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Alpha List by Composer IV: Leos Janacek to George Onslow

Leoš Janáček (1854 - 1928) String Quartet No. 2, 'Intimate Letters'

In 1930, George and Ira Gershwin's highly successful Broadway musical "Girl Crazy" featured the song: "Boy, What Love Has Done For me." Well, what you will hear in Leos Janáček*,s* String Quartet No. 2, "Intimate Letters," is the result of what love had done to Janáček in his last 11 years. Here's how it happened.

By 1917, Moravian-born Janáčeck *was a* respected Czech composer and teacher with special abilities in choral music. Principally centered in Brno, capital of Moravia, he had carried on the nationalist tradition of the Czech composers Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884) and Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904). It was the sensational 1904 premier of his opera Jenufa in Prague that moved him to the top ranks. The opera showed influence of Moravian folk music as well as attempts in vocal melodies to capture the rhythm and inflections of Czech speech. (At that time, Moravia and Bohemia were the principal Czech language lands of the Hapsburg Empires eastern European lands.) His nationalist urges from his Moravian background had a direct connection to the Bohemian world of his friend Dvorak. Where Dvorak weaved some folk melodies into a romantic style, Janacek chose more modern ways, somewhat more fragmented, yet uniting post-romantic chords to highly dissonant thrusts. Many such examples will be heard in the quartet.

But In 1917, his 14-year marriage to his wife, Zdenka, was rocky due to her discovery of a major dalliance by her husband. After Janáčeck stopped that particular affair, he chose a solo vacation trip to the Moravian spa town of Luhacovice, where he met a charming young couple. He socialized with them and in innocent walks around the spa with the wife, Kamila Stosslova, some 37 years his junior, he became infatuated. It would be an obsession plainly found in the near 700 hundred letters he sent her over the last 11 years of his life (and now published). Not only would she be the basis of "Intimate Letters," but in his autumnal years, the model for the heroines of his famed operas Kat'a Kabanova (1921) and The Makropoulos Affair (1925). She remained married; the Janacek's separated permanently.

As he was just beginning to compose his second string quartet in 1926, which he originally thought to name "Love Letters," he wrote to Kamila:
"I've begun to write something nice. Our life will be in it...I think that it will sound delightful. There have been so many of those dear adventures of ours, haven't there? They'll be little fires in my soul and they'll set it ablaze with the most beautiful melodies."
Kamila was to be present in the quartet through a motto, an "idée fixe," taken from the very first theme and found in various ways in all movements. He would write the four-movement quartet with the intent to use the older instrument, the viola d'amore (not too obvious a choice), but the tone ultimately didn't sound right and the viola was substituted. Since the Kamila "motto" is often in the viola's hand, the instrument is prominent throughout. In addition, the listener will find in each movement rapid shifts in mood and texture. For example, in the second movement

there are a total of 12 sequential tempo changes, the final six of which are: "Presto—Adagio—Grave—Allegro—Vivo—Adagio."

As Janáček proceeded composing the quartet movement to movement, he wrote to Kamila to tell her the feelings he had thrust into the music. Here for the listener are some clues.
First Movement: *"The first movement…the impression when I saw you for the first time."*
Second Movement: *"I'm now working on the second movement. I think that it will flare up in the Luhacovice heat." (*The spa site of their first meeting*.)*
Third Movement*; "Today I have written down my sweetest longings….Today I have succeeded in writing a piece in which the earth begins to tremble." (Critics agree this is the emotional center of the quartet.)*
Fourth Movement*: "I'm now putting the finishing touches on these "love letters." So that everybody will understand them: here they kissed, there they longed for one another…here they said they belonged to each other."*

He completed "Intimate Letters," his final work, in over a month, from February to March, 1928, with his final gift to Kamila being the autograph manuscript. The public premiere was in Brno, six weeks after Janáček's death. And the result of "What love had done to him" is now heard all over the world in this string quartet. ***Daedalus Quartet May 12, 2019***

Leon Kirchner (1919-2009) Sonata No. 3, "The Forbidden" (2006)
How does one become three? Leon Kirchner had a way of doing that. The story starts at Harvard where the composer taught, reflecting in his teaching and composing the influence of his early studies with Arnold Schoenberg. Among Kirchner's students was Joel Fan who years later asked his former teacher to compose a sonata for him and a consortium of pianists. The result was the short, one-movement work entitled "The Forbidden," which Fan premiered in 2006. The title reflects on a character in Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* who sells his soul to the devil to achieve great prominence as a composer. Being aware that many composers chose new musical forms for previous works, Kirchner turned "The Forbidden" into a string quartet (2006) and then supplied an orchestral version of "The Forbidden" for James Levine and the Boston Symphony in 2008. So one became three. One critic proposed that "the work derives a sweeping power from its distinctive fusion of atonal and tonal languages, its struggle between lyrical repose and unbridled animation." Indeed the quiet central portion contrasts effectively with later bursts of energy. ***Joel Fan, piano September 18, 2011***

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962) Recitativo and Scherzo, op. 6
During World War One, the United States took a rather severe stance concerning anything German: German measles became "Liberty Rash" and sauerkraut re-named "Liberty Cabbage." Operas by Wagner disappeared from opera houses and German artists became less than welcome, something that the Vienna-born Fritz Kreisler, came to learn. However, once the anti-German feeling had passed, Kreisler took his place as the pre-eminent virtuoso of the violin on the American concert stage before the Heifitz era. Kreisler became an American citizen in 1943. One critic spoke of Kreisler's artistry as "so nearly flawless that it is like a pane of clear glass through which one looks upon beauty." At the end of his concerts, Kreisler invariably played encores, which he indicated were arrangements by him of eighteenth-century pieces he had discovered. Not being able to find any copies of these pieces, a suspicious New York music critic

asked Kreisler point blank if, in fact, he had not composed the pieces himself. Kreisler admitted that he had, thinking the public would accept them better if they thought others had composed the works. This minor hoax irritated many, but today these Kreisler "miniatures" (among them " Caprice Viennois," "Schön Rosmarin," and "Liebesfreud") remain among the most often played encores by violinists. One composition he did immediately admit to having composed is the short Recitativo and Scherzo, a Caprice for Solo Violin. The Recitativo portion opens dramatically in the darker tones of the violin, with much double stopping, establishing a solemn mood. The Scherzo portion brings a contrasting playfulness utilizing the brighter violin tones.

Ayako Yoshida, violin, Andrew Armstrong, piano May 19, 2001

Charles Lefebvre (1843-1917) Suite

To paraphrase a common saying: "The French they are a musical race." That this is true should be clear from today's program by French composers whose music spans that of some three centuries. From Rameau's 18th century elegant "Gavotte" to Poulenc's "Sextet," with its Paris brashness of the 1920s and 1930s, variety is the spice of French music life. Of all the composers on this program, Charles Lefebvre is by far the least recognizable name. But he was well known in his day as a winner of the annual Prix de Rome, the highest musical award for a French composer. (Other winners of the prize included Berlioz, Gounod, Bizet, and Debussy.) Grove's Dictionary (3rd Edition) refers to him as "a composer of sincere and delicate accomplishment in many forms." This three-movement suite for five winds is one of the few of his works that remains in the repertoire. Lefebvre chose to begin his suite in a most unusual way--with a canon. In this musical form, a tune once started is joined by the same tune after a fixed interval, in a type of counterpoint. (A "round" is a type of canon.)

Borealis Wind Quintet with Leon Bates, piano November 9, 2003

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) Annees de Pelerinage, Premiere Annee: Suisse
Orage
Vallee d'Obermann

Youthful Franz Liszt, the personification of romanticism both in action and music, loved to travel. At 25 he wandered throughout Switzerland and initiated the first of three collections of pieces based on European peregrinations calling them "Annees de Pelerinage." Of the nine sections of the "Premiere Annee: Suisse," two are on this program. No doubt he encountered some significant Alpine storms and his exuberance to describe both nature and historical episodes in music led to the turbulent "Orage." The longest of the Swiss pieces is "Vallee d'Obermann." This is less about a valley than about the emotions of Obermann, the title character in a popular French novel of the time. Where "Orage" depicts the energy and beauty of nature at its rawest, "Vallee d'Obermann" looks into the world of solitude and melancholy of the Byronic type hero. Few pieces by Liszt better exemplify the inner workings of this man whose brain thrived on philosophy and religion while constructing tone poems that challenged both the stamina of the pianist as well as the piano itself.

Kevin Kenner, piano March 28, 2009

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) Années de Pèlerinage, Deuxieme année
"Aprés Une Lecture du Dante"

"Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita "In the middle of the road of our lives

Mi retrovai per una selva oscura, *I found myself in a dark forest*
Che la diritta via era smarrita" *With the path no longer clear"*
So begins *Inferno*, the first part of Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy.* In view of the multiple journeys that Liszt took throughout Europe and his preoccupation with the sacred and profane in life, it is not surprising that he took these words to heart. The title "Aprés Une Lecture du Dante" the final work of his second "Years of Pilgrimage," is actually taken from a poem by Liszt's friend Victor Hugo. As Liszt's pianistic vision of Hell, the work is hellish, both for performer and listener, given the intensity of its drama. (Perhaps Hell is overflowing with notes!) Still some strains of transcendence appear a few times, and at the end another "h" word comes to mind: Hope. ***Gilles Vonsattel, piano April 21, 2007***

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) Funerailles, Liebstraum, Transcendental Etude No. 10
Romanticism and Franz Liszt are one and the same. His piano compositions are sometimes epic (such as "Funerailles"), often supremely melodic (such as "Liebestraum"), and often so difficult as to test the very mettle of any pianist willing to try them (the "Transcendental Etudes.")
Funerailles
"Funerailles" was the seventh of a collection of ten pieces composed in 1849 entitled "Harmonies poetiques et religieuses". It is a threnody in memory of Hungarians killed in a revolutionary uprising against the Hapsburgs in October of that year. The composition is an effective expression of grief with bells tolling and funeral marches pounding. In a climactic moment, massive octaves in the bass echo the great Military polonaise of Chopin, a possible reference to the Polish pianist who had also died that year.
Liebestraum
Liszt wrote three separate songs entitled "Liebestraum," in 1850, then adapted them to the piano. One has become Liszt's most famous melody. With the rippling undercurrents, it is indeed a "Dream of Love."
Transcendental Etude No. 10 in F Minor
Twelve etudes composed by Liszt in 1826 became in 1837 his "Grandes Etudes," so difficult to play that the famed pianist, the late Claudio Arrau, stated that they "would not be able to be played in concert today by anyone." In 1851 Liszt revised the works into the twelve "Transcendental Etudes." Etudes are studies with a purpose. Liszt's purpose was to combine poetic concepts with technical mastery. Some of the etudes he named descriptively ("Landscape," "Will o' the Wisps.") However, others would be described solely by a musical phrase. This is the case with the Tenth Etude: "Allegro agitato molto." Indeed it is an agitated composition presented with almost interminable rapid figuration by one hand as another emphasizes a somber theme. Perhaps the great Italian pianist/composer Ferrucio Busoni was right in suggesting that this etude should also have been named "Appassionata!"
Andrew Armstrong, piano April 4, 1998

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) Sonetto del Petrarca no. 104 in E Major
In a "Top Ten" list of the greatest composer-lovers, few would challenge the right of Franz Liszt to occupy the top spot. Among his most famous affairs was a decade of passion and co-habitation with the married Countess Marie d'Agoult. The liaison produced three children, including Cosima Liszt, who would become Richard Wagner's wife.
For Liszt, who embodied romanticism in word, deed, and music, it is not unexpected that he would find interest in the sonnets of Petrarch, the 14th century Italian humanist whose words

dealt with all aspects of love. Liszt transformed three of the 360 sonnets into songs, then transcribed these for piano alone as his second set of "Années de pèlerinage" ("Years of Pilgrimage in Italy"). Sonnet 104 is a letter to a lover that begins, "Pace non trovo, e non ho da far guerra"("I don't find peace and don't have the desire to fight"). Thirteen more lines of self-pity leads to the final assessment of his depression: it's all because of the woman he adores! Liszt's "Sonetto" begins in modest agitation, moves to a central climax, but ends pensively, perhaps Liszt's musical musings whether some of the blame for the difficulties might be his.

Jeffrey Biegel, piano May 3, 2003

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) Transcendental Etudes, Nos. 1-8

If there is any doubt in the minds of piano lovers about "Liszt, the Romantic," they need only listen to the "Transcendental Etudes." Some might say of these etudes what Emperor Joseph II remarked in criticism of an opera to its composer---"Too many notes, my dear Mozart." But for sheer bravura in the world of the pianoforte, these etudes are at a pinnacle. And it all came about because a 15-year old Liszt in 1826 had the chutzpah to publish "Etude en douze exercices," which he revised nine years later as "Grandes Etudes." This version Robert Schumann labeled as "studies in *Sturm und Drang* for, at the most, ten or twelve players in the world." In 1851, Liszt revised them again into the "Transcendental Etudes" that are performed today and dedicated them to his teacher Karl Czerny. Some he named descriptively; others he simply listed by a musical phrase. Today's program presents the first eight:

1) Preludio (Prelude), C major; 2) Molto vivace, A minor; 3) Paysage (Landscape), F major; 4) Mazeppa, D minor; 5) Feux Follets (Will-o'-the wisps); 6) Vision, G minor; 7) Eroica (Heroic), E flat major; 8) Wilde Jagd (Wild Hunt), C minor

Nothing evidences the variety of tonal experiences provided by Liszt than the central two etudes of today's program: "Mazeppa" and "Feux Follets." Liszt dramatic "Mazeppa" is the melodic personification of the Cossack chieftain immortalized in poems both by Lord Byron and Victor Hugo. Caught in amorous skullduggery when he was a page, the young Mazeppa is tied naked to the back of a wild horse by an irate husband.

They bound me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back with many a thong;
They loosed him with a sudden lash -
Away! - away! - and on we dash! (Lord Byron)

After three days of galloping terror, the horse falls dead and Mazeppa drags himself away to safety and ultimately to become a Cossack leader. The musical theme that pervades all of "Mazeppa" is one of Liszt's most memorable, transformed in variations and finally emerging in a brilliant change to a major key. (Liszt later turned this etude into another of his famed symphonic poems.)

The drama of Mazeppa is neatly counterpointed by the Mendelssohnian lightness of "Will-o-the wisps." The pianist Abram Chasins (1903-1987) spoke of this etude as "angelic to hear and devilish to play." (Incidentally, will-o-the wisps are those ghostly lights that spontaneously appear above marshes and in legends lead people into dangerous situations.) ***Christopher Taylor, piano September 30, 2007***

Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) Nonet No. 2, H 374

Bohuslav Martinů is among the 20th century's most prolific composers with some 400 works (e.g. 39 concertos, 16 operas, 15 trios, and 6 symphonies). Perhaps he was infected with music by the daily tolling of bells in the church tower where his family lived, his father being the bell ringer and watchman in the Bohemian town of Policka. With the monetary support of the townsfolk, young Martinů went to Prague for initial musical studies, where he became a fine violinist and a youthful composer. But he knew of the musical foment in Paris, so at the age of 33 he moved there during the "Roaring 20s" to study with Albert Roussel and be influenced by jazz and Stravinsky, whom he admired a great deal.

Escaping the Nazi hordes, Martinů came to the United States in 1941, living in trying conditions on Long Island, where he composed and learned English by seeing the same movies over and over. Serge Koussevitzky of the Boston Symphony then brought him to the Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood) as a teacher in summer time. During his 1941-1946 stay in the United States, Martinů wrote five symphonies. Interestingly, his Symphony No. 3 was composed in Ridgefield, Connecticut in 1944, where he had come with his wife to get away from the big city life of New York. The Boston Symphony premiered the work. Martinů returned to Prague in 1946, but came back often to the United States, teaching at Princeton University, then Curtis Institute. He ultimately became a citizen, but never again took up full-time residence here. He died in Switzerland in 1959 after a year's battle with cancer.

Martinů's music is marked by lucidity, rhythmic excitement, and effective combination of the tone color of instruments, elements that are especially clear in his chamber music. Martinů gave this explanation of the powers that shaped his music. "In my music I have been influenced by many things but most of all by the national Music of Czechoslovakia, by the music of Debussy and by the English madrigals."

He composed chamber works for almost all possible combinations of instruments. A month before Martinů died, the Nonet No. 2 was premiered in 1959 at the Salzburg Festival by the Czech Nonet, to whom the work was dedicated.

Czech Nonet October 31, 2004

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) Octet for Strings

In a recent interview, the pianist Alfred Brendel stated that Mendelssohn as a composer was a greater "teenage genius" than Mozart. Certainly it is true that nothing young Mozart wrote at sixteen was as masterly as Mendelssohn's Octet for Strings. Young Felix was the descendant of several generations of the family considered in their time to be "the Rothschilds of culture." So important was the Mendelssohn family to German arts and letters that in 1820, the 72-year-old Goethe welcomed the eleven-year-old Felix to visit him for several weeks. The youthful Felix played some of his own compositions for Germany's literary giant, but also some by Bach, a favorite of Goethe. Years later Mendelssohn would be a key player in bringing Bach out of the shadows and into his rightful place in music history.

Music cascaded from the brain of the teenager. In his thirteenth year alone, he composed six symphonies, five concertos, and a three-act opera entitled The Uncle from Boston. He and his beloved sister Fanny even put on performances of Shakespeare for the family during the Sunday afternoon cultural events sponsored by the Mendelssohn family in their Berlin home. From such experiences, 17-year-old Felix was inspired to compose some of the most famous music ever written—the Overture to Midsummer's Night's Dream.

But it was when he was sixteen that Mendelssohn composed the Octet. It was a groundbreaking work, for though octets for wind instruments were common at the time, there were none for strings alone. By the time of the Octet, Mendelssohn had written a dozen of what are now called his "String Symphonies." With this experience, it is not surprising that his first masterpiece would be a composition for strings.

The first movement is all exuberance, with the vigorous theme, in its upward thrust, seemingly releasing skyward the magical romantic notions from the classically trained youth. The second movement, slower and more lyrical, with a tinge of melancholy, leads to the gem of the composition, the scherzo. It is a prize example of the light, transparent, and joyful movements that would become a Mendelssohn trademark. Fanny Mendelssohn wrote of this Octet's scherzo: "It is a complete success. The whole piece is played staccato and pianissimo, with shivering tremolandos and light, brilliant flashes." The final movement begins fugally, then chatters energetically to bring to a conclusion the composition that Ernest Sanders states is "perhaps the singularly most astonishing creation by so young a composer in the history of Western music."

Chamber Orchestra Kremlin November 10, 2002

Saverio Mercadante (1795-1870) Concerto for Flute and Strings in E Minor, Op. 57

Time for a quiz. In the opera-crazy world of Italy in the 1840s, who was the most-respected figure?

A) Rossini; B) Bellini; C) Donizetti; D) Verdi; E) None of these.

Well, if you chose the last answer ("E"), you were right. The operatic winner for that era (but no longer champion) is Saverio Mercadante, composer of sixty operas. Born on the Adriatic near Bari, Mercadante studied in Naples, his principal site of operation throughout life. His initial years emphasized orchestral works; his mature years dealt almost exclusively with operas. He composed both for Italian opera houses as well as those of Spain and Vienna. How, you might ask, can someone who wrote sixty operas and reached such a respected pinnacle in opera-loving Italy disappear into the stage dust behind La Scala? The answer? His operas, some immensely successful in their time, really provided the transition from Rossini and Bellini to the genius of Verdi. From a distance, one can be cynical of the forgotten Mercadante as the following critic was in 1889:

> *In Italy he was long regarded as the most learned of contemporary Italian composers, an estimation which shows quite sufficiently the low condition of musical learning in Italy at the time.*

However, musicologists do give him credit for bringing the importance of a vital libretto to opera as well as emphasizing the brass in the opera orchestra, something Verdi very much adopted.

Mercadante had written six flute concertos by the age of twenty-four. Of those, the E Minor concerto is now one of the few compositions by which he is remembered. The concerto is lengthy (the first movement in length is equal to the entire Vivaldi concerto on today's program) and varied in musical structure. There is real musical "meat" here. The beginning movement, A*llegro Maestoso,* provides a lengthy introduction of the two principal themes that the flute and orchestra then treat in sonata form. The themes are notable for their contrast, the first utilizes a forceful ascending phrase, the second is Mozartean in its "singability." The second movement, *Largo*, gives the flute another beautiful melody, another opportunity to be lyrical. With the third movement, *Rondo Russo*, Mercadante provides an emphatic rhythm in a mode he claims to be Russian-like. No matter what the folk emphasis here (Isn't it more like a classical "polka"?), the movement is stirring with the flute both dancing with partners (the strings) or simply encircling the on-going melodies. ***The International Sejong Soloists October 3, 1999***

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974 Sonatine a trois, Op. 221b

By the 1930s, Darius Milhaud had established a firm reputation as a composer, one of "Les Six," French composers (Poulenc was one of the others) who were against both the romanticism of Richard Wagner and the impressionism of Debussy. In 1940, having already composed 200 of the 470 works that would be his musical legacy, Milhaud and his family, of Jewish ancestry, escaped the oncoming Nazis and came to the United States. He had been invited by the prestigious women's school, Mills College, in Oakland, California, to become a professor of music. (It is likely that his decision to come to the San Francisco area related to the fact that his friend Pierre Monteux, the Frenchman of international repute as a conductor, at that time conducted the San Francisco Symphony.) On the train trip from Chicago to San Francisco to take up his teaching position, he composed today's *Sonatine a trois.*

This brief Sonatine (of some eight minutes) begins with two movements strong in contrapuntal emphasis. Over the years, Milhaud had been influenced by "le jazz hot," something that seems to be part of the upbeat pizzicato "anime" final segment. After all, he was now in the jazz center of the world. ***Walden Chamber Players March 24, 2019***

Federico Mompou (1893-1987) Variations on a Theme by Chopin (1938-1957)

Federico Mompou lived a long life of 94 years. A native of Barcelona, Spain, he composed mainly for piano, and like his hero Chopin, spent formative years in Paris. One of the reasons that Mompou is not so well known here in the USA is that he was a miniaturist composer; he loved the quick, rhythmic quirk, or short emotional dallying, not the production of the big, splashy works such as concertos and symphonies. His named piano works number nineteen, each consisting of from three to a dozen short segments. For example, he wrote twelve Preludes, none longer than four minutes. His Spanish origins found musical exhibition in his thirteen Cancons e Dansas, none longer than five minutes.

In 1938, emboldened by his love of Chopin and the piano, he began to write a piece for cello and piano: variations based on the Chopin Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7, certainly one of the most famous of Chopin preludes. He got only as far as the third variation at that time. Twenty years later, after the success of his ballet La Casa de los Pajaros (orchestration of some of his

piano works) at the Royal Ballet in London, he was asked to write another ballet. For that he completed his Variations on a Theme by Chopin, but the ballet never happened, so he simply published the Variations.
In this work, some of Mompou's variations honor Chopin's favorite musical forms, such as the mazurka and the waltz. In several, Mompou weaves in another Chopin melody. In Variation 8 he paraphrases the elegiac Prelude No. 4 in E minor, while in Variation 10, the beautiful slow section of Chopin's Fantasie Impromptu emerges. (For the writer's generation, it's the melody of "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows.") Mompou, having lived through the era of Debussy naturally introduces impressionistic qualities in many of the variations, and even seems to give Gershwin a nod; "I Got Rhythm" seems to sneak into the Variation 12 Galope. Well, "Who could ask for anything more? ***Michael Brown, piano November 16, 2013***

Paul Moravec (b. 1957) Tempest Fantasy for Piano Trio and Clarinet
Paul Moravec, a member of the music department at Adelphi University, composed *Tempest Fantasy* for the Trio Solisti and clarinetist David Krakauer and he won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in music for it. How this work came to be is illustrative of compositional evolution. Because of a longtime friendship with violinist Maria Bachmann, Moravec dedicated a short piano piece to her in 1996. She asked him to convert it for violin and piano, which he did; he named it "Ariel Fantasy," referring to that spritely character in Moravec's favorite Shakespeare play, *The Tempest*. So taken was Bachmann with the result that she suggested Moravec write a longer work on the Tempest theme for the Trio Solisti. As had Brahms, Moravec greatly respected a clarinetist, in this case David Krakauer, so he composed a five-movement work for piano trio and clarinet----and the rest is Pulitzer Prize history.

The three movements of the fantasy to be heard show Moravec's capacity to give every instrument a chance to show off with both beautiful and unusual sounds. Melodic fragments are the order of the day, often in endearing rhythms. The briskness of the first movement, "Ariel," suggests a modern version of a Mendelssohn scherzo. The intensely lyrical "Sweet Airs" reflects the beauty of Caliban's words: "Be not afraid; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not."
The final movement, "Fantasia," provides a frenetic, but joyful congregation of all the composers "flights of purely musical fancy" about *The Tempest*.

Moravec, in a radio interview in 2006, remarked that he was one of today's composers seeking to bring "memorability back into music," meaning, among other things, tunefulness and tonality. ***Trio Solisti April 5, 2008***

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Concerto in D Major, K. 447
Gaspar Cassado (1897-1966), the Spanish cellist and composer, decided to add to the cello repertory by arranging Mozart's third horn concerto for cello soloist, a particularly unusual decision since horn and cello have such different tonal play-offs versus an orchestra. Why didn't Mozart write a cello concerto? He wrote concertos for violin, piano, bassoon, oboe, flute and horn, why not the cello? Probably because no one commissioned him to do so or he didn't have any virtuosic cello players in Austria at that time. The concerto begins with an orchestral introduction of a variety of themes later taken up by the solo instrument. The second movement, a "romanze," use a principal theme of quiet beauty. In the final movement the cello has the challenge to play against the orchestra in a jaunty manner more appropriate to the horn.
I Musici di Montreal October 15, 1995

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Divertimento in F Major, K. 138
Italians fell in love with Mozart, the Salzburg wunderkind, during his lengthy first trip through Italy--15 months starting in December 1769. Accompanied by his proud, but overbearing, father, he concertized to great acclaim throughout northern Italy and as far south as Rome. In 1772 the pair left Salzburg for another trip to Italy, heading for Milan, where the premiere of Mozart's opera *Lucia Silla* was to be held. It is believed that the young genius took with him three divertimenti (three-movement works for strings alone, K. 136-138) just in case he needed to quickly generate some symphonies. If asked for something new, all he had to do was to add woodwinds and brass to the divertimenti scores and, voila, symphonies. (Just to confuse the situation even more, these three divertimenti are sometimes referred to as the "Salzburg symphonies.") Though it is unlikely the divertimenti were performed during the Italian visit, they are now a staple of string orchestras, particularly today's in F Major. The singing melodies that are the trademark of Mozart pervade all three of the movements.

The French Chamber Orchestra October 28, 2007

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Flute Concerto in D Major (K. 314).
Mozart's trip to Mannheim in late 1777 had as a purpose his possible employment by the enlightened supporter of the arts, the Elector Karl Theodor. At the very least, Mozart hoped that he might tutor some, if not all, of the four illegitimate children of the Elector. But as throughout Mozart's life, he would not receive from royalty any lengthy employment. He did, however, through friendship with the principal flautist of the famous Mannheim orchestra, receive a commission from a Dutch surgeon, an amateur flautist. As Mozart wrote to his father on Dec. 10, 1777, for 200 gulden he had to compose "three short, simple concertos and a couple of quartets for the flute." Two months later Mozart had finished two concertos and three quartets, only to be paid 96 gulden for his work. In a confessional letter to his father (for Mozart consistently received written beratings from his father for his poor finances), Mozart admitted to receiving less than half of the original promised payment. Mozart wrote: "[Father] you know that I become quite powerless whenever I am obliged to write for an instrument which I cannot bear." The diminished payment may have been appropriate since the Flute Concerto in D Major (the second of the concertos written) was in fact a transcription of Mozart's already written and successful oboe concerto. Regarding the music of this concerto, the ever present sense of melody (writers constantly refer to Mozart's sense of a "vocal line" in all his music) pervades the first two movements, while the rondo finale allows the flute's perkiness to take center stage.

I Solisti di New York May 21, 1995

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K 491
(arranged by Ignaz Lachner)
It would seem that some composers are born with a gene that makes them want to take someone else's composition of smaller dimensions and make it much grander. Cases in point: 1) Maurice Ravel who took Moussorgsky's piano work "Pictures at an Exhibition" and gave it a magnificent orchestration; 2) Modernist Arnold Schoenberg who decided that a piece he dearly loved---Brahms' Piano Quartet No. 1---needed to be orchestrated because too many pianists played the work too loudly, he said, and "you hear nothing from the strings. I wanted once to hear everything, and this I achieved."
Then there are composers born with a gene that urges them to take a work and shrink it. So it seems to be with Ignaz Lachner (1807-1895), a German who, though a composer in his own right, sought to make

some of Mozart's piano concertos more accessible to musicians by transcribing them for piano and string quartet and bass. Today provides a sample of Lachner's talent for "shrinking"

For two-thirds of his short life, Mozart produced 26 piano concertos that brought the form to a new level of perfection. The vast majority of the concertos provided an energetically restrained and melodious first movement, a second movement of serenity and beauty, then a conclusion overflowing with verve and joyous energy, helped by being in major keys. The Viennese found Mozart's concertos most entertaining, so, as the Mozart biographer Alfred Einstein suggested, it would be hard to imagine the expression on the faces of the Viennese audience when on April 7, 1786, Mozart played for them a work in a minor key, his 24th piano concerto. Instead of the expected ebullient Mozart, they heard a work of passion and gravity, one that deeply impressed Beethoven more than any of Mozart's others.

What immediately sets this concerto apart from others of its time is the lengthy orchestral introduction, some two minutes long. (Beethoven would similarly begin his Piano Concerto No. 3 with such a waiting time.) One would expect with such an introduction that the opening notes of the soloist would be something mighty and unforgettable. Mighty, no, but unforgettable, yes: the simplest and quietest of themes, one that would pervade the movement, with strokes of dynamic force, only ending the movement in almost a whisper. The Larghetto movement provides one of Mozart's calmest and longing melodies, a contrast to the two movements it separates. The final movement, structured as a theme-and-variations, returns to the sense of sadness, albeit with incredible cleverness in the variations. But Mozart doesn't let up on the emotional sense of the minor key, ending the concerto with several emphatic chords.

One writer has spoken of the "brooding darkness" of the entire work. And some see despair in the music. Yet Mozart in early 1786 was premiering his "Marriage of Figaro," while working on concertos #22, #23 and #24. Clearly he was at the top of his musical powers. Perhaps in #24 he was echoing some of his own despair, yet in "Figaro" he provided a comic masterpiece. Geniuses, it would seem, are quite capable of juggling all emotions at the same time.

Fine Arts Quartet with pianist Alon Goldstein Sunday, May 21, 2017

W. A. Mozart (1759-1791) Piano Concerto in E flat Major, K. 449
(Arranged by Mozart for string quartet and piano)

In February, 1784, Mozart began a little notebook with information about every work he would complete from that time forward---date, type of composition, and the first several measures of the work. The journal's first entry was the E flat concerto, which today will be performed in the composer's own version for piano and string quartet. In a letter to Leopold, his father, on February 20, 1784, Mozart wrote that he had completed the E flat major concerto and had "composed it for Fräulein Ployer, who paid me handsomely." But why did he make this arrangement for string quartet? Barbara Ployer was Mozart's student and an extremely gifted pianist, whose family was quite well off and would often have concerts of Mozart's music in their home. So it was natural that Mozart would trim down the concerto to drawing room size.

By 1784, Mozart had already composed fourteen piano concertos, but it is with K. 449 that scholars assign the beginning of his mature series of concertos, which would total fourteen more. Arthur Hutchings, who wrote *A Companion to Mozart's Piano Concertos* speaks of the "vast difference between the first concerto of 1784 (K. 449) and any previous work in the form."

The first movement has an operatic flair to it, one can almost see Mozartian characters in fierce dialogue. For the quiet second movement comes a Mozart of supreme tenderness. In the third movement, the hippity-hoppity theme is first announced by the strings, then taken by the piano. After four thematic "re-dressings" comes the supremely joyful conclusion.

Alianza String Quartet November 16, 2008

Rondo in A Minor, K. 511 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

The classical rondo form is truly "what goes round comes round." One theme or subject is stated, contrasted with a second, and a return is made to the original theme several times. The Rondo in A Minor, written on March 11, 1787, has long intrigued pianists for its "elegant and mysterious" sense and its pervasive use of chromatic sequences. The theme after its first presentation returns four times, separated with the contrasting subjects in appropriate major keys. With each return, slight changes are made in the theme, sometimes with a trill, sometimes with emphasis on the base notes. The contrasting subjects are treated at greater length than the principal theme. In this work, some eleven minutes in length, Mozart uses the full-range of the pianos tonal spectrum, but always with a light touch. Embellishments abound, especially the "turn" which occurs on the second note of the principal theme. With this composition, Mozart brought the rondo form to a masterful pinnacle of beauty.

Pamela Mia Paul, piano May 25, 1996

W. A. Mozart (1956-1791) Serenata Notturna, K. 239 (ca. 1775)
Marcia Maestoso; Menuetto (Trio)----Rondeau; Allegretto

For 19 year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the year 1775 began in Munich with his father Leopold and sister Nannerl and away from their home base in Salzburg. Though they were enjoying the pre-Lenten carnival (both father and son loved dancing and the good food), they were there for another reason: young Mozart had been asked to provide a new opera as a carnival highlight, which would be the three-act *opera giocosa*, La Finta Giardiniera. The musical abilities of the young man were well known for he had already written some 200 compositions of varied types from church music to sonatas to chamber music to dramatic works (including other 3-act operas). Christian Schubart, famed poet and trained musician, heard the opera and wrote to a friend: "Flames of genius flashed here and there [but] if Mozart is not a forced hothouse plant, he will certainly become one of the greatest composers of music who ever lived." It is likely that Schubart was well aware of how Leopold had pushed his talented son in trips throughout Europe from early youth, exhibiting him almost as a musical freak.

Once back in Salzburg, the demands on young Mozart continued: church music for the Archbishop of Salzburg and special music for the visit of Hapsburg royalty. His own talents sometimes made demands because Mozart, the pianist, had also become a fine violinist, again pushed hard by his father. As a result during 1775 he composed his five violin concertos. Also, the nobility made demands. They employed musicians to entertain indoors or outdoors at parties to give dinner guests a pleasant atmosphere. Mozart was called upon often to write divertimentos or serenades, works comprising 3 to 10 movements, full of pleasant melodies and a variety of dance rhythms. Strings and winds made up the ensembles, from a trio to small orchestra. He would write some two dozen divertimenti and serenades in his Salzburg years.

The Serenata Notturna (yes, a bit duplicitous for "serenade" is an "evening song" and "notturna" means "at night") was completed in January, 1776, for an unknown nobleman and likely for a pre-Lenten party. The work features a string quartet playing against a larger group of strings and drums. Certainly with the distinctive sound of the timpani, it was not meant for dozing. (Did Mozart ever give another timpanist such a starring role?) The Serenata begins with a march (elegant rather than spirited), a central minuet, and then a final rondo. Mozart would write a

more famous serenade years later in Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, but this Serenata outdoes it in robustness. And you just can't forget those drums!

A Far Cry with guest artist David Shifrin, clarinet Sunday, May 20, 2018

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791) Sonata for bassoon and cello in B-flat major, KV 292/196c

For any bassoonist, Mozart's name holds a high place because of the bassoon concerto written by the boy wonder in 1774 when he was only 18 years old. Mozart must have loved the bassoon's sound for he chose it for the first of his woodwind concertos (later came those for flute, oboe and clarinet). Later in 1774, Mozart was in Munich overseeing the premiere of his opera "La Finta Giardinera" and was feted often. His fame brought many of money to meet him and many had commissions to proffer. Among them was a rich amateur musician, also 18 years of age --Baron Thaddäus Wolfgang von Dürnitz—who had both pianistic and bassoonistic abilities. The two must have hit it off well for Mozart accepted Dürnitz's commission for a piano sonata. Sonata K. 292, written in Munich and now known by the name "Dürnitz." .

So did Mozart also write the Sonata for Bassoon and Cello for Dürnitz? There is an aura of mystery about this for no autograph manuscript exists, and what was published came in 1805, years after Mozart's death. The bass part, accompanying the bassoon, is unspecified as to the instrument leading some to believe it originally was for a second bassoon, not a cello. Because of no autograph, detractors who doubt it was written by Mozart also aired their doubts. However, there is in the work a quality, energy and wit that parallels so much of what Mozart put into his bassoon concerto that Mozart "naysayers" have been brushed aside.

The intrinsic warmth inherent in both the sounds of a cello and bassoon make for a special listening experience. There is briskness in the first movement, lyricism in the second and a "let it all out" for the bassoon in the third, in which movement the accompanying cello also lets the bassoon know that "anything you can do, I can match."

Walden Chamber Players March 24, 2019

Wolfang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Symphony No. 41, "Jupiter" (K. 551)

Three years before he died, the great Mozart composed his final three symphonies in a total of six weeks. He wrote them at a time when his wife's illness and the ever-circling creditors suggest that Mozart must have been in despair. Perhaps some sadness can be found in the Symphony No. 40 in G minor, but certainly none shows up in the joyful No. 41 in C major, his final symphony. The name "Jupiter" was probably given by a music publisher. Few would challenge the appropriateness of linking this work to the highest ranking Roman god for it is a heavenly work.

The first movement begins with a stirring martial quality that immediately suggests the nobility of the entire work. The second movement's pacific quality is such that Woody Allen, an unexpected Mozart lover, gives this movement a place of honor in his short list of "reasons for living." The lilting minuet of the third movement is perfect to set the stage for a final movement that leaves the spirit as energized as any music can. Starting with a simple four note motif, Mozart adds new themes until in the symphony's final few minutes, all five themes are meshed into a fugal form that staggers the imagination. Then with the sound of trumpets and drums, Mozart's symphonic output comes to an end, as noble a conclusion as will be found in any symphony, before or after. ***Camerata New York October 12, 2008***

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Theme and Variations from Divertimento in B-flat Major for Two Horns and Four Strings, K. 287

When Wolfgang, Salzburg's little genius, had grown-up, many of the upper crust sought his talent to write divertimenti (serenades) for special occasions, such as birthdays and name-days. The Lodron family of Salzburg, Count and Countess, were well known by Mozart for the Countess and her two daughters had studied piano with him. In fact he wrote his Concerto for Three Pianos for those ladies. (He didn't make it too difficult, because he knew the level of their ability, but after all they were paying customers.) When the Count commissioned two divertimenti for his wife on successive years for her name day, Mozart produced K 247 and K 287. The latter is Mozart at his most lyrical. For the Theme and Variation second movement he chose the German folk tune "Heissa, hurtig, ich bin Jans and bin ohne Sorge" (My name, Hurrah!, is Hans and I don't have a care in the world!) Mozart provides six variations on the tune. Most of the variations concentrate on the strings for melodic emphasis, but the horns come to the footlights in the third variations and make their mark very heroically also in the final measures. ***New York Chamber Soloists May 18, 2013***

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) Pictures at an Exhibition (Arranged for piano trio by Jon Klibinoff)

Mussorgsky's life led from a middle class boyhood as a good pianist to his becoming an officer in a crack Russian army outfit. Leaving the military, he became a minor civil servant, and started a downwards spiral into poverty, alcoholism, and an early death. But throughout these difficult times he developed his innate abilities as a composer. He pushed forward, particularly in operatic works, there aided by his friendship with, among others, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Borodin.

Though his opera *Boris Godunov* would gain him some fame in his lifetime, *Pictures at an Exhibition* languished in its original piano version long after his death. For this work, Mussorgsky chose to describe, in atmospheric music, ten of the paintings of his close friend Victor Hartmann from a memorial exhibition of the artist. To help link the depictions, he, the composer, "promenades" from work to work, from a depiction of a grotesque fellow ("Gnomes") to "The Old Castle" with a troubadour singing. Children playing in a Parisian park ("Tuileries") is followed by the plodding of an oxcart (Bydlo). Chicks still inside their shell have a ballet, and two Polish Jews—one rich, the other his "yes" man---argue ("Samuel Goldenburg and Schmuyle"), followed by a chaotic "Market Place" in Limoges, France. Life descends into the "Catacombs", only to emerge with the witch Baba Yaga in "Hut on Fowl's Leg." Finally, the "Great Gate of Kiev" provides noble Russian music, with bells ringing from the gate's towers.

In 1922 the Russian conductor Serge Koussevitsky , then in France, interested Maurice Ravel in orchestrating the work. The result added a brilliant work to the orchestral repertoire. While some, including Leopold Stokowski and pianist/conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy , have also tried their hands at orchestrating *Pictures*, how do you improve perfection? Others have attempted more modest approaches. For example, *Pictures* has been transcribed for organ, also guitar quintet, as well as for a brass quintet.

Tonight's version ion for piano trio is probably the most recent. The beauty of this transcription is the embellishment of the melodic lines in each of the "pictures," with the high and low notes of the violin and cello adding breadth to the sound. The piano still remains the center point, but how much more realistic now are some of the pictures, such as the children at play in the Tuileries, with the violin mimicking the children's voices. Or the chirping and

pecking of the pirouetting "Unhatched Chicks." Even the "Catacombs" (with the promenade theme emerging as a hymn-like melody) has a clear, individual sense of both fate and earthly depths. Yes, sometimes less is more. ***Trio Solisti April 5, 2008***

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

"Einleitung" "(Introduction)" "Da Geht ein Bach" "(There goes a brook)"
"Heldenklage " "(A hero's sorrow)" "Das 'Fragment an sich'""(A fragment itself)"
"Das verbrochene Ringlein" "(The broken ring)"

O.K., admit it. Like me, you didn't know that the famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was a composer in his youth. Nietzsche, a man who in his later years riled against his former hero Richard Wagner, as well as Christianity and Romanticism, maintained a love of music (with Bizet's *Carmen* being a favorite of his). Even at the age of fourteen he showed a determined sense of where music fit into life when he wrote: "God gave us music so that we, *first and foremost*, will be guided upward by it…. It can be capricious; it can cheer us up and delight us…It can even break the resistance of the toughest character... Music also provides pleasant entertainment and saves everyone who is interested in it from boredom. All humans who despise it should be considered mindless, animal-like creatures." He had become in his youth an excellent pianist and most of his compositional output occurred by the time he was 25, including songs for family occasions.

Only in the 1970s did his dozens of short pieces become published from manuscripts. The five works today show a young man beholden to the likes of Robert Schumann, whereas "The Broken Ring" seems to have some Franz Liszt's influence also. But for a young man self-taught in music, Nietzsche provides clear expression of deep feelings. Strangely enough, it would be one of his books, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, which would inspire other composers to produce music of more lasting performances. The fourth movement of Mahler's Third Symphony is a paean to the Nietzsche work, as well as Frederich Delius's "A Mass of Life." And what of those thrilling initial measures of Richard Strauss's tone poem *Also Sprach Zarathustra* that made the first minutes of Stanley Kubrick's masterpiece, *2001: A Space Odyssey* so memorable?

Alex Alguacil, piano September 26, 2010

George Onslow (1784-1853) Quintet, Op. 81

In the 19th and early 20th century Europe was saturated with composers who had their "15-years of fame." Some of these composers who wrote wind quintets and sextets for wind and piano then slipped into musical limbo, such as George Onslow. Early in the 19th century, Antoine Reicha (1770-1836) brought the wind quintet into prominence, by writing 24 of these works.

Onslow's full name---André George Louis Onslow---is a big clue to his parentage: an English father and French mother. Wealth was from the English side, but a family scandal in England, sent the Onslows permanently to France. The talented young man began as an amateur musician, and then studied piano and string instruments. He turned to writing string quartets and quintets, a total of some 70, at a time when French composers were not writing chamber music, being too busy with operas and ballet. That he was well-known in his day is confirmed by the 1844 etching "Gallery of the Modern Lyric Composer" by A. Maurin. In it you see Onslow standing in the same row as Berlioz, Donizetti and Mendelssohn. Not bad company.
Clearly, Onslow was respected in his day.

His very last composition was the quintet on today's program. Why, for someone so linked to the string instruments, would he choose the wind quintet? The answer is simple: his teacher for composition was none other than the aforementioned Antoine Reicha, "King of the Wind Quintet." The quintet's first movement, allegro, is full of kittenish ways for all five instruments, but without a long melody line. The andante movement is more songlike, albeit somewhat sad. The finale provides scamperings especially for flute and clarinet, the two intertwining in somewhat passionate instances, but with a finale that has all five instruments ending in oneness--and quite fortissimo. ***Borealis Wind Quintet and Leon Bates, Pianist October 24, 2010***