modulations, variations and the inventiveness of ideas are all well done, fresh and pleasing. One hears that this composer stylistically was influenced by Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven. Trio No. 2 begins with an energetic Allegro moderato which also has moments of lyricism. An Adagio with a bustling middle section is followed by a rhythmically fiery Menuetto. The finale opens with a short Adagio introduction before giving way to an Allegro, Polish in style.

**Hermann Spielter (1860-1925)** was born in the German town of Barmen. He studied piano and composition, and was active in Schwelm for a number of years as a teacher and composer. Sometime around 1900, he emigrated to New York, where he spent the rest of his life. In America, he continued to compose and held several conducting positions as well as continuing to teach. The **Little Serenade in G Major for String Trio, Op. 32** was composed in 1889 while he was still in Germany. It is a lovely, short work in one movement, posing no technical difficulties. The trio, though intended for violin, viola and cello can also be played by a trio consisting of 2 violins and cello as Spielter provided a second violin part which could be played in lieu of the viola.



**Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915)** was a Russian composer and teacher. Taneyev wrote 3 works for string trio, but there is only one complete work for violin, viola and cello—the **String Trio in D** (no opus number, dating from 1879/1880). Despite the fact that the parts to this trio have always remained in print, the work is virtually never heard in concert. It is a big work in 4 movements. The opening Allegro has a Romantic cast but also has a hint of the Baroque, especially in its middle fugal section. Most unusual is the Scherzo in contrapunto alla riversa in which the counterpoint is played in reverse. A short but powerful and elegiac Adagio is then followed by a very exciting finale, Allegro molto. Without doubt, this trio, with its wonderfully rich part-writing, should be in every string trio group's library.

Taneyev's **Trio in E Flat, Op. 31** dates from 1910 and was originally written for violin, viola and tenor viola. It has been reprinted by Wollenweber Verlag. The publisher recognized early on it would not sell and an alternate cello part was immediately created. It has appeared in this guise ever since. This is another huge and impressive work. Beginning Allegro con brio, the trio often sounds more like a quartet because of the rich part-writing. Again, there are elements of the Romantic combined with the Baroque. The Scherzino, Allegretto vivace which follows has a delicate but elegant filigree quality to it. An Adagio espressivo is a tender and ethereal affair while the interesting finale, Presto, shows some of the influence of Beethoven's Middle Quartets.

The final work for this combination, the **Trio in b minor** dates from 1913. Taneyev completed only the first 2 movements. A forceful and brooding Allegro, though written in late a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic idiom, nonetheless shows the influence of Beethoven's Late Quartets. The pitch remains quite low for much of this very effective movement. It is followed by a sad, albeit not

tragic, theme and 7 marvellous variations. Like Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, one can only wonder at the incredible edifice being erected. These 2 movements can stand alone.



**Jan Baptist Vanhal (1739-1813** also spelled Vanhall, Wanhal, Wanhall) was born in the Bohemian town of Nechanice, then part of the Habsburg Empire. He moved to Vienna where he studied violin and composition with Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf. He also learned both the cello and bass and became so proficient that he was able to play the cello part in a quartet which consisted of Dittersdorf on

first violin, Haydn on second violin and Mozart on the viola. Vanhal tailored his output to economic realities of the day and composed, as did most of his contemporaries, a huge number of compositions in virtually every genre, including some 70 symphonies and numerous operas. A considerable part of his output was for various chamber ensembles and he is thought to have composed more than 90 string quartets not to mention dozens of other chamber works. Today he is remembered mostly for his double bass concerto, but during his lifetime and for most of the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several of his works were quite popular. Mozart frequently performed one of his violin concertos in concert. Along with Haydn, Vanhal's works influenced and shaped Mozart's ideas and compositions. Judging from the style of the music, the **Divertimento in G Major for String Trio** was composed sometime in the early 1780s. The title suggests this was meant to be lighter, entertainment music. In five movements, it opens and closes with an Allegro. There are two minuets separated by a lovely Adagio. Good for amateurs and students but not for concert.



**Anton Webern (1883-1945)** was an Austrian composer and prominent member of the so-called Second Vienna School which specialized in 12 tone and atonal music. His **Op. 6** and **Op. Posthumous** trios fall into this category. But they are somewhat interesting to listen to and can be managed by experienced amateur players.



**Leo Weiner (1885-1960)** was a Hungarian composer and teacher. His **String Trio in g minor, Op. 6** was composed in 1908.

Rightly considered a masterpiece from the time of its premiere, it is in 4 movements. The first movement, Allegro con brio, is attractive throughout. The rhythmically interesting Vivace (a scherzo) which follows is both very lively and gay, while the middle section features exotic harmonies.

The third movement, Andantino, is a theme and excellent set of variations. The exciting finale, Allegro con fuoco, is a mix of élan and gaiety. This trio, which presents no special technical difficulties, should be appeal to amateurs as well as professionals.

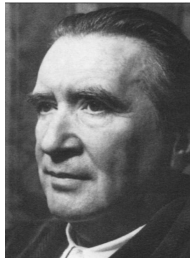


**Julius Weismann (1879-1950)** was a German composer. His **String Trio, Op. 157a** was composed in the late 1940's. It is entirely polytonal and in 4 movements: Allegro moderato; Scherzo, molto vivace; Lento solenno; and Fuga. Though well-written and not difficult technically, it is interesting, but there is nothing in particular which makes it stand out from other such works.



**Friedrich Wildgans (1913-1965)** was an Austrian composer and teacher. His **3 Kleine Stücke** (3 Small Pieces) for string trio were composed in 1935 and published by Doblinger in 1961. The 3 movements—*Allegro deciso*, *Andante* and *Allegro con brio* are short. They show the influence and speak the language of Webern who was one of Wildgans' teachers. They are interesting, much in the same way that such

pieces as Webern's are.



**Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876-1948)** was an Italian composer. His **Trio in b minor** dates from 1894 when he was a student. From the first bars of the opening *Allegro*, the fusion of his 2 national heritages can be heard. The short, moody introduction which becomes the first theme shows the influence of Brahms. This is immediately developed in what might be called the bright, sunny Italian vocal style of long-lined melodies. A cheerful and large

*Larghetto* begins with the violin singing a happy aria over the lower voices. The other voices are given similar solos as the theme is developed. Wolf-Ferrari apparently planned for the trio to have 4 movements, but the *Scherzo*, which is the third, concludes the work. The fourth movement was either lost or never composed. This *Scherzo* is unusual and robust. The cello is given the thematic material in the first section. Both rhythmically and tonally the music has the imprint of Rheinberger. One could hardly do better for a teacher of *scherzi*. The middle section is a lovely Neapolitan tune. In no way does this fetching music sound like a student piece.

**String Trio No. 2, Op. 32 in a minor** was written in 1945 during one of the darkest periods of Wolf-Ferrari's life, a time when he nearly starved to death. The opening *Allegro* consists entirely of short episodes in which the agitated and, at times, violent main theme is juxtaposed against a sad and reflective plaint. The beautiful middle movement, *Pastorale*, *Andante tranquillo*, is simplicity itself. The finale, *Allegro*, is a kind of devil's rondo, quite robust. The second theme is a burlesque, a demonic and disjointed dance, which creates the same mood that Shostakovich sometimes evokes by using such dances. (This is not to suggest, however, that this music sounds like Dmitri's.) A spooky unison tremolo coda concludes this first-rate work on a note of despair.



**Paul Wranitzky (1756-1808)** 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. Wranitzky was, as so many of his contemporaries, a prolific composer. His chamber works number over 100. Writing about Wranitzky's chamber music in the last part of the 19th century, the famous Belgian critic and musicologist Francois Joseph 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, (circa. 1805-10) 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 wrote at least 24 string trios, and at least 15 for violin, viola and cello. In 1789 the composer, friend of Mozart and music publisher Franz Anton Hoffmeister brought out six trios by Paul Wranitzky. Composed between 1787 and 1789, the trios were published without an opus number. Scholars generally believe these so called Hoffmeister Trios to be the first six with the one in a minor thought to be the first although this is probably based on the fact that it was the first in the set. However, publishers often printed multiple works in any order that suited them so this is not conclusive.


**String No.1 in a minor, "Hoffmeister"** has three movements, *Allegro*, *Poco adagio* and *Allegretto*. It is tuneful and well-written, as is most of his music. Although written in concertante style, it is a relatively simple work, most likely aimed at the amateur market. Most of the interest is in the violin part, however, the viola and cello do get a few solos. Good for amateurs and students but not a choice for concert.

The **String Trio in F Major, Op.3 No.1** is the first of a set of three which were published in Paris between 1794-95. Like many popular and prolific composers from this era, Boccherini and Pleyel for example, different publishers gave the works different opus numbers hence making them unreliable for posterity. The French publisher Imbault called the first three Op.1 and next three Op.2. That would make this trio his seventh. Few string trios were as advanced as these with each of the voices is given solos but the trios are not concertante trios per se. The opening movement is unusual, not only because it begins *Andante*, but also because it is a theme and set of variations. The middle movement is a graceful Menuetto with a nicely contrasting moody trio section. The Finale, an upbeat Rondo, is a typical lively romp in 6/8.

**String Trio in G Major, Op.3 No.3** is the last of a set of three which were published in Paris between 1794-95. It is the most substantial of the three and the only which has four instead of three movements. It is the viola which is given the responsibility of briefly stating the main theme to the Haydnesque opening movement *Allegro moderato*, which is then developed by the violin and cello. In the second movement, *Adagio*, it is the cello which for much of the movement is given the lead, often sailing high into its treble clef. The third movement is a genial French style Menuetto *allegretto* with a nicely contrasting moody trio section. The Finale is a lively, toe-tapping *Allegro*. Good enough for concert performance and can only be recommended to technically secure amateurs.

**String Trio in D Major, Op.17 No.5** is the fifth of a set of six that date from 1791/92. These six string trios are among the most important of their time. Each in four movements as true proponents of the Vienna Classical style. Each of the voices is given solos but trios are not concertante trios per se. The opening movement, *Allegro con spirito*, open with three loud chords in all of the voices. These three chords will reappear and play an important role throughout the movement. Next comes a lovely *Adagio*, which is followed by a energetic and hard-driving. The bright finale is a lively Rondo.

**Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931)** was a Belgian violin virtuoso and composer. His string trio is entitled **Le Chimay** and dates from 1927. It is a lengthy one-movement work. It is ostensibly tonal, but with no real identifiable melodies— strident work showing French Impressionist influence, but not its beauty.

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

within the range of experienced amateurs.

# String Trios

## For 2 Violins and Violoncello, 2 Violins and Viola, et.al.

Most people generally have come to consider the string trio as a work for violin, viola and violoncello. However, this would not have been the case prior to 1800, when most string trios were for the combination of 2 violins and violoncello. Such works were the direct descendants of the trio sonata of the Baroque era. Additionally, there have been trios for 2 violins and viola; violin and 2 violas; viola, cello and bass; and perhaps other combinations. Only a handful of such works have been composed.



The Russian composer **Alexander Alyabiev (1787-1851)** wrote a short work **Variations on a Russian Folk Song**, (In the vegetable garden). It is for **2 violins and cello**. According to the publisher, it was intended as part of a larger work. It is well done, effective and fun to play.

**John Antes (1740-1811)** was born in Frederick, Pennsylvania, the second generation of a German Moravian family. He was a violinmaker, watchmaker, inventor, missionary, theoretician, businessman and composer. He met and knew Haydn and his 3 trios, **Op. 3 Nos. 1-3 for 2 Violins and Cello** are dedicated to Haydn. Most scholars believe they date from sometime between 1770 and 1781. Haydn wrote dozens of such trios and it is fair to assume that they probably served as Antes' model. But unlike Haydn's trios, Antes treats the 3 instruments as equals which was perhaps without parallel for the time, especially since Antes was not writing in the concertante style then still prevalent. Of particular note is the fact that the cello does not take the role of basso continuo, but plays a part almost as important as the violins. Strong enough for a concert presentation. Not at all difficult to play.



**Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805)** was born in the town of Lucca in northern Italy. He studied cello and became a virtuoso. He is one of the best known Classical-era composers outside of the German countries. Like most of his contemporaries he wrote a great deal of music and even today, despite the effort of various scholars, including Gerard, it is not certain just how many works he composed. Boccherini wrote

over 70 string trios. Why so many? The answer lies in the fact that during the last half of the 18th century, the string trio was the most popular chamber ensemble and virtually all of the active composers lavished their talents on them. Of his 70 string trios all but a dozen or so are for 2 violins and cello, rather than violin, viola and cello. Boccherini's opus numbers are often confusing with different works sometimes sharing the same opus number or the same work having different opus numbers. This is due to the fact that Boccherini sent the same work to different publishers and also that he sometimes rearranged a work from a different combination. The best and most reliable guide is the catalog of his works created by Gerard, hence the G numbers. Only these trios which have survived and are the most deserving of attention will be discussed here. They are for **2 violins and cello**.

Boccherini's **Op. 1, G. 77-82** trios are a set of 6 (it was then standard practice to compose and publish trios or quartets in sets of 6), composed and published in Vienna in 1760. These trios are a representative example of the changing musical expression around the middle of the 18th century. They combine

elements of late Baroque with the new emerging Classical style pioneered in Mannheim and Vienna. The trios are the descendants of earlier such works by Corelli and Tartini. The choice of 3 movements per work harks back to the Baroque as does the placement of a slow movement followed by 2 faster ones, seen in the last 4 of the 6 trios. The trios, generally written in concertante style, show that Boccherini's thinking was, even at a young age, quite advanced in that the writing for the 3 voices is quite balanced and that the melodic material is not merely shared between the 2 treble voices. No doubt, this was because Boccherini was a cellist and most likely planned to premier his own works.

Boccherini's **Op. 34, G. 101-106** string trios for 2 violins and cello, also a set of 6, are probably the finest he wrote for this ensemble. The intricate part-writing is excellent, the moods and tonal colors he brings forth are wide-ranging and the overall treatment of the 3 voices leaves nothing to be desired. Of the set, **Op. 34 No. 4 in D Major**, nicknamed "El Fandango," is perhaps the most attractive. Most probably, Boccherini's royal patron expected his composer to at least occasionally utilize native melodies and dances, and it is not surprising to find these in many of his compositions. The structure of the trio, especially the second movement, is quite interesting. It opens with a moody and melancholy Allegro moderato assai. For the most part, it sounds slow and meandering, but 32<sup>nd</sup>-note passages create the illusion of a quicker tempo. The second movement, Grave-Allegro, begins with a very dark, funeral dirge for its introduction. The Allegro which serves as the main part of the movement, is a wild dance—a fandango, a traditional dance of Spanish origin. A brief Adagio in which the cello is given a short cadenza interrupts the festivities without warning before the Allegro returns. But surprisingly, the movement is concluded by the reintroduction of the Grave. The closing movement, as was traditional for the time is a Menuetto, stately and traditional, although toward the end it picks up speed.



**Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)** is well known for his orchestral pieces and not his chamber music. 9 out of 10 people could not tell you that the famous Borodin melody in the popular Broadway musical *Kismet* is from his Second String Quartet. But Borodin wrote several lovely chamber music works. These fall into 2 distinct periods. The first is from his time in Germany during the late 1850's when

he was doing post-graduate work in chemistry. The second period was when he worked as a Professor of Chemistry at the university in St. Petersburg. Music was only a hobby he engaged in for relaxation.

The **String Trio in g minor for 2 Violins and Cello** is one of the earliest works of Borodin which is extant. It dates from 1855, the time during which he was in Germany. It is relatively short and in one movement, a theme and set of 8 variations. Unlike his other works from this period it escapes the influence of Mendelssohn, largely because of its use of a once well-known Russian folksong, "What have I done to hurt you?" as the theme. The Trio remained as a forgotten manuscript until it was finally published by the Soviet State Music Publishers toward the mid-20th century.

There is virtually no information about Borodin's **String Trio in G Major**, the so-called No.2. This is based on the assumption of some Borodin scholars that it was composed between 1855 and 1860. Other scholars have claimed it dates from 1847 which would make it Borodin's earliest work, since he would have been 14 at the time. The manuscript bears the inscription 'Grand Trio' and although only the first two movements survive, it is clearly written on a much bigger scale than his other trio which is really only a theme and variations. No one knows for

sure if Borodin ever completed the work. Hence, the last two movements may never have existed, or if he did complete that they are lost. Listening to the opening movement, Allegro, one could easily conclude that this trio was written before the g minor trio as the music shows the string influence of Mozart, Hummel and the earlier Romantics. Yet, the writing is more accomplished and detailed than that in the first trio. The second movement is a lovely Andante.



Born in Sussex, **Frank Bridge (1879-1941)** learned to play violin from his father and had much early exposure to practical musicianship, playing in theatre orchestras his father conducted. He studied violin and composition, the latter from Charles Stanford, at the Royal College of Music. He later played viola in prominent quartets and was a respected conductor. His **Rhapsody Trio for 2 Violins and Viola** dates from 1928, his so-called modernist period and is one of his last chamber music works. It is in one, very substan-

tial movement with several sections that are created by tempo changes. The overall mood is one of mystery, often created by the blending of major and minor tonalities which convey a light, gossamer, almost transparent feel. It is a work with a strong fantastic character, very personal themes and wonderfully resourceful writing for the instruments, and deserves to be heard in concert.



**Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)** was an Italian violin virtuoso who lived at a time when the violin was emerging as the most important of all concert instruments. It was the age of the great violin makers—Stradivarius, Amati and Guarnerius—and the craze for the new music being composed for the violin swept across northern Italy, which became the birthplace of the Baroque sonata. Corelli revolutionized violin play-

ing, and his trio sonatas, which were studied by Bach, Telemann and Vivaldi to name but a few, are widely regarded as the beginning of chamber music as we know it. His **Op. 4** was a set of 12 trio sonatas (sonata a tre) written for **2 violins and cello** (basso continuo). However, although the bass line is written out only as an unadorned melodic line, Corelli placed figures under the notes (as was the common practice) to indicate a plan for harmonization should the ensemble wish to add a keyboard player, again a common practice.

**Pierre Crémont (1784-1846)** was a French violinist. His **Op. 13** trios, a set of 3, for **2 violins and cello** are in no way difficult to play and were intended for amateurs as either a performance vehicle or for home music making. In the first 2, the violins can play entirely in first position, should they so desire.

The **First Trio** is in 2 movements which are well written. Tonally, the first movement, Allegro moderato, is especially appealing. The work concludes with a charming theme and set of variations.

The **Second Trio** also has 2 movements. The opening Allegro is brilliantly scored.

The **Third Trio** has 3 movements. Here, between the opening Allegro moderato and closing Allegro vivace, one finds an appealing Andantino grazioso.

**Leopold Dancla (1822-1895)**, brother of the better-known violinist Charles Dancla, has had his **Trio in G Major, Op. 25 for 2 Violins and Viola or Cello** published in 1877. A work from the

mid-19th century—pleasant, easy to play, nothing special; for home and amateurs only.



**Antonin Dvorák (1841-1904)**, the famous Czech composer, wrote one of the very best works for **2 Violins and Viola**, his **Terzetto, Op. 74**. Although Dvorák may have had amateurs in mind when he composed it, this is not a work for beginners or those of very modest technical accomplishments. On the contrary, though not overly difficult, it does require players with an assured technique as Dvorák soon found out. At the time he wrote the work,

he had been living in his mother-in-law's house. She had rented out a room to a chemistry student who was an amateur violinist. Dvorák, a viola player, often heard his neighbor playing duets with his violin teacher and conceived the idea to write a trio so that he could join in. But when he tried the work with his chemistry student neighbor he realized the piece was too challenging, at least for the student.

Undeterred, Dvorák composed another work of less difficulty and the result was his **Four Miniatures, Op. 75a** for the same combination. Both the Miniatures and Terzetto are charming and worthy of concert performance.

**Andreas Ehrhardt (1823-1884)** pursued a career as a concert violinist and teacher, as well as a composer. He spent the greater part of his life in Hamburg. His **Op. 19 Trio in e minor for 2 Violins and Cello** was composed in 1870 and was published in 1877. Wilhelm Altmann praised the trio for its superb compositional technique and handling of the instruments, and considered it among the very best for this combination. It is not particularly difficult to play, and every instrument is given an important role. In the first movement, Allegro agitato, we find a restless, energetic main theme followed by a more lyrical second subject. It is followed by a warm Largo con espressione. A spirited Scherzo, allegro molto comes next. The work concludes with a fleet Presto, perhaps a kind of gigue with a very pleasing lyrical second subject. While trios for 2 violins and cello were the norm during the 18th century, by the 19th century they were superseded by trios for violin, viola and cello. After 1800, very few such compositions were composed and after 1850, fewer yet. This fact alone, makes this mid-Romantic era trio an important addition to the repertoire. But, in addition, the writing is of the best quality and makes this a work that should be in the collections of chamber music players everywhere.



**Robert Fuchs (1847-1927)**, the Austrian composer and teacher whose music is almost always on the very highest level and deserving of performance in concert, composed 2 trios for **2 Violins and viola. Op. 61 Nos. 1 and 2**. They date from 1898. It can be said that in these trios, Fuchs solved the problem of no bass—the absence of the cello—in as good a fashion as is possible. These works, which are structurally excellent, contain many fine ideas and noteworthy melodies. Neither work presents any great technical difficulties.

**Op. 61 No. 1** begins with a slow introduction, Langsam mit sinnigem Ausdruck, which leads to the lilting main section, Heimlich bewegt, which is full of passion. A real archetypical Scherzo, Lebhaft bewegt, comes next. The third movement, Langsam sehr zart, is a romance. The lively finale, Lebhaft übermütig, is full of high spirits and dance-like rhythms.

The first movement of **Op. 61 No. 2**, Energisch bewegt, doch nicht zu rasch, has a very effective ostinato accompaniment

in the viola to a warm theme. The second movement, *Anmutig*, brings Brahms to mind. A piece in true Vienna Conservatory tradition serves as the scherzo. Next is a very attractive *Intermezzo*. The finale sports a charming main subject.

**Ladislao Gabrielli (1851-19??)** was an Italian violinist. He composed 2 trios for either 2 violins and cello or 2 violins and viola; neither has an opus number. They are **Trio No. 1 in E Major** and **Trio No. 2 in d minor**. Both appear to have been composed during the last third of the 19th century. Of the 2, the second is more effective. It is in 3 movements. The first is a powerful and dramatic *Allegro appassionato* which borders on the operatic. The middle movement is a deeply felt *Adagio espressivo assai* and the work concludes with a gypsy-like, rousing finale, *Allegro alla zingarese*. Both trios are available from Schott. There also is a version for 2 violins and viola.



sent what melodies there are.

The prolific French composer **Francois Gossec (1734-1829)** was once highly thought of. There have been a few modern reprints of his **Op. 9 No. 1 Trio for 2 Violins and Cello**. The thematic material, though mildly pleasant, is pretty ordinary, not at all interesting or memorable. The trios are a cross between the Baroque and early Classical. The cello is given little to do, and only the violins get a chance to pre-



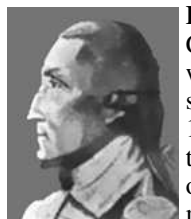
**Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)** wrote a great many trios for **2 violins and cello**, far more than he did for violin, viola and cello. Among these are his **Opp. 12 and 21**, and **Divertimenti Opp. 25-31**. The cello basically has no part in any of these, although the violins are treated well. They are pleasing. Several publishers have republished some of these. Again, Haydn is listed here for the sake of completeness.



**Peter Hänsel (1770-1831)** was an Austrian violinist and primarily chamber music composer. His **Op. 30 for 2 Violins and Cello**, a set of 3 trios was not published until 1876, but is in the style of Mozart and Haydn. Easy to play, they are effective works, but require a competent first violinist to be sure, and may well have been intended by the composer for himself.



**Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)** wrote what is arguably the finest 20<sup>th</sup>-century work for **2 violins and viola**, his **Serenade, Op. 12**. Powerful, dramatic and highly effective, this is not a work for amateurs unless they are of the highest standard. It is a concert piece and not intended for home music making.



**Franz Koczwara** (František Kočvara in the Czech form and sometimes known as Kotzwara) was born in Prague around 1740. Some sources say 1730 others 1750. He died in London in 1791. Not much is known of his early life. He toured as a soloist and was said to be a virtuoso on the violin, viola and double bass. In 1775, he moved to London and it was here that he be-

came quite well known for his various compositions. He composed in all genres, including a considerable amount of chamber music. His **Trio in C Major for 2 Violas and Cello**, dates from 1775 and is in three movements---*Andante espressivo*, *Adagio* and *Rondo, allegro*. It was originally called *Sonata* as this was usual for the time. (Haydn called his piano trios sonatas) It was one of six trios he submitted to the London publisher C. & S. Thompson each for different ensembles. It is an interesting work from a historical standpoint as it gives testimony of the kind of chamber music then in demand in England, but it can stand on its own merits as well.

**Richard Kursch (1879-1949)** was a German composer, pianist and novelist. He composed 2 chamber trios for **2 violins and cello**; his **Op. 41 Kammertrios** (Chamber Trios) date from 1911. They are especially welcome in view of the lack of good modern works for this instrumental combination. They are beautifully written with appealing melodies and, because they present no real technical difficulties, are an excellent choice for inexperienced ensembles.

**Kammertrio No. 1** is in 4, short movements—*Moderato, un poco allegro*, with a particularly effective main theme; a very attractive *Scherzo, vivace ma non troppo*; *Larghetto*; and to conclude, *Allegro moderato*.

**Kammertrio No. 2** is also in 4 short movements which are connected to each other. It begins with a praiseworthy *Con moto tranquillo* and is followed by an *Allegro grazioso*, then an *Andante* with some lovely variations and concludes with an *Allegretto*.



**Ignaz Lachner (1807-1895)** was the second of the 3 famous Lachner brothers. Like his older brother Franz, he became a close friend of Schubert's and fell under the influence of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. He composed a considerable amount of music, much of it chamber music, including 7 string quartets. His **Die gute alte Zeit, Op. 77** (The Good Old Time) for **2 violins and cello** dates from 1874. He subtitled it "Musikalischer Scherz"—a musical treasure. It is pretty clear that he intended it as a kind of gentle parody in the spirit of Mozart's "A Musical Joke." It is in 3 movements—*Maestoso, quasi andantino*, *Andantino* and *Allegro giocoso*—and is meant to be a work from the Baroque era. Lachner left a note to the players at the bottom of the first violin part. "Composer's Note: The performance markings should be followed exactly since this will demonstrate the baroque style of playing. But the playing is meant to be a caricature." Unfortunately, much of Lachner's dry humor is lost to 21<sup>st</sup>-century ears, in the same way that few today can hear the humor or parody in Mozart's Musical Joke.



**Karol Lipiński (1790-1861)** was a Polish violin virtuoso whom many considered the equal of Paganini. He wrote 2 string trios for **2 violins and cello: Op. 8 and Op. 12**. There is no mistaking that these are not trios of equals but rather a vehicle intended for the soloist, although the other players must also be accomplished and are sometimes given important thematic material. They will only be of interest to a violinist of the first order.



**Fereol Mazas (1782-1849)** was a French violin virtuoso who wrote several trios. Among these, his **Op. 18**, a set of 3 for **2 violins and cello**, were reprinted several times by Litolf and Peters. The thematic material is limited to the violins with the cello playing a very subordinate role. However, they are effective.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)** is, of course, famous, but his **5 Divertimenti K.229 Anh/439b** languish in obscurity. They were composed sometime between 1783 and 1785 and were originally for three basset horns. All were unknown until 1800, when Mozart's widow Constanze wrote to a publisher that the famous clarinetist Anton Stadler still had in his possession 25 pieces by Mozart for three basset horns. The basset horn was an alto clarinet with an extended bass range. It is thought that Mozart created these pieces for the pleasure of Stadler, his brother, and a third player. In 1803, Breitkopf & Härtel published them for two basset horns and bassoon. Later, the 25 pieces were published by Simrock and divided into five 'Serenades' for two clarinets and bassoon. All later editions and arrangements were based on this Simrock publication. Simrock and other publishers realizing how limited the market for the combination of 2 basset horns and clarinet was, with an eye on the home music making market, quickly started producing editions for 2 Violins and Cello. Probably the best of these was made by the famous violinist, teacher and editor, Friedrich Hermann. Hermann who made the arrangement at the request of the publisher Peters. His arrangement is superb. Of modest difficulty, the works though very suitable for amateurs, are without doubt strong enough to be performed in concert.



**Juan Oliver y Astorga (1733-1830)** was a Spanish violinist and composer. His style is that of the Mannheim composers since he often collaborated with Johann Christian Bach and Karl Friedrich Abel. He is generally regarded, along with Boccherini, Soler, Scarlatti and Brunetti, as one of the most important musicians working in late 18<sup>th</sup>-century Spain. His

**Trio in C Major for 2 Violins and Cello** appears to date from the mid-1770's. It is in the style of Johann Stamitz and Leopold Mozart. Each instrument is handled quite well, and Oliver shows that he has a gift for melody as well as a true understanding of chamber music.



The Austrian composer **Ignaz Pleyel (1757-1831)** wrote a number of worthwhile trios for **2 violins and cello**. They are mostly all in the concertante style of the Vienna classics and are better than those of Haydn's because the cello is given some solos. Among those worth mentioning are the **Opp. 16, 17, 21 and 56**. Pleyel's opus numbers, like those of Boccherini, are often confusing because he sent his works to several publishers who often used the same opus numbers as other works.



**Hubert Ries (1802-1886)** was a German violinist and brother of the virtuoso pianist and composer who studied with Beethoven in Vienna. He wrote a considerable amount of music, none of it groundbreaking, but generally quite well written. He composed at least 6 trios for **2 violins and cello** which are quite useful, his **Op. 24**

and **Op. 25**, both sets of 3 which were published around 1875, but were most likely composed in the 1840's. I single out 2 as especially worthy of revival.

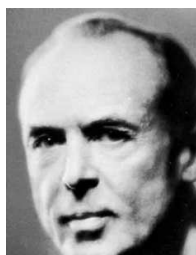
**Op. 24 No. 1 in C Major** is in 4 movements and opens with a stately Allegro moderato, followed by a thrusting and muscular Scherzo. The third movement is a lovely and very romantic Andante. An exciting finale, Allegretto, concludes the work.

**Op. 25 No. 1 in g minor** is in 3 movements and opens with a lilting Allegro moderato and is followed by a charming Menuetto and Trio. The finale begins with a somber, even ominous Poco adagio introduction but the main section, Allegretto, is a bright and playful rondo.

**Hermann Spielter (1860-1925)** was a German composer who emigrated to New York, where he spent the rest of his life. His **Little Serenade in G Major, Op. 32** was composed in 1889. It is a lovely, short work in one movement, posing no technical difficulties. As such, it is very suitable for amateurs, but would make a fine encore in the concert hall. The trio, though intended for violin, viola and cello can also be played by a trio consisting of **2 violins and cello**, since Spielter provided a second violin part which could be played in lieu of the viola if desired.



**Karl Stamitz (1746-1801)**, along with his father Johann, is considered the founder of the Mannheim School which influenced what ultimately became the Vienna Classical style promoted by Haydn and Mozart. His **Sonata in F Major for 2 violins and cello** is a good early Classical work in which each voice is given thematic material.



**George Templeton Strong (1856-1948)** was born in New York City, the son of a famous lawyer of the same name, who was a friend of Abraham Lincoln. He studied in Germany with Salomon Jadassohn, Richard Hoffmann and Joachim Raff. With the exception of a few years, he remained in Europe. His **String Trio for 2 violins and viola**, which he titled **The Village Music Director**, was composed in 1904 and dedicated to the members of the famous Flonzaley String Quartet. It is clearly program music and Strong provided some notes to describe each of the 3 movements. In the carefree first movement, Allegro pastorale, we are told that blue skies and rolling meadows, country yokels and murmuring brooks are all the director has for his concert hall and orchestra. The motto of the second movement, Andante sostenuto, is "he only loved once, he only suffered once." Yet this is not a particularly sad movement, rather it is calm and resigned. In the humorous finale, Allegro scherzando, we are present at a music lesson with 2 naughty students at which everything eventually goes horribly wrong. It starts out well enough, but then the director tries to teach his pupils about fugues. They will have none of it and mock him. He becomes angry but tires and finally falls asleep. As in the *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, the students create mischief; finally the director awakes and pandemonium results. Superbly written for all 3 voices, and clearly intended as a work for the concert hall, here is a "must have" from the late Romantic era for those interested in the repertoire for 2 violins and viola.

**Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915)** is one of the greatest Russian composers from the last half of the 19th and early 20th centuries and probably, from this group, the one whose music is the least known in the West. Among his many students were Glière, Rach-



maninov, Gretchaninov, Scriabin and Medtner. His **String Trio in D Major for 2 Violins and Viola, Op. 21** is not particularly difficult to play and certainly is a very important addition to the scanty literature for this combination. In the first 2 movements, the spirit of Mozart, albeit in an updated guise, is present. The opening movement, *Allegro giocoso*, is bright and sunny throughout. The second movement, *Menuetto*, is a late Romantic version of a Baroque dance.

The third movement, *Andante*, is a heart-felt romance. The finale, though fleet and jocular, is also lyrical and dramatic.



**Jan Baptist Vanhal (1739-1813)** was an Austro-Czech composer and cello and bass virtuoso. He tailored his output to economic realities of the day and composed, as did most of his contemporaries, a huge number of pieces, including more than 90 string quartets, not to mention dozens of other chamber works. Today he is remembered mostly for his double bass concerto. His **15 Little or Short Trios**, known as *Petits Trios*,

were composed in the mid-1770's and are very comparable to the melodic and harmonic ideas found in the works of Haydn, and in particular Mozart, from the same period. The trios present no technical difficulties whatsoever and were clearly intended for players of modest technical resources. Yet they are polished and highly effective little works, so much so that they could easily be and probably were performed in concert at the time. It is unlikely that Vanhal intended all of these works to be played at one go, but rather that musicians could pick and choose and present 3 or 4 to make up a short trio. These pieces are not only ideal for students, but can be played by professionals without any rehearsal at weddings or parties and they will sound every bit as good as more difficult works from the same era. They can be performed by either **2 violins and cello** or **2 violins and viola**.



**Giovanni Battista Viotti (1752-1824)** was an Italian violin virtuoso and composer, generally regarded as the greatest violinist before Paganini and the composer that served as Paganini's model. He composed upwards of 30 trios for **2 violins and cello**, mostly in sets of 3. They are primarily vehicles for the 2 violins with the cello playing a very subordinate role.

However, the melodic writing is generally good. Both his **Op. 18** and **Op. 19** were republished in the late 20th century. Each opus contains 3 trios 2 Violins & Cello.



**Paul de Wailly (1854-1933)** was a French composer and organist. He wrote in the tradition of his teacher César Franck. His **6 Pieces for 2 Violins and Cello** dates from 1919 and was the result of a commission he received from musician friends. The music was intended for the concert hall, but it is not at all difficult to play. Five of the 6 pieces are subtitled; only the first is without one. The pieces are *Andante ma non troppo*, *Scherzino vivo*, *Idylle*

*andantino*, *Alla Polacca marcato*, *Regrets larghetto* and *Ronde allegro*. The slower movements are highly evocative and atmospheric and show de Wailly's compositional skills.

Reprints of older works as well as newly composed trios are always coming onto the market. No guide therefore can ever claim

to be exhaustive. However, I believe, that at least with regard to works which have appeared up until the mid-20th century, most, if not all, have been touched on here.